



**ANCC**  
← ALASKA NANNUT CO-MANAGEMENT COUNCIL →

# Introduction & Overview of Co-Management Efforts

Ice Seal Committee Meeting

February 4-5, 2021



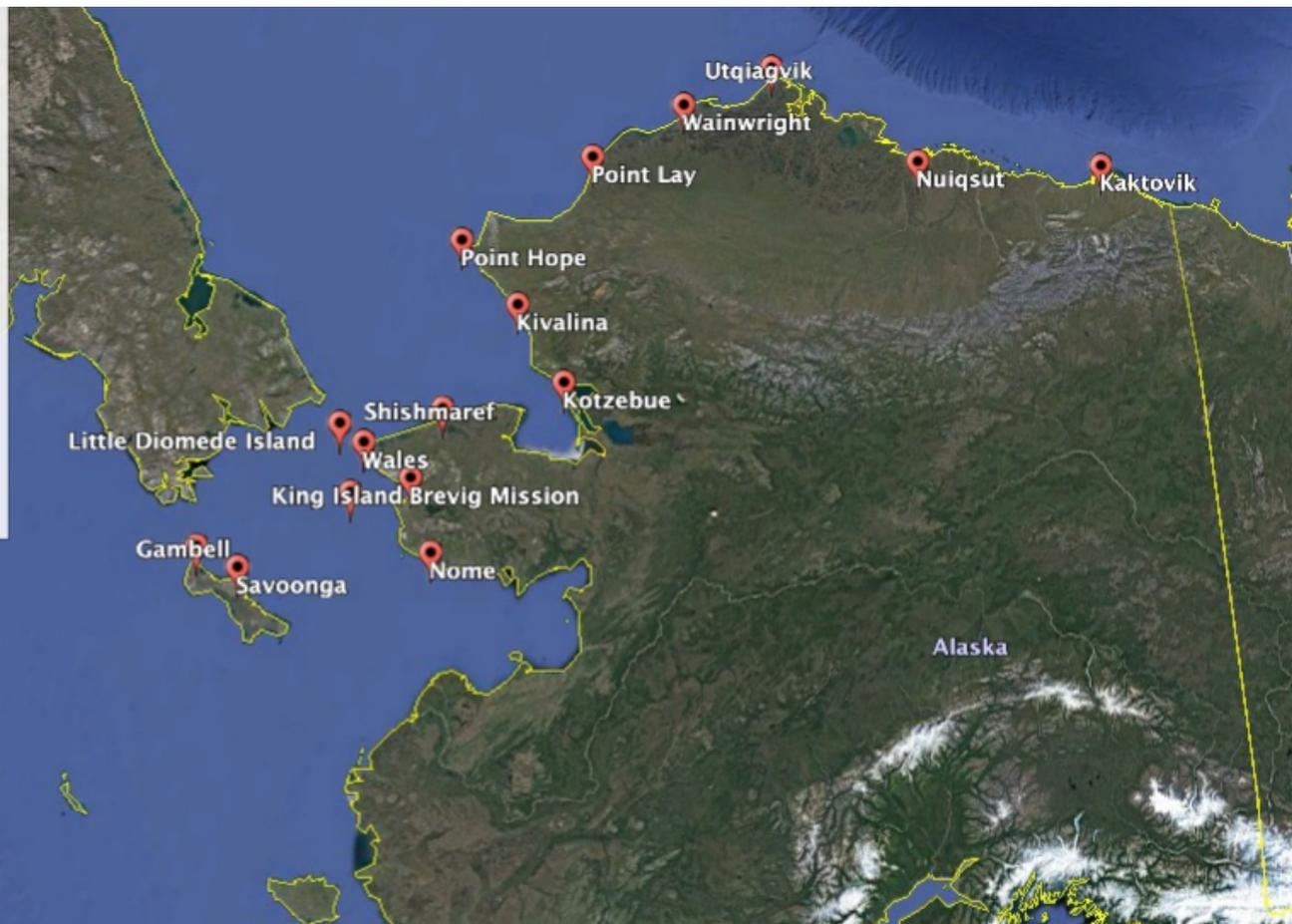
# Recent History of Alaska Native Polar Bear Co-Management

- 1972: Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)
- 1988: Inuvialuit-Inupiat (I-I) Polar Bear Management Agreement for Southern Beaufort Sea Polar Bears signed between Inuvialuit of Canada and Inupiat of the North Slope (via North Slope Borough Wildlife Department)
- 1994: Alaska Nanuuq Commission (ANC) formed to represent all Alaska Natives on polar bear co-management issues
- 1997: ANC entered into Cooperative Agreement with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- 2000: U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Agreement signed, including provisions formalizing the involvement of the ANC in the management of the Alaska-Chukotka stock of polar bears
- 2016: ANC dissolves due to financial issues and a decision by USFWS that ANC will no longer be funded by USFWS or recognized as a co-management partner
- 2017: ANCC formed

## ANCC Communities

ANCC Includes 15 Member Tribes:

- Native Village of Kaktovik
- Native Village of Nuiqsut
- Native Village of Barrow (location Utqiagvik)
- Native Village of Wainwright
- Native Village of Point Lay
- Native Village of Point Hope
- Native Village of Kivalina
- Native Village of Kotzebue
- Native Village of Shishmaref
- Native Village of Diomedes
- Native Village of Wales
- King Island Native Community (location Nome)
- Native Village of Brevig Mission
- Native Village of Gambell
- Native Village of Savoonga

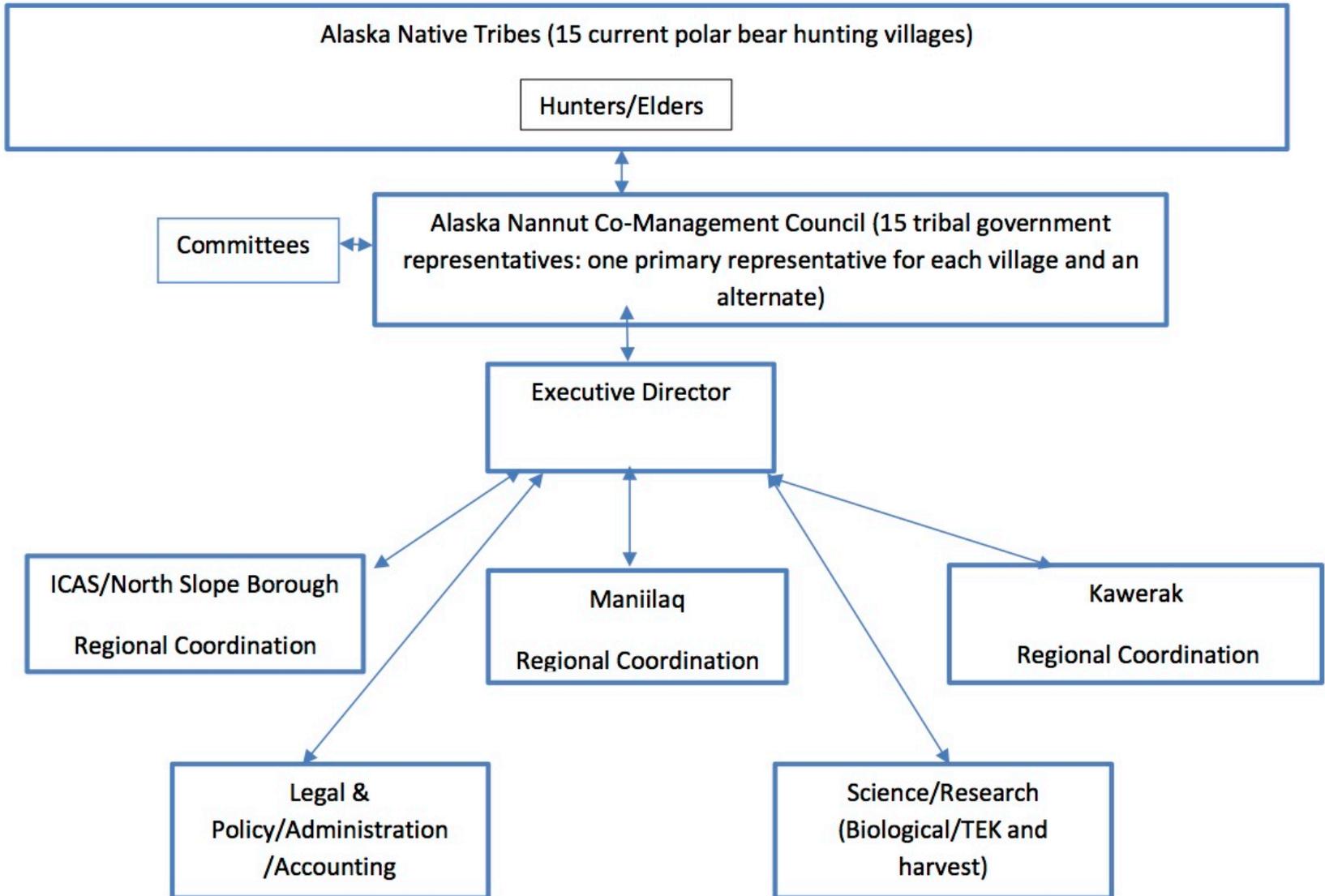


Preamble of ANCC Constitution:

“We, the polar bear hunting Tribes of Alaska, proclaim that polar bears are essential to our cultural, nutritional and spiritual well-being and our way of life. We recognize our responsibility and authority to exercise our indigenous rights to act as stewards of our traditional territories and resources. Since time immemorial, we have cared for the hunting of polar bears throughout our territories. We hereby reaffirm our commitment to respect, conserve, and manage polar bears while protecting the hunt and traditional uses of polar bears and their habitat based on our knowledge and appropriate scientific principles. Founded on Tribal unity, and striving for consensus, we form the Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council for the health and well-being of our Tribal members, our future generations, and for the polar bears.”

# About ANCC

# Alaska Nannut Co-Management Council (ANCC) Organization Structure





## ANCC's Work Since 2017

- Develop organizational infrastructure: office, staff, policies, etc.
- Work with USFWS to establish/formalize co-management relationship
  - Negotiations on a co-management agreement underway since early 2018
  - Developed DRAFT Harvest Management Plan for Chukchi Sea Polar Bears
- Participate in ongoing processes related to polar bear management
  - U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission and Scientific Working Group meetings
  - Inuvialuit-Inupiat Polar Bear meetings
- Conduct outreach among ANCC communities to:
  - Introduce ANCC
  - Provide information and updates
  - Gather feedback to inform ANCC's representation of communities/hunters

# Community Perspectives & Co-Management Efforts

- Need for true co-management
  - Correct the imbalance of power between Alaska Natives and federal co-management partners
- Need for locally-driven harvest management, reporting, and enforcement systems
  - Practical, community-based, culturally appropriate solutions
  - Better outcomes for community and polar bear health
- Concerns:
  - Quota-based management & associated changes to relationship with bears
  - Research impacts to polar bear health and subsistence
  - Safety: habituation of bears due to increased tourism & other activities



# Priorities Moving Forward

- **Finalize Co-Management Agreement between ANCC & USFWS:**
  - To include meaningful language around:
    - Powers & authorities, roles & responsibilities, communication
    - ANCC-led harvest management plan for Alaska-Chukotka subpopulation
    - Clear language empowering local, civil-based enforcement
- **Ensure Strong Communication Between ANCC & Communities/Hunters**
  - Build and maintain communication capacity: website, social media, newsletter, etc.
  - Continue community meetings:
    - Next round to focus on draft harvest management plan concept for Alaska-Chukotka subpopulation (on hold due to COVID)
- **Ensure Alaska Native voices are meaningfully represented in all decision-making processes related to polar bear management and research in Alaska**
  - ANCC is seeking to facilitate greater participation by Alaska and Chukotkan Native representatives at the 2021 U.S.-Russia Polar Bear Commission meeting, to be held in Nome

# DRAFT Co-Management Agreement

- Describes individual and collective authorities and responsibilities of ANCC and USFWS in relation to polar bears, as well as a structure for communication and collaborative partnerships on various aspects of polar bear management
- Chukchi Sea Polar Bears:
  - ANCC will develop and implement HMP (in alignment with U.S.-Russia Agreement), which will be exclusive enforcement mechanism for managing subsistence harvest
- Southern Beaufort Sea Polar Bears:
  - ANCC aiming for jurisdiction over subsistence-related violations
- Both populations:
  - Harvest monitoring and reporting (ANCC), population monitoring and research (both), outreach and communications (mainly ANCC)

# Co-Management Agreement: Next Steps

- Continue negotiations with USFWS until we reach agreement
- Conduct outreach with ANCC tribes/hunters to ensure that HMP is on the right track
- Prior to finalizing Co-Management Agreement, conduct additional outreach with tribes to ensure they are comfortable with provisions
- Once Co-Management Agreement is finalized, enter into Cooperative Agreement with USFWS to fund co-management activities pursuant to Co-Management Agreement
  - This will include finalizing and implementing HMP

# Tribal Harvest Monitoring Program (THMP)

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Framework developed by ANCC board through the process of drafting the HMP

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ANCC is currently in discussions with USFWS on organizing this program on a stand-alone basis in the near-term, as the Co-Management Agreement and HMP continue to be developed

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Once the HMP is finalized, this program would already be in place to help support harvest management under the HMP

# Draft THMP Framework

- Statewide program, centrally coordinated by ANCC to:
  - Conduct marking/tagging of polar bear hides/skulls as required by federal regulations
  - Collect harvest data
  - Collect Indigenous Knowledge and observations from hunters
  - Collect biological samples and measurements to contribute to scientific research
- Logistics:
  - Tribal Harvest Monitors & Alternates hired by ANCC in each community to conduct marking/tagging and collect information listed above
  - Hunters compensated with vouchers at local store for gas/ammo
  - Data collected and maintained by ANCC, potentially utilizing an app

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