

Supplemental Materials

for

Federal Subsistence Board Meeting

**Eastern Interior Region Hunter Ethics Education
and Outreach Initiative Update to the Board**

January 2023

**Excerpt from 2009 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 10068/AW)**

Dated July 22, 2010

Issue 2: Impacts of Non-rural Users

Rural residents are impacted by non-rural user groups in a number of ways and the Council would like those impacts adequately identified and evaluated. For example, some users may lack the knowledge to properly care for wild resources once they are taken. These practices often offend rural users when they observe meat in poor condition or wasted due to the lack of experience in processing the resource. The Council recommends that the Board develop educational materials and a method of outreach to deliver those materials to rural and non-rural hunters. The curriculum could include caring for the harvest in the field and methods of harvest.

Response

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has developed materials addressing proper meat care, caring for harvest in the field, and related issues. These are available to the public through the 2010 hunting regulations "handy dandy" book (page 22), and also through the ADF&G website. In addition, two videos, "Field Care of Big Game" and "Is this Moose Legal?", are available and are required viewing for some nonsubsistence hunts. These videos are on the following website: <http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=pubs.video>. There also is information on "Field-to-Freezer Meat Care" on the State's website: <http://www.wildlife.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=hunting.meatcare>.

The Board suggests adding your concern regarding the impacts of nonsubsistence users on subsistence users as an agenda item for further discussion at the Council's 2010 Fall meeting. Additional discussion would help to elucidate what areas the Council is concerned about and what kind of educational materials the Council is interested in. Staff is available to provide information to the Council and to assist with developing recommendations to the Board.



Eastern Interior Alaska
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503
Susan Entsminger, Chair

October 14, 2010

Mr. Pete Probasco
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199


Dear Mr. Probasco

The Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council has identified a need for an educational program designed to provide cultural sensitivity education to nonrural users when they are traveling, hunting and fishing in rural areas. The Council reviewed the 2009 Annual Report reply from the Board during the October 13 and 14 Council meeting in Fairbanks and wishes to continue the dialog with the Board and the Office of Subsistence Management. This issue has the potential to negatively affect the relationships between subsistence uses and others that share our resources.

The Council appreciates the efforts by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide written and on-line instructions on the correct methods to process game. However, the primary issue is not necessarily a standard method of care of meat in the field. There are two closely related concepts that require attention. The first is the recognition that failure to abide by appropriate harvest practices may not only be an inefficient use of those resources but may be offensive to the cultural practices of some residents. The second is that subsistence harvest limits, seasons, harvest methods and use of those resources are often much less restrictive than rules governing recreational activities targeting some of those same resources. A lack of understanding of the reasons for those differences may result in a lack of support for the continuation of subsistence uses and unnecessarily result in antagonism toward subsistence users.

The Council requests that a member of your staff attend the winter Council meeting to become more familiar with Council concerns and assist the Council in developing a strategy for improved outreach opportunities, including the use of radio, television and print media. The Council is interested in all alternative methodologies and the cost of these programs.

Sincerely,



Sue Entsminger

**Excerpt from 2010 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM11083.TJ)**

Dated September 20, 2011

Issue 8: Impacts of Non-rural Users

The Council respectfully notes that it is aware that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game provides materials related to hygienic and legal care of game meat, but maintains that the practices and actions of non-rural and non-local resource users continue to be a concern that includes, but extends beyond, inept meat salvage. The Council is working with Office of Subsistence Management staff to better articulate behaviors of concern to subsistence users and to suggest specific educational outreach mitigation strategies to recommend to the Board. The Council looks forward to the Board's consideration and support of these strategies. Contribution of resources from Board agencies may be necessary to accomplish outreach goals.

Response

In response to the Council's concerns regarding the impacts of non-rural users, the Office of Subsistence Management made its outreach coordinator available to facilitate further discussion on the issue. Several particularly interested Council members met informally with the outreach coordinator to discuss cultural sensitivity concerns, outreach strategies and possible partners for outreach efforts, with summaries provided to the participants. Four issues were identified:

- 1) Non-rural users can have a negative impact on rural users' ability to meet their subsistence needs because of direct competition for resources and disturbance of resources.
- 2) Non-rural subsistence users may not understand the dependence that rural residents have on wild resources.
- 3) Non-rural users sometimes leave meat in the field or demonstrate poor meat handling practices. There is a sense that meat is wasted and that this is meat that otherwise could have been used to feed families in rural communities.
- 4) Hunters trespass on private property when hunting.

The Board encourages the Council to continue to develop outreach plans to address these issues. Once the plans are completed, Board members can consider what type of support might be provided by their respective agencies.

**Excerpt from 2013 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 14081.CJ)**

Dated August 06, 2014

4. Hunter ethics and educational outreach to generate better understanding and reduce conflict between users.

The Council has heard many proposals and extensive public discussion over the years that focus on user conflicts among various resource users. The Council feels education and outreach initiatives should be developed to generate better understanding between user groups that hunt and fish common resources on Federal public lands. Proactively providing information may help avoid conflicts that stem from activity in sensitive cultural areas, Native lands, or lack of awareness of local etiquettes and values when outsiders engage in hunting and fishing near rural communities or in traditional hunting areas. The Council would like to see the Federal Subsistence Management Program and its Federal land managers make an effort to develop educational initiatives in collaboration with the State where needed for known conflict/problem areas identified through the Regional Advisory Council meetings or Tribal consultation process. Fostering understanding and respect may help greatly in co-management efforts and reduce stress experienced by some due to conflicts around hunting and fishing activities.

The Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council itself contains a diverse membership and may be able to assist in developing approaches to education and outreach initiatives. The Council suggests that possible solutions include providing education materials in the Federal and State fish and wildlife regulatory books and/or education flyers that can be distributed along with relevant hunting permits. Information could include maps of Native lands, local cultural information by region, and notations regarding local etiquette, such as donation of meat to local communities and elders. Contact information for more details or questions could also be provided.

Response:

The Board finds your ideas outstanding. OSM has helped facilitate this type of outreach in the past. The Board will refer this to the applicable land managers to develop maps or educational flyers with the assistance of OSM and any input the Eastern Interior Council would like to provide. Similar efforts have been made in other areas of the State. In Unit 23 for instance, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, along with a variety of user groups, formed the "GMU 23 Working Group" in 2008. Their focus is on finding solutions to fall hunting user conflicts in the area. It is a 20-member group that includes representatives of local and Tribal governments, land management agencies, hunting and guiding interest groups, and both the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board. They are tasked with finding solutions to hunting conflicts that will help to both preserve traditional native hunting practices and hunting opportunities, while also providing reasonable opportunities for non-local hunters to hunt in the unit. An equivalent working group could be formed in the Eastern Interior Region, with the land managers taking the lead, and with assistance from OSM and the Council. And while funding may be limited, if available at all, the Unit 23 Working Group may have materials or ideas that could assist in this effort.

Your Subsistence Council Coordinator is available to help the Council coordinate these educational efforts.

**Excerpt from 2015 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 16083.CJ)**

Dated September 14, 2016

5. Hunter ethics and education to reduce user conflict and promote understanding

The Council has heard many proposals and extensive public discussion over the years that focus on user conflicts among various resource users. The Council feels education and outreach initiatives should be developed to generate better understanding between user groups that hunt and fish common resources on Federal public lands. Proactively providing information may help avoid conflicts that stem from activity in sensitive cultural areas, Alaska Native lands, or lack of awareness of local etiquette and values when outsiders engage in hunting and fishing near rural communities or in traditional hunting areas. The Council would like to see the Federal Subsistence Management Program and its Federal land managers make an effort to develop educational initiatives in collaboration with the State where needed for known conflict/problem areas identified through the Regional Advisory Council meetings or Tribal consultation process. Fostering understanding and respect may help greatly in co-management efforts and reduce stress experienced by some due to conflicts around hunting and fishing activities.

The Council possesses a diverse membership and may be able to assist in developing approaches to education and outreach initiatives. The Council suggests that possible solutions include providing education materials in the Federal and State fish and wildlife regulatory books and/or education flyers that can be distributed along with relevant hunting permits. Information could include maps of Alaska Native lands, local cultural information by region, and notations regarding local etiquette, such as donation of meat to local communities and elders. Contact information for more details or questions could also be provided.

The Council met with the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council during the winter 2015 meeting cycle and worked jointly to develop ideas and solutions to address these user conflict issues. The Council also discussed these potential collaborative options with Alaska Department of Fish and Game representatives at the same meeting and has been pursuing avenues that could be facilitated by Council member involvement in other resource advisory groups. The Council has also drafted a letter outlining several suggestions, which is enclosed with this report. To have an effective education and outreach program will require the collaboration and support of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Councils seeks feedback and confirmation from the Federal Subsistence Management Program on what type of programmatic, technical, and monetary resources the program may be able to contribute to the effort and a plan for possible next steps in order to proceed.

Response:

The Board appreciates the Council's continued ideas and collaborative efforts to develop an education and outreach program that can reduce hunter conflicts in the region. Such a program could particularly help local hunters in rural areas who rely heavily on fish and wildlife resources for

subsistence. The Board recognizes that this is a critical concern not only for your Council but several other Councils, including Western Interior.

Member Andy Bassich from Eagle effectively captured and presented the Council's concerns during a facilitated Outreach Challenges session held at the All Council's Meeting in March. The ideas and suggestions from the session will provide a baseline for **the development of an OSM outreach strategy to reduce user conflicts and educate local and visiting hunters. A pilot project would be carried out in the Eastern Interior region to test the strategy.** Karen Deatherage and Katerina Wessels are OSM council coordinators who have extensive outreach and communications background. They will both be working to initiate a pilot outreach program to address the concerns of Council on this matter. **The Board fully supports this effort and looks forward to a successful program.**

**Excerpt from 2016 EIRAC Annual Report
Reply (FWS/OSM 17053.KW)**

Dated April 04, 2017

1. Understanding and tolerance for different cultural hunting values as means to reduce waste and work towards better hunter ethics in the field

The Eastern Interior Region has several areas where ongoing user conflicts among various groups of resource users create stress and misunderstanding, resulting in waste of valuable resources. This issue is one of the major concerns for many other Councils' areas, for example Western Interior. The Council brought the user conflict issue before the Board in its 2014 and 2015 annual reports but had not seen much progress made on developing solutions it. Some discussion regarding hunters' education occurred during an Outreach Challenges break-out session held at the All Council's Meeting in March of 2016; however, none of the suggestions made during this session were implemented and no Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) outreach strategy to reduce user conflict and educate hunters has yet been developed.

The Council would like to advocate for the acceptance and teaching different sets of values that the hunters of different backgrounds – both rural subsistence and urban sport – have. Very often ignorance and misunderstanding of these values result in animal waste. Some of the urban hunters would like to share with subsistence users animal body parts that they do not consume but they need to be educated on how to process and store them correctly.

The Council encourages the Board to set up a timeline for developing the strategy and testing it out. The Council suggests that OSM creates a small working group in partnership with other agencies and the State of Alaska to address the issues of user conflict and waste of subsistence resources. The goal of this group should be to develop strategies for hunter education and outreach programs both statewide and regionally. The developed strategies should be tested out through a pilot program focused on the Eastern Interior Region. Additionally, the Council suggests that one specific group of users – the military – should be targeted for delivery of hunter ethics and meat care education programs. The military has been very receptive to public concerns and requires their personal to go through a hunter orientation course before going hunting.

The Council also suggests that the Board directs OSM to develop an educational publication on different cultural values of various user groups and opportunities and procedures for sharing animal body parts to reduce waste and achieve better hunting ethics in the field.

Board Response:

The Board acknowledges the Council's continuing concern regarding ongoing user conflict in the Eastern Interior Region, potentially stemming from misunderstanding each user groups' traditions, way of life, and ethical standards. The Board appreciates the Council's emphasis on moving forward in a positive way to improve understanding of and tolerance for different cultural hunting values between local Federal subsistence users, non-local subsistence users, and sport/commercial user groups and the desire to create a collaborative network that will include State and Federal agencies, tribes and Native organizations, rural community representatives, and hunting organizations. For this effort to be successful, it is very important to take into account various perspectives and consider agency mandates and authorities.

The Board is pleased to report to the Council that, in accordance with the Board's recommendation outlined in the reply to the fiscal year 2015 annual report, the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) developed a draft plan of action that will guide the development of an outreach strategy and potential pilot project to improve understanding between users. A draft timeline was also created to help guide achievement of realistic goals for the pilot project. **The plan of action was presented to the Interagency Staff Committee in May of 2017 and subsequently to the Board during its work session in July of 2017. OSM plans to continue working with State and Federal agencies and Council representatives, with the intent to form a working group of collaborators that will identify target audiences and goals for the project and develop key messages by the Council's winter 2018 meeting. The Board is aware that two Council members, Susan Entsminger and Andy Bassich, have already agreed to be Council representatives on such a group.**

OSM will present the plan of action and timeline to the Council during its fall 2017 meeting to solicit further comments and ideas. After the working group is formed during the Council's fall meeting, it will work with other valuable stakeholders to solicit input and collaboration in developing a pilot project that will be presented to the Council during its winter 2018 meeting. Your Council Coordinator will lead this initiative, and OSM will commit other staff time on a as-needed basis. The Board will also request that representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management are assigned to participate in the initial working group.

The Board would like to note that due to the current Federal budget uncertainties OSM cannot commit specific funding for this initiative but will leverage OSM staff time dedicated to the pilot project to network on a collaborative path forward and actively seek alternative funding from other sources.

Excerpt from 2018 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 19062.KW)

Dated August 16, 2019

1. Hunter displacement and the "Domino Effect" contribution to changing hunting patterns and user conflict

Over the last few years, the Council has become increasingly concerned about the displacement of local hunters from their home region by hunters from other regions. The displacement often happens due to the various Federal and State wildlife management decisions, including closures, which force hunters to hunt in a different region. This phenomenon, also known as the "Domino Effect," is an underlying reason for some of the user conflict in the State.

The issue of user conflict and finding ways to preempt and mitigate the conflict has been a long-standing concern for the Council. The Council requests that the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) provide a report with data on hunter communities of residency and harvest locations for various species. This information can be obtained from the harvest ticket reports filed with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, including data on what percentage of hunters were Federally qualified subsistence users. The Council suggests that OSM also seek out other potential sources of information.

The Council understands that collecting the requested data for the entire state is a large project, but notes that it is needed to understand hunter movement patterns and changing harvest pressures in different areas. This data will help wildlife managers gain a comprehensive picture of displacement, address the impacts of the "Domino Effect," and find approaches to mitigate it in the future.

Also, this data would assist the Council in proposing better informed regulatory changes to hunting seasons or other changes that would redistribute and lessen hunting impacts to Federally qualified subsistence users.

The Council considers this research a priority and suggests that OSM collaborate with the State to collect the information. This may be a good research project for a University of Alaska Anchorage or University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate student, such as an Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program student, and has the potential to be his or her graduation thesis as well. The Council feels strongly that this information will also help the Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Board of Game understand the impacts of closing hunting in one area and the pressure that it may put on other areas. It might also result in developing better regulations that provide harvest opportunities on more equitable basis. There is the potential for long-term positive impacts to State and Federal wildlife management from this research.

Board Response:

The Board acknowledges the Council's concern about the "Domino Effect." Data on hunters' resident community for wildlife species and locations across Alaska exist in State and Federal databases. Hunting locations are only specific to the subunit level and, of course, these databases only reflect reported harvest.

While these databases likely contain the information needed to examine what the Council describes as the "Domino Effect," further clarification is needed before a useful report can be generated. First, what is the time frame? Is the Council interested in hunting trends over the last 10, 20 or 30 years? Also, are any

species (e.g. caribou, moose), units (e.g. Unit 20E), or closed areas of particular interest or priority to the Council or does the Council want a comprehensive report including every species and subunit in Alaska? Is the Council only concerned about the "Domino Effect" of hunting or also of trapping? Is the Council concerned about the displacement of non-local and non-Federally qualified hunters or only of local, Federally qualified subsistence users?

The Board encourages the Council to work further with your Council Coordinator in order to refine and clarify your request.

**Excerpt from 2019 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 20069.KW)**

Dated August 6, 2020

5. Continuation of the hunter ethics and education initiative and dialog with rural Communities

The Council is aware of the current staff shortages at OSM; however, the Council would like to emphasize to the Board that it wishes to continue work on developing the hunter ethics and education initiative in the year ahead. There is a need for increased cultural awareness and respect for people that live in rural Alaska. The Council would like to engage in a direct dialogue with the communities like Arctic Village. For example, the Council wants to create a subcommittee to find mutually beneficial solutions to the situation in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area. The Council voted on the record during its fall 2019 meeting to send a letter to the Board requesting permission to create a subcommittee that will engage all stakeholders. The letter was sent on October 28, 2019 (see enclosure), but the Council had not received a reply yet. The Council asks the Board to provide direction on appropriate ways to engage in a two-way dialogue with rural communities about subsistence issues at stake.

Board Response:

Over the past three and a half years the Council's hunter ethics and education initiative has made significant progress. The Board believes that this initiative is an important undertaking in building cultural awareness and respect between different groups of hunters and continues to support the work on its development. However, it is important to note that OSM is currently experiencing significant staff shortages and it might be very difficult to make any progress in continuation of the initiative development, at least in the near future.

The Board received the Council's letter, dated October 28, 2019, with a request to create a subcommittee to work on Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) issues. OSM presented the Council's request to the Board at its November 5, 2019 meeting. The Board felt that the request did not contain enough information to make an informed decision and directed OSM to conduct a scoping meeting with interested parties/stakeholders to see if there is any interest to form a subcommittee. A scoping meeting would help identify specifics of the Council's request and assist the Board in making its decision regarding a formation of subcommittee, and to make assignments and set expectations. The Board also requested that OSM work with your Council to develop proposed subcommittee goals, timelines, frequency of meetings, and cost estimates. The Board deferred to act on the Council's request until the framework for establishing a subcommittee has been accomplished.

As the Council pointed out, OSM is currently experiencing significant staff shortages and has not yet been able to conduct a scoping meeting or develop the specific information requested by the Board. The Board believes that would be very important to reach out to the AVSMA stakeholders to gauge their interest and potential level of commitment prior to considering forming a subcommittee. OSM intends to fulfill the Board's directive after additional staff are hired. The timeline for this remains uncertain. The Board recognizes that the Councils must interact with the rural communities as a part of their official duties and recommends that your Council engage with communities through: (1) correspondence according to the guidelines in the enclosed Board's Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy (June 15, 2004); (2) inviting rural communities representatives to attend the Council's public meetings and present public testimony on subsistence issues; and (3) holding public meetings in rural non-hub communities. The requests to hold public meetings in rural non-hub communities should be sent by the Council to the Assistant Regional Director of OSM for review and decision. Requests should include a cost benefit analysis.

**Excerpt from 2020 EIRAC Annual Report Reply
(FWS/OSM 21030.KW)**

Dated August 4, 2021

4. Hunter ethics education and outreach and dialog with rural communities

The Council again would like to emphasize to the Board their wishes to continue work on developing of the Board's approved hunter ethics and education initiative. To achieve better understanding between rural communities and the Federal Subsistence Management Program, it is imperative to increase cultural awareness and foster respect for people who live in rural Alaska. The Council also would like to have a better mechanism to engage in a direct dialog with rural communities like Arctic Village. A lot of the times when a meeting is held in a hub community, rural users do not have an opportunity to attend it.

In October 2019, the Council requested the Board's approval to create a subcommittee to work on Arctic Village Sheep Management Area issues and find mutually beneficial solutions. The Board deferred to act on the Council's request until the Council, with the help of their Coordinator, develops a framework for establishing this subcommittee. Prior to the fall 2020 Council meeting, no work had been done on the development of this framework due to the Council Coordinator being on extended sick leave and OSM staff shortages, and the last meeting was held via teleconference due to the pandemic travel restrictions.

However, despite these delays, the Council wants to continue pursuing the creation of a subcommittee and other means of having an open, engaged dialog with rural communities. Other means might be to have one of the Board agencies, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, sponsor a Council member trip to a community, or receive approval from OSM's Assistant Regional Director to hold a future meeting in a rural community. Getting users from rural communities like Arctic Village involved with the Council will provide them with better opportunities to become proactive in the management of the wildlife; plus, it can become an example for other communities. The Council requests that OSM provide "adequate qualified staff," as mandated in ANILCA, to accomplish these goals.

Response:

The Board remains supportive of the Council's wishes to continue work on the development of the Board's approved hunter ethics and education initiative. The primary responsibility of coordinating this work is with your Subsistence Council Coordinator. OSM continues to experience staff shortages, and currently the position of the Subsistence Council Coordinator for your Council remains vacant. OSM intends to advertise and hire this position by the end of 2021.

During the fall of 2020 the Council received a brief oral report from OSM on small progress in the initiative, when the preliminary contacts were made with the representatives from Eielson Air Force Base and Fort Wainwright to discuss collaboration on the pilot project concept titled "Hunt Like an Alaskan" that was aimed to work with military groups on creating a program that would emphasize the importance of mutual respect between different user groups through building and improving relationships between military, local communities, and the land. There was no further progress on this pilot project concept primarily because of the pandemic and OSM staff shortages.

Additionally, during the fall 2020 meeting, the Council heard a report from the Yukon Flats Refuge Manager, Jimmy Fox, on the progress of the other pilot project titled "A Community Based Hunter Liaison" that was conducted in cooperation with the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments and was in its second year. Through this partnership the hunter liaisons were stationed in both Fort Yukon and

Circle. This pilot project continues being successful with many hunters willing to talk to liaisons about meat sharing and cultural values of local residents, as well as property and boundary lines concerns. Amanda Pope, Community Hunter Liaison in Circle, provided a report on her work as well. Suggestions were made to expand this collaboration to include the National Park Service and to station a hunter liaison in Eagle, as well as to have another liaison stationed at the beginning of the Taylor Highway. The Council also suggested and unanimously voted to organize a hunter ethics brainstorming teleconference meeting to develop a plan for the future with the intent to hold this meeting in February 2021; however, due to the late Council appointments and other priorities, the meeting did not take place.

The Board recognizes that the Council must interact with the public as part of their official duties, and that the Council desires to engage in a direct dialog with rural communities. Currently, the two avenues of dialog available to the Council are through 1) holding one of its public meetings in a rural community and having discussions with rural users on record, and 2) communicating the Council's comments and positions on subsistence issues to the Tribal and/or rural community leadership through correspondence.

If the Council desires to hold a future public meeting in a rural non-hub community, the Board encourages the Council to submit, with the help of their Subsistence Council Coordinator (when this position is filled), a request to the OSM Assistant Regional Director for consideration. At the same time, the request for creating a formal subcommittee to work on the resolution of the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) issues can be re-submitted. The Council is also free to work through their Subsistence Council Coordinator with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and request the Service sponsor a Council member trip to Arctic Village for a specified purpose of finding solutions to the AVSMA issues. The Board recommends that the Council reach out to the USFWS Regional Subsistence Coordinator, Jill Klein, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Steve Berendzen.