MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH Fish & Wildlife Commission

Regular Meeting
May 14, 2026

HANDOUTS

Pg. = Item:

- **1 = Draft Strategic Communications & Outreach Plan**
- **7 = Meehan Response to Draft FWC HB321 Letter**
- **12 = Rep Josephson AND Opinion Article**

Handouts Added During Meeting

- **17 = Cook Inlet LNG Project Notification Letter**
- **23 = T Gorlick Pike Barrier Concerns Handouts**
- **25 = M Van Diest Nelchina Herd Handouts**

DSJ Building, Conference Room 203
350 E Dahlia Ave, Palmer, AK 99645
Remote Participation: See attached agenda on p. 1
Planning and Land Use Department - Planning Division
http://www.matsugov.us planning@matsugov.us

Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission

2026-2027 Strategic Communications & Outreach Plan

1. Background

The Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) relies on communication to accomplish many of our goals. As advisors to elected officials and managers on fish, wildlife, and habitat topics, the results of our communications determine how well we accomplish our mission. This document aims to establish a professional, organized process for using communications to strengthen our impact in support of Mat-Su Borough residents.

This plan builds on examples of successful FWC communications, including "It Takes Fish to Make Fish", committee members' comments on Proposal 186, public testimony, letters to legislators and the Governor's Office, resolutions to the Assembly, and our experience developing relationships with agencies and decision-makers.

2. Purpose

The FWC requires a structured, outcome-driven communication strategy to effectively influence decisions at the **2027 Alaska Board of Fisheries Meeting**. This strategy establishes a framework for outreach, relationship-building, and legislative alignment to support the Commission's short and long-term objectives.

Effective communication for the FWC is not simply receiving and distributing information, but it is the ability to build trust, engage similar agencies, and provide recommendations for decision-making through timely, transparent, and continuous communication.

3. Communication Objectives

Primary Objective

Influence regulatory and policy outcomes at the **2027 Board of Fisheries** and **North Pacific Fishery Management Council** (NPFMC) meetings to maintain the Conservation Corridor

Supporting Objectives

- Build a broad coalition of support across Mat-Su user groups
- Increase public awareness and engagement on key fisheries issues
- Build relationships with the Governor, state and federal agency leadership, and board council meetings
- Strengthen alignment with local and state legislators
- Establish the Commission as a credible voice in fisheries policy
- Ensure organized, effective participation during public comment and decision phases

All communication will directly support these objectives and are measurable, time-bound, and consistent with communication strategies. The communication that assists our actions is necessary for a thorough product.

4. Target Audiences and Key Messages

Effective communication requires clearly defined audiences based on influence, engagement level, and authority.

Target Audiences and Associated Stakeholders

- Alaska Board of Fisheries members
- ADF&G leadership, managers, and biologists
- State legislators, elected officials, and assembly members representing the Mat-Su region
- Federal managers and NPFMC members
- Tribal and subsistence stakeholders
- Mat-Su residents and local outdoor users
- Sport fishing and guiding groups
- Advocacy and interest groups (aligned and opposed)
- Northern District Set-Netters
- Mat-Su Salmon Habitat Partnership
- Local and statewide media outlets

Each audience will be engaged based on their current awareness, influence, and ability to impact outcomes, ensuring messaging is targeted and effective. Messaging will be tailored to each audience and designed to achieve three outcomes: inform, advocate, and drive action.

Core Themes

- Policy, Politics, and Public Relations (3 Ps)
- Sustainable harvest opportunities are essential to Mat-Su's economy, culture, and way of life
- Local stakeholders must have a voice in fish and wildlife management decisions
- Data-driven and equitable solutions striving to benefit commercial and sport fishing, personal use, and subsistence harvest opportunities
- Timely action is necessary to address current and emerging challenges

Examples of Direct Action

- Participate in public meetings and submit comments
- Support Commission-backed proposals
- Engage with legislators and decision-makers

5. Communications Mix

The Commission will use a variety of communication tools to implement this plan and our objectives. The following list includes common tools and media for the FWC to use:

Platforms of Communication

- Website updates on the FWC webpage and a Fish and Wildlife topic page (replacing the Fish Hub)
- Information materials, particularly the "It Takes Fish to Make Fish" booklet
- FWC meetings
- Social media posts
- Presentations at public meetings and community forums
- Surveys and feedback mechanisms
- Customized outreach to key stakeholders and partners
- E-newsletters (Planner Pulse)
- Policy briefs and fact sheets for decision-makers
- Media outreach (op-eds, interviews, press releases)

Most effective communication strategies emphasize active engagement and messaging, ensuring stakeholders and the public are not only informed but are motivated to participate in shaping outcomes.

6. Timelines for Key Meetings

The following timeline identifies the general tasks and deadlines for upcoming 2027 meetings affecting fish and wildlife management:

2027 North Pacific Fishery Management Council Meeting

- December 2026 – January 2027: Review NPFMC materials
  - Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) reports
  - Environmental Assessment (EA) for Cook Inlet salmon harvest specifications
  - Submit written comments
- February: Select FWC members to provide oral comments, develop testimony
- **February 22- March 2, 2027: NPFMC meeting**
  - Participate and attend the event, either in person or virtually
  - Develop an action plan or a brief for the FWC for the NPFMC meeting

2027 Board of Fisheries Meeting

- September – October 2026: Determine which proposals to focus on and establish alignment with FWC and Borough positions
  - Establish our goals and core themes for BOF meeting
- Work Session October 28-29, 2026, for Agenda Change Requests (ACRs) and organizing the 2027 regulatory meeting
  - Monitor this Work Session and track Board decisions on ACRs
  - Participating in this Work Session
  - Develop an action plan or brief for the FWC to act on based on the Work Session's results
- November – December 2026: Draft FWC position statements, research and develop evidence-based arguments
- January – Early February 2027: Submit written comments, develop testimony scripts
- February 2027: Identify speakers and aligned agencies for support
- **March 4 – 15, 2027: Board of Fisheries Meeting**
  - Deliver oral testimony
  - Provide clarification statements and stay active in discussions
- Late March – April 2027: Post-meeting debriefing with an after-action summary, monitor regulatory processes, and develop plans for next proposal cycle

7. Action Plan

Action	Who Leads?	Method of Communication	Objective?	Due Date

8. Evaluating Success & Conclusions

Key Performance Indicators

- Engagement levels (meeting attendance, survey responses)
- Number of legislative briefings and partnerships formed
- Public participation in Board of Fisheries and NPFMC meetings
- Media reach and visibility
- Alignment of final outcomes with Commission objectives

Success will be measured using both quantitative and qualitative metrics. Regular evaluation ensures the strategy remains adaptable and responsive to changing conditions.

Conclusion

This communication strategy provides a structured, actionable framework for the Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission to build relationships, engage organizations and residents, and influence fish and wildlife policy outcomes. By focusing on targeted messaging, active engagement, and milestone-driven execution, the Commission will be positioned to effectively meet its goals for the 2027 Board of Fisheries and NPFMC meetings.

This document is intended to inform discussion regarding the FWC position on HB321B. It provides the language of the FWC draft letter opposing HB321 the responses from Joe Meehan of Representative Josephson's office (based on a phone call with FWC member Kendra Zamzow) and compares bill and regulation language. Joe Meehan managed refuges in Alaska for 25 years.

FWC letter	*Joe Meehan response*	HB321B language	Current statutory language
The bill's language to prohibit the use of firearms poses land use risks to Mat-Su Borough residents and infringes on our rights protected under the United States and Alaska Constitutions. While intended to address unsafe firearm discharge and other hazards, the FWC believes this could allow agencies to close portions of wildlife refuges without legislative oversight and infringe on inherent protected rights to bear and use firearms.	*The purpose is to give ADFG the authority to ban target shooting at access sites only. It actually strengthens the right to bear arms in refuges. There is no definition of "target shooting", so the bill uses "discharge of firearms for any purpose other than hunting in designated areas".* *The reason the bill addresses target shooting is because of the cost the state has had to spend to clean up lead contamination. Cleanup requires either burying the lead or excavating the soil and shipping it to Oregon. The state probably spent around $3.5 million statewide. They spent $2.5 million cleaning up lead contamination at Reflections Lake and hundreds of thousands at Rabbit Slough, Cottonwood Creek and Goose Bay.* *ADFG would still need to go through regulatory and public comment processes to identify the "designated areas". Alaska State Parks has a similar statute and it has not resulted in conflicts with hunting or other legal use of firearms.*	*** Sec. 7.** AS 16.20 is amended by adding a new section to read: **Sec. 16.20.028. Restrictions on the discharge of firearms and public access.** (a) The discharge of firearms during lawful activities, including hunting, trapping, and fishing is permitted within the boundaries of a wildlife refuge established under AS 16.20.010 - 16.20.075 or 16.20.550 - 16.20.690, except that the department may, for purposes of public safety, close a designated area within a wildlife refuge to the discharge of firearms for purposes other than lawful hunting, trapping, and fishing. (b) The department may by regulation prohibit public access to a designated area within a wildlife refuge established under AS 16.20.010 - 16.20.075 or 16.20.550 - 16.20.690 if the closure is reasonably necessary to (1) protect the public's health and safety; (2) allow for the safe operation of a facility within the refuge. (c) Nothing in this section prohibits the operation of a shooting range, shooting park, or similar facility operated or sanctioned by the department.	None – HB321B adds a new section

FWC letter	*Joe Meehan response*	HB321B language	Current statutory language
The Goose Bay, Palmer Hay Flats, and Susitna River Refuges are the primary areas of direct relevance to the Mat-Su Borough, and HB 321 proposes converting it into a state wildlife refuge while incorporating additional state-owned or future state-acquired lands into its boundaries. This automatic inclusion of future acquisitions without any requirement for Mat-Su Borough consultation creates uncertainty for land-use planning and for residents who rely on consistent access to these high-use areas. As a result, we have significant concerns about how future boundary changes may interfere with local land use planning.	*The bill does not change anything for future acquisitions outside refuge boundaries. It is the legislature that establishes the external refuge boundaries now and that process would not change. It only changes the parcels of land that ADFG and others have purchased inside refuge boundaries with the express purpose of managing them as refuge. Currently statutes require ADFG to go to the legislature every time they purchase 5 acres, 10 acres etc to allow them to manage the land as refuge.* *One piece of land outside existing boundaries is proposed in the bill – this is land in Knik Arm that has risen above the surface as land rebounds.*	*** Sec. 14.** AS 16.20.032(a) is amended to read: 6 (a) The **presently** [FOLLOWING] state-owned land and water**, and land and water acquired in the future by the state, within the described area** is established as the Palmer Hay Flats **Wildlife** [STATE GAME] Refuge: (1) Township 16 North, Range 1 West, Seward Meridian Sections 1 - 12 Section 13: N1/2 Sections 14 - 18 **Section 20: NE1/4** **Section 21: N1/2**; Section 26: SE1/4 NE1/4[,] S1/2, excluding all portions of U.S. Survey No. 9024 **Matanuska TWNST (USS 1169) Block 31, Lots 1 and 2** Section 32: Lots 3 - 7, NE1/4, SW1/4 SW1/4, NE1/4 SE1/4**, including all state tide and submerged land** *(no land changes proposed for Goose Bay or Susitna Flats)*	**Sec. 16.20.032. Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.** (a) The following state-owned land and water is established as the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge: *(land descriptions are the same as HB321B except where HB321B has descriptions in bold)*

FWC letter	*Joe Meehan response*	HB321B language	Current statutory language
HB 321 also appears to shift authority away from local communities and toward state agencies. By elevating habitat protection as the primary statutory purpose of wildlife areas, HB 321 may enable ADF&G to restrict access through regulation rather than legislative action. For a rapidly growing region like the Mat-Su Borough where residents depend on accessible hunting, fishing, and recreation, this shift raises legitimate concerns about long-term access. Access to public lands is central to our community identity and outdoor culture, thus the potential for regulatory closures by unelected officials is particularly concerning.	*Habitat is already and has always been the highest priority of refuges; access has always been second provided it doesn't significantly impact habitat. This is encoded in Alaska Statute AS 16.20.020 (purpose statement for refuges) and AS 16.20.500 (purpose statement for Critical Habitat Areas). The purpose statements have been in place for 40-50 years. The bill only combines the language in 16.20.020 and 16.20.500. If the purpose statement is changed, then essentially state refuges would be managed as regular DNR state lands.* *Conditions of access, especially those that could impact habitats, are addressed in the development of a refuge management plan and regulations which includes a public process and engagement of the MSB and other agencies, partners, and stakeholders.*	*** Sec. 6.** AS 16.20.020 is repealed and reenacted to read: **Sec. 16.20.020. Purposes.** (a) The purposes of AS 16.20.010 - 16.20.075 and 16.20.550 - 16.20.690 are to protect and preserve natural habitats, fish and wildlife populations, and areas crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife and to restrict all other uses not compatible with the purposes. (b) Subject to (a) of this section, the department may allow hunting, trapping, fishing, subsistence activities, wildlife viewing, photography, recreation, and other public uses of wildlife refuges under AS 16.20.010 - 16.20.075 and 16.20.550 - 16.20.690. (c) The department, the Board of Fisheries, and the Board of Game, as appropriate, may adopt regulations to achieve the purposes described in this section.	**Sec. 16.20.020. Purpose.** The purpose of AS 16.20.010 — 16.20.080 is to protect and preserve the natural habitat and game population in certain designated areas of the state. **Sec. 16.20.030. National wildlife refuges designated as state game refuges; Goose Bay State Game Refuge.** (e) Egress and ingress to and from private property within the parcels described in (c) of this section shall be allowed through access corridors established through agreement between the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Fish and Game, and with the private property owners involved. **Sec. 16.20.500. Purpose.** The purpose of AS 16.20.500 — 16.20.690 is to protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife, and to restrict all other uses not compatible with that primary purpose.

FWC letter	*Joe Meehan response*	HB321B language	Current statutory language
Additionally, HB 321 includes statutory brown bear hunting closures in the McNeil River and Katmai regions. Although these areas lie outside the Mat-Su Borough, the precedent is relevant. Our analysis concludes that these closures expand no-hunt zones in ways that are difficult to reverse and prioritize tourism over hunting opportunity. This raises concerns about how similar statutory restrictions could be applied elsewhere in the future, including within or near Mat-Su Borough wildlife areas.	*There are 3 areas in Alaska with hunting closures established in statute including one at the McNeil River sanctuary. Recognizing the unique resource values at McNeil River, it has been closed to brown bear hunting since 1955 by the federal government and then the state after gaining statehood.* *The surrounding area in the McNeil River REFUGE has been closed to brown bear hunting by the BOG for at least 30 years, and the area in Kamishak Bay has been closed to brown bear hunting for at least 40 years. This bill simply enshrines these regulatory closures into statute.*	*** Sec. 48.** AS 16.20.041 is amended to read: **Sec. 16.20.041. McNeil River Wildlife [STATE GAME] Refuge.** (a) The **presently** [FOLLOWING] state-owned land and water**, and land and water acquired in the future by the state**, including the tideland but exclusive of marine water and submerged land, lying within the **following** parcels described in this subsection is established as the McNeil River **Wildlife** [STATE GAME] Refuge: *(Land descriptions follow)* *** Sec. 60.** AS 16.20.160, as repealed and reenacted by sec. 5, ch. 56, SLA 1991, is amended to read: **Sec. 16.20.160. Sanctuary established [SANCTUARY ESTABLISHED].** The **presently state owned land and water, and land and water acquired in the future by the state, in the** following described area and adjacent state waters are established as a state **wildlife** [GAME] sanctuary to be known as the McNeil River **Wildlife** [STATE GAME] Sanctuary:	**Sec. 16.20.041. McNeil River State Game Refuge.** (a) The following state-owned land and water, including the tideland but exclusive of marine water and submerged land, lying within the parcels described in this subsection is established as the McNeil River State Game Refuge: *(Land descriptions are identical to HB321B)* **Sec. 16.20.160. McNeil River State Game Sanctuary.** The following state-owned land and water, including the tidelands but exclusive of marine water and submerged land, lying within the parcels described in this subsection is established as the McNeil River State Game sanctuary:

FWC letter	*Joe Meehan response*	HB321B language	Current statutory language
Finally, the bill's prohibition on personal watercraft in certain wildlife refuges may conflict with a recent Alaska Supreme Court decision and could limit Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) ability to conduct habitat restoration work. This contradiction suggests that HB 321 may unintentionally hinder the very conservation efforts it seeks to establish.	*The bill only addresses Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats (at the head of Kachemak Bay) and would re-instate language that was in regulation for 20+ years and put it into statute. For any other area to have personal watercraft prohibited, the language would need to go through a regulatory or legislative process. There is no change in that process.* *The recent Alaska Supreme Court decision involving the regulatory PWC prohibition in Kachemak Bay was based on the public process of rescinding the prohibition, not the merits of the prohibition.* *There is no known habitat restoration work being done (or having been done) with the use of PWC.*	*** Sec. 77.** AS 16.20.590 is amended by adding new subsections to read: (c) A person may not operate a personal watercraft within the Kachemak Bay Wildlife Refuge established under (a) of this section. (d) In this section, "personal watercraft" has the meaning given in AS 16.20.580(c).	None – HB321B adds a new subsections

Opinions

For Subscribers

Opinion: Alaska's special areas deserve better protection. House Bill 321 delivers that.

By Andy Josephson
Published: May 5, 2026

A brown bear with two cubs walks back up the beach along the Cook Inlet coast in the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary on the Alaska Peninsula. (Bob Hallinen / ADN)

Imagine thousands of Pacific walruses packed side by side on a remote island beach. Elsewhere, dozens of brown bears are standing shoulder to shoulder catching salmon. Picture duck hunters harvesting some of the millions of migratory waterfowl, moose wintering in valley lowlands to escape deep mountain snows, and anglers filling coolers with salmon and halibut.

These places belong to every Alaskan for your use and enjoyment. Together,

they form Alaska's Special Areas program — 3.2 million acres of public land protected in state wildlife refuges, sanctuaries and critical habitat areas. House Bill 321, currently before the Legislature, would strengthen the protections, management and public use of these lands.

Despite erroneous criticism in recent media posts, this bill represents a meaningful improvement for all Alaskans. Here's what the bill actually does.

• Fixes maps and expands access: It corrects errors in legal land descriptions and incorporates adjacent state-acquired lands whose habitat values warranted protection. These changes benefit fish and wildlife populations while expanding opportunities for all users.

• Modernizes and streamlines management: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has an impressive 66-year track record of balancing habitat protection with public land use. House Bill 321 builds on that legacy by giving the department clearer statutory direction, making management both more effective and more efficient.

Currently, the program uses five different designations — game refuges, wildlife refuges, critical habitat areas, wildlife sanctuaries and game sanctuaries — each carrying slightly different management intent. The bill consolidates these into two categories using the more modern and all-encompassing terms "wildlife" refuges and "wildlife" sanctuaries. This also eliminates confusion with federal "critical habitat" designations under the Endangered Species Act, thereby removing any public perception that these areas are closed to public use.

• Addresses safety issues without touching hunting or your firearms: Current refuge statutes lack clear protections for many traditional uses. House Bill 321 corrects this by formally protecting hunting, trapping, fishing, subsistence activities, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities within Special

Areas.

This bill explicitly protects your right to carry and use firearms while addressing a serious safety problem: unregulated target shooting at trailheads. This activity has deterred access, caused injuries and generated significant lead contamination requiring multimillion-dollar cleanup efforts using public funds. The bill would allow the department to regulate target shooting in these narrow, specific locations only, with no impact on hunting or any other lawful activities.

Additionally, the bill protects designated shooting ranges, such as the Rabbit Creek range in Anchorage. It authorizes the department to restrict access to downrange areas during active shooting sessions — a necessary measure, since some individuals enter those areas deliberately, forcing shooters to stop with no legal recourse available to range managers.

• Respects private property and preserves a beloved resource: The bill streamlines how private landowners — including Native corporations and Native allotment holders — manage their autonomous property within refuge boundaries, freeing them from the requirement to seek departmental permits for use of their own land.

Finally, the bill enshrines in statute the long-established brown bear hunting closure surrounding the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary. For decades, the Board of Game has maintained this protection around one of the world's most celebrated brown bear viewing sites. Codifying a closure that has existed for a generation simply gives it the permanence and clarity it deserves.

House Bill 321 is no threat to Alaska's public land users or its traditions. It's a straightforward improvement — cleaner management, stronger protections for public use and a fix to real problems that have been building for years. Don't let unfounded criticism obscure what this bill actually is: good policy for every

unfounded criticism obscure what this bill actually is: good policy for every Alaskan who hunts, fishes, traps, watches wildlife, hikes or simply loves this land. Alaskans should feel confident supporting it.

***Rep. Andy Josephson**, sponsor of House Bill 321, D-Anchorage, is a member of the Alaska House of Representatives and serves as co-chair of the House Finance Committee.*

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The Anchorage Daily News welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, email commentary(at)adn.com. Send submissions shorter than 200 words to letters@adn.com or click here to submit via any web browser. Read our full guidelines for letters and commentaries here.

Andy Josephson

Rep. Andy Josephson was elected to the Alaska State House of Representatives in 2012 and represents residents in South Midtown, Taku-Campbell and East Sand Lake.

COOK INLET LNG

May 5, 2026

Matsu Fish and Wildlife Commission
Peter J Probasco, Chair
PO Box 2502
Palmer, AK 99645

Subject: Introduction to the Cook Inlet LNG Project and Opportunity for Public Engagement

Dear Community Members, Stakeholders, and Interested Parties,

We are writing to introduce the proposed **Cook Inlet LNG Project** (the "Project") and to begin an open and transparent dialogue with the public, regulatory agencies, and all interested stakeholders regarding its development. This outreach is part of our commitment to a robust Public Participation Program consistent with federal and State of Alaska regulatory expectations, including those of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The Project has been designed to address a well-documented and growing challenge facing Southcentral Alaska: a projected shortfall in natural gas supply beginning as early as 2029. Natural gas is the primary fuel used to generate electricity and provide heat for homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure across the region. As existing Cook Inlet gas production continues to decline, ensuring a reliable and affordable energy supply is essential to maintaining the safety, economic stability, and quality of life for Alaska communities.

Project Overview

The Project is a flexible, offshore LNG import solution that will deliver natural gas to Southcentral Alaska using proven, industry-standard technology. It will be located approximately two miles offshore of the West Foreland in Cook Inlet and will maximize the use of existing infrastructure.

At its core, the Project will utilize a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU), a specialized marine vessel that receives liquefied natural gas (LNG) from carriers, converts it back into natural gas, and delivers it into the existing pipeline system. Today, roughly 50 FSRUs are in operation across the globe, demonstrating a long and dependable record of

safe performance. The FSRU will be moored adjacent to the existing Osprey Platform located 2 miles offshore near West Foreland. The Osprey platform will be repurposed to facilitate the safe transfer of gas to shore through existing subsea and onshore pipelines and a short segment of replacement pipeline at the custody transfer meter.

This design allows the Project to deliver between approximately 20 and 30 billion cubic feet of natural gas per year, with the flexibility to increase supply if future demand requires. LNG deliveries will occur approximately every 30 to 45 days throughout the year, ensuring a consistent and reliable source of fuel.

Addressing Energy Needs and Ensuring Reliability

The primary purpose of the Cook Inlet LNG Project is to ensure continuity of energy supply for Southcentral Alaska. Without timely action, declining local gas production could result in supply shortages that affect electricity generation and heating—particularly during the region's coldest winter months.

The Project is designed to serve as a practical "bridge solution," providing dependable access to natural gas while longer-term energy solutions, such as a pipeline from the North Slope, continue to be evaluated and developed. In addition, the Project offers operational flexibility that is especially valuable in Alaska's environment. It can respond to seasonal demand fluctuations, support peak energy needs, and provide backup supply during unexpected disruptions. This project will not compete with the proposed Alaska Gasline nor any other Cook Inlet gas efforts. These capabilities are critical for utilities and communities that rely on uninterrupted service.

Supporting Cost Stability

In addition to improving reliability, the Project is expected to support cost stability for consumers. By accessing competitive global LNG markets, the Project can help mitigate the price volatility associated with declining local supply. Its use of existing infrastructure and offshore facilities also avoids the need for large-scale, permanent onshore construction, which can significantly increase project costs.

The result is a cost-effective solution that can be implemented more quickly and at lower capital cost than many alternatives, while still maintaining the flexibility to adapt to future energy needs.

COOK INLET LNG

Minimizing Environmental Impact

A key priority in the design of the Cook Inlet LNG Project is minimizing environmental impact. The Project has been deliberately configured to reuse and repurpose existing infrastructure, including the Osprey Platform and established pipeline systems that have been operating safely in Cook Inlet for decades.

Importantly, the Project avoids the need for major new onshore construction. No dredging is required, and the only significant new infrastructure consists of a subsea mooring system used to safely anchor the FSRU. The offshore location reduces land-use impacts and provides a seamless pathway for energy delivery through existing infrastructure.

The regasification process itself uses a closed-loop system that does not use seawater from Cook Inlet to vaporize the LNG, further reducing potential environmental effects. All components of the Project rely on proven technologies that have been successfully deployed in challenging marine environments around the world.

Commitment to Public Engagement

We recognize that projects of this nature are of strong interest to local communities, stakeholders, and regulatory agencies. We are committed to maintaining an open, transparent, and inclusive process as the Project advances.

As part of our Public Participation Program, we will:

- Provide clear and accessible information about the Project and its potential impacts through the project website at *www.cookinletlng.com*
- Offer opportunities for public input and feedback at Project Open House meetings.
- Respond to questions and concerns in a timely and respectful manner.

Your input is an important part of this process, and we encourage you to stay engaged as the Project moves forward through design, permitting, and review.

Conclusion

The Cook Inlet LNG Project represents a practical, timely, and environmentally responsible approach to addressing Southcentral Alaska's impending natural gas supply challenge. By maximizing the use of existing infrastructure, deploying proven technology, and prioritizing

both reliability and cost stability, the Project is designed to serve the public interest while minimizing environmental impact.

We look forward to working collaboratively with communities, regulators, and stakeholders throughout this process. Please refer to the Project's website (www.cookinletlng.com) for on-going Project updates and details regarding public Open House informational sessions to be held in the near future.

Sincerely,

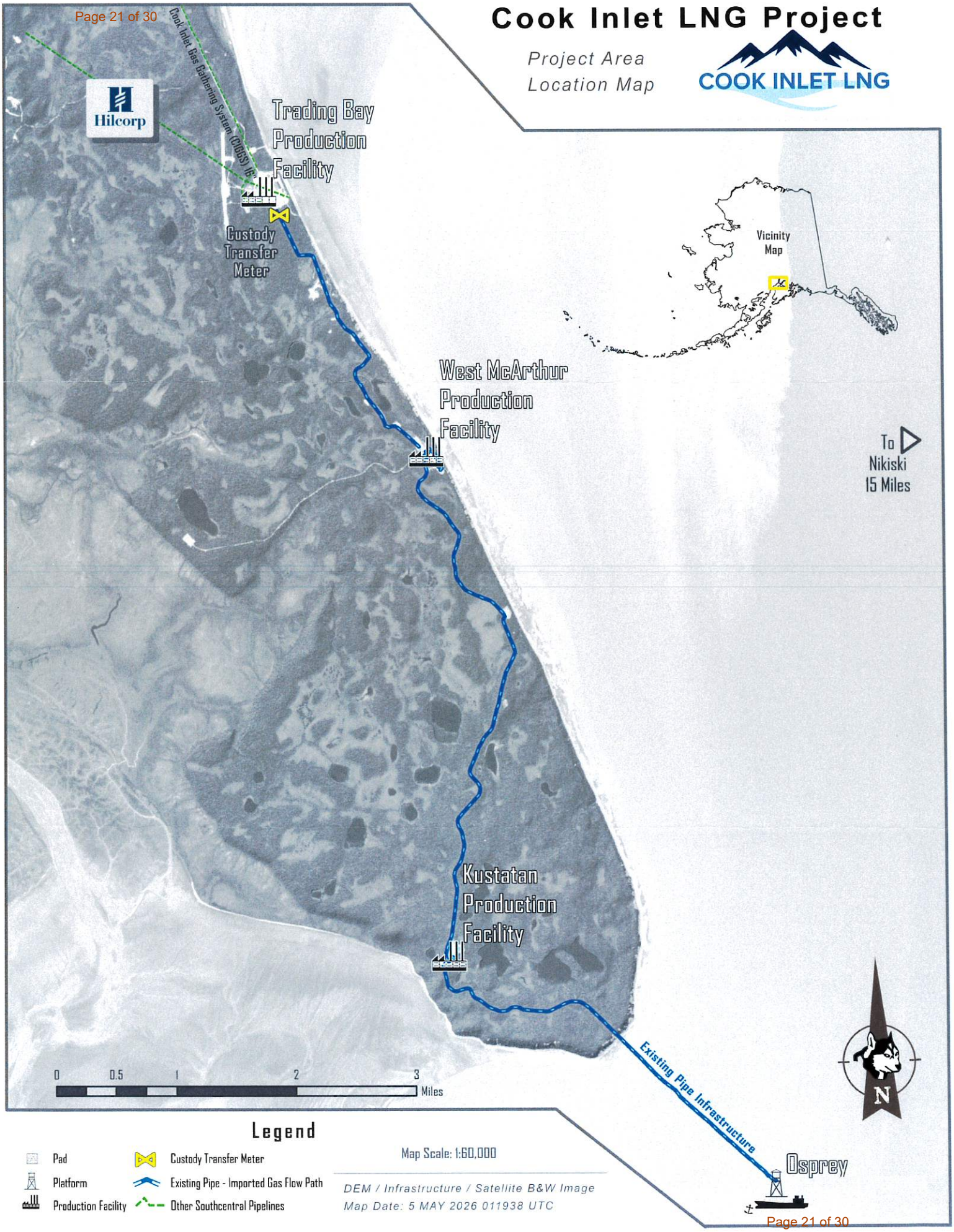
Rob Bryngelson, Project Lead
Cook Inlet LNG Project Team

Robert Gardes, Chairman
Cook Inlet LNG, LLC

Cook Inlet LNG Project

Project Area Location Map

COOK INLET LNG



Page 22 of 30

OPPOSITION TO CONSTRUCTION OF NORTHERN PIKE CONTAINMENT BARRIERS

South Central Unit 1 – Fisheries Management Position Statement

Prior to expenditure of substantial public funds on the construction and installation of northern pike containment barriers on the ingress and egress of lakes and waterways, expanded emergency-order harvest management measures should first be fully implemented, monitored, and scientifically evaluated.

The proposed Summer 2026 emergency management framework already authorizes significant suppression measures, including expanded angler harvest opportunities of up to five (5) lines per person in designated waters, mandatory immediate kill requirements, and enhanced harvest logging and monitoring protocols. These measures provide a substantially lower-cost, less environmentally disruptive, and more adaptive management alternative that should be tested before permanent or semi-permanent barriers are constructed.

Key Concerns Regarding Pike Barriers

- **Habitat Fragmentation:** Physical and electrical barriers interrupt natural aquatic connectivity and may restrict movement of native fish species to spawning, rearing, and feeding habitats.

- **Impact on Native Migratory Species:** Salmonids and other migratory fish can experience reduced passage success, altered migration timing, and long-term population impacts.

- **Ecological Imbalance and Bycatch Mortality:** Pike barriers can create concentrated holding areas where northern pike school and enter feeding frenzies, increasing predation and mortality of non-target fish species trapped near the structures.

- **Scientific Uncertainty:** Barriers are not 100 percent effective. Improper design, flooding events, debris accumulation, or seasonal water fluctuations may allow pike passage while still restricting native fish movement.

- **High Public Cost:** Barrier projects require extensive engineering, environmental permitting, specialized construction, debris management, monitoring, maintenance, and ongoing operational expenditures that can total hundreds of thousands of dollars or more.

- **Long-Term Maintenance Obligations:** Continuous inspection, debris clearing, fish monitoring, and repair obligations create recurring operational liabilities for agencies and taxpayers.

- **Regulatory and Permitting Complexity:** In-water structures frequently require complex environmental review, permitting, and interagency coordination processes, increasing project delays and cost exposure.

Recommended Management Approach

A phased adaptive-management approach should be implemented before construction of pike barriers is authorized. This approach should prioritize expanded angler suppression measures under emergency order authority, including increased line allowances, mandatory harvest retention requirements, targeted removal efforts, and enhanced data collection on harvest success and population reduction. Scientific evaluation of these measures should occur over multiple seasons before consideration of expensive infrastructure-based containment systems.

Public agencies should avoid committing substantial public resources to barrier systems until lower-cost and less ecologically disruptive management alternatives have been thoroughly tested and independently evaluated for effectiveness. A science-based fisheries management program must balance northern pike suppression goals with protection of native fish migration, habitat connectivity, and long-term ecosystem health.

Prepared for policy and fisheries management discussion – 2026

BY EMERGENCY ORDER
NORTHERN PIKE — SOUTH CENTRAL UNIT 1
PROPOSED NORTHERN PIKE MANAGEMENT REGULATION — SUMMER 2026
Effective May 30, 2026 through October 30, 2026

1. In designated waters, there shall be no bag or possession limit for northern pike. All northern pike harvested must be immediately killed. Live release of northern pike is prohibited.

2. Northern pike may be taken from sunrise to sunset using sport fishing gear, baited lines, or artificial lures. Up to five (5) lines per angler are permitted, provided all lines are continuously monitored in person at all times.

3. All harvested northern pike shall be photographed and logged by the angler, including date, location, and estimated size or weight.

4. Waters open under this regulation include Big Lake, Long Lake, Finger Lake, and additional Unit 1 waters as authorized by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

5. Unless specifically authorized under this regulation, all other waters remain under a two-line limit per angler.

6. All limits and line allowances apply per individual angler from Monday through Sunday and are not transferable between persons.

7. Northern pike not retained for personal use may be lawfully disposed of, including return of dead fish to the water where permitted by law.

8. Northern pike may be taken by spear, bow and arrow, sport fishing gear, or ice fishing gear where otherwise authorized by state regulation.

9. During the summer season under this emergency order, anglers using up to five (5) lines for northern pike must maintain close in-person attendance of all gear at all times and immediately release all non-pike species unharmed.

10. Additional Unit 1 waters potentially eligible for expanded northern pike suppression management include Alexander Creek and Lake, Amber Lake, Fish Creek systems, Kroto Lakes, Ladyslipper Lake, Lockwood Lake, Lower and Upper Vern Lakes, Neil Lake, Parker Lake, Scotty Lake, Sucker Lake, Trail Lake, Trapper Lake, Whitsol Lake, and Witsoe Creek.

Prepared for discussion and emergency regulatory consideration – 2026

Nelchina Caribou Herd: Status and Recovery Update

May 2026

The Situation

The Nelchina Caribou Herd (NCH) is emerging from its most severe decline in the modern management era, but recovery is far from complete. From a peak summer minimum count of more than 53,000 animals in 2019, the herd collapsed to fewer than 10,000 by summer 2023. All state and federal hunts have been closed since regulatory year 2023. The most recent fall estimate, from October 2025, puts the herd at approximately 13,900 caribou. That increase is driven primarily by improved calf survival rather than adult population recovery. The adult population itself has changed very little since the low point. No state hunt opportunity is offered for the 2026/27 season, though ADF&G is hoping to offer limited bull-only opportunity in regulatory year 2027.

How the Herd Declined

The collapse resulted from multiple compounding stressors rather than any single cause.

Warning signs appeared as early as 2014, when four-month-old calf weights began a steady decline and birth rates among cows started sliding. The herd had remained above its management objective of 35,000 to 40,000 for most of the nine years following 2010, peaking at a summer minimum count above 53,000 in 2019. The core spring and summer range covers approximately 2,500 square miles, meaning roughly 20 caribou per square mile on that range every summer for nearly a decade — a sustained pressure on forage that likely left animals entering winter in suboptimal body condition.

Managers worked to reduce the herd back to objective through increased harvest in 2019 and 2020. By fall 2021 the herd had been brought back within the management objective range. Then two catastrophic winters struck back to back.

The winter of 2021-22 saw the herd migrate nearly to Dawson, Yukon. Deep snow blanketed the entire wintering range and adult cow survival fell below 70%. Calf survival from October 2021 through June 2022 was only 13%. The following winter was worse, with nearly 40% of remaining adult cows lost and calf survival from October 2022 through June 2023 falling to only

7%. The summer 2023 count confirmed fewer than 10,000 caribou remained, with fewer than 1,000 of those being calves. The fall 2023 composition survey recorded only 3 calves per 100 cows, the lowest ever documented for this herd.

Current Condition and Recent Trends

The picture since 2023 has improved meaningfully across multiple indicators.

The herd is staying closer to home. In winter 2025-26, roughly two thirds of the herd wintered in GMU 13A and one third in GMU 11, in areas that have not been used much for wintering range in the past 20 or more years. Fresh wintering grounds mean forage resources are likely more available, and shorter migrations require less energy expenditure. Both factors are considered promising for recovery.

Calving is occurring earlier and calves are larger. Four-month-old calf weights and growth metrics in 2024 and 2025 were the heaviest and largest recorded since 2014 and 2015 respectively. Calf survival from birth through end of September 2025 was 72%. The summer 2025 calf-to-cow ratio of 59 calves per 100 cows is one of only two occurrences of that figure in the herd's recorded history, and the fall 2025 ratio of 55 calves per 100 cows is similarly exceptional.

The bull-to-cow ratio is improving, sitting at 28 bulls per 100 cows in fall 2025, approaching the management threshold of 40 at which limited bull-only hunting could be considered.

Adult survival has improved significantly over the past two winters compared to the catastrophic losses of 2021-23, and overwinter survival for the current 2025-26 winter is tracking as promising, with ADF&G completing a final roundup flight to confirm numbers.

Despite these positive signs, important structural challenges remain. Three consecutive year-classes of calves born in 2021, 2022, and 2023 are severely underrepresented in the population. These cohorts represent future breeding females and their absence will suppress herd productivity for years to come. ADF&G has also flagged that the summer 2026 calf-to-cow ratio will likely appear lower than 2025, not because of any setback but because the strong 2024 and 2025 calf cohorts are now entering the population as young cows not yet old enough to reproduce, while the missing 2021-2023 cohorts left a gap that has not yet been filled.

Predator Management and Calf Mortality Research

ADF&G has conducted intensive calf mortality research on the calving grounds in 2024 and 2025, with the effort continuing in spring 2026. In 2025, the full-scale effort involved a helicopter

on standby throughout the calving season, daily monitoring of 62 collared newborn calves, and DNA collection from carcass wounds, bones, hooves, and collars to confirm or correct field predator assignments.

Of 14 calf mortalities in 2025, 13 were confirmed predation events. The predation breakdown was 39% eagles, 38% brown bears, 15% wolverine, and 8% unknown predator. Wolves were not assigned to any 2025 predation events after DNA analysis, which corrected one initial wolf designation to wolverine. DNA also corrected a wolverine designation to brown bear, demonstrating the value of genetic confirmation over field assessment alone.

The 2024 pilot project showed a somewhat different pattern, with more wolves and fewer bears, likely because that effort focused on early-born calves. The full 2025 dataset with DNA collection is considered more reliable.

The significant and unexpected role of eagles, particularly bald eagles not typically known as predators of terrestrial mammals, is one of the more striking findings of this research. ADF&G is bringing eagle specialists to the calving grounds in spring 2026 to better understand their role. Bald eagles are federally protected and cannot be managed as a predator control target, which is an important consideration when evaluating what predator management tools are actually available.

Wolf control has been active in Unit 13 as part of the intensive management program for moose, with portions of Unit 13 remaining under wolf control in regulatory year 2025. However, the NCH has been wintering largely in GMU 11 and 13A on areas that include federal lands not open to wolf control, which limits the program's reach. The Board of Game increased the brown bear bag limit in Unit 13 to two bears per regulatory year at its January 2025 meeting. The March 2026 Board of Game meeting was scheduled to discuss the feasibility of an Intensive Management designation specifically for the NCH.

Given that brown bears accounted for 38% of documented 2025 predation events and wolves were not confirmed in any 2025 predation events after DNA analysis, the current data suggests brown bear management on the calving grounds deserves particular attention in any predator management discussion. That said, ADF&G is repeating the full DNA collection effort again in spring 2026, and those results will further refine the picture before firm management conclusions are drawn.

Hunting Outlook

ADF&G has outlined a clear framework for how hunting opportunity will return. State and federal hunts will remain closed until the bull-to-cow ratio reaches 40 per 100 cows. When limited opportunity does return it will be structured as bull-only harvest under a Tier 2 hunt. As harvestable surplus grows above 600 animals, Tier I permits and the Community Subsistence Hunt would return. Draw hunts would follow at higher surplus levels. ADF&G is cautiously

optimistic that limited bull-only opportunity could be available as soon as regulatory year 2027 if current trends continue.

Key Considerations Going Forward

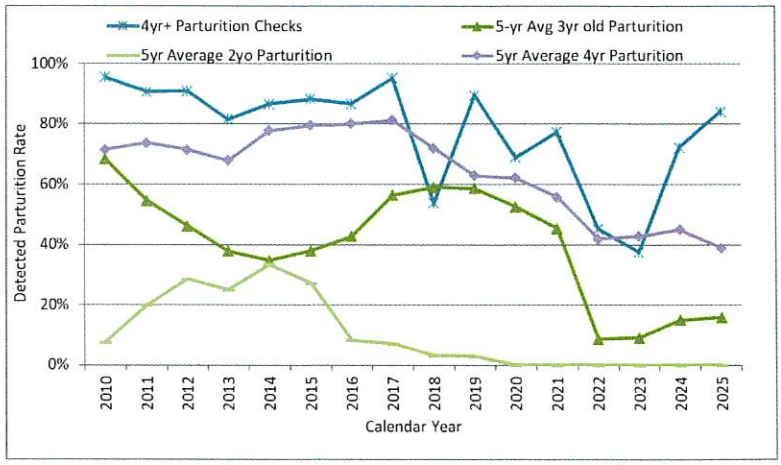
Several factors will shape recovery over the coming years. Cow survival remains the foundation, as cows must stay fully protected from harvest throughout the recovery period. The missing 2021-2023 year-classes mean that as older cows age out of the breeding population over the next several years, there will be a gap in replacement breeders that no near-term management action can fully address. The strong 2024 and 2025 calf cohorts are the first meaningful step toward filling that gap, making their overwinter survival disproportionately important.

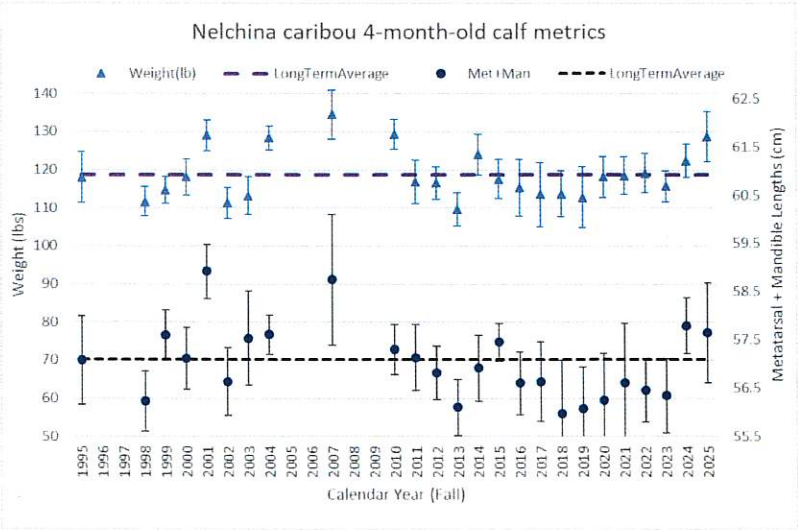
The ongoing calf mortality research, including the 2026 eagle study and continued DNA analysis, is generating data that did not previously exist for this herd. The findings to date, particularly the dominant role of eagles and brown bears over wolves in 2025 predation events, underscore the value of letting that research mature before drawing firm conclusions about where management resources should be concentrated.

ADF&G has also begun nutritional and body condition research on adult cows, tracking individuals from fall through spring and into the following calving season. This work, combined with continued calf survival monitoring, will provide an increasingly complete picture of what is driving recovery and where its remaining vulnerabilities lie.

Nelchina Cariou Herd Update

- No state hunt opportunity is offered for 2026/27 season; hoping to offer limited bull-only opportunity in RY27
- Checkout the Nelchina update presentation on the ADF&G YouTube channel.
- Spring 2025:
  - High parturition rates for cows 4years and older and 72% calf survival from birth through the end of September
- Summer 2025:
  - minimum count of 13,937 caribou; Rivest estimate 14,472 (+/- 1,358)
  - Composition survey
    - 59 calves per 100 cows
    - 32 bulls per 100 cows
- October 2025:
  - Fall composition survey
    - 55 calves per 100 cows
    - 28 bulls per 100 cows
  - Fall estimates: 13,397 based on minimum, 13,911 based off Rivest est.
  - Deployed 15 VHF collars on female calves, plus we still had 45 neonate collars on air to track overwinter survival.
    - 2024 and 2025 had the heaviest calves since 2014 and largest growth metrics since 2015: really good signs for recruitment potential as well as hard health compared to the past decade.
  - Captured 32 adult cows to begin a research project tracking body condition from fall to spring, as well as reproductive success
- Winter 2025/26 (so far)
  - Herd split up but stayed close to home; adult and calf survival so far has been promising; working on the final roundup flight to finalize overwinter survival
    - Roughly 2/3 of the herd wintered in 13A (spread out from Gunsight to the big bend of the Su to Crosswind)
    - Roughly 1/3 of the herd wintered in GMU11 (spread out from Slana to Copper Lake, around to the west from there and down to the Klawasi)
    - These areas have not been used much for wintering range in the past 20+ years, so winter resources may be more available, and a shorter migration takes less energy, which are both promising for herd recovery
  - March 2026: recaptured adult cows to assess body condition and pregnancy as a continuation of the research project; will track calf recruitment for these individuals to the fall and repeat body condition assessments
- Expectations for Spring/Summer 2026:
  - As of May 14th it looks like calving may start later than it did in 2025; we will be weighting and collaring newborn calves again this season to track survival
    - Snow depth this winter was average (less than last winter in most places on the wintering range), but snow melt is looking to be later this year than last year in the high country where the caribou typically calve.
  - High recruitment of young cows into the population from the 2024 and 2025 cohorts will likely reduce the summer calf:cow ratio in 2026, as those young cows will not be old enough to have calves yet (and the 2021-2023 cohorts had very poor recruitment)





Page 30 of 30