

Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199
Phone: (907) 786-3888, Fax: (907) 786-3898
Toll-Free: 1-800-478-1456

In Reply Refer To:
OSM.A24124

Ben Mulligan
Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99518

Dear Mr. Mulligan,

I write to you on behalf of the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding the Fortymile Caribou Herd.

The Council represents subsistence harvesters of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands and waters in Eastern Interior Alaska Region. It was established by the authority in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Section 805 of ANILCA and the Council's charter establishes the Council's authority to initiate, review and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters related to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife within the region.


The Council held a public meeting October 8-10, 2024, in Fairbanks during which it discussed Fortymile caribou management. Fortymile caribou are an important subsistence resource within the Eastern Interior region, and in some of our rural communities they are one of the most relied on subsistence foods overall, especially given salmon fishing closures. We look forward to the opportunity to send a representative from our Council to the up-coming Harvest Management Coalition meetings and decided to share some initial recommendations ahead of time.

The Council wants to ensure that the communities of Circle and Central have representatives invited to participate in updating the Harvest Management Plan since they are located on the Steese Highway and within the range of the herd. It is unfair that Circle has been excluded from meetings in the past given their reliance on the herd. The Council requests that Canadian Tribes and the Yukon Government should be involved in this round of planning as they were in years past. Our Council was copied on a letter from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in that expressed their support for reconvening the transboundary group.

In terms of management of the herd, the Council feels strongly that non-resident harvest opportunity should be greatly reduced or eliminated in times of low abundance like we are currently experiencing. Alaskan residents should have top priority to harvest to help address food security needs. Additionally, the Council would like to see conservative harvest management strategies that take into account the uncertainties of climate change and attempt to rebuild the herd. Lastly, we would like to see a targeted hunter ethics outreach campaign to educate and remind Fortymile caribou hunters about hunter safety, meat care, and respect of private property.

The Council thanks you for considering our concerns and kindly requests you share our recommendations with the appropriate Fortymile Caribou Herd management staff. We look forward to fruitful discussions on these matters and more when the Harvest Management Coalition convenes. If you have any questions or would like to follow up, please contact me through our Subsistence Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid, at (907) 891-9181 or brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert C. Wright, Sr." The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Robert "Charlie" Wright, Sr.
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Mark Burch, Assistant Director of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Tim Hammond, Field Office Manager, Bureau of Land Management Eastern Interior Field Office
Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management Eastern Interior Field Office
Administrative Record