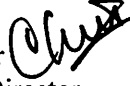


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members  
FROM: Chris Oliver   
Executive Director  
DATE: November 30, 2010  
SUBJECT: Pacific Walrus in Bristol Bay

ESTIMATED TIME 8 HOURS ALL D-1 ITEMS
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

Initial review of an analysis of options to establish a closure area around a new Pacific walrus haulout on Hagemeister Island in northern Bristol Bay.

**BACKGROUND**

At the April 2009 meeting, the Council passed a motion based on a request from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to describe the process for designating a walrus protection zone around a new, emerging walrus haulout on the southwest side of Hagemeister Island. The USFWS expressed concern over potential disturbance to walrus using this haulout from groundfish fishing activities in the northern Bristol Bay region. Hagemeister Island is part of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, which is administered by the USFWS.

The Council received a staff discussion paper in December 2009 that provided information on the new Hagemeister Island walrus haulout and options for designating a protection zone around this haulout. After considering the options outlined in the paper, and public comment, the Council requested that staff prepare an analysis of alternative closure areas around the Hagemeister Island haulout, and referred this issue to the Joint Protocol Committee. The Joint Protocol Committee reviewed the alternatives in October 2010, and noted that while the Board of Fisheries can regulate fishing activity in State waters, it cannot regulate vessel transit or other human activities in State waters. The Council noted that most disturbances to walrus are likely from activities not related to Council-managed fisheries, and requested that the USFWS engage in discussions with the Alaska Board of Fisheries and other entities in northern Bristol Bay that may be sources of disturbances to walrus in this area.

The Council is scheduled to make an initial review of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA at this meeting. The Executive Summary of the analysis is attached as Item D-1(c)(1).