

# BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

## Meeting Minutes

Dolly Hall  
Naknek, Alaska  
March 8, 2023

### Invocation:

Richard Wilson provided an invocation.

### Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment:

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at 8:37 am. Council members Norman Anderson, Dan Dunaway, Richard Wilson, John Christensen, William Trefon, Robert Hill, and Chair Nanci Morris Lyon were present in person. Lary Hill attended via teleconference. With eight out of eight seated Council members present (Council has two vacant seats) the quorum was established.

### Attendees:

#### *In person:*

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): *Glenn Chen*
- Katmai National Park and Preserve: *Troy Hamon*
- Lake Clark National Park and Preserve: *Susanne Fleek-Green*
- National Park Service (NPS): *Dillon Patterson*
- Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (NWR): *Andy Aderman and Kenton Moos*
- Office of Subsistence (OSM): *Brent Vickers, Kendra Holman, Pippa Kenner, and Leigh Honig*
- Alaska Peninsula and Becharof NWR: *Susan Alexander, Bill Smith, Bo Jensen, Elona Tansky, and Ken Yee*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): *Bronwyn Jones, Amy Vandervoort, and Chance Wilcox*

#### *Via teleconference:*

- Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA): *Cody Larson*
- Lake Clark National Park and Preserve: *Liza Rupp*
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): *Jill Klein*
- Curyung Tribal Council: *Desi Bond, Courtenay Carty*
- OSM: *Robbin La Vine, Jarred Stone, and Katya Wessels*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): *Mark Burch*

### **Review and Adopt Agenda:**

Motion by Member Dunaway, seconded by Member Wilson, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries report on ice associated seals presented by Mike Cameron under Agency Reports section.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Election of Officers:**

Ms. Nanci Morris Lyon was elected the Council's Chair.

Mr. Dan Dunaway was elected the Council's Vice Chair.

Mr. Richard Wilson was elected the Council's Secretary.

### **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:**

Motion by Member Dunaway, seconded by Member Wilson to approve the fall 2022 meeting minutes with the following modifications:

- Add the discussion the Council had on the request Member Anderson made to add an executive session to the fall meeting agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Council Member and Chair Reports:**

Lary Hill of Iliamna reported that his region had received a lot of snow. Iliamna Lake had not frozen yet, making it unsafe to travel. There were good conditions for a couple of weeks during the season for snowmachine travel. Folks in his community had been gathering wood and had yard sales to earn extra money. He also reported he saw a lot of ptarmigan tracks when he traveled south.

Dan Dunaway of Dillingham reported on the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) actions from its November meeting, which included the determination by the BOF to designate the Nushagak Chinook Salmon being a stock of concern. The Nushagak Advisory Committee worked to develop a management plan that will be addressed at the BOF meeting in spring of 2023. Nushagak Chum Salmon could also be listed as a stock of concern given the poor returns. The BOF adopted conservative regulations for the sport fishery for Chinook Salmon. He informed the Council that many of the topics surrounding the Chinook Salmon stock of concern management plans would be addressed at the spring meeting, as well as other proposals he thought the Council would be interested to know. The BOF would be deliberating on statewide proposals and have one proposal that would institute a 5-day reporting requirement that would be onerous for subsistence users who are generally out in fish camps.

Member Dunaway expressed enthusiasm over the State wildlife biologist positions being filled in Dillingham, welcoming John Landsiedel as the Area Biologist and Evelyn Lichwa as the Assistant Area Biologist. He reported that roughly 18 moose had been harvested near Togiak and Twin Hills. Snow conditions had been good, but the rivers did not freeze, resulting in folks not being able to access Unit 17A near Togiak to harvest moose. He had attempted to get out a few times but couldn't cross the river. Ptarmigan appeared to be more abundant, and he saw kids in the community harvesting birds. He reported he's looking forward to hearing reports of the recent caribou collaring effort near Kokhanok from ADF&G. Smelt fishing had been occurring. Member Dunaway was still interested in pursuing submitting a proposal to the Board and/or the Alaska Board of Game to address the sale of bear hides. Member Dunaway listened in on the Board deliberations in January on Wildlife Proposal WP22-40 wolf and wolverine.

Richard Wilson of Naknek reported that the rivers and creeks had not frozen in his area either. They received good snow and kept most of the snow the entire season. Due to the rivers and creeks not being frozen, folks were not able to get out as far to hunt for caribou. He reported that some caribou had been taken during the open season. He reported a rare sighting of an Arctic hare in the Naknek area. Ptarmigan numbers were good, and he expressed happiness at being able to see them fly by the windows and along the road picking up gravel. He thanked the Council for their reports and noted the importance of the reports especially given the interest in opening a season for a resident caribou herd near Kokhanok that was brought up at the fall meeting. Folks in the area are hurting as there's no open season for caribou and there are not many moose in the area that they traditionally harvest. Member Wilson also report that the water was high in the fall making it difficult to harvest fish in the creek systems; the fish had already spawned and then were washed back down stream due to the high-water levels.

William Trefon of Nondalton reported that his area received a lot of snow early in the season; nearly four feet of snow, which hasn't happened in 15 years or more. The heavy snow prevented the streams and swamps to freeze up causing dangerous travel conditions. Only two moose had been harvested the past season and it was only because they had good snowmachines. He reported that his community met their salmon quota, and a lot of people traveled to the Nondalton area to sport fish. The moose hunting season faced the same issues they had been experiencing for a few years in the Chulitna and Mulchatna rivers areas. The Chulitna River is their traditional hunting grounds, often called the dinner table. He reported there is a lot of air traffic coming into Long Lake and flying at low levels. Requests have been made for pilots to fly higher to avoid affecting subsistence hunters and not to fly on corporate land to no avail. He reported that he hasn't seen any ptarmigan in his area, but the hare population is outstanding. The lynx population has also increased; trappers have been harvesting more than they have in many years.

Norman Anderson of Dillingham reported that he traveled to Port Heiden to hunt with fourth-generation family members. He harvested a caribou and shared the meat with Elders in Dillingham. He also got nine gallons of smelt that he'll be sending back to Port Heiden. He reflected on how he has participated in subsistence activities in a customary and traditional manner all his life and how important it is for all the residents to have that opportunity afforded to them to keep subsistence alive. He spoke about the

importance of having access to subsistence hunting and fishing as it is a meager take that is shared among community members that are not able to go out and hunt or fish for themselves.

*John Christensen of Port Heiden* reported that the caribou population in his area is doing great. The caribou spent time in the mountains in early fall and didn't come down to lower elevations until late winter. He reported that 200-300 caribou were seen running through town. The ptarmigan population has increased after being down for a while, which he attributed to the high fox populations targeting the ptarmigan. He reported there had been sighting of a couple hares and lots of bears. He thought the high sighting of bears were due to the caribou being in town. Salmon, shorebirds, and geese were plentiful.

*Robert Hill of Naknek* reported he is waiting to see how the Nushagak commercial fishery will be managed for the upcoming season; there are many concerns over the status of Chinook Salmon. Predictions for the upcoming season indicate lower fish prices, healthy salmon returns, and increased operating costs. He reported that a lot of snow for Naknek and Kokhanok areas. The rodents over the last few winters had benefited from the snow; he reported seeing a higher numbers of voles and ground squirrel sightings, which haven't been seen in many years. He reported seeing ptarmigan and spruce hens; more coyotes had been seen this winter compared to previous years; the lynx population was high; and he had spotted many wolverine tracks. He noted that he hadn't seen as many foxes lately. He also reported that the caribou in the Nonvianuk area appear to be healthy and the numbers have appeared to increase.

*Nanci Morris Lyon of King Salmon* reported Nushagak Chinook Salmon are of great concern. Member Morris Lyon had spent time on committees that discussed and developed a proposed management plan that provided recommendations for long term changes that will allow the BOF flexibility if population thresholds are met. Ptarmigan sightings have increased. She also reported that she had seen more coyotes in the area during the winter and less wolves. She was unsure if it indicated that coyote numbers were up or if the coyotes relocated to her area. Member Morris Lyon had attended the Board meeting and reported that the deferred wildlife proposal that dealt with allowing snowmachine to be used to harvest wolf and wolverine passed and the new regulation would go into effect July 2023. She was very pleased with the outcome and expressed appreciation for all involved in the lengthy process. She reported the Board meeting was well attended and appreciated hearing reports from other areas. She noted that there were shared concerns between different areas regarding sport fish opportunities intermingling and interfering with subsistence opportunities; she was hopeful moving forward that collectively, solutions could be found. She also reported that there were concerns for Chinook Salmon statewide. There had been many actions taken on Federal public lands to address Chinook Salmon concerns and was hopeful that State managed lands with align with Federal actions to allow for a more collaborative effort of managing the stock.

### **Public Testimony (for complete testimony, please review transcripts for March 8, 2023)**

Adam Grenda informed the Council that he would like to submit a wildlife proposal requesting King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek be added to the communities that are allowed to harvest caribou on Federal public lands in Unit 9E. The Council was in support of Mr. Grenda's proposal.

Courtenay Carty with the Curyung Tribal Council provided an update on the Nushagak Peninsula caribou hunt. The Curyung Tribal Council received eight permits and issued the permits to hunters who agreed to donate the meat back to the Curyung Tribal Council to be distributed to elders in the community of Dillingham. Six caribou had been harvested and returned to the Curyung Tribe for distribution. The Curyung Tribe received over 300 pounds of meat to distribute. The hunt was designed on traditional methods when there are times of shortages, and the priority is to feed the elders in the community. The Council was in support of the innovative and successful program the Curyung Tribal Council had employed.

Kelyn Parlos, a subsistence hunter who participated in the caribou hunt that the Curyung Tribal Council administered, provided his experience with the hunt. Mr. Parlos grew up in Togiak and was taught to take care of their meat, their land, and their people, especially elders. He felt very fortunate to be able to hunt for the community and to utilize his wife's traditional knowledge of the area that aided him in harvesting a bull caribou.

Randy Alvarez notified the Council that the Village of Igiugig will be submitting a proposal to propose opening a hunt for Federally qualified subsistence users in Igiugig for the resident caribou herd. Local observations for over 30 years have indicated that a herd of caribou, associated with the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH), does not migrate out of the Kukoklik Lake and surrounding hills within Katmai National Preserve.

Smiley Knutson provided public testimony regarding the Pikes Ridge Trail boundary in the Katmai National Park. There have been discussions about modifying the park boundaries to put the trail back in use and off park land. The trail has been used for subsistence activities such as hunting and berry picking.

## **Old Business:**

### ***North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference:***

The Council received presentations on the North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference in May 2023 by Ms. Kendra Holman, Office of Subsistence Management.

The Council discussed potential topics for discussion at the conference. Topics the Council requested to be included were management and identification of resident herds versus migratory herds; predator control; funding for wildlife surveys; harvest management strategies; poor harvest reporting; habitat and population thresholds; traditional ecological knowledge; and caribou distribution patterns in relation to village harvest needs.

## **New Business:**

### ***Wildlife Closure Reviews:***

The Council reviewed one regional wildlife closure. Ms. Holman presented the analysis for regional closure review WCR24-04/06 (Unit 9C, remainder closed to caribou hunting except by residents of Unit 9C and Egegik and Unit 9E closed to caribou hunting except by resident of Unit 9E, Nelson Lagoon and Sand Point).

### ***Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals:***

Ms. Holman reviewed the call for Federal wildlife proposals.

Motion by Member Dunaway, seconded by Member Wilson to submit the following wildlife proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board within the 2024-2026 wildlife regulatory cycle:

- Add residents of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek to those eligible to harvest caribou in Unit 9E. These residents have many generations of customary and traditional use of caribou in Unit 9E. Alternative caribou were available in Unit 9C in the Mulchatna caribou herd, but the population of caribou and accessibility to residents of King Salmon, Naknek, and South Naknek have declined.

The motion passed unanimously.

### ***2021 Council Charter Review:***

Leigh Honig, Council Coordinator, reviewed the Council's 2021 Charter. Motion by member Wilson, seconded by member Dunaway, to accept the Charter with no changes. The motion passed unanimously.

### ***Review and approve FY2022 Annual Report:***

Member Wilson motioned to adopt the FY2022 Annual Report with the following additions:

- Concerns for Chinook and Chum salmon abundance; the Nushagak Chinook salmon was determined a stock of management concern. Nushagak Chinook and Chum salmon have failed to achieve the sustainable escapement goal for several years. The Council requested that other tributaries in the Bristol Bay region be added to numeration studies.
- Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) recovery concerns; the MCH as of June 2022 is still below the population objective and the population was lower than 2021 survey information. State and Federal hunting opportunities have been closed since 2019.

The motion passed unanimously.

### ***Federal Subsistence Board Updated Draft Council Correspondence Policy:***

Katya Wessels, OSM Council Coordination Supervisor, reviewed the updated Council Correspondence Policy. The Council was in support of the new language.

### ***Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and Partner for Fisheries Monitoring Program Update:***

Pippa Kenner, OSM Anthropologist, provided an update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring and Partners Programs. There were 15 proposals received for the Partner Program and the Review Panel met in February to determine which application will be funded. OSM will publish a News Release with this information, and the Council will hear an update at the fall 2023 meeting. Open period for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program proposals closed on February 24, 2023. Applications will be reviewed by the Technical Review Committee and summary of project proposals will be presented at the fall 2023 meeting.

### ***Regulatory Cycle Update:***

Ms. Kenner provided updates from the Fisheries Regulatory Cycle. There were no fishery proposals for the region and one closure review for the Chignik area. The Board adopted deferred Wildlife Proposal WP22-40 that allowed the use of snowmachines to approach or pursue wolf and wolverine.

### ***NPS seeks input on proposed changes to 2020 Hunting and Trapping regulations on national preserves in Alaska:***

Susanne Fleek-Green, Superintendent of Lake Clark NPP, updated the Council on the proposed rule for sport hunting on national preserves. The Aniakchak and Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC) submitted formal comments in support of the proposed rule.

### ***Lake Clark National Park and Preserve Subsistence Resource Commission appointment:***

Member Anderson motioned, seconded by Member Dunaway, to appoint William Trefon to the Lake Clark SRC. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Agency Reports:**

- BBNA Update presented by Cody Larson.
- North Pacific Fishery Management Council report presented by Dr. Stram, Senior Scientist, and Dr. Haapala, Tribal Liaison.
- Togiak NWR update presented by Andy Aderman, Wildlife Biologist, Togiak NWR.
- Alaska Peninsula and Becharof NWR:
  - Update presented by Susan Alexander, Refuge Manager.

- Bill Smith, Supervisory Biologist, presented an update on wildlife and fishery projects.
- Bryce Woodruff, Mammal Biologists, presented an update on recent moose and Alaska Hare survey data.
- Katmai National Park and Preserve, Aniakchak National Monument, and Alagnak Wild River:
  - Troy Hamon, Natural Resource Manager, presented an update on wildlife projects.
  - Dillion Patterson provided an update on local SRCs.
- Lake Clark National Park and Preserve:
  - Update presented by Susanne Fleek-Green, Superintendent.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Fisheries presented a report from Mike Cameron on ice associated seals.
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game:
  - Amy Vandervoort, Area Wildlife Biologist, provided an update on wildlife activities in Unit 9.
  - Todd Rinaldi, Management Coordinator, provided an update on wildlife activities in Unit 17.
- Office of Subsistence Management update provided by Brent Vickers, Anthropology Division Supervisor.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Fall 2023 meeting to be held October 24-25, 2023, in Dillingham.

Winter All-Council meeting preferred dates is the week of March 4, 2024, in Anchorage.

Fall 2024 meeting to be held October 29-30 in Dillingham.

*Signature on file in office*

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Leigh Honig, DFO  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

*Signature on file in office*

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Nanci Morris Lyon, Chair  
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its October 24-25, 2023, meeting in Dillingham, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

For a more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Leigh Honig at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-891-9053, email leigh\_honig@fws.gov.