

Eskimo Walrus Commission

"To protect the pacific walrus population."

A Business Plan for Sustainability 2016-2020

I contend that we must come together as the Alaska Native community and set a long-term goal of getting our inherent right to a subsistence lifestyle reinstated unequivocally. This will involve looking at this matter as a matter of the heart and committing to taking however long it will take to achieve this goal, even if it takes beyond our lifetime to get there.

Matthew Iya, 1993, In Memoriam
EWC Founder

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I. Executive Summary

The federal Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) acknowledges the importance of having “full and equal participation by Alaska Natives in decisions affecting the management of marine mammals taken for subsistence purposes” – a voice in the management of the species Alaska Native hunters have relied on since time immemorial. The Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC) is a formal voice for walrus hunters in the management of the Pacific walrus population. Founded by Kawerak, Inc. in 1978, the EWC membership includes walrus hunting communities along Alaska’s coast from Barrow to Bristol Bay. Since its creation, the EWC has partnered with various government agencies, researchers, and marine mammal commissions to ensure that the Pacific walrus population remains healthy and available to Alaska Native subsistence users.

The EWC currently represents and advocates on behalf of Alaska Native people who live in 19 coastal walrus hunting communities and is the statewide entity that works specifically on co-management issues with the U.S. federal government with the purpose, “to protect the Pacific walrus population.” A 1994 amendment to the MMPA allowed for the development of a cooperative agreement between the EWC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which formalized the role of the EWC in the management process, and significantly altered the financial situation of the EWC with the introduction of federal funding. The EWC was then able to undertake Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) research on the use of walrus by Alaska Native people and traditional methods of conservation to help inform the management process.

The EWC was also able to have a stronger presence in its member communities through annual hunter meetings, which resulted in better communication of information between hunters and the management bodies. In addition, the EWC translated legal provisions regarding walrus hunting into the local Native languages. However, after the EWC had become dependent on federal funding, the cooperative agreement funds were significantly reduced, decreasing the capacity of the EWC to operate at an effective level and meet its mission. Other significant challenges that the EWC has faced include an ongoing imbalance of power between the USFWS and the EWC in the co-management relationship. Today, EWC aims to work cooperatively with the USFWS through the collection of walrus harvest data and biological samples; support of the self-regulation efforts of walrus hunting communities; and annual commission member meetings. Without the capacity and authority of the USFWS, the EWC struggles to be an equal and effective partner.

The current EWC strategic plan established a core vision for 2025 to:

- Strive for self-management of the Pacific walrus population
- Secure long-term funding to stabilize the commission
- Educate those who don’t know us about our cultures and our commitment to preserve the walrus
- Document and preserve traditional hunting and preparation of walrus as an educational method for the younger generation

Two significant priorities to accomplish in FY 2015-2016 include identifying sustainable funding and strengthening the capacity and role of the commission as a catalyst for positive

change. The development of this Business Plan for Sustainability is directly tied with outcomes identified for both of those priorities.

II. The Organization and its Environment

The Eskimo Walrus Commission formed in 1978 as a consortium of Native hunters concerned about protecting and sustaining the cultural access and use of the Pacific walrus. The founding and current commissioners are the descendants of countless generations of coastal Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, and Central Yup'ik, and Aleut people who have relied on the harvest of walrus for continued existence. Walrus provides sustenance (needed protein and nourishment) to thrive and adapt in the northern environment. It also provides material (bone, ivory, and hide) that has been used to create hunting equipment, shelter, clothing, ceremonial material, land and water transportation, and art. Today, the EWC is recognized at the tribal, state, federal, and international levels as the primary entity that advocates on behalf of walrus hunters and their communities as well as addressing issues that directly relate to or impact the health and population of the Pacific walrus.

The EWC has members in 19 communities in Alaska, highlighted in Figure 1 below.

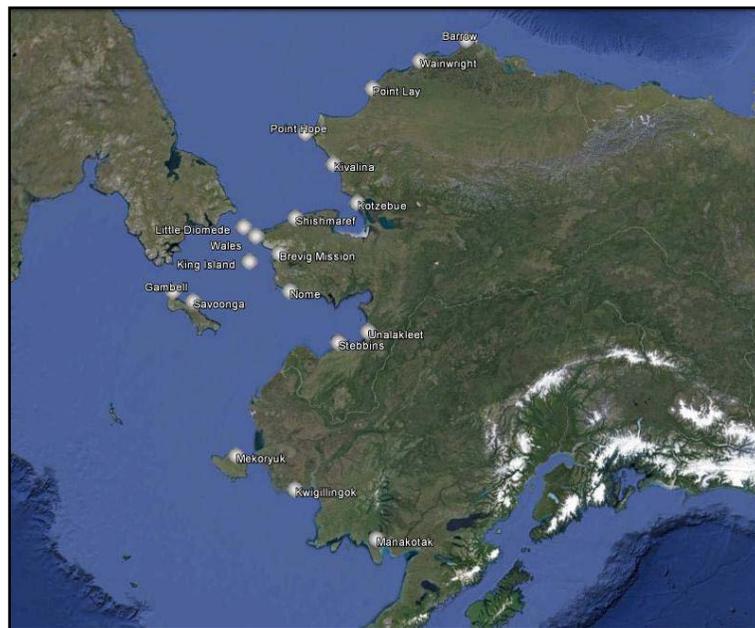


Figure 1. Map showing the location of 2015 EWC member communities.

The EWC operates under the umbrella of Kawerak, Inc. which provides in-kind services (accounting, payroll, office space, supplies, and other operational and financial support) to the commission. After the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971, Bering Straits Native Association (formed in 1967), organized Kawerak as the regional 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization in the Bering Strait region. Kawerak seeks to improve the region's social, economic, educational, cultural, and political conditions and is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the president (or designee) of the IRA or traditional councils within the region, elder representation, and a representative from the regional health care provider Norton Sound Health Corporation. Kawerak represents 20 member tribes, has about 200 employees, and

provides services to approximately 7,000 tribal members who live in the region. In efforts to meet its vision, “Building on the inherent strength of our cultural values, we shall assist our tribes and residents to create a positive future,” Kawerak offers educational, social, and infrastructure development, natural and cultural resource preservation and employment programs and services.

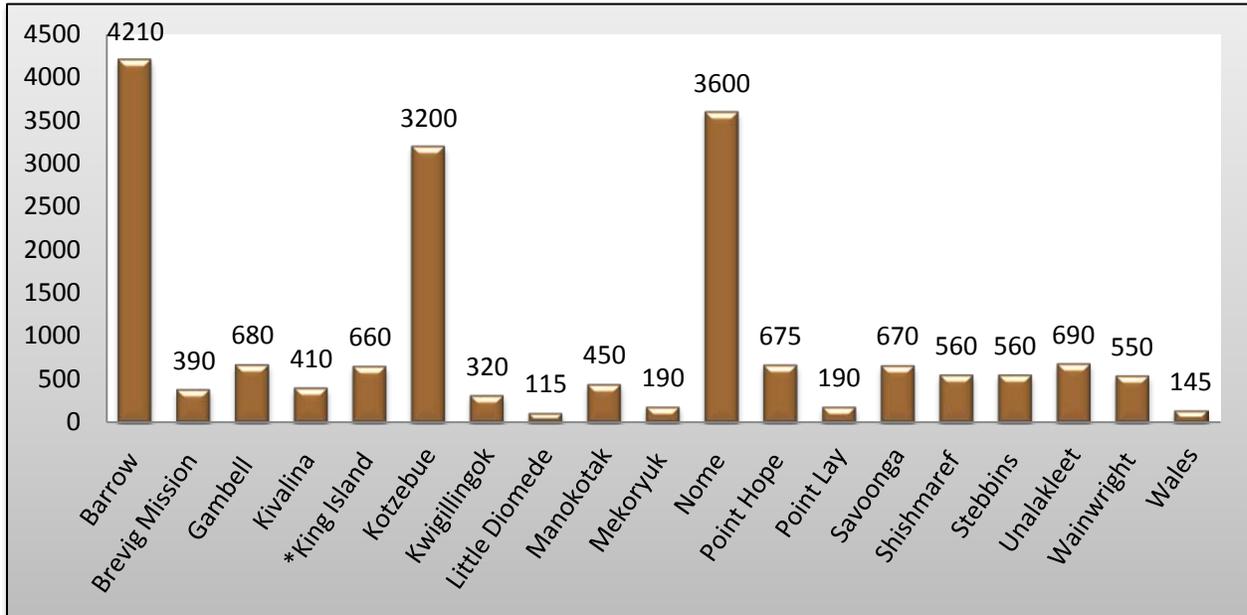


Figure 2. 2010 population in EWC member communities.

Reference: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/dcra/DCRAExternal/community>

*** King Island Native Community number is the 2015 number of tribally enrolled citizens**

The EWC is a program within the Natural Resource Division of Kawerak and operates in accordance with a cooperative agreement developed in 1997 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to encourage subsistence hunters' participation in conserving and managing walrus stocks in the coastal communities. In 1998, a Memorandum of Understanding between the EWC, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), and USFWS was signed further allowing the joint management of the Pacific walrus with the development of the Pacific Walrus Conservation Fund, which is funded primarily from the sale of raw ivory by the EWC during statewide conferences and events.

The EWC is the primary liaison between member communities in Alaska and the USFWS. Although progress has been made over the years with USFWS as a co-management partner, when and how federal agencies are fully required to engage and consult remains undefined. A disconnection and a lack of trust exist between the EWC's walrus hunters and the USFWS which is indicative of the shortcomings of federal agencies in fulfilling their co-management responsibilities. The EWC oversees several initiatives in order to be actively engaged as an equal partner to federal entities in the conservation and management of the Pacific walrus. The primary initiatives and projects are as follows:

- Conduct annual meetings with EWC commissioners.

- Monitor subsistence walrus hunts on Round Island with Bristol Bay Native Association's Qayassiq Walrus Commission.
- Collect detailed walrus harvest data and biological samples in five member communities.
- Record general walrus harvest data through the federally mandated marking, tagging, and reporting program.
- Work through a cooperative agreement between U.S. and Russian governments with all Chukotkan Native coastal communities in the harvest, conservation and sound management of the Pacific walrus.
- Gather culture-based traditional knowledge.
- Work with communities to become more proactive in 'co-management' of the walrus population.

Summary of the EWC Strategic Plan – Vision for a Sustainable Future

The EWC operates in accordance with a strategic plan with a solid Core Purpose and strongly held Core Values which provide the foundation for a Core Vision for 2025 and Strategic Priorities that will help EWC achieve that vision for 2025. The Strategic Plan is summarized below:

Core Purpose

To protect the Pacific walrus population

Core Values

Proactive: Foreseeing changes and taking needed actions

Adaptable: The willingness and ability to adjust to changing environment and conditions

Ethical: Being honest and acting in the best interest of our people

Traditional Knowledge: Honoring the wisdom and ways that enable us to survive

Core Vision for 2025

In 2025, we will continue providing walrus for our families. We will:

- Strive for self-management of the Pacific Walrus population
- Secure long-term funding to stabilize the commission
- Educate those who don't know us about our cultures and our commitment to preserve the walrus
- Document and preserve traditional hunting and preparation of walrus as an educational method for the younger generation

Strategic Priorities

Within the EWC Strategic Plan seven strategic initiatives were identified by commissioners – the purpose of these priorities is to provide guidance in how to meet the Core Vision for 2025:

1. To secure long-term funding for the EWC
2. Undertake commission role strengthening
3. Provide better advocacy support to hunters
4. Improve co-management
5. Improve research coordination

6. Improve coordination with other commissions
7. Conduct walrus population assessments.

Each strategic initiative includes specific goals and a timeframe for completion. The strategic initiatives identified with the highest importance are co-management, coordination with other commissions, advocacy support to hunters, commission role strengthening, and long-term funding for the EWC. First, by helping to strengthen more member communities to enact successful tribal marine mammal ordinances and increase local management control, the Alaska Native voice in the co-management process and relationship can be improved. The same effect can be expected through improved coordination with other commissions. The last three strategic initiatives are related to the efforts to increase the capacity of the EWC to be effective.

Operating Plan (FY 2015 & 2016)

The executive leadership of EWC has developed a number of operating priorities for 2015 and 2016, which include:

- Develop active community outreach
- Long-term sustainable funding
- Commission role strengthening
- Providing advocacy support to hunters
- Co-management
- Research coordination
- Coordination with other commissions
- Walrus population assessment

The Community Need to Support EWC

The work of EWC is grounded in five clearly identifiable community needs:

Community Need One: As a people, we have relied on this population since time began – walrus is not just part of our diet, it is part of our cultural identity and language.

Community Need Two: Walrus has always been part of our resilience as a people. When the walrus are not around it affects the health of the community because when the walrus are healthy we are healthy as a people – this is community resilience.

Community Need Three: When we as a people are not involved in the management of the walrus, bad things happen – quotas are imposed, and more enforcement activity occurs.

Community Need Four: Without a good harvest management plan, the walrus population will be endangered. We have been managers of our resources for centuries, and we haven't depleted anything yet.

Community Need Five: Without the EWC we don't have a voice; the commission allows for an organized voice that puts us at the table so we are not on the table. Through the process, wildlife managers get what they need and hunters get what they need.

III. EWC Programs and Services – Social Return on Investment

To fully address the five needs highlighted in the above section, the Eskimo Walrus Commission engages with its partners who include hunters and commissioners, member communities, Alaska Native entities, and governing institutions in a number of related activities. These activities take the form of its four core program areas:

- 1) Research
- 2) Education
- 3) Connecting and Convening
- 4) Advocacy

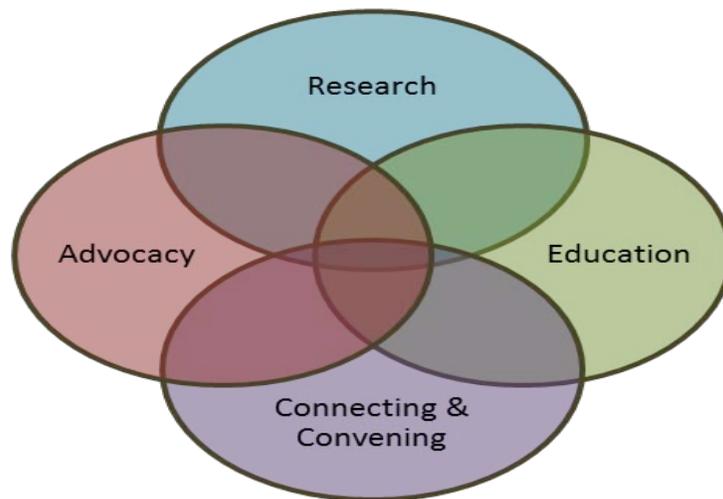


Figure 3. Eskimo Walrus Commission Core Program Areas.

At the intersection of the four core areas is where EWC upholds its purpose in protecting the Pacific walrus population. Each of the four core program areas is described briefly below.

Research. The EWC works to ensure that the observation and expertise of walrus hunters are an equal and active part of the scientific research process from data collection to the publication of findings. For many years, hunters were simply consumers of imposed scientific research with limited (if any) influence or input in determining topics of study, approach or methodology used, or the basis of findings and publication. Limited participation and contribution to scientific research involving the Pacific walrus has resulted in limited legitimacy with research processes and findings for hunters and their communities. Recent scientific research that pertains to the Pacific walrus focuses on global complex challenges directly related to the impacts of climate change and increased ocean acidification. These challenges are unlike any people have faced in human memory and require new and emergent solutions. Walrus hunters need to be a part of this process. They have a tremendous amount to contribute to scientific inquiry because of their experience, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and ‘in situ’ observations. The EWC is committed to ensuring that they are involved and their participation is recognized as a relevant and integral part of the process.

The people of the Bering Sea and Bering Strait region are a part of the ecosystem that is being studied. We should be the first ones to be aware of the results. It is important to be involved, be able to ask questions, and to understand more of what is happening in our waters – especially if something is changing.

*Perry Pungowiyi (Yupik), 2006, Savoonga, Alaska
Report on US Coast Guard Ice-breaker activities*

TEK is different from science. It is a system of research in terms of information gathering and experiment. TEK involves the human experience and is, consequently, local in nature and a function of society. TEK is based on the traditions of learning the skills and knowledge necessary to live successfully where one is reliant entirely on the natural resources locally available. It is because it is experiential and personal that all hunters and others living a subsistence lifestyle are “engaged in a lifelong personal search for ecological understanding.” Significant to understanding why this is a continual process of study is the concept that things change. Unlike scientific laws that are fixed, traditional knowledge presumes that change is inevitable and therefore adaptability is critical. EWC recognizes the legitimacy and need for both scientific and TEK research.

Recently EWC launched a project to build local capacity in research efforts by training recommending to federal agencies to hire local TEK Advisors in member communities with the intent to:

- 1) Involve more hunters and communities in the monitoring and reporting process by developing appropriate reporting protocols and community based conservation efforts (i.e. minimize disturbances at non-traditional or new walrus haulouts).
- 2) Research other mortality to walrus population, including disturbances from (a) development activities including oil/gas exploration or fishing industries, and (b) ship and aircraft transportation disturbances.

The ice pack [at Gambell] is different thus far compared to that of the past. It is generally agreed that it has a poorer quality, probably from mostly fluctuating temperatures; storms; and not fully developing, as it has before, into thicker ice. It is in all probability prone to rapid melting with the coming of warmer spring climates. The Siberian lead [between St. Lawrence Island and Siberia] has been open as well with the ice pack drifting beyond the horizon at least a couple of times. The shorefast ice was broken off at the Qitelnguk, Devleghaq, and Aqeftapak Bays [along the north shore, around Cape Sivuqaq] around the first of the month of March and remains open to date.

*Paul Apangalook (Yupik), 2011, Gambell, Alaska
Local Observer, Sea Ice Summary from Sivuqaq/Gambell*

Education. The EWC is actively involved in the documentation and sharing of cultural information as it pertains to the Pacific walrus with the goal of enhancing the wellbeing of Pacific walrus as a natural and cultural resource. The dependence of the EWC communities on the subsistence harvest of Pacific walrus is well documented and places them in a unique situation. The interweaving of cultural values, lifestyle, and economy creates a dynamic, highly influential process of change that affects the walrus and human population equally. Put simply, as the walrus go, so go the indigenous communities among them. Just as significantly, as those same people go, so go the Pacific walrus. This is the interconnectedness that culture is based upon, which is something that is undoubtedly changing.

The EWC works to educate hunters and member communities, partners, scientists, and the general public by documenting and sharing culturally relevant information related to walrus. Additionally, the EWC communicates information to hunters and their communities on issues that directly impact the health of and access to Pacific walrus from the state, federal and international levels. In this regard, the EWC is an important and necessary educational and informational conduit. At a 2003 Biomonitoring Workshop in Nome, Alaska, the EWC stated a need for “passing along knowledge across generations’ and to ‘preserve and share traditional knowledge of walrus subsistence to maintain strong culture in communities.’ Since then, some of the educational initiatives and projects lead by EWC include:

- A Walrus Dictionary which will include names for different types of walrus, age, sex, groups and terms or phrases associated with walrus to be translated into Russian, Chukchi, Yupik, and English (in progress).
- Maintaining a database received from commission members with information on environmental observations and TEK (last updated in 2014).
- Communication with walrus hunters and managers in Chukotka on joint bilateral walrus issues and concerns (annually).
- *Neqniighvigput (Where We Get Our Food From)*—a documentary video featuring ‘traditional and acceptable’ walrus hunting methods and practices.
- Translation of Walrus Harvest Guidelines from English into St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Iñupiaq, and Central Yup’ik (2005).
- *Pacific Walrus: Conserving Our Culture Through Traditional Management*—a publication featuring first person interviews of 27 Pacific walrus hunters (2003).

Connecting and Convening. The EWC works to bring hunters, communities, state regulators and federal agencies together, in the following ways:

- Connecting communities with federal and state regulators
- Bringing the voices of many stakeholders who together are interested in protecting the walrus
- Working in co-management partnerships with other marine mammal commissions
- Working with international agreements, such as Chukotkan Native coastal communities in the harvest, for conservation and sound management of the Pacific Walrus
- Work with communities to become more proactive in “co-management” of the walrus population

- Because walrus hunters have shared resources, and the current environment in Russia makes it difficult for them to have a voice, the EWC can be a voice for “dialogue across the Bering Strait”

Advocacy – for Hunters and the Walrus. Protecting the Pacific walrus from the future impacts of climate change and ocean acidification is a top priority for the EWC. In December 2014, the Commission issued a resolution urging the U.S. government and State of Alaska to reduce carbon dioxide emissions; invest in ocean acidification research to better anticipate and mitigate its impact on marine ecosystems, including people; and invest in renewable energy. These actions appeal to the governments’ responsibilities to protect the well-being of citizens, fulfill trust responsibilities to Native American tribes, and to protect Alaska Native subsistence needs. These management actions also take an ecosystem approach that focuses on integrated and dynamic environment and human interactions at multiple scales. This includes strategies that are preventative in nature, focusing on understanding and addressing system threats, rather than only reacting to single species concerns.

- The voice of the walrus hunters and their communities, tribes, and the walrus
- Advocate for and protect hunters before the law – local, state and federal
- Educate law enforcement about subsistence regulations, the MMPA and Endangered Species Acts
- Support local ordinance and community-based cultural resource management (management process that is not imposed from the outside)
- Work to insure that walrus populations remain healthy; this is a food security issue.
- Ensure harvest numbers are used to the benefit of the hunters and not used against them
- Trusted source of information for policy makers and regulators
- Helps local communities develop relevant ordinances
- Helps inform reports and publications from its stakeholders.
- Ensure hunters have voice in the management of Pacific walrus
- Ensure that policy makers are consulting with the people who are using the resource

EWC provides an essential voice for hunters, artisans, and their families in a rapidly changing world. EWC focuses on a bottom-up stewardship approach to conserving walrus - it is those living with walrus who are most critical for ensuring the long-term health of the walrus population and the food security of indigenous villagers.

*Martin Robards, PhD.
Director, Arctic Beringia Program
Wildlife Conservation Society*

Benefit to the Community – Social Return on Investment

The ultimate good that comes from the work of the EWC is best expressed as social return on investment (SROI) for hunters and their families, walrus, the communities in which hunters live, the EWC organization itself and those who are making an investment in the Eskimo Walrus

Commission. These numerous SROIs are presented here as bullets identifying the “good” that comes from the work of the EWC.

Walrus will always be a part of our lives. It always has been a part of our lives. [...] The food, the way we talk about our stories, how we interact with people, how we respect people for doing this and doing that. That is basically how I think all the subsistence hunting does for us ... it bonds us together and that is why we live here in this community [...] we are subsistence hunters. It will always be strong in the community.

*John Sinnok (Inupiaq) 2003, Shishmaref, Alaska
Pacific Walrus: Conserving Our Culture Through Traditional Management*

- Hunter SROI
 - With a stronger voice through EWC, hunters are validating the critical practice and importance of walrus hunting
 - ~~With~~ EWC hunters are part of the conversation and can be an authentic part of co-management
 - Because the walrus population hunters depend on is healthy, available and sustainable, hunters can continue to harvest and their role in the eco-system is protected
 - EWC is a buffer between the hunter and the federal government that really allows hunters to do what they do best - hunt
 - EWC is a trusted source of information for hunters and a liaison between EWC than FWS. Hunters can go to the commission and receive information and give information
 - Hunters are better informed of the issues facing their ecosystem and their ability to hunt walrus
 - Hunters are safer and involved more in community based harvest management that are more relevant to local hunters
 - Hunters are more successful in harvesting marine mammals such as walrus

- Walrus and Walrus Management SROI
 - Due to the continuation of subsistence practices, the spiritual and cultural relationship with the walrus remains strong
 - Encouraging an ecosystem based approach versus a population based approach to management leads to sustainable and culturally relevant walrus hunting practices
 - A healthy walrus habitat is good for other ~~wild~~ marine mammal populations
 - Management of walrus is much more effective when information/perspective of the hunter is incorporated
 - Allows better management of the species across international lines, versus just U.S.

The importance of EWC's role in facilitating the development of the local Marine Mammal Ordinances and the process for the tribes on St. Lawrence Island to regulate their own marine mammal intake cannot be understated. EWC brought the hunters together and connected them with technical assistance such as myself and Martin Robards (Wildlife Conservation Society). EWC worked with hunters to gather traditional knowledge about how taking of marine mammals should occur and be regulated, and then worked with myself and Martin to put that knowledge into what eventually became the Marine Mammal Ordinances. EWC Director, Vera Metcalf, was uniquely capable of working on both sides of the development, being from St. Lawrence Island herself. Without EWC's involvement, none of this would have come together as successfully as it did.

*John Bioff
General Counsel
Kawerak, Inc.*

- Community and Cultural SROI
 - EWC is a bridge that allows other participants to have a meaningful role in walrus management, specifically Russian involvement
 - Building greater awareness among the many stakeholders of the walrus, and how the population is dealing with climate change etc. With greater awareness there will be greater likelihood for positive change to preserve the population and the subsistence practices
 - Commissioners learning of various management issues to represent their communities effectively
 - Communities are better prepared to deal with the impacts of climate change on the people and the walrus population
 - Communities that have a good relationship with a healthy environment are more resilient – when the environment is healthy our communities are healthy

Everything is changing. One thing affects another. Mother Nature can take care of herself, it's just that we the humans are the culprit of what she's suffering through. She's reacting to what we've been doing to her for a couple hundred years now—all this pollution, destroying the land, and destroying the oceans. We have been told by our ancestors about the future. We've been told that [we] will need to watch out for the four winds. The four winds will be getting stronger in the future and unexpected weather patterns will start to be happening. And now it's happening, right before our eyes. I was practicing how to tell the weather in our Iñupiaq way 30 years ago. But some 20 years ago, everything got chaotic. This weather got chaotic.

*Vince Pikonganna (Inupiaq) 2015, King Island Native Community/Nome, Alaska
On Thin Ice: Subsistence Walrus Hunting and the Adaptation to a Changing
Climate in Alaska
Cultural Survival (www.culturalsurvival.org)*

Organizational SROI – for the EWC

- Through its work, EWC is able to become more sustainable, through building the recognition that the most effective management of ~~wild~~ subsistence populations is culturally important natural resource, holistic, involving indigenous people in a meaningful, authentic and legitimate way
- Investor SROI
 - USFWS management is richer, more robust and more effective because of the work of EWC. For USFWS, EWC allows a more comprehensive approach to their responsibilities by bringing in the many various factors that affect the walrus population, whereas the FWS is fairly focused on the numbers of walrus.
 - Oak Foundation – now an investor around communications infrastructure and practice – the EWC helps the foundation meet its mission to increase awareness of the impact of climate change ~~on~~ in the Arctic, the walrus and the people.
 - For the state of Alaska:
 - Hunters ~~are~~ continue to hunt on their vessels
 - Information on how to improve their research results
 - Making sure hunters are adequately compensated for the services they provide to the State
 - Enhance State’s community development efforts
 - Help with State’s food security disaster declarations

IV. EWC Stakeholders and Market Analysis

At the core of a good market analysis is a solid understanding of the EWC’s many stakeholders and partners – a number of them are listed below, speaking to the breadth of the EWC’s interest and involvement in taking a broad-based approach to protecting the Pacific walrus population:

- Hunters who hunt the walrus
- Families who rely on walrus as a food source and an associated cash economy through the sale of ivory
- Communities that rely on strong and healthy families
- Alaska Native cultures, which are tied physically, emotionally and spiritually to the subsistence way of life
- The State of Alaska
 - In particular the Department of ~~Fish and Game~~ of Community and Regional Affairs
 - Helping State declare a harvest disaster for parts
 - Receiving monetary support for EWC programs
 - Working with State agencies to help communities with development efforts, and in the case of disaster declarations

- Connecting with State legislators and the executive branch in development of sound policy and regulation
- State, national, and international researchers
- The Federal Government – and many of its departments and divisions
 - The Department of Interior
 - The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
 - The US Geological Survey (USGS)
 - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 - The State Department, with regard to international relations
 - The US Coast Guard, whose partial mission is protecting hunters from ship traffic and enforcing international boundaries
- International Partners
 - Russian neighbors, through assisting them in raising concerns about the oil industry and impacts on wildlife and habitat
- Kawerak, Inc., which fully supports the work of the EWC, both in-kind and financially
- The North Slope Borough
 - Specifically the North Slope Borough Wildlife Management Department
- Local Tribal Councils that appoint members to the commission
- Other Relevant Commissions
 - The Alaska Beluga Whale Committee
 - The Ice Seal Committee
 - The Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition
 - The Indigenous People’s Council on Marine Mammals
 - The Alaska Nanuuq Commission
 - The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC)
 - The Qayassiq Walrus Commission (QWC)

Industry and Market Trends

There are a number of significant industry and market trends that the commission is focused on, in order to meet the needs of its many stakeholders, while fulfilling its mission.

- Increased commercial transit through the Arctic
- A growing oil industry presence and impact in the Arctic
- Climate Change, and its impact on the Arctic and walrus, including ocean acidification
- Decreased federal funding through the USFWS
- Commercial trawling vessel impacts on the walrus’ food stock
- The potential federal listing of the walrus as an “endangered species”

Each of the identified industry and market trends above has a role to play in helping the EWC determine the steps necessary to fulfill its mission far into the future, and in particular highlights the important relationship the EWC has had and can continue to have with its federal government partner.

Opportunities for Collaboration and Competition – EWC and the Federal Government

At the core of the success of EWC is collaboration and partnership, in particular between the commission and the federal government. In 2008, the Marine Mammal Commission (www.mmc.gov) performed a review of co-management and presented their findings to the federal government. The Marine Mammal Commission is an independent agency charged with reviewing and making recommendations to Congress and the agencies on domestic and international actions and policies of all federal agencies with respect to marine mammal protection and conservation. The Executive Summary of the 2008 report identified that four ‘pervasive themes’ emerged and include the need for: 1) Trust between parties; 2) Alaska Native organization capacity building; 3) Funding and accountability; 4) Recognition that Alaska Native subsistence cultures face enormous threats from climate change.

A good relationship between the federal government and the EWC is one that is based on mutual trust and respect, with the recognition that the federal government is heavily reliant on the EWC to help meet its charge. Recognizing the importance of this relationship, one of the main assumptions supporting this Business Plan for Sustainability is that the funding relationship between the EWC and the federal government needs to be more predictable, more consistent, and more substantial. Because the collaboration between the EWC and the federal government is cooperative and mutually beneficial, it is important to acknowledge that the federal government does have a role to play with respect to ensuring sustainable revenue comes into the commission, and likewise ensuring that the EWC is not unduly subsidizing the work it does for the federal government. A preferred collaborative relationship is one that is equitable and fair, with the federal government covering the true costs of “doing business” for the federal agencies.

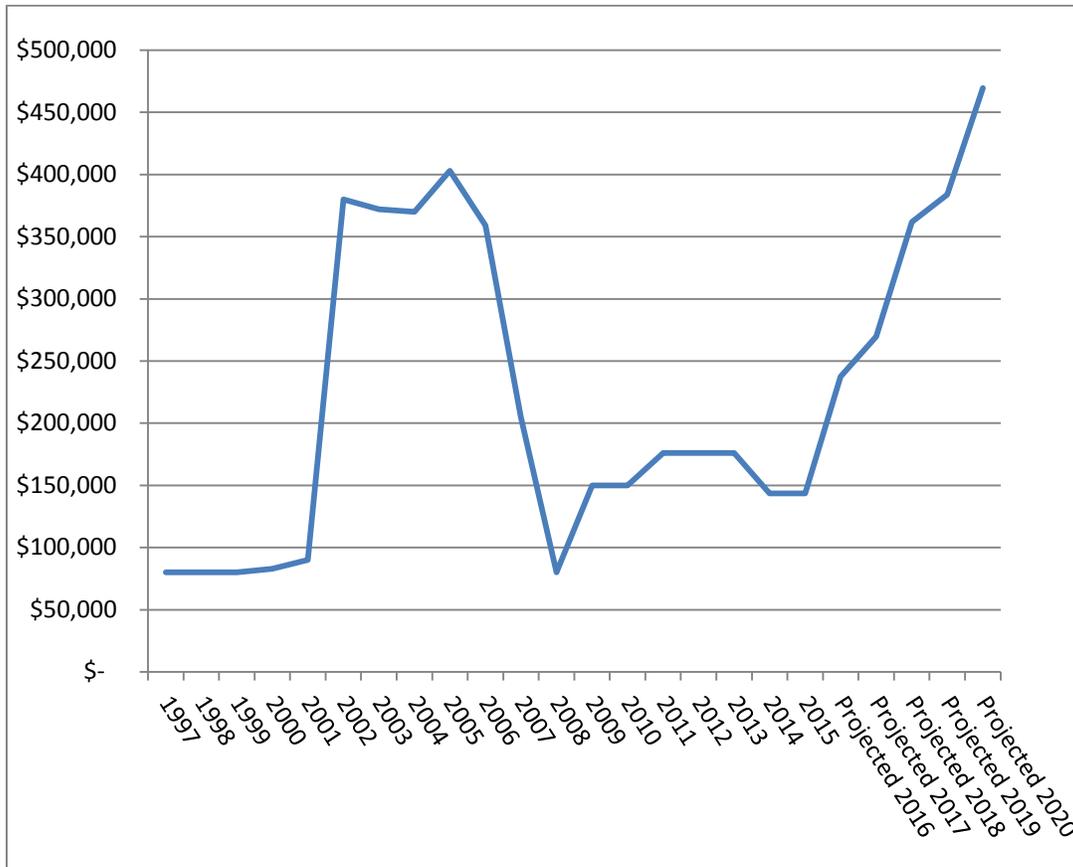


Figure 4. Past and projected financial commitments from the Federal Government

According to Figure 4 above, describing past and projected financial commitments from the federal government, in Fiscal Years 2002-2006, the Cooperative Agreement via U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supported EWC at a level commensurate with its contribution to co-management. In years 2007-present, federal support has been reduced significantly and is unpredictable. This plan outlines growth in federal funding back to a commensurate level and is key to the organization’s long term sustainability.

A strategic initiative identified in the EWC strategic plan is for the eCommission to be actively engaged by the federal government as an equal partner on issues and projects related to walrus conservation and management. Challenges identified by the commission include the need to create guidelines and realistic expectations about co-management. Currently, an agreed definition of “co-management” remains unclear and federal partners are reluctant to consider an expanded role of the commission in conservation and resource management. Additionally, EWC recognizes the critical importance and need to have scientific expertise on staff or in an active advisory capacity working with the commission.

In part due to the great breadth and depth of EWC stakeholders, coupled with the issues facing the commission, there is significant opportunity for collaboration that helps the EWC best leverage its resources.

Competition and Competitive Advantage

In the truest sense of the word there is no competition for the Eskimo Walrus Commission, but there are other commissions thinking about specific species, including the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Alaska Nanuuq Commission. There are other commissions interested in different species, which are considered potential collaborators. Internationally, the Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka is considered less competition, but more a partner organization.

V. Community Outreach and Marketing Plan

More active community outreach about the work of the commission will be an important part of building a more thriving Eskimo Walrus Commission. The EWC is actively engaged with a professional communications firm to develop a more formal communications infrastructure and a more visible image for the EWC. By improving and expanding communication avenues, the EWC plans to increase its ability to share and receive information with and from hunters as well as the general public, thus improving the ability of the EWC to advocate on behalf of its member communities. Also, by creating a more visible image and showcasing the EWC's work, the EWC could more easily attract potential funders to contribute to its efforts.

Development of a new communications infrastructure for EWC includes an updated interactive website that allows for people to send comments/messages to the EWC, an improved social media presence, and a new newsletter format to use for sending information to member communities on a regular basis which will enable the EWC to communicate information and ideas with member communities and advocate on their behalf, as well as increased capacity for the EWC to receive feedback. Greater visibility of the work carried out by the EWC in mainstream media and will be tracked by media pieces referencing the organization and their work.

The EWC works in partnership with many organizations on joint community outreach and marketing efforts:

- Partner organizations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, The National Park Service- Shared Beringian Heritage Program – providing resources to work with Russian indigenous people.
- Smithsonian Institution, Arctic Studies Center – as advisor and partner, regarding Dr. Igor Krupnik.
- Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka, specifically regarding Nikolay Etyne
- EWC assists the USFWS with their outreach through the EWC annual meeting
- Pew Charitable Trusts – part of the project with the Oak Foundation – to expand the tribal capacity

VI. Sustainable Human Resources Plan

Current Personnel

The current staff of the EWC is small, with 2 FTE positions:

- **Executive Director (1 FTE)** – is responsible for the day-today office management; represents EWC at various statewide, national, and international meetings and forums relevant to EWC’s operations and goals, financial oversight, commission relations, and is the primary contact for government agencies. The Executive Director represents the EWC at meetings and forums relevant to the EWC’s operations, and is the primary contact for EWC collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **EWC Specialist (1 FTE)** – responsible for daily administrative function for the organization, as well as providing overall program support activities, e.g., grant reporting, budgeting and planning.

As the umbrella organization, Kawerak, Inc. formally employs EWC staff. Kawerak contributes financially to the EWC when federal compact funds become available to cover remaining base operating expenditures, but this is not guaranteed. EWC has no reserves or debts and due to extreme federal support, funding is insufficient and often difficult to predict. EWC primarily relies on grant funding for any projects or costs outside the base operational costs.

Projected Personnel Needs

With the development of sustainable funding the EWC will benefit from one additional position, a Program Coordinator (1 FTE), with scientific expertise who can focus on the specifics associated with the current and future EWC programs. In addition to one future staff member, the EWC would be able to contract with legal expertise, specifically someone who understands the intricacies of the Marine Mammal Protection and ESA Acts.

Shared Operational Services

The operating costs of the EWC currently consist of staff time for 2 employees, including insurance and benefits, indirect costs for office and administrative expenses, travel and per diem costs for one EWC annual meeting, board honorariums, and telephone and office supply costs. Kawerak applies an indirect cost rate of roughly 30% or more a year on any grants or other agreements that EWC receives. Kawerak also provides legal assistance.

VII. Commission Governance and Leadership

The following organizational chart presents a picture of the EWC structure, most notably that the commission is a voice of the walrus hunters, who in turn govern a commission managed by an Executive Director who manages all other employees. Though not reflected in this current chart, a projected Program Coordinator would report to the Executive Director, along with the EWC Specialist.

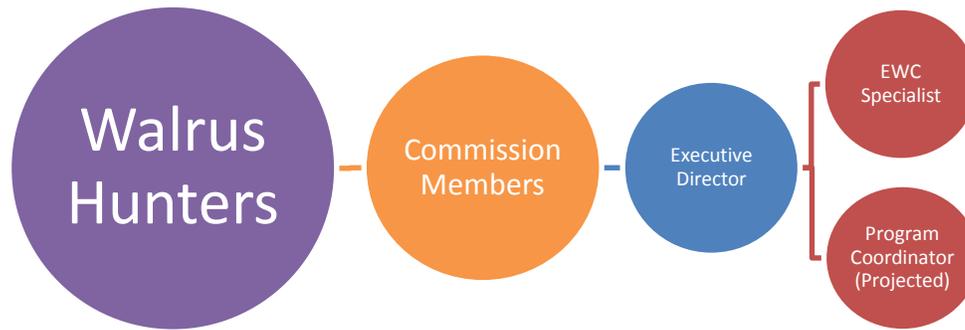


Figure 5. EWC Organizational Chart – Current and Projected

The Eskimo Walrus Commission is an Alaska Native marine mammal commission with a board of directors consisting of one representative from each of 19 member communities, located along Alaska’s coast from Barrow to Bristol Bay. The tribal government in each community appoints a representative to serve on the EWC, and these individuals are predominantly older males because of their knowledge and experience as subsistence walrus hunters. Currently, the EWC board consists of 19 members.

Currently, the chair of the EWC is Charles Brower from Barrow, the vice chair is Elmer Seetot, Jr. from Brevig Mission, and the executive committee members are Kenneth Kingeekuk from Savoonga, Stephen Schaeffer from Kotzebue, and Benjamin Payenna from King Island. Charles Brower has a long tenure as EWC chair, but the rest of the leadership positions are new, as the EWC recently adopted new bylaws creating these positions and officers were elected during the 2014 and 2015 annual meetings.

The EWC’s two permanent staff members are Vera Metcalf, who has been the EWC Director since 2002, and Katya Wassillie who has been the EWC Specialist since June of 2014. Detailed bios appear below:

- **Vera Kingeekuk Metcalf, Executive Director.** Vera was born and raised in Savoonga (Sivungaq) on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska. Since 2002, Vera has been the Director of the Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC) at Kawerak, Inc., working with 19 coastal Alaskan communities in the promotion of community involvement in research, documentation of local traditional ecological knowledge, and co-management of the Pacific Walrus population. Vera represents the EWC in various forums, including the Indigenous People’s Council on Marine Mammals, the Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition, and the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee. Vera is a Special Advisor on Native Affairs on the Marine Mammal Commission ~~Commissioner on the U.S. Arctic Research Commission,~~ an Advisory Panel member of the North Pacific Research Board, a Steering Committee member for the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy, ~~Special Advisor on Native Affairs for the Marine Mammal Commission,~~ and a member of the Inuit Circumpolar Council Executive Committee. Vera is also a Bering Strait Commissioner for the U.S. Department of State, facilitating travel between Chukotka, Russia and the

Bering Straits Region of Alaska. Vera is a strong advocate for the subsistence lifestyles of Alaska Native peoples, and passionate about strengthening Alaska Native languages and cultures.

- **Katya Wassillie, EWC Specialist.** Katya is Yup'ik/Iñupiaq from the communities of Pilot Station and White Mountain, Alaska. Although these are her hometowns, Katya was raised in many different villages throughout western and northern Alaska, moving frequently with her mother who was a school teacher. Katya attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks as an undergraduate studying political science, and interned at the Alaska State Legislature with Senator Bettye Davis in 2012. During the 2013-2014 academic year Katya was a Teaching Assistant for the Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks while completing course work for her M.A. degree. Katya has been the Eskimo Walrus Commission Specialist at Kawerak since the summer of 2014, working with 19 coastal Alaskan communities in the promotion of community involvement in research, documentation of local traditional ecological knowledge, and co-management of the Pacific Walrus population. Katya also continues to work on her M.A. in Rural Development by completing a project involving the development of an Alaska Native political history curriculum for Alaskan high school students.

VIII. Facilities Plan

The EWC occupies office space within the main Kawerak building in Nome, Alaska, within the Natural Resources Division. The space is paid for via Kawerak's indirect cost rate which is applied to all EWC awarded grant funds, which includes internet, phone, and other office support. There are no foreseeable plans to seek other space.

IX. Sustainable Income Plan

The commissioners and staff of the EWC are committed to building an income stream for EWC that is larger, more diverse and more sustainable in the long-term. The reality is that as the potential responsibilities and importance of the commission's work grows, the revenue stream must be able to grow with that increasing importance and responsibility.

The operating costs of the EWC currently consist of staff time for two employees, including insurance and benefits, indirect costs for office and administrative expenses, travel and per diem costs for one EWC annual meeting, board honorariums for the annual EWC meeting, and telephone and office supply costs. Since 1994, when cooperative agreement funds were introduced through the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the primary source of funding for the EWC has been its annual cooperative agreements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The annual amount was initially \$400,000, but has since dropped to this year's amount of \$143,500, which is insufficient to cover the EWC's operating costs. When U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding is insufficient, Kawerak, Inc. has contributed federal compact funds to the EWC to cover the remaining base operating costs, but Kawerak's financial support is not guaranteed. The EWC

has no reserves and no debt. Because of the extreme limitations to the capacity of the EWC due to insufficient funding, the EWC board identified the strategic initiative of securing long-term funding to allow the EWC to be more effective.

EWC staff have since applied for and received a small grant to contract with The Foraker Group to develop this Business Plan for Sustainability. Until a plan for long-term funding for the EWC is established, the EWC must rely on grant funding for any projects or costs outside of the base operational costs detailed above. Throughout the past year, the EWC staff has applied for several grants to conduct walrus-related work in member communities, in addition to capacity-building grants to move the EWC toward more stability and effectiveness.

Building a sustainable income stream that is large enough to support a thriving commission and at the same time diverse enough to be financially resilient is especially important in light of the decreasing federal money, which in the past has made up 90% of the commission’s revenue stream.

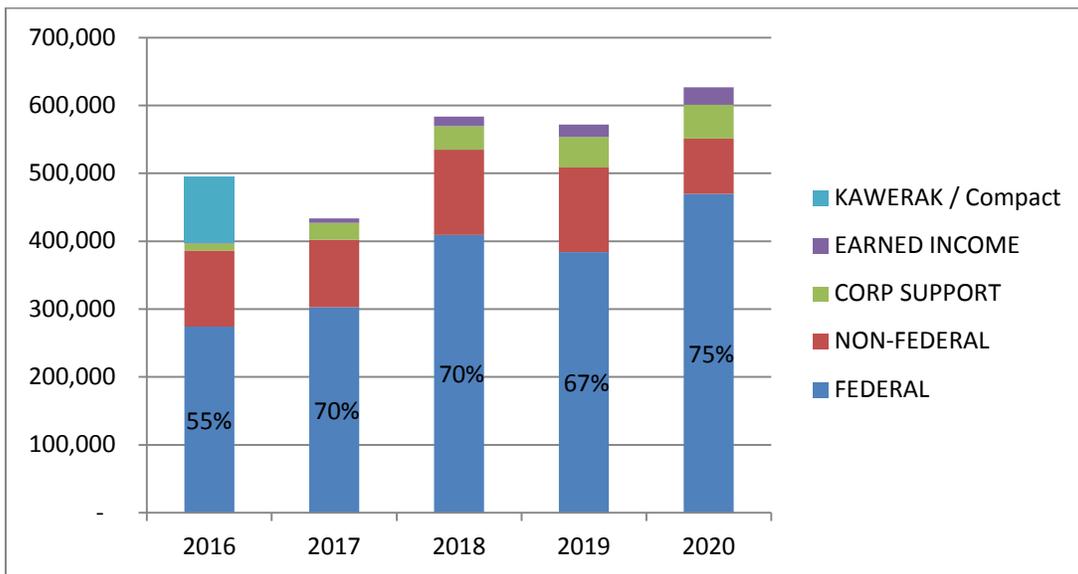


Figure 6. EWC Projected Financial Support, 2016 - 2020

Projected Revenue – FY 2020

By FY 2020 the revenue breakdown by type indicates significant federal funding, coming from a number of agencies, as well significant actual and in-kind revenue support non-federal sources, with small revenue from other sources, including contributions from agencies with interest in having a presence in or traversing the Arctic and the creation of earned income via sales of educational/promotional items created by EWC and consulting time billed for EWC expertise supporting marine mammal tribal ordinances, policy development, advocacy and research.

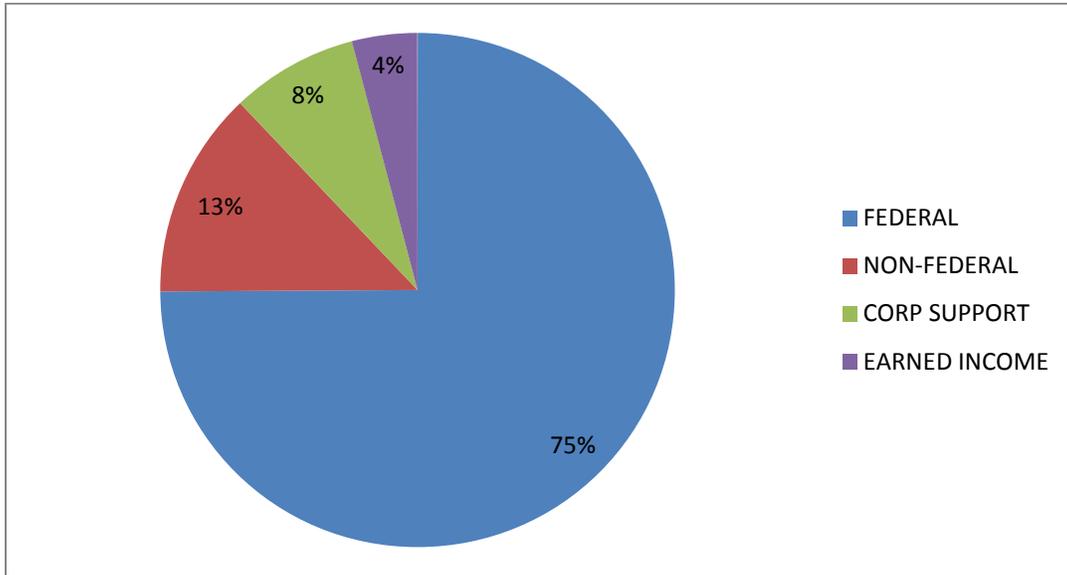


Figure 7. EWC Funding Support 2020 demonstrating federal funding at a level commensurate with EWC contributions to co-management

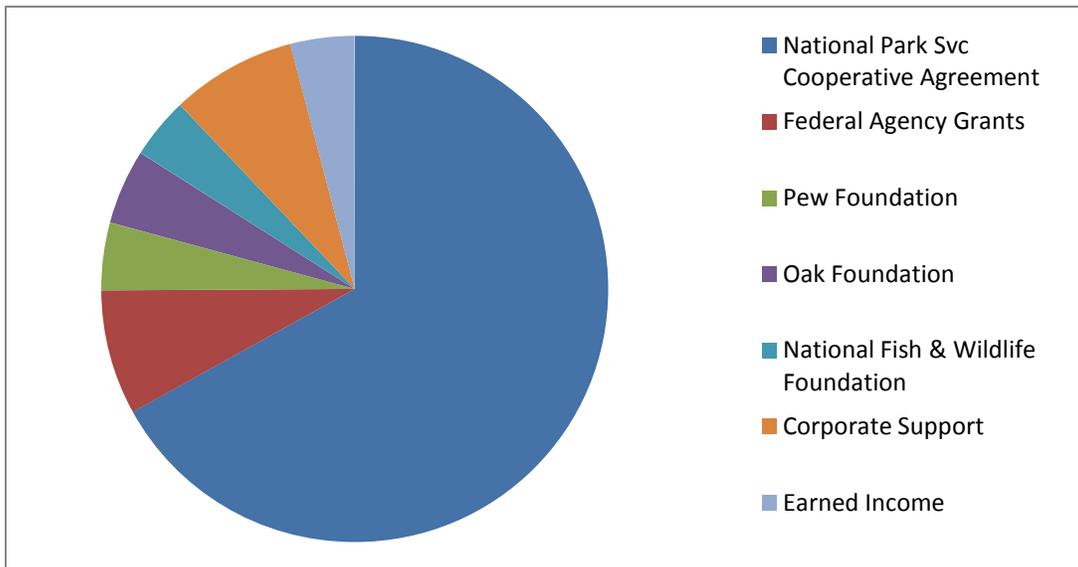


Figure 8. EWC Diversified Funding Support Detail, Fiscal Year 2020

A Foundation for Sustainable Commission Revenue

A significant part of this business plan involves developing a multi-year funding strategy that is based on several key assumptions, leading to greater consistency and sustainability in funding. At the core of any sustainable funding stream is more equitable participation from federal partners and growing the capacity of the EWC to generate revenue from other non-federal sources. Ideally, within the next five years the size of the EWC revenue stream has grown to

\$626,700, with roughly 75% coming from the federal government, and the remaining share coming from a diverse mix of sources. The central components of a more sustainable revenue stream are:

- Increased funding from the federal government, including the National Park Service
- Increasing EWC marketing as part of the effort to improve the revenue stream
- Identify and pursue strategic grants to more consistently fund specific programs/activities
- Increasing support from the Kawerak Board with Compact funding
- Increasing corporate support from stakeholders who are engaged in the increased transit in the channels
- Charging consulting fees for Marine Mammal Tribal ordinances; though the communities are the owners, but getting permission allowing them to charge

X. The Financials

Projected Statement of Activities FY 2016 – FY 2020

The projected Statement of Activities below presents the thinking of the commission as it relates to the growth of sustainable revenue for EWC between FY 2016 and FY 2020, including estimated expenses for the same time period. The revenue and expense estimates are based on a number of assumptions identified below the statement.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
REVENUE					
FEDERAL	274,125 55%	302,721 70%	409,357 70%	383,905 67%	469,528 75%
NON-FEDERAL	112,300 23%	99,332 23%	125,339 21%	124,694 22%	81,441 13%
CORP SUPPORT	10,000 2%	25,000 6%	35,000 6%	45,000 8%	50,000 8%
EARNED INCOME	2,053 0%	6,633 2%	13,860 2%	18,337 3%	25,734 4%
KAWERAK	97,056 20%	- 0%	- 0%	- 0%	- 0%
TOTAL REVENUE	495,534	433,686	583,556	571,936	626,703
EXPENSES					
TOTAL DIRECT PERSONNEL	190,804	219,935	315,309	324,768	334,511
TOTAL TRAVEL	78,712	60,359	91,565	101,940	115,469
TOTAL SUPPLIES	8,705	11,550	14,303	13,145	13,273
TOTAL FACILITY COSTS	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL CONTRACTUAL COSTS	91,950	50,845	41,592	24,119	28,041
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	10,000	2,500	-	-	15,000
TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES	380,172	345,189	462,768	463,973	506,294
TOTAL INDIRECT EXPENSES	86,754	88,497	120,788	107,962	120,409
TOTAL EXPENSES	466,926	433,686	583,556	571,936	626,702
NET INCOME / (LOSS)	28,609	0	(0)	0	0

Figure 9. EWC Projected Statement of Activities, Fiscal Years 2016 - 2020

Budget Assumptions to support above projection:

- Utilized base EWC budget as starting point
- Beginning in 2016
 - Added a 5% inflation rate on all regular expenses, year-over-year
 - Added technology upgrades in 2016; for new staff in 2017; and again in 2019
 - Created earned income based on the sale of resources created by EWC (books/publications/maps/ivory/etc) and based on outsourced staff time for advocacy, policy work, commission coordination, scientific expertise
 - Added incoming funds from corporate sponsors interested in and with a presence in the Arctic
- Beginning in 2017
 - Added a scientific staff member (Program Coordinator) in the last quarter of 2017
 - Added community hunter meetings; four meetings in 2017, nine in 2018, 14 in 2019 and 19 in 2020
 - Added promotional / marketing outreach funds in fiscal years 2017-2020 to increase public awareness and education

- Grant funding opportunities (both Federal and non-Federal) are expected to continue and potentially increase based on scientific relevance of EWC work via Program Coordinator staff addition
- Beginning in 2018
 - Added legal costs for advocacy and policy work in 2018 – 2020
 - Added 3% salary increases for all staff, 2018 – 2020
- Beginning in 2019
 - Added second Commission meeting
 - Added travel to Juneau and Washington D.C. for advocacy and policy work
- 2020
 - Funding is more stable
 - Federal support via cooperative agreement is commensurate with EWC contributions in co-management relationship
 - Non Federal grant funding continues to support EWC work
 - Corporate Sponsor Contributions reach \$50,000 annually
 - Earned Income supports EWC operations at a level of \$25,000 annually
 - Operations support EWC mission and vision
 - Hunter meetings are conducted in all 19 communities
 - Two Commission meetings are conducted annually
 - Staff are providing support in areas of advocacy, policy and science/TEK
 - Marketing & Outreach efforts have raised awareness and support for the work of the EWC

XI. Appendices