

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Teleconference
Anchorage, Alaska
October 28, 2020

Invocation

Mr. Richard Wilson gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 8:50 am. Council members Ms. Nanci Morris Lyon, Mr. William Trefon, Jr., Mr. Dan Dunaway, Mr. Lary Hill, and Mr. Richard Wilson participated. Ms. Molly Chythlook, and Mr. Robert Larson did not participate and were excused. The Council has three vacant seat(s). A quorum was established with five of seven seated Council members participating by phone.

Attendees:

Via teleconference

- Gayla Hoseth; Dillingham; Bristol Bay Native Association
- Susan Alexander; King Salmon; USFWS Becharof/Alaska Peninsula NWR
- Liza Rupp; Anchorage; NPS Lake Clark NP
- John Creed; Dillingham
- Mark Burch; Anchorage; ADFG
- Ted Kreig; Dillingham; Public
- Jared Stone; Anchorage; USFWS Office of Subsistence Management
- Robbin La Vine; Anchorage; USFWS Office of Subsistence Management
- Bronwyn Jones; Anchorage; ADF&G Subsistence
- Glenn Chen; Anchorage; BIA
- Heidi Kris; Dillingham; Bristol Bay Native Association
- Leslie Skora; King Salmon; NPS Katmai NP
- Linda Chislom; King Salmon; NPS Katmai NP
- Mark Strum; King Salmon; NPS Katmai NP
- Lee Borden
- Jonathan Gerken; Anchorage; USFWS Fisheries

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Trefon, Jr, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add Update on WP20-26 Working Group
- Lake Clark National Park SRC Appointment
- Change order of Analyses Presentation: 1. FP20-05, 2. FP20-07, 3. FP20-06 and 4. FP20-08

The motion passed unanimously.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Trefon, Jr., to approve the winter 2020 meeting minutes as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Mr. Richard Wilson of Naknek reported despite these challenging times, people are observing more ptarmigan and hares in the area. The fall hunting season, more subsistence users are meeting their needs.

Mr. Lary Hill of Iliamna reported also reported that more ptarmigan are being observed in the area. Moose harvest for subsistence has been successful. Mr. Hill also reported on a small group of caribou have been observed in the Iliamna area. Increase of bear observations in the area have also been reported.

Mr. Dan Dunaway of Dillingham reported that the subsistence and commercial fishery went well. Moose season was a success, but without ADF&G staff biologist in the field office, it's hard to measure the local success rate. Locals had the opportunity to harvest Nushagak Peninsula caribou last spring. Predator management is questionable, and Mr. Dunaway wondered about other mortality causes on moose and caribou that are not observed. The berry season crop in the area was not very productive this fall.

Ms. Nanci Morris Lyon of reported the ptarmigan population is increasing in the area, and grouse are plentiful. The berry crop in the area was productive. Ms. Morris Lyon also reported participating in the Federal Subsistence Board meeting in spring 2020.

Old Business

805c Report

The Council was provided an 805c Report from the Federal Subsistence Board. The report provides actions taken by the Board on Wildlife Proposals and Wildlife Closure Reviews affecting residents of the Bristol Bay region. The Board deferred WP20-26 which would allow the use of snowmachines for the positioning of wolves and wolverines, and that a working group convene to develop recommendation of positioning of animals. The Board adopted three proposals deemed non-controversial. The Board

adopted WP20-37 allowing use of snowmachine to assist in taking of caribou, and rejected WP20-30, requesting the Alaska hare season in Unit 9 be shortened, and reduced the harvest limit. The Board adopted the Wildlife Closure Reviews, WCR20-04/06 to rescind the Federal public lands closure in portion of Unit 9C.

WP20-26 Working Group – Update

The working group, composed of Federal and State staff, met in July of 2020 to discuss the positioning of animals to develop recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board on the positioning of animals for wolf and wolverine hunting. The working group requested additional guidance from the Solicitors Office and the Board on regulatory language between the National Park Service, BLM, and the Fish and Wildlife Service regulations addressing positioning of Animals. Currently, the working group is at a pause to address administrative issues on the makeup of the working group. The group will convene to continue its work in the winter of 2020/21.

New Business

Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews

Regional:

FP21-05: Requests the Board simplify Federal regulations by removing regulations that imply the Board has authority to regulate subsistence fishing in the marine waters of fishing districts.

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Trefon, Jr., to adopt FP21-05.

Support.

Justification. The Council supports this proposal to remove regulatory language from existing regulations that reference commercial fishing districts. The Council states that it is a burdensome, confusing, and unnecessary regulation for subsistence users. There is no Federal jurisdiction over the marine waters in the Bristol Bay commercial fishing districts. The Council notes however that removal of caudal fins is not a subsistence practice and a separate proposal is required to request the removal of the caudal fin from regulations.

FP21-06: Requests the Board revise Federal subsistence fishing regulations for the Bristol Bay Area to specify that salmon may be taken by dip net, beach seine, and gillnet only, unless otherwise specified.

Motion by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hill, to adopt FP21-06.

Oppose.

Justification. The Council opposes this proposal stating it is too broad in scope and does not address specific issues including salmon management and conservation concerns in some vulnerable drainages.

FP21-07: Requests that the Federal Subsistence Board revise the Federal subsistence fishing regulations for the Bristol Bay Area by removing the scheduled fishing closures in the Egegik River at §_.27(e)(5)(iii).

Motion by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Trefon, Jr., to adopt FP21-07.

Support.

Justification. The Council supports this proposal stating that it will reduce user confusion, remove inconsistency in regulations, and avoid possible legal confusion in current regulations.

FP21-08: Requests that the Federal Subsistence Board remove the area wide closure to the taking of fish at the mouths of streams used by salmon.

Motion by Mr. Wilson, seconded by Mr. Hill, to adopt FP21-08.

Oppose.

Justification. The Council opposed the proposal stating it is too broad in scope and does not address specific issues stemming from salmon management and conservation concerns.

2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Mr. Jared Stone and Ms. Robbin La Vine with OSM presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Priority Information Needs (PINs) working group discussion results.

The Council was presented with the draft 2022 Draft Priority Information needs (PINs). The PINs were drafted by a working group of Council members volunteering to develop the PINs. Representative Council members included members from the Bristol Bay and Kodiak/Aleutians Councils. OSM staff presented the draft to the Council. The Council reviewed the PINs developed by the working group and provided comments. The Council approved the PINs. The PINs approved by the Council are as follows;

- Reliable estimates of salmon in the Southwest Region to determine health and abundance and address region-wide declines in populations and/or loss of funding for existing research.
- Obtain subsistence harvest survey data for salmon and non-salmon fish by residents of southwest communities, particularly those with outdated information and/or not currently surveyed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. Emphasis was given to address harvest trends in Unalaska Bay, Togiak and Southwest Kodiak Villages.
- Comparative ecological evaluation of lake rearing habitats of subsistence Sockeye Salmon stocks in southwest Kodiak Island, Alaska including Olga Lakes and Akalura Lake watersheds;

assessment of 1) the decline of salmon stocks and associated subsistence harvest opportunities and (2) the potential effects of climate change on salmon production in these lake systems.

- Abundance and assessment of critical subsistence salmon stocks in priority areas such as the Buskin River.
- Abundance and assessment of critical subsistence salmon stocks in priority areas such as McLees Lake.
- Investigate crab populations in Women's Bay.
- Reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapements in the Lake Clark watershed.
- Reliable estimates of salmon escapement and evaluation of "quality of escapement" measures (for example, potential egg deposition, sex and size composition of spawners, spawning habitat quality and utilization) for determining the reproductive potential of spawning stocks in Big Creek, Naknek River, Alagnak River, Nushagak River Chignik River, Meshik River and Togiak River.
- Harvest survey of Dolly Varden in the Togiak River drainage.

Motion by Mr. Dan Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Richard Wilson to adopt the 2022 Priority Information Needs as presented by OSM staff. Motion carries by unanimous vote.

Identifying Issues for FY2020 Annual Report

The Council identified the following topics for inclusion into the FY-2019 Annual Report:

- Regional Advisory Council Teleconference Public Meetings
- Chignik Salmon Fishery
- Nushagak Caribou Herd

Proposed Review Processes for NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Mr. Joshua Ream with NPS presented the Council with the proposed changes to the NPS individual customary and traditional use determinations review process and requested the Council's opinion on the changes.

The Council moved to defer the National Park Service Individual Customary and Traditional Process and Guidelines for all National Park lands in Alaska to its March 2021 public meeting. The Council stated it needs additional time to review and develop its comments on the document.

Agency Reports:

- Ms. Gayla Hoseth, Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), reported that BBNA has been involved in the positioning of animals working group. Ms. Hoseth suggested the Council hold a workshop on hunting on Federal lands to educate the public that, hunters, can have the option to hunt under State or Federal regulations. Currently, State regulations applies to all lands, whereas Federal regulations apply to Federally managed public lands.
- Mr. Cody Larson, BBNA, informed the Council on a recent FRMP funded completed project documenting the sharing networks of subsistence on the Alaska Peninsula. The final product was published in February, 2020. The BBNA Board of Directors Fish and Game Committee formed a task force to assess strategies for rebuilding Salmon stocks in the Chignik area. Mr. Larson also provided an update on BBNAs intern program.
- Mr. Jon Gerken, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Fishery Inseason Manager, provided a summary of management actions in the Chignik area. Assessment on salmon returns are currently conducted by the ADF&G and the service does not have any ongoing assessment projects. Preseason escapement goals for 2020 were similar to 2019. For the last several years escapement goals have not been met.
- Mr. Ross Renick, ADF&G area management biologist for commercial and subsistence fisheries, provided an update on preliminary harvest reports. Mr. Renick reported the escapement total for the salmon run is very low in the Chigniks on record.
- Mr. George Pappas, OSM ADF&G Liaison, reported the villages in the Chignik area have a government to government relationship with the service, and are able to assist in distributing Federal permits. The Chignik communities have formed the Chignik InterTribal Coalition and discussion are that they may be able to provide assistance with possible research efforts.
- Mr. Kenton Moos, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager, referred to the Council the refuge report contained in the meeting materials. Topics covered are Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects, Mulchatna and Nushagak Caribou Herd biological report, and moose survey reports conducted in 2019 and current monitoring projects. Additional summary of various resource monitoring projects are found in the meeting materials beginning on page 90 of the fall October 28-29, 2020 meeting materials. Mr. Moos provided staffing update in the Togiak Refuge field office.
- Ms. Susan Alexander, Becharof/Alaska Peninsula NWR Manager, provided staffing update in King Salmon, Alaska. Currently staffing is one third filled but the refuge has hired a budget technician and a deputy refuge manager. Ms. Alexander also provided an update on the subsistence caribou hunt in Units 9C and 9E and the ptarmigan hunt was opened under a temporary delegation of authority. The refuge is currently cooperating with the ADF&G to conduct moose surveys and also conducting composition and trend surveys for bears.

- Mr. Bruce Seppi, BLM, reported that Anchorage BLM office field activities were shut down due to COVID-19 during the summer season. Mr. Seppi provided staffing update; the BLM Anchorage office filled the BLM statewide subsistence coordinator position.
- Ms. Susan Fleek-Green, Lake Clark NP Superintendent, reported projects were curtailed due to COVID-19. Ms. Fleek-Green informed the Council on the fisheries monitoring on the Newhalen River reporting a return of 450,000 salmon in the system. The Telaquana station reported a run of 175,000 return, above the average of 88,000. Water sampling in the Kvichak River system was conducted to investigate the impact of beaver on water quality due to increased beaver dams. She reported the NPS is in partnership, community harvest project, with ADF&G to study the changing subsistence patterns in Port Alsworth. The NPS is currently conducting ongoing work on mercury deposits in various lakes within the Park. The subsistence knowledge project in partnership with Nikolai and Nondalton was delayed due to COVID-19 but the Park is planning to start the project in the summer of 2021.
- Mr. Mark Strum, Katmai National Park Superintendent, reported due to COVID-19, the Katmai NPS had to relocate their office from the Air Force Station to another location. The State of Alaska and the Federal Emergency Management Administration, established a field hospital in anticipation of COVID-19. Mr. Strum provided an update and progress on the road restoration project. The NPS currently have a draft plan for restoring the disturbed site. The monument recognizing the Council of Katmai descendants, a bust of Pelagia Melgenak has been completed, and the NPS is currently in dialogue with the heirs of Pelagia Malgenak in bringing the bust to Katmai and presenting it to the descendants.
- Ms. Linda Chislom, Subsistence Coordinator, Aniakchak National Monument, reported the Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) reviewed the Federal fisheries proposals and had no comments. The SRC also passed a motion in their fall 2020 meeting supporting Alaska Board of Game proposal 32. The proposal requests to close to nonresident season for emperor geese in Units 9 and 10. The SRC has an incumbent seat currently filled by Mr. Mark Kosbruk and the NPS will submit his application for reappointment by the Bristol Bay RAC.
- Ms. Leslie Skora, Katmai NPS wildlife biologist, presented a briefing on Katmai NPS projects. Moose surveys were completed last fall/winter 2019. The NPS completed bear surveys in Katmai and Aniakchak National Monument. The NPS is currently seeking funding to conduct a caribou project to investigate the Mulchatna Caribou Herd that are ranging within Katmai National Park and to conduct ptarmigan surveys in Katmai and Aniakchak National Monument to estimate the ptarmigan density in these units.
- Mr. Lee Borden, ADF&G Sportfish biologist, briefed the Council on the projects the department is conducting. The Department did not complete assessment projects on King Salmon fishery in the Togiak River, Coho Salmon on the Nushagak River and Rainbow Trout on the Kvichak River and on Rainbow Trout and Dolly Varden on the Iliamna, Gibralter, and Margot watersheds due to a lack of funding. The Department was able to maintain funding for Naknek River Rainbow Trout project during the fall field season.
- Ms. Bronwyn Jones, ADF&G Subsistence, referred the Council to the meeting materials outlining the Departments projects. The projects covered Togiak Refuge Harvest and Stock Composition

of Dolly Varden and Nonsalmon fish, Lake Clark NPS Subsistence Harvest surveys, BBNA Marine Mammal Harvest assessment project, Naknek River Salmon Ethnography, and Port Heident Subsistence Salmon Harvest.

- Ms. Lisa Hutchinso-Scarborough, ADF&G Subsistence, presented current projects on assessment surveys in the Bristol Bay communities.
- Ms. Danielle Stickman, Network Coordinator for the Western Alaska Partnership. Ms. Stickman provided a briefing to the Council on what the Western Alaska Partnership is currently working on. The Partnership is currently expanding its community based monitoring system to address environmental change, co-developing coordinated monitoring networks across Alaska and Western Canada, and Implementing community based programs to enhance stewardship of traditional foods and critical habitat in Alaska. The partnership is pursuing projects the next year that includes stream temperature monitoring, wild berry monitoring, install tidal gauges to assist in Coastal Mapping, and expand the partnership to support community based monitoring on subsistence resources.
- Mr. George Pappas, OSM, briefed the Council that all ten Regional Advisory Councils are meeting via teleconference due to COVID-19 and travel restriction to outlying communities due to health concerns. Mr. Pappas informed the Council on staffing within OSM and that acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence, Tom Doolittle, will be retiring at the end of 2020.

Future Meeting Dates:

Winter 2021 meeting to be held February 9-10, 2021 in Naknek
Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 27-28, 2021 in Dillingham

Meeting Adjourned

Donald Mike, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

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 winter 2021 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Donald Mike at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3629, email donald_mike@fws.gov.