

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

January 21, 2008

8:42 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Kyle Johansen
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Lindsey Holmes

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME
DIVISION OF SUBSISTENCE

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous committee action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ELIZABETH ANDREWS, Director
Division of Subsistence
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G).

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at [8:42:43 AM](#). Representatives Seaton, Johansen, and Edgmon were present at the call to order. Representatives Johnson, Holmes, and Wilson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

OVERVIEW: Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Division of Subsistence

8:42:53 AM

CHAIR SEATON announced the committee would hear an overview of the Division of Subsistence today.

8:44:15 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked what percentage of the harvest "piece of the pie" is allocated to subsistence.

ELIZABETH ANDREWS, Director, Division of Subsistence, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), told members it varies by area, but the amount is roughly 1-2 percent.

8:45:22 AM

MS. ANDREWS then directed members' attention to the committee packet and proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation. She told members the following:

Thank you, Chairman Seaton, and committee members, for this opportunity to speak to you about our program. As mentioned, my name is Elizabeth Andrews and I am the director of the subsistence division. I do have the handout there and you can follow along there.

I just want to mention, some of this may be a review from last year. Some parts will sound familiar to some of you. I wanted to first mention for the state's subsistence division our mission and purpose.

In 1978, that's when the Alaska statute first recognized the economic and cultural importance of wildlife in the lives of Alaskans and passed the law. This provided a priority for customary and traditional uses for subsistence and I'll talk about that a little more shortly. It preceded the 1980 federal law, [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act] ANILCA, in part so that the state could retain management authority over all lands.

8:46:42 AM

MS. ANDREWS continued:

Our mission, as a division in the department, has four ... basic elements. It is to gather information on subsistence uses, it's to quantify it, evaluate it, and report that information and it includes both fisheries and wildlife.

What are subsistence uses? They are the non-commercial customary and traditional uses. That is different from personal use because it has a customary and traditional component that each board, Board of Fisheries and Board of Game, has to identify. The Alaska regulations since statehood and preceding the state's subsistence law did provide for subsistence fishing. It didn't just come with the 1978 statute but the priority did.

Fisheries resources are important to Alaskans and this includes subsistence fisheries and, in fact, in many communities the fish harvest for subsistence accounts for anywhere to one-third to two-thirds of the total food harvest. Again that varies by area. It's marine fisheries as well as freshwater fisheries.

[8:48:14 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked whether in certain areas, such as the Yukon River, the subsistence harvest may exceed the commercial and sport harvest combined.

MS. ANDREWS responded that along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers where the commercial harvest has diminished considerably, the subsistence fisheries harvest is greater. However, the subsistence harvest for all resources ranges from one-third to two-thirds around the state.

[8:49:31 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if that applies to a variety of species, for example sheefish, and whether a commercial fishery for such non-salmon fisheries exists.

MS. ANDREWS answered that varies by area; the sheefish harvest is particularly significant in the Northwest Arctic. ADF&G sometimes issues permits for small commercial and sport fisheries; however, the majority of the sheefish take is for subsistence.

CHAIR SEATON questioned whether the one-third to two-thirds amount applies to salmon.

MS. ANDREWS said that amount includes all fish and wildlife species statewide.

[8:51:14 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS continued her presentation:

In terms of our program, our mandate is to conduct applied research so we're not the management divisions - commercial fisheries and sport fisheries are the management divisions. But it's to conduct the applied research and to provide the information for implementing the state subsistence law.

We've prioritized the work so that basically we're doing two things and these tie into our core services and that is to provide the information to the boards, whether it's fisheries or game, so that they can provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses. It's also to provide the information to the manager so that it factors into the overall management of the fish stocks or populations.

As I mentioned, subsistence fishing management is handled by the management divisions' commercial fisheries and sport fisheries. They also have their own research arms but we do the research on subsistence uses, again whether it's fisheries or wildlife.

[8:52:02 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS continued:

In 1990, as I know many of you are aware, the management of subsistence fishing became more complex with the federal government beginning to manage subsistence hunting, trapping and, at that time, fishing in non-navigable waters. In 1999 they then added management on all federal public lands and waters within their jurisdiction.

[8:52:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if Ms. Andrews' role changed with the 1990 and 1999 changes.

MS. ANDREWS said she had been with the division for 18 years and then left and returned two years ago. The division still does research but the federal government is now involved in management and has a regulatory arm that is focused on regional advisory councils. The ADF&G divisions and private businesses get [federal] funding to competitively bid project contracts. She said the managers have faced considerable challenges when federal programs try to extend jurisdiction or promulgate regulations that do not align with state regulations. The Division of Subsistence gets information on subsistence uses regardless of location and is challenged to keep up with proposal review for the federal program. The division's priority is to review and analyze the proposals that go before the Alaska Boards of Fish and Game. The division's participation in reviewing proposals for the federal government has diminished; other ADF&G staff has taken over that duty.

[8:55:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked how the Division of Subsistence interacts with the decision makers and whether the division feels it impacts those decisions.

MS. ANDREWS said a special assistant to the commissioner gathers information from the division managers and chairs a liaison team comprised of a staff member from each division. The department is recruiting an assistant director to lead that team. The department's commissioner or his/her designee has a seat on the federal subsistence board. The team leader will decide who will attend the federal meetings to discuss the proposals.

[8:57:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN noted that subsistence was a huge issue in the 1990s. He asked whether the Administration would prefer to revert to the 1999 changes to give the division more control or whether it is content with the status quo.

MS. ANDREWS said she is unaware of a desire on the Administration's part to revisit ANILCA or change the subsistence law. The department's approach during the last several years, with the help of the Department of Law (DOL), has

been to challenge any regulations or decisions it believes are inappropriate or unsubstantiated with evidence.

8:59:01 AM

CHAIR SEATON clarified that the Division of Subsistence's function is research, not management; however, the sport fish and commercial fish divisions manage the fisheries and also do research. He asked whether the sport and commercial fish divisions research stock assessments while the subsistence division does utilization and need assessments.

MS. ANDREWS said the other divisions have management and research functions but the subsistence division only has a research function.

9:00:32 AM

CHAIR SEATON questioned whether the subsistence division does research on stock assessments and determining allowable limits or looks at community needs and utilization.

MS. ANDREWS said the division focuses on the human uses; patterns of use and geographic areas of use. That information is fed into the management allocation decisions made by the boards.

9:01:26 AM

MS. ANDREWS continued her presentation:

Okay, just moving to this one, subsistence opportunity and subsistence preference, and this kind of follows along with what we were just talking about. It is the Board of Fisheries that implements the state law by providing the reasonable opportunity for subsistence fishing. So this is not a guarantee of amount of fish or unlimited fishing time but it is what is considered reasonable, considering the customary patterns of use. That's the opportunity aspect of the subsistence statute and the preference aspect is only when it's necessary to restrict harvest does the Board of Fisheries provide a preference over other uses. Up until that point all uses are provided for.

9:02:14 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN questioned how many times a harvest was restricted and preference was given to subsistence users.

MS. ANDREWS said that can happen anytime but the most extreme example was an occurrence in the Nome salmon fishery, which had a tier two fishery at that time. Commercial fishing had been closed for years but stocks were still not doing well. Sport fishing was cut back and escapements were poor. Restrictions among subsistence uses were put into effect. On the Yukon River, management plans lay out at what point commercial, sport, and other uses will be restricted. First commercial fishing would be restricted and then stopped, then sport fishing would be restricted and stopped, and then subsistence fishing would be restricted. During that course the Board could decide, for conservation reasons, to cut back subsistence. She explained that conservation trumps subsistence and the process is one of ratcheting down.

[9:04:13 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked whether a commercial or sport fishery has been closed to provide for a subsistence fishery in the last four or five years.

MS. ANDREWS said earlier in the decade, poor escapements caused a salmon disaster in the Kuskokwim River area. The early run assessment showed the run was not materializing so no commercial fishing was allowed. She said she would have to get specific numbers and dates from managers.

CHAIR SEATON asked Representative Johansen whether he is specifically referring to fish.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN said he is also interested in getting the same information about wildlife.

CHAIR SEATON said he is interested in the drastic allocation changes and restrictions in the Koyukuk River area.

[9:06:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON requested that the committee receive a written report of the number of times and where a sport or commercial fishery was closed to subsistence over the last five years.

[9:06:52 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked how specific he would like the report to be, such as whether a fishery was never opened during a year.

[9:07:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON said he would like to know of any time a fishery had to be scaled back. He said he does not want the report to be time or labor intensive. For example, he wants to know whether a fishery has been closed five times in the last 10 years.

[9:08:07 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said he is trying to hone the committee's request and asked Ms. Andrews what she could provide.

MS. ANDREWS said she will need to request that information from the other division managers. She said they make those determinations based on assessments of the runs.

[9:09:35 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said he is attempting to provide parameters for a report.

[9:10:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON said he would like to get a report on the times and places when a commercial and/or sport fishery was ratcheted down or closed and subsistence was affected. He said he is interested in the more extreme situations, not, for example, when a fishery was closed for one day or when a bag limit changed.

[9:11:41 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON thanked Representative Johnson for the clarification.

[9:12:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN referred to AS 16.05.258 and said it appears to stipulate three conditions. He stated:

One, if the harvestable portion of the stock is sufficient to provide for all uses; two, if a portion

of the stock is sufficient to provide for subsistence uses and some, but not, other uses; and then c, if the harvestable portion is sufficient to provide for subsistence use and no other uses. So it seems like there are three different levels in the statute here so I'm not sure exactly how far, if we go to number two or number three, whether it restricts it a little bit or whether it completely shuts out other uses.

[9:12:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON said for the sake of reasonableness the report should:

... get that third trigger in there where it's cut off for subsistence only or severely curtailed. I think I'd like it if the season was cut in like two-thirds, I think that would be significant so a significant change in commercial or sport fishing but I would be satisfied with just the third trigger if it was totally cut off to everything but subsistence.

[9:13:26 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked Director Andrews what level of restriction should be targeted to produce a reasonable report and whether the definition of a closure of a commercial fishery or a restriction within the sport fishery would provide a reasonable report.

MS. ANDREWS replied affirmatively and estimated the number should be less than a handful. She said she is familiar with the Kuskokwim, Yukon, and Kvichak closures since 2000. She added that subsistence, depending on the species, has prevailing restrictions. It is not open, particularly for salmon fisheries, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. For example, the subsistence opening might be for two 48-hour periods.

[9:15:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN said that would be satisfactory.

[9:15:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked if the number of times fisheries have closed to subsistence fishing since 1990 could probably be counted on both hands.

MS. ANDREWS said that is correct.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON noted that by-catch levels have impacted commercial and sport fishing and said he would follow up independently on the reason for the closures.

9:17:13 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON stated his interest is in the management of fish stocks for preservation reasons, not which group triggered a cut back. He expressed interest in the number of times the subsistence allocation was cut back because that might signify that a particular stock is in danger. He clarified that his intent is not to get information to debate the value of commercial versus sport fishing.

9:18:26 AM

MS. ANDREWS said she is comfortable with the committee's description of the information members want. She then continued her presentation, as follows:

Again, I think I've already covered this pretty much, our core services are basically derived directly from our statutory mandate. It provides information directly into management by the department's fisheries managers as we just discussed and also for the allocation decisions that the Board of Fisheries makes. We also contribute to the fisheries management plans and, again, I just earlier described some that are in regulation. There are others that aren't as well as to other management and allocation bodies, and these would be, for example, just as Representative Edgmon mentioned the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the International Pacific Halibut Commission, the U.S./Canada Yukon Salmon Panel, of which I am the co-chair. I didn't know if you have any questions about that. I could perhaps answer those now or continue with this.

9:19:36 AM

CHAIR SEATON asked for a description of the division's research methodologies.

MS. ANDREWS said the methodology is area dependent and the division's research funding comes largely from contracts and other entities rather than from general funds. Depending on the needs identified by an entity, such as subsistence information for the International Halibut Commission, a different methodology might be required than for research requested by the Board of Fisheries on Bristol Bay salmon.

[9:20:48 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked about the process for determining the research methodology. He questioned whether the division develops a scientific survey method when the International Halibut Commission makes a request, which the commission then approves.

MS. ANDREWS said the International Halibut Commission has a scientific review team that reviews the questions the division will ask and the methodology. Sometimes those questions also get reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget. The commission established halibut subsistence standards which underwent a review process. For example, the commission established a permit system [for subsistence take] and wanted to know the number of halibut taken from each of 14,000 permit holders. That study required the use of a different methodology than getting that information from 1,500 permit holders in Bristol Bay.

[9:22:35 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS returned to her presentation:

Again, as I said, our subsistence fishing research - and to summarize our division's main responsibilities, it's basically to conduct the research and document these subsistence uses as identified in statute, estimate subsistence harvest levels, and to evaluate the potential impacts to subsistence uses from other uses. We do compile the information into different formats for the regulatory issues and we provide it to the state and federal agencies, as well as other researchers. We're also involved in baseline data collection so that we can evaluate trends over time. We're involved in one of the climate change studies right now with the Bering Sea ecosystem project that the North Pacific Research Board has. We do resource development related impact studies and you may

remember last year I mentioned research we were doing under contract with Rond (ph) Associates on the Pebble Mine proposed development and now there is a proposed expansion to the Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska and we're subcontracting with Rond Associations for that work also on subsistence uses.

[9:24:09 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked what role the division plays with the North Pacific Council or through ADF&G to the Council regarding the by-catch of king salmon being problematic for subsistence uses. He questioned whether that is simply a stock assessment number.

MS. ANDREWS said ADF&G is represented by the commissioner on the Council so the king salmon by-catch would come into play in terms of overall salmon production. The division provides information to Council staff for presentations on halibut harvest. The US/Canada Yukon Salmon panel has written letters and had people give testimony about the salmon by-catch issue and will continue to do so. The number of Yukon bound salmon is unknown. The Canadian stocks were not as productive as usual this year on the U.S. side. The Yukon stocks met their escapement but the Canadian stocks did not. The panel is interested in getting more genetic stock identification to get a better estimate of the Yukon stock taken as by-catch and in developing alternatives to reduce the by-catch.

[9:26:52 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if the king salmon taken in the by-catch are retained not for sale but for distribution to food banks and whether any genetic stock analysis occurs on the by-catch.

MS. ANDREWS offered to provide that information at a later date. She said ADF&G wants to involve the industry in getting samples but she was unsure of the amount of observer coverage at this time.

[9:27:55 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON said 100 percent of the Bering Sea boats have observers but he was wondering if the panel had requested an analysis of the by-catch.

MS. ANDREWS said the panel has requested that information for Yukon stocks but not just for subsistence purposes. She noted

the panel has a treaty obligation to get a certain number of fish across the border.

9:28:34 AM

MS. ANDREWS continued her presentation:

Just to move onto our program, our office and staff locations - as you know, we're a small organization. We have 25 full-time staff and five seasonal or part-time. We have two regional research programs; one is north of the Alaska Range with a regional office in Fairbanks and a field office in Kotzebue and one south of the Alaska Range with the regional office in Anchorage and field offices in Dillingham and Juneau. The third part of our program is the information management program, which is the core for the data compilation analysis and disseminating that information to the public, as well as to others.

Our current FY 08 actual budget is \$3.2 million; nearly 50 percent of that is general funds and 50 percent from other funding sources. The general fund provides for program management and fixed costs and partially for the information management but, as I mentioned earlier, no research. So the other funding sources provide for the applied research that we do.

Our targets and measures associated with our

9:29:57 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON interjected to question the topics of the non-fisheries research.

MS. ANDREWS said the topics include migratory birds, marine mammals, wildlife, resource development projects, such as the Pebble Mine, and comprehensive harvest surveys including fisheries.

9:31:07 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if the division uses ADF&G's public information officer.

MS. ANDREWS said the funding she was referring to is all research related and is used to disseminate technical reports

and to post information on the web. The public information officer provides press releases. The division has a communications person who contributes to on-line newsletters.

[9:32:52 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS returned to her presentation:

Our targets and measures are associated, as you can see on your slide, with conducting the studies and gathering the information. I try to balance it across all regions of the state. We analyzed, as I mentioned earlier, the regulatory proposals to the Board of Fisheries as well as Game and we report on that at those meetings. We report and disseminate the results. We're involved in the management planning of the different divisions and then the information management, which is a database I'll talk about here shortly.

[9:33:52 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked Ms. Andrews to provide the committee with a copy of a survey and the data produced.

MS. ANDREWS said the surveys vary but that she would provide a copy of a current survey on the expansion of the Red Dog Mine. The division coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture on food related questions on that survey. She noted sometimes a contractor requires a suite of questions. The division attempts to design its surveys so that it can track consistencies over time.

[9:35:27 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS presented the final slide, which bulleted the FY09 budget request focal points and told members the following:

Mr. Chairman, for the FY 09 budget request and some of our key challenges, looking forward we have two increments you'll see in the governor's budget and a CIP [capital improvement project] request to insure that we do meet our core services and these are predominantly related to fisheries management.

One is to get our subsistence salmon harvest database accessible to managers, researchers and the public by

making it web accessible and to have it integrated into the database and format used by the fisheries managers in the Commercial Fisheries Division. We want to also be able to continue to divide an annual statewide report of the subsistence salmon harvest.

9:36:20 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked how that is currently handled.

MS. ANDREWS said the salmon harvest information is in a data base right now but it is not web accessible so providing that information requires that it be manipulated. When it becomes web accessible users can quickly sort it as desired. The Division of Commercial Fisheries' data is already web accessible. The Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development's web database allows a user to get data by community very easily. The salmon harvest database will be similarly designed.

9:38:10 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if the information will be entered by the users into the database or whether ADF&G employees will do the data entry.

MS. ANDREWS said making the data web accessible is the current goal and that the data will be entered by ADF&G personnel. She said the division does not have an "e-landing" system yet but is interested in working on that. She said not all villages have Internet or electronic capabilities.

9:39:49 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN noted that Representative Foster discussed the challenge of direct data input from the villages but he hoped Director Andrews was able to make the process as paperless as possible.

9:40:30 AM

MS. ANDREWS continued reading the bulleted slide, as follows:

The second increment is to be able to annually assess and evaluate the fish harvests and trends, particularly in Bristol Bay and Southeast and the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and then also to continue

ongoing harvest monitoring studies. At this point we're not at a situation where even though we have the data in different databases to be able to have our research analysts, for example, really go through and evaluate what the trends are and to determine as we know - I mean there have been changes in some areas and there may be opportunities for other fisheries, for example, and we just - until we can actually have some money to analyze the data in that way, we aren't ready to identify those but we think it's important to be able to do so. We get questions from the Board of Fisheries, for example, that will say well, why is this going on in the extreme upper Kuskokwim and these changes going on and we haven't really had a chance to evaluate that information. We know there [have] been changes and we know there have been in some areas declines that aren't related to abundance. There are other things happening in some of these communities.

The third is a CIP request, which is to integrate the technical and scientific reporting into the, again, the Department's on-line accessible publication systems.

[9:42:01 AM](#)

MS. ANDREWS continued:

The two fisheries divisions have already accomplished this. The Sport Fish Division took the lead on that and got it up and going and Commercial Fisheries has been doing it the last couple of years and I think all of theirs are now in that system. We've been trying to format all of our reports accordingly to match that and so we have a request to be able to then get the information into the same - exactly the same and just as accessible so all of the fisheries related reports a person can get through a single portal.

And then lastly it's important to maintain our own capacities in terms of staffing, information management and with the joint fisheries management, and I know that you heard from the other directors and I'm sure not just in this department, about recruitment and retention challenges. I guess lastly, as I said, it's essential for us for information management because they really are the ones - it's

almost like the engine, I mean they compile all of the information. They are the ones that get it back out to the other folks but we need to make sure that those staff are retained. They carry a lot of knowledge with them and we need to maintain that capacity.

I know you've been asking questions along the way, but if there are any other questions, I'd be glad to answer them.

[9:43:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked how much of an increment the division needs and, regarding hiring and retention, whether ADF&G requires employees to serve a certain amount of time in the department before advancing.

MS. ANDREWS said there is no requirement. It is the function of the job classification to ensure that the employee has performed at that same level and has relevant experience and that could be in the private sector.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON questioned whether an education trade-off is allowed.

MS. ANDREWS said that depends on the job classification. She explained that while some job qualification requirements accept experience, others might require a Bachelor's degree and one or two years of experience or a Master's degree and one year of experience.

[9:45:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON commented that so many departments are limiting their recruiting abilities [with that system] because Alaska is doing some very unique things. He said he would like to see the experience requirements eased to allow educated applicants to be hired.

MS. ANDREWS agreed and said she has been working with the human resources staff to revise the minimum qualifications to broaden the base of interest and widen the scope of applicants. Regarding the increments, the increment for database accessibility is \$156,000. The second increment for evaluating the harvest assessment data is \$142,800. The capital increment is about \$140,000 for the technical publications.

[9:48:56 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked about Ms. Andrew's experience finding qualified personnel in the last year.

MS. ANDREWS said it appears that many applicants self-eliminate during the application process because of the advertised requirements so the qualifications are being re-written to minimize that situation. It is common to get one or two applications for a position. Also, the division's minimum qualifications for a job are often broader than the human resources division's interpretation. For example, if the human resources staff too narrowly defines the term "closely related field," the division must go through an appeal process, which is time consuming. People often apply for several jobs simultaneously so the top candidates may have moved on while a description is being appealed. In addition, federal programs offer considerably higher pay.

[9:51:59 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if working with the unified human resources system is less efficient than working with a human resources unit within the department.

MS. ANDREWS said the human resources division has been tremendously helpful and that she has not had any problems caused by restructuring that function, but the problems associated with hiring difficulties need to be identified, such as the job classifications.

[9:53:23 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked about the cost savings to the division of having a unified human resources section.

MS. ANDREWS said she is not in a position to respond to that question because she was not involved with the hiring process in the same detail in her prior position.

[9:54:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON recalled discussing at last year's overview that the Subsistence Division's name may not represent its purpose because its role is support services, analysis, data collection, and doing surveys. He asked whether any further discussion about renaming the division has occurred.

MS. ANDREWS said she discussed that with management and other staff. They said the existing name reflects what is in the statute but the division's focus is on research. She believes the Division of Subsistence Research would be better. She said the name could be changed administratively. If the desire exists, the division would be agreeable to doing so.

[9:56:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON said he wasn't expressing that desire, he was inquiring as to whether the division feels a name change is necessary.

MS. ANDREWS said the statute requires the establishment of a division of subsistence hunting and fishing, which is less useful.

CHAIR SEATON suggested coordinating a name change when hiring letterhead stationary.

[9:57:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked about the level of genetic identification used. He said the discussion of genetic identification makes him uneasy because discrete stock management could become an issue.

MS. ANDREWS said the agreement with Canada requires the U.S. to get a certain number of fish across the border. When fish are sampled at the mouth of a river, the Canadian stocks can be identified.

[9:59:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN recalled legislation from the 1990s about discrete stock management that became quite controversial. He then asked when, how, and why the Division of Subsistence decides to challenge a federal decision.

MS. ANDREWS said ADF&G's liaison team evaluates the federal decisions with the commissioner and determines which ones the state will challenge.

[10:00:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked Ms. Andrews if she has a seat at that table and provides input about subsistence uses.

MS. ANDREWS said she does and that ADF&G challenged the federal decision making process on its rural/non-rural review last July.

[10:01:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if ADF&G has challenged the whole process, as well as individual decisions and whether Saxman's designation was reviewed and not challenged.

MS. ANDREWS said the Saxman designation was not reviewed.

[10:01:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if the Saxman designation was left standing without any push back from the state.

MS. ANDREWS said that is correct. She continued, "It is part of the general package of challenging the process that they went through on that and we could have that brought to the commissioner's attention for further examination or some examination of Saxman specifically if you'd like."

[10:02:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN said he thought he was clear about his desire to do that last year.

[10:02:43 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked if an individual legislator would make a direct request to the commissioner to challenge such a decision.

MS. ANDREWS said the request should be made directly to the commissioner.

[10:03:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN commented it is ADF&G's charge to review all federal decisions that impact Alaskans.

[10:04:08 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON agreed and added he was asking about the protocol. He said he thought a new commission was established last year to

review and challenge the impacts of the federal fisheries and wildlife management agencies.

MS. ANDREWS noted she did pass Representative Johansen's request last year on to the special assistant on federal/state issues. She said she will bring it to the attention of the new person in charge.

10:05:56 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN said his request obviously fell through the cracks but he would like an answer.

CHAIR SEATON thanked Ms. Andrews for her presentation and asked her to contact the committee through the liaison about any information she believes it should be kept abreast of.

10:06:41 AM

CHAIR SEATON commented that today is Martin Luther King Day. He noted that Alaska's population is diverse, which he appreciates, as well as the division's role in acknowledging that diversity.

10:07:38 AM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.