

# **SOUTHCENTRAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Via tele-video conference

February 24-25, 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/2-south-central-alaska>*

### **Invocation**

Greg Encelewski gave an invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, February 24-25, 2021, at approximately 9:00 a.m. Council members Ed Holsten, Richard (Greg) Encelewski, Diane Selanoff, Gloria Stickwan, Angela Totemoff, Donna Claus, Andrew McLaughlin, Aaron Bloomquist, and John Whissel were present during the two-day meeting. Paula Nicklie had expected to partially participate, due to a schedule conflict arising from her last-minute membership appointment; however, she was not present during any portion of the meeting. The Council has three vacant seats. A quorum was established with nine of ten seated Council members participating by phone/video.

### **Attendees:**

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

- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): ***Sue Detwiler, Jarred Stone, Robbin La Vine, Katerina Wessels, George Pappas***
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Juneau: ***Wayne Owen, DeAnna Perry, Greg Risdahl, Bret Christensen, Stephanie Latimer, Milo Burcham, Steve Namitz***
- Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC): ***Karen Linnell, Jim Simon, Odin Miller***
- Native Village of Eyak (NVE): ***Matte Piche***
- Ninilchik Traditional Council (NTC): ***Darrell Williams***
- Seldovia Village Tribe: ***Michael Opheim***
- Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC): ***Hope Roberts***
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): ***Pat Petrivelli***
- Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): ***Ken Gates, Todd Eskelin***
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): ***Paul (Chris) McKee, Valerie Lenhartzen, Brian Ubelaker***

- National Park Service (NPS), Anchorage: *Joshua Ream, Victoria Florey, Kim Jochum*
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (NPP), NPS: *Judy Putera, Barbara Cellarius, David Sarafin*
- Denali National Park and Preserve, (NPP), NPS: *Amy Craver*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): *Ben Mulligan, Mark Burch, Joelle Hepler, Jeremy Botz, Richard Merizon, Charlotte Westing, Heidi Hatcher, Todd Rinaldi, Jason Herreman, Nick Fowler*
- Members of the Public: *Mary Hake, Faye Ewan.*

## **Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Whissel, seconded by Mr. Bloomquist, to adopt the agenda as read with no changes. The motion passed unanimously. Items “10e. FP21-10” and “11e. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Project” were later added by unanimous consent.

## **Election of Officers**

Mr. Greg Encelewski was re-elected the Council’s Chair.  
 Ms. Gloria Stickwan was re-elected the Council’s Vice Chair.  
 Mr. Andrew McLaughlin was re-elected the Council’s Secretary.

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

Motion by Mr. Whissel, seconded by Mr. Holsten, to approve the fall 2020 meeting minutes with corrections to the first full paragraph on Page 9 that addressed the reasons for opposition to FP21-10 as expressed by the dissenting Council members. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Council Member and Chair Reports**

Edward Holsten of Cooper Landing reported that his community is finally experiencing winter, after experiencing a lot of ice and rain in November and December. He reported that the snowshoe hare population in the area has increased in the last year or so.

Diane Selanoff of Valdez reported that the community is hoping for a better summer fishing season this year. The community is rather quiet with social distancing and other COVID mitigations.

Gloria Stickwan of Tazlina reported that her area experienced a relatively warm winter.

Angela Totemoff of Anchorage shared that since this was her first meeting, she was learning the meeting procedures and how she can contribute in the future.

Donna Claus of the area north of Chitina reported that it seemed that the peak with snowshoe hares was about two years ago and there are almost none now. Usually there are wolves and other predators in

winter, but this year even the birds are gone. Weather in the area: almost 13 inches of rain recorded for the area last year and warmer temperatures, as well as a lot of snow.

Andrew McLaughlin of Chenega Bay reported that his area experienced very harsh weather in the fall which resulted in dangerous conditions for goat and deer harvests. Harsh weather persisted and less than six deer were harvested for the entire village this winter, so deer population is a concern. When weather is good, people are getting subsistence rockfish. Quite a few families got clams; people are getting beyond fear of paralytic shellfish poisoning as chances are less in the winter months.

Aaron Bloomquist of Palmer/Copper Center reported a rather easy winter in the Mat-Su Valley this year. Ice fishing was good. It was fairly warm in the Copper Valley. Mr. Bloomquist informed the Council that he would not be reapplying for membership on the Southcentral Council, but intends to stay involved with issues. In addition, Mr. Bloomquist has recently been appointed to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and will try to act as a liaison and help with communication, unofficially, between the Federal subsistence system and the Commercial Services Board.

John Whissel of Cordova reported that the area experienced a normal winter and the deer harvest seemed patchy; may want to continue to adjust the deer season for better harvest opportunities. Coho harvest remains a concern as well as the number of fish escaping into the Delta. There are some crabs harvested and the test fishery for Golden King Crab in Prince William Sound anecdotally went well; there has been talk of Sea Cucumber harvest. Weather is providing a fair amount of snow in the mountains and churning up the Pacific Ocean, which is good for our fish (lowering water temperatures). The community is hopeful that the lower abundance salmon runs seen in recent years will be replaced by a strong crop from the good winter weather being experienced.

Greg Encelewski of Ninilchik reported a good winter with a fair amount of snow and cooler temperatures. The wolf population is down and moose doing pretty good. Winter fisheries doing well so far. The Ninilchik Traditional Council had a good meeting with the local Federal fish and wildlife manager. Mr. Encelewski also provided a Chair's Report, informing the Council that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) deferred fisheries proposal FP21-10 and referred it back to Southcentral and Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Councils for further discussion.

## **Public Testimony**

Karen Linnell, Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission, referenced information from an email from their local fisheries manager on the 2021 Copper River salmon forecast and reminded the Council of previous testimony outlining concerns for the decline and lack of subsistence harvest in the area. This forecast was then shared with Council members. Ms. Linnell also shared observations of fishwheel harvests last season and the low return observed. There is concern that the area will experience similar challenges to those of Yukon/Kuskokwim area where restrictions have been placed on subsistence users. Ms. Linnell also reported that project proposals for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program had been submitted to conduct more research on escapement etc., on the Copper River and she urged the Council to support collecting more data on the Copper River.

Michael Opheim, Seldovia Village Tribe, Community of Seldovia, provided an update for his area, sharing that the community was concerned this winter when ADF&G wanted to pull their King Salmon fishery from the area. Community members were successful in their large letter writing campaign (to express that the fishery was a big economic boost for the community and it is where people get their fish for the winter and feed their families), and saved the fishery. Observations in the area: black bears were moving about before the snow and cold temperatures arrived; some moose moving around, including cows with calves; snowshoe hare population good with more coyote and wolf predation; and there is a good number of ducks. The Tribe will be starting a herring project to try to bring the resource back and they are also continuing their Silver Salmon project.

## **Old Business**

### ***Nonrural Determination Process Update***

Robbin La Vine with OSM informed the Council of the action taken by the Board on this issue and provided a status update on the 2021 nonrural determination regulatory cycle. Ms. La Vine also provided information on the next steps before a new cycle begins in 2022.

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

Victoria Florey, NPS, presented the Council with the Board's adopted changes to the NPS individual customary and traditional (C&T) use determinations review process. The revised process incorporates two critical recommendations made by Regional Advisory Councils and Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC):

- 1) includes a formal recommendation from both the affected Councils and the affected SRC; and
- 2) contains no delegation of authority to NPS; Board will retain final decision-making authority.

Amy Craver, NPS, presented the NPS Individual C&T application of Blaine Mayo, et al. Motion by Mr. Whissel, seconded by Ms. Claus, to support the application and the Council found that based on the information presented, there was sufficient evidence to support an individual customary and traditional use determination for Mr. Mayo, et al., for moose in Unit 13E. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Denali Subsistence Resource Commission Appointment***

Amy Craver, Denali NPS – Denali SRC, reminded the Council of the purpose of the SRC and then presented information on an applicant who met the eligibility criteria to serve on the Commission. Motion by Ms. Stickwan, seconded by Ms. Totemoff, to appoint Caleb Holum as a Southcentral Regional Advisory Council appointee on the Denali SRC. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

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

The Council discussed Board of Fisheries (BOF) proposals, some of which were identified during its fall 2020 meeting. Many of these proposals addressed similar issues that were contained in the Federal fisheries proposals upon which the Council provided recommendations to the Board during its fall 2020

regulatory meeting. The Council received information from Federal and State staff as well as public testimony from: Hope Roberts – (CRRC) / InterTribal Federal Subsistence Cooperative Management Alliance; Karen Linnell, Odin Miller – (AITRC); Jim Simon – consultant for CRRC and AITRC. The Council will be submitting a written public comment letter to BOF supporting proposals 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, and opposing proposals 5, 18, and 22.

### ***Federal Fisheries Proposal 21-10 Update***

The Council was advised that at its last meeting, the Board deferred action on this proposal to such time as the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Councils could meet and work to develop a compromise proposal that would be supported by all those affected. The Chair of the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council (EI RAC) was given the courtesy to address the Council on this issue.

Motion by Mr. Holsten, seconded by Ms. Selanoff, to schedule the Council’s fall meeting (to include one day as a joint meeting with EI RAC) for October 13-15, 2021, in Anchorage.

Motion by Ms. Totemoff, seconded by Ms. Selanoff, to choose October 6 – 8, 2021, as alternate dates with an alternative location of Fairbanks. The motion passed with 8 votes in favor to 1 against.

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

Jarred Stone, OSM, provided an update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and reminded everyone that the funding opportunity deadline is 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.

### **New Business**

The Council received a Federal Subsistence Fisheries and Wildlife Update for the Southcentral Region from Dave Sarafin, Judy Putera, Barbara Cellarius, and Todd Eskelin. Rick Merizon, ADF&G, also provided an overview of a pending State snowshoe hare proposal.

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

Katerina Wessels, OSM, provided the Council with information on the current opportunity to change Federal regulations for subsistence harvest for July 1, 2022 – to June 30, 2024 regulatory years.

Council member, John Whissel, proposed two wildlife proposals and offered suggested language to (1) modify deer season length in Game Unit 6D; and (2) add a sentence to ‘Special Provisions’ in Unit 6 to reflect: *“Any recipient may designate any federally qualified member of their household to take any deer in Unit 6.”*

Motion by Ed Holsten, seconded by John Whissel, to submit the ‘designated hunter’ proposal for Unit 6. The motion passed on a unanimous vote. The Council supported the change to the designated hunter rule allowing any Federally qualified member of the household to proxy hunt because only a single quota can be in their possession at any given time and the Federal subsistence take of deer would, statistically, be barely relevant in comparison to the overall harvest.

Motion by John Whissel, seconded by Ed Holsten, to submit a proposal to extend deer season in Unit 6D. The motion passed on a unanimous vote. The Council supported the elimination of ‘one buck’ from the regulation in recognition that successful harvests are coming later in the season and that extending the deer season in Unit 6D without the requirement of the take to be a buck in January, provides additional opportunity and increased chances of fulfilling the subsistence users’ needs. This also takes into consideration the challenge of identifying the sex of a deer during a time when many bucks are shedding antlers and buck/doe identification is difficult.

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

The Council reviewed and discussed its Charter, which is renewed every two years.

Motion by Ms. Claus, seconded by Mr. Bloomquist, 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. 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 FY-2020 Annual Report:

- Council Vacancies – seats not filled during last appointment cycle
- Climate Change
  - unpredictable effects on subsistence resources (migratory patterns, travel conditions)
  - ocean acidification: poor performance of Southcentral region Sockeye Salmon
- Postponement of action by the Board on the NPS Individual C&T delegation of authority process
- State prioritizing de facto subsistence priority
- Federal regulations should not be more restrictive than State regulations for resources, per ANILCA

Motion by Ms. Totemoff, seconded by Mr. Whissel, to approve the annual report as discussed. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Gloria Stickwan, seconded by Mr. Holsten, to add suggested language from Ms. Linnell regarding funding research on Copper River salmon fisheries. Motion failed with 1 vote in favor and 7 against. The Council supported the intent but believed this issue would be better addressed in a letter by AITRC to the Board than as an item on the Council’s Annual Report.

### ***Correspondence***

Council member, Andrew McLaughlin, raised the issue of State jurisdiction for marine waters in the Prince William Sound area and the disservice suffered by subsistence users due to one-sided management. The Council discussed this and similar challenges in Cook Inlet, Nanwalek, and Port Graham. Mr. McLaughlin read proposed language for the letter regarding the Prince William Sound jurisdiction matter into the record.

Motion by Mr. Whissel, seconded by Mr. Holsten, to use Mr. McLaughlin's suggested language for a letter from the Council to the Board. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

**Agency Reports:**

- Sue Detwiler, new Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management, introduced herself to the Council and expressed her appreciation for the Council's work
- Darrell Williams presented the Ninilchik Traditional Council Subsistence report
- Karen Linnell, Executive Director, presented the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission report
- Matt Piche, Biologist and Natural Resources Coordinator, presented the Native Village of Eyak report
- Katerina Wessels, Acting Policy Coordinator, presented the Office of Subsistence Management program and special action updates
- Ken Gates, Fish Biologist, presented the USFWS – Kenai National Refuge report
- Milo Burcham, Chugach NF Subsistence Program Leader, presented the USDA Forest Service – Chugach National Forest report
- Judy Putera, Wildlife Biologist; Dave Sarafin, Fisheries Biologist; and Barbara Cellarius, Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Coordinator, presented National Park Service – Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve updates on fisheries, wildlife, and anthropology
- Brian Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist, Glennallen Field Office, presented the Bureau of Land Management report

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 13-14, 2021 in Anchorage.

Winter 2022 meeting to be held February 10-11, 2022, in Anchorage.

\_\_\_\_\_/signature on the original/\_\_\_\_\_  
DeAnna Perry, Designated Federal Officer  
USDA Forest Service

\_\_\_\_\_/signature on the original/\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard (Greg) Encelewski, Chair  
Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes were formally considered and approved by the Southcentral 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).