



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-OC-2026-1519; FXGO166009OC000-267-FF09X00000]

Re-establishment of the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation and Access Council; Request for Nominations

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is re-establishing and seeking member nominations to the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation and Access Council (Council). The Council replaces and changes the name of the previous Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council. The Secretary of the Interior (Secretary), after consultation with the General Services Administration, is re-establishing the Council charter for 2 years. The Council will provide recommendations to the Federal Government, through the Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture, regarding the establishment and implementation of existing and proposed policies and authorities with regard to wildlife and habitat conservation endeavors that benefit wildlife resources; encourage partnership among the public, sporting conservation organizations, and Federal, State, Tribal, and Territorial governments; benefit hunting and the shooting sports; and increase public access to hunting and the shooting sports.

DATES: Comments regarding the re-establishment of this Council must be submitted no later than [INSERT DATE 7 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]. Nominations for the Council must be submitted by [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments and nominations via email to doug_hobbs@fws.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Douglas Hobbs, by telephone at (703) 358-2336, or by email at doug_hobbs@fws.gov. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Council is re-established under the authority of the Secretary and regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended (5 U.S.C. Ch. 10). The Council's duties are strictly advisory and consist of, but are not limited to,

- (a) Assessing the implementation of current and future Executive Orders, Secretary's Orders, Secretarial memos, and Director's Orders that pertain to the objective of the Council, and providing recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation;
- (b) Conducting a review of public lands to identify any areas currently unreachable or unavailable for public hunting opportunities and recommending solutions or options to increase access;
- (c) Making recommendations regarding policies and programs that:
 1. conserve and restore wetlands, grasslands, forests, and other important wildlife habitats, and improve management and restoration of rangelands and agricultural lands to benefit wildlife and enhance hunting and wildlife-associated recreation;
 2. promote opportunities for hunting and/or expand access to hunting, shooting sports and wildlife-associated recreation on public lands;
 3. improve and enhance agency infrastructure that benefit wildlife and their habitats, that enhance public access to hunting and shooting

sports opportunities on public lands and other related and lawful uses in accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801-6814) and the Great American Outdoors Act (P.L. 115-162);

4. encourage hunting and shooting sports safety, including through development of ranges on public lands;
5. recruit and retain new hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts whose participation helps support wildlife conservation and increased access and opportunities through the North American Model of Conservation;
6. increase public awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation and the social and economic benefits of hunting and the shooting sports; and
7. encourage coordination among the public; the hunting and shooting sports communities; wildlife conservation groups; and Federal, State, Tribal and Territorial governments to better utilize natural resources while providing for conservation.

(d) When requested by the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) in consultation with the Council Chairperson, performing a variety of assessments or reviews of policies, programs, and efforts through the Council's designated subcommittees or workgroups for consideration and approval of full Council.

The Council will meet at least two times per year. The Secretary will appoint members and alternates to the Council to serve up to a 3-year term. The Council will not exceed 18 primary representative members, up to 18 alternate representative members, and 4 ex officio members. Ex officio members will include:

- Secretary of the Interior or designated Department of the Interior representatives;
- Secretary of Agriculture or designated Department of Agriculture representative; and
- Executive Director, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

The Secretary will select remaining members from among, but not limited to, the organization/interests listed below. These members must be senior-level representatives of their organization and/or have the ability to represent their designated constituencies.

- State fish and wildlife management agencies;
- Wildlife and habitat conservation/management organizations;
- Shooting sports interests;
- Gamebird hunting organizations;
- Waterfowl hunting organizations;
- Big game hunting organizations;
- U.S hunters actively engaged in domestic and/or international hunting conservation;
- The firearms or ammunition manufacturing industry;
- Archery interests;
- Wildlife-associated recreation interests;
- Tourism, outfitter, and/or guide businesses related to hunting and/or wildlife conservation;
- Tribal resource management organizations;
- Agriculture interests;
- Ranching interest; and
- Veterans service organizations.

Member Terms and Vacancies to Fill

Each representative member is appointed to serve up to a 3-year term.

Nominations are sought to fill 18 primary representative member positions and up to 18 alternate representative member positions. We are requesting nominations to fill vacancies to represent all organizations/interests listed above.

Nomination Method and Information

Nominations should include a cover letter and resume providing an adequate description of the nominee's qualifications, including information that would enable DOI to make an informed decision regarding meeting the membership requirements of the Council and the national interest potentially represented, and to permit DOI to contact a potential member.

Members of the Council serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council or subcommittee business that the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) approves may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5703, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Federal Government service.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF COMMENTS: Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

PUBLIC INTEREST DETERMINATION: Pursuant to 41 U.S.C. § 102-3.60(a) to establish, renew, reestablish, or merge a discretionary (agency discretion) advisory committee, an agency must first consult with the General Services Administration's Committee Management Secretariat (the Secretariat) and, as part of the consultation,

provide a written public interest determination approved by the head of the agency to the Secretariat with a copy to the Office of Management and Budget. In addition, pursuant to 41 U.S.C. § 102-3.35, an agency shall follow the same consultation process and document in writing the same determination of need before creating a subcommittee under a discretionary committee that is not made up entirely of members of a parent advisory committee.

Information on the following factors for the committee is provided to the Secretariat to demonstrate that establishing the committee is in the public interest:

1. Annual budget

Up to \$80,000 (per the committee charter).

a. Federal personnel on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis

Up to 0.5 FTE

b. Other Federal internal costs

Approximately \$63,000

c. Proposed payments to members

\$0

d. Proposed number of members

4 Ex officio members, 18 primary members, and up to 18 alternate members

e. Reimbursable costs

Approximately \$17,000

2. If applicable, the total dollar value of grants expected to be recommended during the fiscal year

N/A

3. Criteria for selecting members to ensure the committee has the necessary expertise and fairly balanced membership

Council membership, balance, and individual perspective and expertise are in large part dictated by the committee charter. To ensure balance, appointees will be selected from among, but not limited to, the national interest groups listed in the charter. Additionally, committee members must be senior-level representatives of their organizations and/or have the ability to represent their designated constituency. The membership make-up of the Council assures a range of perspectives and expertise reflecting the breadth of its responsibilities as identified in the charter.

4. List of all other Federal advisory committees of the agency

Acadia National Park Advisory Commission

Advisory Committee on Landslides

Alaska Resource Advisory Council

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

Arizona Resource Advisory Council

Avi Kwa Ame National Monument Advisory Committee

Baa'j Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni-Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon National Monument Advisory Committee

Bears Ears National Monument Advisory Committee

Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area Advisory Council

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Bureau of Indian Affairs Advisory Board for Exceptional Children

California Desert District Advisory Council

Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission

Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park Advisory Commission

Central California Resource Advisory Council

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Advisory Council

Committee for the Preservation of the White House

Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Eastern Washington Resource Advisory Council

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Public Advisory Committee

Geologic Mapping Advisory Committee

Gettysburg National Military Park Advisory Commission

Gila Box Riparian National Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Advisory Committee

Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council

Idaho Resource Advisory Council

Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Advisory Commission

John Day-Snake Resource Advisory Council

Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Commission

Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Mary McLeod Bethune Council House National Historic Site Advisory
Commission

McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area Advisory Council

Missouri Basin Resource Advisory Council

Mojave-Southern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

National Geospatial Advisory Committee

National Park of American Samoa Advisory Board

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Aniakchak National
Monument

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Cape Krusenstern
National Monument

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Denali National Park
National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Gates of the Arctic
National Park

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Kobuk Valley National
Park

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Lake Clark National
Park

National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission-Wrangell-St. Elias
National Park

National Volcano Early Warning System Advisory Committee

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Review Committee

North Slope Science Initiative Science Technical Advisory Panel

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Northern California District Resource Advisory Council

Northern New Mexico Resource Advisory Council

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Northwest Resource Advisory Council

Preservation Technology and Training Board

Rio Puerco Management Committee

Rocky Mountain Resource Advisory Council

San Rafael Swell Recreation Advisory Council

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Advisory Committee

Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Sierra Front Northern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Southeast Oregon Resource Advisory Council

Southern New Mexico Resource Advisory Council

Southwest Resource Advisory Council

Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

Steens Mountain Advisory Council

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Advisory Committee

The Wyoming Resource Advisory Council

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Advisory Council

Utah Resource Advisory Council

Wekiva River System Advisory Management Committee

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Western Montana Resource Advisory Council

Western Oregon Resource Advisory Council

Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

5. Justification that the information or advice provided by the Federal advisory committee or subcommittee is not available from another Federal advisory committee, another Federal Government source, or any other more cost-effective and less burdensome source

Because of the professional affiliations, expertise, and experiences of members of the Council, it is uniquely positioned to provide consensus advice to the Departments related to hunting, recreational shooting, and wildlife conservation. Members of the committee typically have years of professional experience as

managers, advocates, and participants in the wildlife conservation and recreation field, or as leaders within the recreation associated industries. There is no equivalent body of advisers empaneled to address the specific set of issues the committee is tasked with, or to assist the Departments with the specific subject matter by providing consensus, group advice. Empaneling the committee serves efficiency and cost-effective bureau operations through the time and cost savings realized by having a group of advisors meet to offer expert advice versus multiple individual meetings to receive stakeholder input. Cost-effectiveness is increased by limiting the number of in-person meetings, and the increased utilization of on-line meeting platforms to conduct business. Lastly, implementation of the committee's consensus recommendations frequently negates the need to proceed through additional public comment and other public input processes, thereby saving time and money.

6. If the consultation is a committee renewal, a summary of the previous accomplishments of the committee and the reasons it needs to continue

N/A

7. Explanation of why the committee/subcommittee is essential to the conduct of agency business

Members of the Council typically have years of experience as managers, advocates, and participants in the wildlife conservation and wildlife-associated recreation fields, or in the wildlife-associated recreation industries. There is no equivalent body of advisers empaneled to assist the Departments in improving the development and implementation of policies that benefit wildlife and their habitats, as well as policies to increase opportunities for hunting, recreational shooting, and other wildlife-associated recreation. Given the Council member knowledge of government conservation law, policy, and processes, the committee

can provide actionable advice and recommendations to the Federal Government on creating, expanding, and maintaining hunting, recreational shooting sports, and wildlife-associated recreational opportunities on Federal lands and waters. The Council also provides advice to maintain and increase the conservation and economic benefits derived from these recreational activities.

The Council serves the public interest by offering actionable recommendations to improve the Federal Government's efforts to implement laws and policies that maximize the core functions and purposes of Federal agency efforts to conserve and sustain wildlife populations and their habitats, and to provide access to and recreational opportunity on public lands. Because of the professional affiliations, expertise, and experiences of committee members, it is uniquely positioned to provide consensus advice to the Departments related to hunting, recreational shooting, and wildlife conservation.

In conclusion, this public interest determination documents that establishing the committee is in the public interest, essential to the conduct of agency business, and that the information to be obtained is not already available through another advisory committee or source within the Federal Government.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT: I hereby certify that the Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation and Access Council is necessary, in the public interest, and is in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture under 43 U.S.C. 1457 and provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701), the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd), Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (16 U.S.C. 8401 et seq.), other Acts applicable to specific bureaus, and Executive Order 13443 (August 17, 2007), "Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation."

Authority: 5 U.S.C. Ch. 10.

Doug Burgum,
Secretary, Department of the Interior.

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