

**SOUTHEAST ALASKA, SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA,
KODIAK/ALEUTIANS, BRISTOL BAY, YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA,
WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA, SEWARD PENINSULA, NORTHWEST
ARCTIC, EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA, AND NORTH SLOPE
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS**

Meeting Minutes

Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center
600 W 7th Avenue
Anchorage, AK
March 5-6, 2024

Invocation and Land Acknowledgement:

Wilson Justin provided an invocation and land acknowledgement.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment:

*Asterisk * identifies if present via teleconference.*

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 8:40 a.m. In attendance were the following members from their respective Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils:

- Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Hernandez, Vice Chair Needham, and members Casipit, Kitka, Howard, Douville, Phillips, Slater, Smith, Wagner, and Sandhofer. With eleven of the thirteen seated members in attendance, quorum was established by this Council.
- Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Encelewski, Vice Chair McLaughlin, Secretary Opheim, and members Holsten, Kocan, Roberts, Selanoff, Zadra, and Caminer. With nine of the ten seated members in attendance, quorum was established for this Council.
- Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Vice Chair Skinner, Secretary Price, and Members Wasley, Holmes, Chernoff, Hayden, Richardson, and Rohrer. With nine of the ten seated members in attendance, quorum was established by this Council.
- Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Morris Lyon, Vice Chair Dunaway, Secretary Wilson, and members Anderson, Nukwak, Trefon, and Rhyshek. With seven of the nine seated members in attendance, quorum was established for this Council.
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council, Chair Oney, Secretary Slats, and members Peter, Sr., Evan, Alexie, Andrew, Morgan, Parks, Rogers, Hoffman, and Cleveland. With eleven of the thirteen seated members in attendance, a quorum was established for this Council.
- Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Reakoff, Vice Chair Pelkola, Secretary Vent Sr., and members Walker and Gervais. With five of the nine seated members in attendance, quorum was established for this Council.

- Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Green, Secretary Seetot, Jr., and members Moses and Reynolds. With four of the nine seated members in attendance the Council did not establish quorum and could not participate in any votes during this joint session.
- Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Chair Baker, Vice Chair Kramer, and members Woods, Schaeffer, Shiedt, Armstrong, Cleveland, Howarth, Ramoth, and Pattee. With ten of the ten seated members in attendance, quorum was established by this Council.
- Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, Vice Chair Wright, Secretary Woodruff, and members Bassich, Burk, Evans, Jagow, Shockley, and Woodruff were in attendance. With 8 out of 9 seated members present, a quorum was established for this Council.
- North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, members Kippi, Ita, Frantz, Williams, and Adams (Adams participated by phone). With five of the seven seated members in attendance, quorum was established by this Council.

Thomas Baker, Chair of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, and Nanci Morris-Lyon, Chair of the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council co-Chaired the meeting.

Attendees:

*Asterisk * identifies if present via teleconference.*

- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Ameer Howard, Katerina Wessels, Orville Lind, Robbin La Vine, Scott Ayers, Lisa Grediagin, Thomas Plank, Dr. Hannah Voorhees, Brooke McDavid, Leigh Honig, DeAnna Perry, Nissa Pilcher, Lisa Hutchinson, Gisela Chapa, Dr. Brent Vickers, Brian Ubelaker, Kendra Holman, Jarred Stone, Liz Williams, Pippa Kenner, Dr. Jason Roberts, Justin Koller, Kevin Foley, Cory Graham, Kristen Morrow, George Pappas, Karen Hyer, Janel Day, Derek Hildreth
- Federal Subsistence Board (Board): Anthony Christianson, Charles Brower, Rhonda Pitka, Sara Boario, Sarah Creachbaum, Steve Cohn, Jolene John, Greg Risdahl
- DOI Solicitor's Office: Bob Anderson, Ken Lord
- National Park Service (NPS): Kyle Joly*, Emily Creek, Maija Katak Lukin, Eva Patton, Kim Jochum, Evguenia Anichtchenko, Jeanette Koelsch
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Geoff Byersdorf, Dona Bach, Rebecca Shaftel
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS): Ashley Bolwerk, Zayleen Kalalo, Jacob Musselwhite, Rob Cross, Andrew Sanders
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Jill Klein, Stefanie Brady, Karlin Itchoak, Crystal Leonetti, Tobi Slaughter, Boyd Blihovde, Ken Gates
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): Glenn Chen
- Office of the Secretary (OS): Raina Thiele, Sara Taylor
- Sitka Conservation Society: Heather Bauscher
- Public: Roll call for the public was not taken at the meeting.

Review and Adopt Agenda:

Motion by Member Rogers, seconded by Member [*Unidentified Voice*], to adopt the agenda as read.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

Regional Reports:

Don Hernandez, *Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, highlighted some of the Regional priorities that the Council has been recently engaged in such as: addressing concerns on the roadless proposed rule for the Tongass National Forest, being actively engaged in the Alaska Board of Fisheries and Alaska Board of Game process, working with the State on a Wolf Management Plan, voicing concerns on local food security and sovereignty, raising concerns on large mining development in British Columbia and its impacts on Transboundary watersheds, and supporting youth engagement in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. In future, the Council looks forward to providing a recommendation on a pending proposal to rescind the non-rural designation of Ketchikan and participating in the revision of the Tongass National Forest Plan. Lastly, the Council expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the All-Council meeting.

Greg Encelewski, *Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, shared some of the Council's concerns, which include the threat of climate change on terrestrial and marine subsistence resources, and concerns over how to equitably distribute subsistence resources amongst growing populations. The Council is paying attention to how the Board's nonrural policy is being implemented as well as how to mitigate conflict between federally qualified subsistence users and sport hunters and fishermen in the patchwork of land ownership and in marine waters in, by far, the most populous region in the state. Looking ahead, the Council will continue to encourage research on climate change and how it affects subsistence, advocate for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Funds, and encourage efforts to get more youth involved in the Council and the regulatory process itself. In closing, the Council expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the All-Council meeting.

Natasha Hayden, *Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Member, expressed the Council's concerns of climate change and its effects on subsistence. She also highlighted the Council's concerns on the alarming decline of the Sockeye Salmon run in the Buskin River since 2020, the escalating presence of invasive species across the Kodiak/Aleutians region, the unusual weather conditions, the delayed berry production of salmonberries and blueberries, the lack of enforcement in some of the Regions' communities in regard to subsistence, and their concern over their exclusion from participating in tribal consultations and talking circles regarding the OSM move. In forethought, the Council hopes for the collaboration of Councils on shared resources and issues that overlap across Regions, and to overcome Federal barriers such as the onerous process to obtain Federal subsistence permits.

Dan Dunaway, *Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Vice Chair, shared the Council's overall concerns with salmon runs highlighting that kings (Chinook Salmon) and Chum Salmon are of concern across the region, declining silver (Coho Salmon) and Pink Salmon runs, and silvers (Coho Salmon) are reportedly smaller in many of the rivers around the Region. He further explained that while

moose opportunities are good, Mulchatna caribou continue to be of grave concern, and the Council support intensive predator management for the benefit of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. Additionally, he shared the Council has requested a Solicitors review on proposals to verify if Title VIII of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) is being followed to keep the process more efficient. The Council is also supportive of the added public member seats proposed to be added to the Board, and request that the Council appointment process be accelerated to improve recruitment and retention. The Council also supports the retention of D-1 status on BLM lands and the completion of the King Cove road. Lastly, the Council expressed their appreciation the opportunity to participate in the All-Council meeting.

Raymond Oney, *Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, spoke of the continuing Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Salmon crisis and the lack of collaborative management across agencies and jurisdictions. The Council requested the Board to elevate these issues to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture (Secretaries) for meaningful action and urged all the Councils to address the bycatch of Chum Salmon, Chinook Salmon, and halibut; reduce bottom dragging by the trawl fleet; and to request two voting subsistence representatives added to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The Council is in support of a reduction in predators to help the Mulchatna Caribou Herd recover. The Council also expressed concerns about increased competition with non-local hunters for moose in their region and the outdated information included in the Donlin Gold Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS does not accurately represent the significant negative impacts that a project of that magnitude will have on subsistence and traditional cultural practices. Furthermore, the Council requests the input of the Solicitor to review the current management situation across all jurisdictions for compliance with the subsistence priority in Title VIII of ANILCA and solicits input from the Secretaries to initiate collaborative ecosystem-based salmon management across jurisdictions, both in-river and the marine environments.

Jack Reakoff, *Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, spoke of some cross-regional issues plaguing all Councils. The Council is concerned regarding marine bycatch, unsustainable numbers of hatchery released salmon into waters that are already undergoing difficulty due to climate change, and that subsistence users have been taking the brunt of salmon restrictions and carrying burden of conservation. Chair Reakoff also shared cross regional concerns over Dall sheep and caribou populations as well as how they are managed, how population and composition studies are carried out, and that Traditional and Ecological Knowledge (TEK) should be better incorporated into management and scientific studies. He also urged the Board to keep science involved in caribou management and incorporate TEK. He further commented that caribou harvest must take into account adverse weather events that will depress numbers of calves. He stated that, like the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, OSM should also have a Wildlife Resources Monitoring Program so Councils can help determine priority information needs for wildlife, which will be used to determine funding distribution just like it is done for fisheries. He also mentioned concerning declines in Dall sheep populations due to deep snow. He has observed the delay in lamb production a month behind, impacting their survival into the winter.

Louis Green, Jr., *Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, spoke of the Council's concern on the incidental take of marine mammals during the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands trawl fleet fishery. Marine mammals are heavily relied on as subsistence foods, particularly while the Region experiences poor salmon runs. The Council has made the argument that in times of shortages, no amount of intercepted or killed marine mammals in these fisheries could be determined to have a negligible impact and requests NOAA to take into consideration subsistence needs and availability of other food sources before making that determination. Likewise, the Council pointed the discrepancies between commercial and subsistence fishing, also stating that trawlers should not be allowed to fish in times of low salmon yields in the Region. He further stated that lower salmon numbers not only impact subsistence users but have a widespread impact across the ecosystem. The Council urges for changes in regulations governing the number of salmon intercepted or thrown overboard as unusable bycatch in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands fishery, and requested Federal and State agencies to manage commercial fishing differently and make serious efforts to recover salmon runs.

Thomas Baker, *Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Chair, stated that the Council shares many of the issues that were brought up by other Councils. In the Northwest Arctic Region, caribou were late and scarce, they also experience the hardships of the rising cost of fuel on subsistence, not having enough salmon and fish not being as accessible. Still, one of the greatest concerns from the Council is the continuing user conflicts between subsistence users and sport hunters. He further expressed the Council's concerns regarding non-local hunters being brought closer to calving grounds of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Chair Baker also shared that, as the Representative at the Alaska House for District 40, he has introduced legislation (House Joint Resolution No. 22) proposing a Constitutional Amendment to the Alaska State Constitution to establish subsistence priority for rural users.

Charlie Wright, *Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council* Vice Chair, conveyed the hardships that the people of the Yukon River are experiencing as their subsistence needs have not been met for many years. The Council urges all management bodies to collaborate across jurisdictional boundaries and to take management actions that are precautionary, account for climate change, and are done in hand with Tribes through co-stewardship and co-management – particularly to rebuild the salmon populations. The Council is in support of a legal review of how subsistence needs are being met in Alaska as mandated by the State Constitution and ANILCA Title VIII. The Council would like to see the development of an ecosystem-based salmon recovery plan, including strategies for hatchery reduction and tribal co-stewardship. They further support actions such as the proposed rule to add three public member seats to the Board, the need to limit salmon bycatch in intercept fisheries, a review of the Yukon River Agreement by OSM and the Board, and for OSM to report the true positions of the Councils at other meetings such as the Alaska Board of Fisheries and North Pacific Fishery Management Council. The Council asks OSM and the Board to support the Councils' specific requests to reduce salmon bycatch in intercept fisheries and to engage the Federal Subsistence Management Program with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Marine Fisheries Service. The Council is deeply concerned with the peoples' inability to meet their subsistence needs in the Region.

Brower Frantz, *North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Member*, stated their desire to ensure the protection of the animals that migrate north as they gave them their existence as People. He further stated the Council is concerned with proposals related to the Western Artic Caribou Herd that want to reduce the numbers of caribou harvested locally but do not limit the harvest of non-local sport hunters, nor address the large influx of fly-in hunters and user conflicts. It was shared that closures in Unit 23 shifted hunting pressures north of the Brooks Range into the Region, and that residents have witnessed disruptions in the herd's migration by guides and transporters who strategically place fly-in hunters on known caribou routes. The Council also shared that despite having a year of great hunts with other species in 2023, climate change continues to have great impacts on the Region's food security.

Office of the Secretary of the Interior Report:

Raina Thiele, Senior Advisor for Alaskan Affairs and Strategic Priority, and Robert Anderson, Solicitor with the Department of the Interior, presented information on and answered questions regarding Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska – Subpart B: Federal Subsistence Board Membership Proposed Rule.

Service Awards:

Council members were recognized for their service on the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The following service awards were presented at the meeting:

5 years of service: Thomas Baker (Northwest Arctic Council)

10 years of service: Verne Cleveland, Sr. (Northwest Arctic Council), Albert Howard (Southeast Alaska Council)

15 years of service: Richard Wilson (Bristol Bay Council), Richard Koso (Kodiak/Aleutians Council), Cathy Needham (Southeast Alaska Council)

20 years of service: Don Woodruff and Andy Bassich (Eastern Interior Council), Nancy Morris Lyons and Dan Dunaway (Bristol Bay Council), Sam Rohrer (Kodiak/Aleutians Council), Greg Encelewski (Southcentral Alaska Council), Don Hernandez, Harvey Kitka, and Mike Douville (Southeast Alaska Council)

30 years of service: Patricia Phillips (Southeast Alaska Council), Elmer Seetot, Jr. (Seward Peninsula Council), Jack Reakoff (Western Interior Alaska Council)

The following members were also recognized for their service:

Over 5 years of service: Natasha Hayden, Coral Chernoff, Rebecca Skinner, and Christopher Price (Kodiak/Aleutians Council), Richard Slats and Phillip Peter, Sr. (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council), William Trefon (Bristol Bay Council), Steve Oomittuk (North Slope Council)

Over 10 years of service: Michael Kramer (Northwest Arctic Council)

Over 15 years of service: Tim Gervais (Western Interior Alaska Council), John Andrew (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council)

Over 20 years of service: Pat Holmes (Kodiak/Aleutians Council), “Attamuk” Enoch Shiedt (Northwest Arctic Council), Raymond Oney (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council)

Over 25 years of service: Della Trumble (Kodiak/Aleutians Council)

Youth Leaders in Subsistence Management:

Katerina Wessels, Supervisory Program Analyst with OSM, provided an update on Council charters and announced the addition of one non-voting youth seat to all ten Councils. Subsequently, the Councils received a presentation on the Arctic Youth Ambassadors Program from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a presentation on the Southeast Alaska youth engagement program and Policy and Procedures Practicum Course focused on subsistence processes from the Forest Service and Sitka Conservation Society.

Co-Stewardship:

The Councils heard a presentation on co-stewardship from several Federal agencies: USFWS, BLM, NPS, and USFS, as well as a the USFWS presentation on Gravel-to-Gravel Keystone Initiative that is coordinated through the USFWS and the BLM to build a stronger foundation for co-stewardship by bringing together the Indigenous Knowledge and western science and to invest in the foundational science and projects needs to respond to salmon crisis and to heal the boarder ecosystem.

Training:

Council members received training on the following topics:

- ANILCA, Title VII
- Federal and State Regulatory Processes
- Council Member Roles and Responsibilities
- Roberts Rules of Order (partial training)
- Customary and Traditional Use Determinations and the Section 804 User Prioritization

Other Business:

The Councils held a joint discussion on cross-regional and Statewide issues of concern for subsistence users, such as salmon, caribou, need for Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) D-1 lands protection, fair compensation of Council members participating in the meetings, Board correspondence process issues and concerns, and the necessity to revise the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Furthermore, the Councils discussed outlines for the following six joint letters to be

sent to the Board with a request to elevate to the Secretaries where appropriate:

- Timely and meaningful action related to the bycatch and interception of subsistence resources in commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea
- Establishing a fair compensation policy for Council member time spent attending and providing their knowledge and expertise at the meetings
- Revisions to the Board correspondence process, especially when the correspondence requests elevation of the issues to the Secretaries
- Elevation to the Secretary of the Interior on the need to retain ANCSA D1 lands protections to safeguard fish and wildlife habitat and large intact landscapes that support subsistence resources and opportunities
- Address caribou issues statewide
- Consider necessary revisions to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act.

The Councils decided to discuss these letters in more detail in their individual meetings on March 7-8, 2024, and then vote individually on which specific letters they will sign.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m. on March 6, 2024.

Katerina Wessels, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Certified by the Chair 6/17/2024

Thomas Baker, Chair
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Certified by the Chair 6/13/2024

Nanci Morris Lyons, Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

A certification request for these DRAFT minutes was sent to the Chair(s) on 05/29/2024.

These minutes will be formally considered by the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils at their next meetings. Any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at each meeting.

- Southeast Alaska Council: October 22 – 24, 2024 in Ketchikan
- Southcentral Alaska Council: October 10 – 11, 2024 in Anchorage

- Kodiak/Aleutians Council: September 4 – 6, 2024 in Unalaska
- Bristol Bay Council: October 29 – 30, 2024 in Dillingham
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Council: August 21 – 23, 2024 in Bethel
- Western Interior Council: October 2 – 3, 2024 in Galena.
- Seward Peninsula Council: October 24 – 25, 2024 in Nome.
- Northwest Arctic Council: October 28 – 29, 2024 in Kotzebue.
- Eastern Interior Alaska Council: October 8 – 10, 2024 in Tanana
- North Slope Council: August 19 – 20, 2024 in Utqiagvik.

Any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcripts, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Katerina Wessels at 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3885, email katerina_wessels@fws.gov.