

Eskimo Walrus Commission
Quarterly Report 01/01/19-03/31/19
Cooperative Agreement Award F14AC01135



Eskimo Walrus Commission

"To protect the pacific walrus population."

Eskimo Walrus Commission (EWC) represents 19 walrus hunting coastal communities in Western and Northern Alaska. Due to budget constraints, EWC currently employs 1 staff position (Director) to maintain daily office operations.

The following are EWC administrative activities to date (some related to Agreement objectives):

- Canceled Marine Mammal Ordinance workshop on St. Lawrence Island scheduled in January due to federal shutdown – rescheduled mid-spring. Attended several conference call workshop planning meetings with others involved in the workshop. Communicated frequently with MMAC Chairs Larry Kava/Savoonga and Iver Campbell/Gambell on MMAC workshop plans, location, and other logistics.
- Traveled to Savoonga on Jan. 22 as part of EWC's ICC Food Sovereignty sub-award project and met with MMAC members and others to provide update on the work.
- Attended IPCoMM's EC board meeting on Feb. 13 to review IPCoMM Director's current job description and draft evaluation report.
- Attended ICC Alaska's Food Security-Sovereignty workshop in Bethel on Feb. 26-28, presented on EWC program activities, and participated in workshop discussions. EWC has a sub-award with ICC Alaska for this project.
- Held Spring Walrus Hunter Meetings in Gambell March 11 and Savoonga March 12. Both meetings were well attended with over 40 hunters attending. USFWS presented various walrus reports and spring WHMP plans. Met Objective 7.3 in Cooperative Agreement.
- Attended Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition and AWSC meetings in Anchorage on March 17-18 vessel traffic and safe waterway discussions.
- Presented on the ivory ban issue as part of a panel on March 20 at Anchorage Museum to new summer staff and distributed 'EWC' and "Alaska Native Art" informational brochures.
- Attended ICC EC meetings in Iqaluit, CA on April 2-4, reported update on ivory ban, and environmental
- Provided EWC program activities update to Kawerak's Natural Resource Committee members meeting in Nome on April 8, 2019.
- Attended IPCoMM EC conference call meetings with Miriam Jorgensen and Dana Goodson of U of AZ and Udall Foundation on gap analysis project as EWC will be part of 6 marine mammal commission selected to be part of the analysis.
- Extended current Oak project to terminate on June 30 and amended existing contract with Strategies 360 to add budget amount and extend termination date to May 31.
- Met various occasions with Kawerak leadership on the ivory ban, selected June 10 to hold an ivory event in Washington, DC, contacted USFWS requesting harvest numbers, population estimates, etc. for the event, and continue to work on event logistics with others.

On-going Tasks:

- Continue working with USFWS to resolve yearly cooperative agreement budget deficit to financially stabilize EWC. Ongoing task by staff to seek other funding sources.
- Continue responding to inquiries on marine mammal issues with MAP-UAF and Kawerak Subsistence program including marine mammal carcass coastal surveys, harmful algal bloom, saxitoxin, and climate related challenges.
- Remain proactive in discussions/meetings on increased vessel traffic in the Arctic in other forums to discuss impacts to walrus and harvesting activities.
- Continue communicating with Native Villages of Gambell and Savoonga to seek multi-year funds to discuss capacity building for the local management structure and potential expansion of the Tribal Marine Mammal Ordinances in other member communities.
- Contact other marine mammal commissions to coordinate EWC attendance at their annual meetings and communicate with EWC Commissioners on potential issues for EWC to further collaborate.
- Communicate with Strategies 360 on EWC website, Facebook posts, and additional media training.

Significant Impacts to the Region

EWC conducts outreach/education on ivory ban and other issues of concern that will or can impact the food security of subsistence users, and advocate for protecting the livelihood of Alaska Native residents and artists who rely on marine mammal products such as walrus ivory.

Conclusion

EWC is committed to remain involved in co-management activities related to the Pacific walrus and continue seeking adequate funds to incorporate the full interests of Alaska Natives to self-manage. Increase communications with federal agencies and other organizations on potential research opportunities for EWC member communities, and remain an effective organization in a changing political, environmental, and social Arctic environment.



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