

# **SOUTHEAST SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Via tele-video conference

March 16-18, 2021

*These minutes are an abbreviated record of the business conducted at this meeting.*

*For full details, transcripts of this three day meeting are available at:*

*<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/library/transcripts/1-southeast-alaska>*

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

The meeting was called to order Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at approximately 9:00 a.m. Council members Frank Wright, Jr., Calvin Casipit, Michael Douville, Jim Slater, Albert Howard, Donald Hernandez, Harold Robbins, Harvey Kitka, Larry Bemis, Jr., Ian Johnson, Robert Schroeder, and Cathy Needham were present for all or most of the meeting. The Council currently has one vacant seat. A quorum was established with twelve seated Council members participating by phone/video.

### **Attendees:**

#### ***By Teleconference or Videoconference***

- U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Juneau: ***Dave Schmid, Wayne Owen, DeAnna Perry, Greg Risdahl, Scott Shuler, Terry Suminski, Rob Cross, Jacob Musslewhite, Susan Oehlers, Gregory Dunn, Melinda Hernandez-Burke***
- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Anchorage: ***Brent Vickers, Pippa Kenner, George Pappas, Orville Lind, Kevin Foley***
- Organized Village of Kasaan (OVK): ***Marina Anderson***
- Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC): ***Keenan Sanderson***
- Metlakatla Indian Community: ***Mayor Atkinson, Judith Eaton***
- Sitka Tribe: ***Jeff Feldpach***
- Sitka Kaagwaantaan: ***Harvey Kitka***
- Tanana Chiefs Conference – Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering Task Force: ***Ben Stevens***
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Anchorage: ***Pat Petrivelli***
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): ***Valerie Lenhartzen***
- National Park Service (NPS), Anchorage: ***Joshua Ream, Victoria Florey, Adam Dermish***
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (NPP), NPS: ***Barbara Cellarius***
- Denali National Park and Preserve, (NPP), NPS, Anchorage: ***Amy Craver***
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Anchorage: ***Ben Mulligan, Mark Burch, Lauren Sill, Robert Chadwick, Robin Dublin,***

- Members of the Public: *Katie Riley and Heather Bauscher – Sitka Conservation Society; Sally Schlichting – Southeast Alaska Conservation Council; Larry Edwards – Alaska Rainforest Defenders, Kathy Hansen*

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Dave Schmid, USDA-USFS Alaska Regional Supervisor and FSB member, addressed the Council and thanked them for serving on this Regional Advisory Council for subsistence issues. He informed the Council of: the four major priorities of the new administration, the invitation extended by the new USDA Secretary for tribes to consult, and the status of all environmental decisions and actions that occurred right before transition – they are being reviewed under the Congressional Review Act. Mr. Schmid then answered questions from the Council on a variety of Forest Service land management issues.

## **Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Ms. Needham, to adopt the agenda with the following additions: “11e. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Project” and “12 USDA – Tribal Relations Report.”

The motion passed unanimously.

## **Election of Officers**

Mr. Don Hernandez was re-elected the Council’s Chair.

Ms. Cathy Needham was re-elected the Council’s Vice Chair.

Mr. Frank Wright, Jr. was re-elected the Council’s Secretary.

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

Motion by Mr. Kitka, seconded by Mr. Casipit, to approve the fall 2020 meeting minutes with suggested additions to Mr. Bemis’s Council member report. The motion passed with 8 votes. New members abstained from voting.

## **Council Member and Chair Reports**

*Ian Johnson of Hoonah* reported that record setting rain amounts and the high event type of winter in the area triggered eight landslides affecting: the whole road network which impacted the ability to participate in subsistence activities and on rivers; the outlay of water systems through the scouring that occurs and pools in new areas along with the washing out of salmon eggs; future Pink Salmon populations; the impact of the amount of sediment left in the estuaries; and levels far out in the flood plain churning up clams and cockles. It was a pretty tough deer hunting season; however, hunters were able to harvest a lot of deer on the beach due to an early snow. Hoonah has detected the highest levels of paralytic shellfish poisoning in shellfish and this is believed to be from warmer temperatures and nutrient outflow from rivers. People were successful in fishing if the openings coincided when the fish were in the area. It was an average year for berries, with blueberries doing better than salmonberries. There are stream restoration and landscape improvements of private and public lands through the Hoonah Native Force Partnership, along with other work directly linked to community need, subsistence, and resource production.

*Frank Wright, Jr. of Hoonah* reported environmental change observations such as caterpillars in January, the absence of swallows, and the unusual depths at which Dungeness and Tanner Crabs were found. The challenge of ferry service (non-existent or unpredictable) is hard on smaller communities. For commercial fishermen, the price of Black Cod is up but not halibut prices, so fishermen expect a struggle in the future. The ferry system seems to be geared more for tourists than for local transportation and this issue should be addressed. The city is doing well on virus testing for the community; however, the mental health of young people are suffering because of COVID conditions (exacerbated by absence of sports and peer socializing). The area has suffered landslides due to weather conditions and high river level likely washed out the salmon eggs.

*Calvin Casipit of Gustavus* reported that he dealt with the COVID issue as Mayor of his community and only one local resident contracted the virus. The vaccine program was successful in keeping the virus away. There was a good moose season (which happens on private/state lands) with only one or two illegal bulls shot last season. Rates of harvest for deer season were successful as well, probably due to pre-rut snow. He made one disappointing unsuccessful fishing trip to Neva Creek this year. It was concerning to see two four-person self-guided fly rod fishing groups that went sportfishing up at Neva who stated each of them 'limited out,' especially since this fishery was supposed to be closed to non-Federally qualified users. Coho fishing was good and may have been the result of the reduced effort from the sport charter fleet (due to the pandemic). The City of Gustavus applied for and fished a community harvest permit for halibut and many residents received the halibut they needed.

*Michael Douville of Craig* reported that it is believed that old growth logging and stem exclusion are reducing the quality of deer browse and habitat, causing a downturn in the deer population. Deer hunting success rates continue to drop. Wolf issues continue on Prince of Wales Island. The population seems healthy but there is a pending petition for listing the Archipelago wolf under the Endangered Species Act. It is believed that good science will prevail and the species will not be listed. Climate change observations: this was the worst winter in memory for wind and rain; the timing of rainfall resulted in flood waters that washed away salmon eggs.

*Jim Slater of Pelican* reported that the community of Pelican is transitioning to a fish processing and tourism town. There are two fish buying operations and one fish processor in town, employing over 30 people in the summer between them and it is estimated that 500,000 fish will go through Pelican this year. Several charter businesses operate in Pelican and they are expected to start paying sales tax on their fleets in 2022, which will help generate revenue. One cruise line will bring two to four ships a week to the area and the city council is considering the town's position on town/cruise ship interaction. Ferry service was suspended for almost a year which created food security hardships, especially during the pandemic, but service has now been restored. For the last year, the city has been powered by diesel; however, hydropower is expected to be back online soon. There is increased hunting pressure for deer and along with weather and brown bear predation: many did not get their harvest needs met. Fishing overall has been consistent but fishing in Lisianski Inlet has significantly worsened over the last decade or two for both salmon and halibut. Four and five attempts are required to catch halibut and the increased effort does

not result in meeting subsistence needs. Clam populations were good and shrimping was okay but berries and mushrooms were below average.

*Robert Schroeder of Juneau* reported that the absence of a tourist season had significant economic effects on his community. There was a good King salmon season but run numbers were down on Coho salmon. Although deer were around, harvesting was more difficult this year. He encourages the Council to “think big” and consider the huge social changes that are possible because of the new political administration and how this may allow the Council to provide more subsistence protection in the coming year. This Council has spent a significant amount of time on forest management and subsistence related issues in past years. Perhaps this Council would like to talk about forest policy and form a forest policy group to write up the way we see forest issues on the Tongass National Forest. He has been impressed by the Council’s ability to function remotely under the limitations created by the pandemic and also the Council’s success in conducting business with so many vacant Council member seats over the last few years.

*Albert Howard of Angoon* reported a lot of snow and rain this winter in his area. Deer season was not typical but deer were definitely around. Perhaps it is because bear hunters are allowed to shoot deer in the fall. Crabs can be enjoyed up to the opening of the commercial season and then there are mostly only females available. There is no mechanism to close the area if there is a conservation concern. This issue is routinely reported each year but nothing is done to address it. This is an example of unintended consequences from decisions made by non-subsistence users which affect local subsistence users. Bear hunting clients in the area have been caught checking area crab pots – maybe because commercially licensed fishermen cannot legally feed their clients sport-caught fish or crabs so the clients are helping themselves. He suggested working with the State to ‘manage for abundance’ because every part of the resource is diminishing, (low salmon numbers and the closure of Hoonah Sound shrimp harvest). Co-management may be the answer for success, especially with the State’s diminishing funds for management. It would be easier to call local subsistence users for observation and anecdotal information.

*Donald Hernandez of Point Baker* reported that despite seeing a lot of deer in general this year, there were few bucks and local hunters experienced a poor deer harvesting season. Erratic weather has pervaded Southeast recently, and the torrential rains have triggered horrific landslide. There are concerns about the impact that these slides may have had on salmon spawning beds. There is an additional concern that the severe cold and no snow pack may have frozen the salmon eggs in the streams. He continues to work in assisting the planning of a Deer Summit to address deer issues on Prince of Wales Island and this meeting will probably take place next winter. There has been good support from local tribes, the local USFS District Ranger, and ADF&G staff for this Summit.

*Harold Robbins of Yakutat* reported that his community is experiencing a ‘real winter’ with three to five feet of snow currently on the ground. The snow may be a real concern for moose/deer survival once it sets up and wolf predation is easier. During the moose hunt in Unit 5A East of Dangerous River, only 34% of moose were taken by local subsistence users; there were 21 moose taken by non-locals. Perhaps some consideration should be given to the subsistence moose harvest timing east of the Dangerous River

because many subsistence users are still trying to commercial fish at the same time. There has been good trolling in the bay that has helped the town economically. Plentiful eulachon have been seen and they are attracting predators (sea lions, gulls) all along the coast up to about the Dangerous River. A local State biologist reported that DNA samples are back from the commercial spring gillnet opening on King Salmon in Yakutat Bay (from May, 2019), and that there was a reasonable number of Situk and Alsek King Salmon along with Southeast Kings in that fishery. This might be an issue for spring troll opening.

*Harvey Kitka of Sitka* reported that there are issues with declining Sockeye Salmon and there are not enough for subsistence harvesting. There are concerns with shrimping and the impact on this resource by charter boaters and commercial users. There is hope that management has a handle on this as subsistence users are getting some shrimp. There are ongoing concerns with the herring fishery because although there seem to be more herring this year, they are small, there are less spawners, and the quality of eggs is lower. Through litigation, the State of Alaska is looking at subsistence differently and there is a new requirement in management that it will now have to check with subsistence people on the quality of eggs. Local deer population seems to be fine and the mild climate seems to have helped considerably.

*Larry Bemis, Jr. of Yakutat* reported that there were people in place at the local cannery before the COVID lockdown and they were able to proceed with processing halibut and salmon. Halibut season was extended and the limit in Unit 3A was increased by 27% so many harvesters are out waiting on the weather. Weather this winter has affected trolling success. The low-end escapement goal on King salmon was met on the Situk and Alsek rivers. Over escapement for several years may have impacted the population. The local economy depends upon tourism and commercial fishing and there was some sportfishing after COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed. The area has experienced winter storms back-to-back with rain/freezing rain/ snow producing a lot of swings in temperatures. There is a fish tagging program for King Salmon currently going on in different sectors of Yakutat Bay, tracking fish to the Pacific Ocean or Gulf of Alaska, and gathering information about water temperatures and the depths of where the fish are swimming.

*Cathy Needham of Juneau* reported on her activities on Prince of Wales Island. She has spent time working on wolf issues and working with Hydaburg Cooperative Association on wildlife population issues in conjunction with the State of Alaska. She recognizes that there isn't always support for survey/monitoring protocols in estimating the number of wolves on the island, but it is the current mechanism in place to manage populations and this management strategy that ADF&G has implemented was supported by the Council. The research does not have funding to continue and she expressed the importance of Council support for the funding of wildlife projects to be able to gather the information needed for management decisions. She is following numerous endeavors for local resource management, including indigenous management efforts coming out of the region, and she hopes to continue to learn and support actions that are taken for the benefit of subsistence users in the region.

*Chair's Report* – Federal Subsistence Board (Board) Meeting: Ms. Needham provided support as Acting Chair for the past three months and she represented this Council at the Board meeting in January. There was one Southeast fishery proposal on the Board's consensus agenda (to maintain status quo on the

closure of Makhnati herring and herring spawn). Ms. Needham informed the Board of the Council's opposition to the delegated authority component of the newly proposed NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination process and the Board passed a modified version of the process. All Regional Advisory Councils voiced dissatisfaction on the numerous seats vacant on Councils statewide. She relayed details of some of the work done by this Council over the last year to the Board, including communications on Forest Service land management activities, and specifically, the many efforts this Council has made to address issues of importance to subsistence users during the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking process.

*General Public Testimony:*

*Mike Miller*, Sitka Tribal Council, provided some updates on: the building of a co-management body with wide regional representation on marine mammal work and potential reauthorization language for the Magnuson-Stevens Act (which would add subsistence definitions and protections for forage fish). He provided copy of a resolution in support of this that came from Alaska Federation of Natives. They are facilitating getting a group back together, funded by National Marine Fisheries Service, which would provide a venue for all communities to speak to their issues.

*Harvey Kitka*, *Sitka Kaagwaantaan*, advised the Council that the clan submitted a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture in August 2020, requesting extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of Sitka waters for herring. The marketable fish are older fish and targeting them for harvest has dropped the percentages of older herring considerably. Based on biomass, the future of this fishery does not look good. Wayne Owen, Regional Director – USFS, provided a status update on the petition with the agency: USFS Washington office is putting together packages of unresolved issues for the new Secretary of Agriculture's review (which includes the ETJ). Mr. Kitka was encouraged to resubmit the petition to the new Secretary of Agriculture.

*Patty Phillips of Pelican*<sup>1</sup>, a long-time advocate for the continuance of traditional ways of harvest and the sharing of traditional ecological knowledge, informed the Council of observations in her community: flooding has washed out salmon eggs and salmon numbers are low in Lisianski Inlet/Lisianski Strait. Bears are not meeting their nutritional needs due to less salmon available and they may be preying on deer. There are more bear/human interactions. Deer may be staying up in the alpine. Less deer are observed and subsistence needs for harvest are not being met. There is a concern that there is overharvest from non-Federally-qualified users. The Department of Agriculture's Farmers to Family food box program brought in 10,000 pounds of food that was distributed within the community. These boxes, along with harvesting resources locally, contributed to meeting some of the food needs. Southeast Alaska is living with consequences of decisions made over the last 50 years (ANILCA) and we are just getting to the point of actually advocating for our Federally-qualified subsistence users. She would encourage the Council to look at things holistically and to remember that the decisions made have consequences on our rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Phillips served on the Council for over 26 years and the Council mentioned her years of support and thanked her for her service as a council member and for continuing to stay engaged with the Council's business.

*Marina Anderson, Organized Village of Kasaan*, informed the Council of a petition submitted by 12 Southeast tribes to the Department of Agriculture, requesting a creation of a traditional homelands conservation rule. This petition is relevant to this Council as it asks for long-term management and protection of traditional and customary use areas. Specifically, it asks for: 1) an inventory and identification and protection of traditional and customary use sites; 2) a new consultation process to co-identify the areas and to co-create the conservation measures; and 3) increase the use of existing authorities and cooperative agreements. The signatories requested a letter of support from the Council on this issue. The Council was provided with a copy of the Traditional Homelands Conservation Rule petition.

*Katie Riley, Sitka Conservation Society*. Supported the development of the Traditional Homelands Conservation Rule petition and she informed the Council that this petition was provided to prior Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue. Receipt of the petition was acknowledged but there has been no further response. She appreciates the Regional Forester's assurance that the new Secretary of Agriculture has the petition. Sitka Conservation Society is working through the Sustainable Southeast Partnership to bring co-management work to fruition.

*Lee Wallace, President Organized Village of Saxman*, commented on the limited opening on the Unuk River Eulachon fishery for Federally-qualified users. Subsistence users of Metlakatla and Saxman are looking at working together for resource management and they have submitted a request for a community fishery (versus an open fishery) to the District Ranger. In tracking State of Alaska applications for fisheries, commercial, sportfish – charter sector, seafood processors and Alaska Aquaculture were listed, but for subsistence harvesters there were 'no applications at this time.' Federally recognized tribes were slated to receive \$1 million, which would have probably gone to Federally-recognized tribes in Alaska and assisted their harvesters; however, it remains unspent because there are 'no applications available for subsistence harvesters' within the State of Alaska.

*Tazia Wagner, Metlakatla Indian Community*, provided history on her family's use of the Unuk River for Eulachon harvest and she commented that many elders have not been able to eat Eulachon for a long time. She agreed with President Wallace's comments on the need to limit the number of boats going up to harvest on the Unuk River in order to mitigate any disturbance to the ecosystem or the run. She suggested the use of beach netting for a harvest method as this is the best way to harvest in the dangerous Unuk River.

*Melinda Hernandez-Burke, USFS Tribal Relations Specialist* commented on the positive collaboration and communication between tribes in the Ketchikan area and District Ranger Walker, noting this type of relationship building is a great model that can be built upon. She provided the Council with several articles of work and collaboration being done by Southeast tribes.

*Heather Bauscher, Sitka Conservation Society*, informed the Council that the Policies and Procedures Practicum class through University of Alaska (subject: Federal Subsistence Program) was currently on

pause due to COVID-19. She was pleased to announce that through the partnership funds provided by USDA-Forest Service, the class has funding for three years, and she hoped that in-person attendance to Council meetings could resume in the fall. She has been active with actions related to Roadless and climate and will share material with the Council.

*President Kevin Frank, Angoon Community Association*, reported on issues of food security in Angoon and the concerns over the safety of consuming deer and seal from the area (due to possible contamination). The practice of subsistence activities that he enjoyed as a child are now against the law. He hopes that others will note what is going on and recognize the subsistence culture. He mentioned it was hard for him to see the challenges the community endures, including having to release any King Salmon caught and the hardship of paying fines. He would like to see people support the Angoon Community Association as a government and recognize the need for it to survive.

*Zack Decker, Glacier Guides*, introduced himself and talked about his guiding business which operates in the northern part of Southeast. It provides opportunities to hunt brown bear, black bear, deer, and mountain goat and provides summer adventure tours in Glacier Bay. He is a second-generation guide operator and he called into the Council meeting to see how his company could better assist subsistence efforts by learning about the concerns and becoming aware of issues of interest to the Southeast subsistence community.

## **Old Business**

### ***Deer Harvest Status***

Tom Schumacher, ADF&G, provided information on deer harvest in Southeast. The 2019 deer harvest was approximately 6,000 with approximately 75% of the harvest being bucks. No major changes expected for 2020 deer populations, but data is not yet available (they are currently in the process of taking hunter reports for the 2020 harvest).

### ***Unit 2 Wolf Status***

Mr. Schumacher and Scot Shuler, Craig District Ranger, provided information on the management of Unit 2 (Prince of Wales Island) wolves. Unit 2 wolf harvest and status population is probably within or above the population objective (between 150 – 200 wolves) and, being sustainably managed, the population should be well-positioned for the coming year. The Council expressed concerns for the management decisions regarding Unit 2 wolves: 1) traditional ecological knowledge is not considered; 2) hair boards are not the best method to gather DNA data for population estimates; and 3) wolves are unpredictable so getting mark/recapture information is not necessarily possible.

### ***Unit 2 wolf sealing period proposal – Proposal #194***

Mr. Schumacher advised the Council of a pending out-of-cycle (agenda change request) State Board of Game (BOG) proposal that would reduce the time to seal a wolf to seven days after harvest. The Council discussed the impact that this may have on subsistence users, the limited value gained by this unnecessary burden on subsistence users, especially with such a short season predicted, and the necessity for a Federal companion proposal to make the State's proposal effective.



BOARD OF GAME COMMENT: Motion by Mr. Douville, seconded by Mr. Kitka, to send a letter with comments in opposition to BOG Proposal 194. The motion passed unanimously.

*“The Council opposed Proposal 194, especially if implemented in a shortened wolf season. The Council anticipates shorter seasons in the immediate future and feels that this proposal, designed to improve the population estimate for Unit 2 wolves, would provide limited value for the population model and that the benefit would not outweigh the burden placed on subsistence users. The Council would support a sealing requirement of seven days after the end of the season. Additionally, there are not enough sealers in Unit 2 and this would result in a hardship on trappers to find a sealer. For those trappers working out of a boat, access and safety may be an issue in bad weather. This could affect a trapper’s ability to harvest while meeting a weekly sealing requirement. For this regulation to be effective, a companion Federal proposal should be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board and the Council would suggest that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game consider an alternative that does not require a regulation change: encourage trappers to seal sooner on a voluntary basis.”*

*Alexander Archipelago Wolf ESA Listing:*

Mr. Schumacher reported that there is a pending petition to list the wolves in Southeast as a distinct population under the Endangered Species Act and all indications are that this petition will be accepted by the Fish and Wildlife Service. This will trigger another 12-month finding (same as the 2015 listing process) where information is reviewed. ADF&G strongly disagrees with the petition.

### ***State Board of Fisheries Proposals***

The Council continued its discussion of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) proposals identified during its fall 2020 meeting. The Council reviewed its discussion of some of the proposals discussed in the fall and then voted to provide a written public comment letter from the Council to include additional BOF Proposals 125 - support, 177 - support, 210 - support, 127 - support, 130 – oppose, 131 - support. In the interest of time, the Council decided to defer action on the other proposals of concern to its fall 2021 meeting. The Council intends to take one last review of its discussions on the identified BOF proposals over the last year and approve a final version of the BOF comment letter at its fall 2021 meeting.

### ***National Park Service Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations***

Joshua Ream informed the Council of the decisions made by the Board regarding the process used for customary and traditional (C&T) use determinations for individuals: the Board retains final decision making authority on these determinations, the process now includes a formal recommendation from both the affected Regional Advisory Councils and from the affected Subsistence Resource Commission, and the application window is open continuously (instead of being tied to the biennial regulatory proposals cycle). No action was required by the Council but the opportunity for comments and questions was given.

## **New Business**

The Council received a Federal Subsistence Fisheries and Wildlife report for the Southeast Region and biologist Rob Cross, USFS, presented the wildlife status information in detail.

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

Pippa Kenner, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), and Terry Suminski, USFS, provided the Council with information on the open Call for Wildlife proposals. The Council discussed various wildlife observations in their communities and heard public testimony on wildlife harvest issues.

### ***Public Testimony for Wildlife Proposals***

**Pelican – Deer Issue:** Several rural residents from Pelican provided testimony that due to people coming into Pelican (hunting/fishing lodge guests) and utilizing the resources, there is increased competition for hunting and fishing. There are safety risks as non-residents do not know the land. The added pressure has impacted local subsistence users by affecting the resource availability and they are unable to meet their harvest needs: Celeste Weller, Mike Allard, Mayor Walt Weller, Terry Wirta, George Phillips, Avery Simmons, Edwina Simmons.

Residents of Southeast (particularly Juneau) have ties to Pelican and may own land in Pelican and utilize the resource for their subsistence needs: Patty Phillips.

*(for complete testimony, please review transcript for March 17, 2021)*

### ***PELICAN – ANGOON – HOONAH PROPOSALS:***

The Council discussed the importance of food security for the low-income subsistence community of Pelican and crafted a deer proposal to address the issue. The Council then discussed similar issues in the communities of Angoon and Hoonah and drafted similar proposals for those areas. The Council recognized the challenge of trying to provide a meaningful priority for local Federally qualified subsistence users for those Federal public lands without negatively affecting other users, such as nearby non-local family members or others who have a long term tradition of coming to these areas to hunt and fish.

The Council then voted to submit the following proposals to change Federal wildlife regulations:

- 1) Deer – Unit 4, Angoon: Motion by Mr. Howard, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to submit this proposal closing certain Federal public lands on Admiralty Island to deer hunting Oct. 15 – Dec. 31, except by Federally qualified subsistence users. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- 2) Deer – Unit 4, Hoonah: Amended Motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Howard to submit this proposal closing certain Federal public lands in the Northeast Chichagof Controlled Use Area to deer hunting Oct. 15 – Dec. 31, except by Federally qualified subsistence users. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- 3) Deer – Unit 4, Pelican (Lisianski Inlet): Motion by Mr. Hernandez, seconded by Mr. Wright to submit this proposal closing certain Federal public lands in (Lisianski Inlet-Strait, Stag Bay)

Pelican to deer hunting Oct. 15 – Dec. 31, except by Federally qualified subsistence users. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

*(these three deer proposals for Unit 4 were submitted due to increased hunting pressure from non-subsistence hunters, creating a concern for future prospects for local subsistence hunters; and, to prevent further depletion of the resource)*

- 4) Elk – Unit 3, draw hunt: Motion by Mr. Douville, seconded by Mr. Kitka, to submit this proposal to provide a meaningful subsistence priority for the harvest of elk and to reduce competition with non-Federally qualified users. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- 5) Elk – Unit 3, general: Amended motion by Mr. Casipit, seconded by Ms. Needham, to submit this proposal to provide a meaningful subsistence priority for the harvest of elk while aiding in the control of non-native elk outside of the managed populations on Etolin and Zarembo islands.
- 6) Goat – Unit 5A: Motion by Mr. Kitka, seconded by Ms. Needham, to submit this proposal to provide a longer season for subsistence users and to simplify the regulations. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- 7) Moose – Unit 3: Second amended motion by Mr. Douville, seconded by Mr. Casipit, to provide additional and easier opportunities for Federally qualified residents of Unites 1 – 5 to harvest moose on Kupreanof and Kiui Islands

### ***Council Charter Review***

The Council reviewed and discussed its Charter, which is renewed every two years. They considered the lack of full appointments in recent years and the resulting lack of geographic diversity on the Council and expressed the need to take incorporate ‘carryover’ language in the Charter to allow members to continue to serve until new appointments are made. Motion by Ms. Needham, seconded by Mr. Howard, to add the following language to the Council’s charter: “SERVICE OF MEMBERS – any member of any advisory council may serve after the expiration of the member’s term until a successor is appointed to the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.” The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Review and Approve FY2020 Annual Report***

The Council reviewed the drafted Annual Report and approved the following topics for inclusion into the final FY2020 Annual Report:

- Information Sharing:
  - Public participation provided for in ANILCA
  - Restrictions on Federally-qualified Subsistence Users
  - Lack of current data for analyses
  - Individual National Park Service Customary and Traditional Use Process
- Support for the Community of Hoonah’s ability to access Glacier Bay
- Concern over Council vacancies experienced in recent years
- Need for staff support for Regional Advisory Council Meetings
- Reasonable access to resources in emergencies
- Status report of fish and wildlife resources in Southeast Alaska

Motion by Mr. Casipit, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to approve and finalize the annual report as discussed (with updated verbiage for Council vacancies topic and attachment of resources report). The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program Information Update***

Brent Vickers, OSM, provided an update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and reminded everyone that the funding opportunity closed on March 15, 2021. Applications will be reviewed, and the results will be presented to the Council at its next meeting. No action by the Council was necessary.

### ***Correspondence***

#### **Letter of Support for Kaagwaantaan's Petition for Extra Territorial Jurisdiction for herring:**

The Council has received several reports and testimony regarding the concern for herring stocks in Sitka Sound. The Council recognizes that the local residents have pursued all avenues to request a conservative management of the herring fishery from the State of Alaska. Motion by Ms. Needham, seconded by Mr. Howard, to write a letter supporting Sitka Kaagwaantaan's petition for extra-territorial jurisdiction. The Council supports this petition to bring the issue of conserving Sitka Sound herring up for Federal resource management consideration as all legal and administrative remedies have been exhausted. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

#### **Letter of Support for the Petition to Create a Traditional Homelands Conservation rule:**

The Council was provided with this petition which was signed by 12 Federally recognized tribes in Southeast Alaska and the Council felt this document contained detailed and well thought out requests. Motion by Ms. Needham, seconded by Mr. Howard, to submit a letter of support for the Traditional Homelands Conservation rule petition. The Council supports action for the long-term management and protection of traditional and customary use areas in the Tongass National Forest by giving Tribes a leadership role. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

#### **Letter to USDA-Forest Service requesting information on young growth timber practices:**

The Council supports the transition from old growth to second growth harvest on the Tongass National Forest; however, the Council has heard reports and testimony in past years that create concern about the impacts of the harvest of the second growth. The Council feels that second/young growth harvests should be done in such a manner as to have the least adverse impacts on subsistence uses. Motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Needham, to write a letter to the Forest Service describing the Council's expectations around young growth logging practices as it pertains to wildlife habitat and also requesting information about how the Forest Service expects to manage these stands. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

## Agency Reports:

- Women’s Earth & Climate Action Network  
Rebekah Sawers and Wanda Culp, shared indigenous intellect and provided testimony on the group’s efforts to address issues important to indigenous people of Alaska such as land management, natural resources, management of food sovereignty, as well as housing, general services, and education. The group has submitted a food sovereignty proposal concept to seek traditional natural resource security for healthy communities, land, air, waters, and climate justice.
  - **Working Group Formed:**  
Motion by Ms. Needham, seconded by Mr. Casipit, to form a working group to gather information and stay informed on pending indigenous people’s interests such as Traditional Homelands Conservation Rule Petition, Indigenous Guardians Program, and Women’s Earth & Climate Action Network’s proposal concept. This group would report this information back to the Council for discussion and possible support of specific co-management efforts for the resources in Southeast. Council members of this Indigenous Co-Management Work Group are Don Hernandez, Albert Howard, Robert Schroeder, and Ian Johnson. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- USDA – Forest Service Agency Reports:
  - Earl Stewart, Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, provided updates on several on-going projects: Central Tongass, South Revilla Integrated Resource Project, Twin Mountain II Timber Sale, and Hecla Greens Creek Tailing Expansion. Many actions are suspended pending “National Review,” which provides the Presidential appointees time to take their seats in the new Administration and to review pending items to assure that they are aligned with the new Administration’s National interest and objectives. Mr. Stewart answered various questions from the Council, including inquiries of the Tongass National Forest’s transition to young growth management and the Alaska Roadless Rule, and made a commitment to provide additional information in follow up after the meeting.
  - Terry Suminski, Subsistence Team Lead, Tongass National Forest, provided an overview of the special actions that have occurred since the last meeting
  - Melinda Hernandez-Burke, Regional Tribal Relations Specialist presented information on various opportunities for tribes and communities to share ecological knowledge and sustainable ways of living into monitoring projects and restoration of the Tongass National Forest
- Brent Vickers, OSM, presented the Office of Subsistence Management program updates which included information on the recent Council member appointee process and on the recent State of Alaska lawsuit (filed Aug 10, 2020, re: the Board’s adoption of some wildlife special actions)
- Joshua Ream, NPS, provided personnel updates for the National Park Service. He also informed the Council that the Park Service Subsistence Program has been working closely with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program recently and the Park Service is also developing further collaborations for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 5-7, 2021, in Craig.

Winter 2022 meeting to be held March 22 – 24, 2021, in Sitka.

\_\_\_\_\_/signature on the original/\_\_\_\_\_

DeAnna Perry, Designated Federal Officer  
USDA Forest Service

\_\_\_\_\_/signature on the original/\_\_\_\_\_

Donald Hernandez, Chair  
Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes were formally considered and approved by the Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its fall 2021 meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call DeAnna Perry at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-209-7817, email [deanna.perry@usda.gov](mailto:deanna.perry@usda.gov).