

**KODIAK/ALEUTIANS SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes**

Cold Bay Community Center  
Cold Bay, Alaska  
September 26-27, 2019

**Invocation:**

Mr. Pat Holmes, Kodiak, Alaska, provided the invocation for the Kodiak/Aleutians Council public meeting.

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

The meeting was called to order Thursday, September 26. Council members Antone Shelikoff, Pat Holmes, Richard Koso, Christopher Price, Coral Chernoff, and Della Trumble were present in person. Council member Rebeca Skinner was present via teleconference. Samuel Rohrer, Natasha Hayden, Melissa Berns were not present and were excused. With seven out of ten seated Council members present (Council has no vacant seats) the quorum was established.

**Attendees**

***In person***

*Office of Subsistence Management (OSM):* Scott Ayers, Orville Lind, Christine Brummer, Steve Fadden, Thomas Evans, Thomas Whitford

*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR):* Pat Fitzmorris  
*Aleutians/Pribylof Islands Association:* Peter Devine Jr.

*Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):* Glenn Chen

*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):* Ellen Yaumiishi

*City of Cold Bay:* Angela Simpson

***Via teleconference***

*OSM, Anchorage:* George Pappas, Robbin La Vine

*USFWS, Anchorage:* Carol Damberg, Ronnie Sanchez

*Sun'ag Tribe of Kodiak:* Tom Lance

*Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Palmer:* Mark Burch; *King Salmon:* Chris Peterson;

*Kodiak:* Mark Witteveen, Kathy Whiteside; *Anchorage:* Jackie Keating, Lisa Fox

*USFWS Kodiak NWR:* Tevis Underwood

## **Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Koso, seconded by Ms. Skinner, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add Coordinator's report under agenda item 7
- Under new business agenda item 10b, add agenda item 3. Partners Report
- Under agenda item 11. Agency Reports: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service add Mr. Ronnie Sanchez, update on refuges
- Under agency reports agenda item OSM, b. add Tribal Engagement

Motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by Mr. Koso, seconded by Mr. Holmes, to approve the winter 2019 meeting minutes with the following modifications:

- Mr. Holmes clarified his statement on page 7 in his report to the Council: "lack of subsistence permits from last year for King Crab and Dungeness..." He said that it should be, "lack of catch reported on subsistence..."
- Ms. Skinner noted that on page 7 "Pollack" is misspelled. Correct spelling is "Pollock."

Motion passed unanimously.

## **Council Member and Chair Reports**

*Chris Price (Unalaska)* reported water warm conditions in the area and that the crab fishery is on a downward trend for subsistence. Subsistence fishing in Kashega for salmon was average.

*Rick Koso (Adak)* reported Adak doing well in subsistence fishery, but Sockeye Salmon harvest occurs outside of Adak while Pink Salmon are available in or near Adak. Access to caribou is a challenge due to increasing numbers of hunters coming into the community to hunt, using boats. The community is concerned about outside hunters coming in and a need to monitor the caribou population in Adak. The influx of nonresidents compete with the local community. Ms. Koso said that there is a critical need to survey the Adak Island caribou.

*Coral Chernoff (Kodiak)* reported that bird die-offs had slowed down compared to the last two years. Silver Salmon fishing was closed in the Buskin River and locals were not able to harvest Silver Salmon for subsistence; earlier in season, people had successful harvest. The berry season was productive. Ms. Chernoff serves as the chair for the Kodiak Region Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC), and the Region proposed to open the road system for subsistence egg gathering and hunting. The proposal passed, but the AMBCC agreed to keep the Aleutian and Arctic Tern, and Mew Gulls, nesting areas closed. During spring hunt, the Emperor geese are off limits at least 50 feet off road system. The Emperor goose population again is in decline and is now in conservation status. Conservation

measures will include education and outreach. The AMBCC have recommended to the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) not to issue any non-resident permits for the 2020 season.

*Pat Holmes (Kodiak)* reported the Sockeye Salmon returns in the Buskin River, Litnik and Pasagshak bays were low but the escapement goals may have been met in these systems. Port Lions subsistence fishers also did not do well with the low returns. Sea duck meat was provided to local elders in Larsen Bay from the local guides. Local community members reported that the mountain goat and deer populations are up. Mr. Holmes also reported to the Council that cod fishery numbers are down and size of the cod indicates mostly the one-year age class.

*Antone Shelikoff (Akutan)* reported that the Sockeye Salmon did not show up until June. The Pink Salmon is readily available around his community.

*Rebecca Skinner (Kodiak)* reported that Kodiak experienced a hot and dry summer season. The berry crop this year was very productive. Pollock sizes are small this year, and it may be due to the warm blob. The warm blob in 2014 and 2015 impacted Pollock and Pink Salmon populations. Last surveys indicate that the warm water influence is evident in the Shelikoff area, and Pacific Cod catch is the second lowest harvest on record.

*Della Trumble (King Cove)* reported from the King Cove area that it was a hot summer and creeks were low due to lack of rain. The summer berry crop was productive, with the exception of moss berries. Local residents were grateful that the caribou season was open. The residents of False Pass on Unimak Island were able to harvest subsistence caribou because of the recent special action for those communities. Ms. Trumble requested to add the migratory bird agency report to the winter 2020 public meeting. Ms. Trumble also mentioned that as chair she had nothing to report due to the government shut down.

### ***Sea otter Report***

The Council formed a working group to address the sea otter population in the region to facilitate gathering of information on sea otters and sea otter management in the region. Working group members will be meeting via teleconference to discuss sea otter strategies.

### **Public – Tribal comments on non-agenda items**

Mr. Peter Devine, the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) held a teleconference on September 16, 2019, on migratory birds. Mr. Devine provided population status of the geese in his region. Mr. Devine also serves on the Aleut Marine Mammal Commission and informed the Council that they have a meeting planned for November 12-13, 2019 in Anchorage. He informed the Council about his seal hunts this summer and said that seals did not look healthy. Some seals were covered in sores. He shared his observations on the Local Environmental Observer (LEO) network site. Mr. Devine noted too that the kelp in his region is disappearing.

Tom Lance, Sun'aq Tribe representative, commented that they submitted a Partner Program proposal and did not get the funding. The Partners Program would assist the Tribe with outreach for traditional foods and other subsistence issues. The Tribe is still waiting to hear about another proposal they submitted. This proposal was submitted to the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and would investigate subsistence harvest trends of salmon and non-salmon fish in the Kodiak area in collaboration with the State of Alaska. The Tribe is partnering with a local engineering firm to address ghost pot crab and derelict fishery. Mr. Lance also briefed the Council on the mariculture industry related to kelp and shellfish farming.

## **Old Business**

Mr. Tom Evans, OSM Wildlife Biologist, presented an update on Wildlife Closure Review (WCR) 20-04/06. The Council took no action.

## **New Business**

### ***Wildlife Proposals***

#### **Regional Proposals:**

Proposal WP20-25 requests that Federal public lands in Unit 10, Unimak Island only, be opened for a limited bull caribou hunt by Federal registration permit from Aug. 15-Oct. 15 for the residents of False Pass only, and that the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Manager be allowed to determine the annual harvest quota.

The Council's motion to support Proposal WP20-25 with modification passed. The Council's modification proposes to change proposed season's dates from Aug. 15 – Oct. 15 to Aug. 1 – Sep. 30.

The Council amended the OSM Preliminary Conclusion season to change the season from Aug. 15 – Oct. 15 to Aug. 1 – Sept. 30. The earlier season provides more opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users at the beginning of the season and reduces the potential of disturbance during the rut during October. In addition, the caribou season in Unit 10, Unimak Island under Federal regulations would align with the State caribou season for the Southern Alaska Caribou herd in Unit 9D. Unimak caribou are an important resource for rural residents of False Pass. A limited hunt would provide the community an opportunity for continuation of customary and traditional practices and to pass cultural knowledge on to the younger generation.

#### **Statewide Proposals:**

Proposal WP20-08 requests implementing a statewide requirement that traps and snares be marked with either the trapper's name or State identification number.

The Council chose to take no action on Proposal WP20-08.

## ***2020 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program***

Mr. Scott Ayers, OSM Fishery Biologist, presented the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program update.

The Council spoke in favor of both projects (20-400 McLees Weir and 20-450 Kodiak Road System Subsistence Surveys) but did not have any comments regarding specific concerns or ideas for improving the likelihood of project successes.

Several Council members asked about the current process for project selection. The Council wanted a better understanding of the logic used by the Technical Review Committee to score proposed projects. Council members felt the process put too much emphasis on technical criteria and not enough emphasis on community needs. Council members also had concerns that the Technical Review Committee process carried more weight in the selection process than the problems identified by the Council through Priority Information Needs process. Council members felt unsure on how the decision are made. This made it unclear if the process worked to meet the needs of communities and/or supported Council recommendations. The Council suggested to restore the pre-proposal part of the process, so the applicants to have an opportunity to submit their proposal ideas prior to start of the Technical Review Committee review process.

Mr. Scott Ayers also presented a briefing on the Partners Program.

## ***Identify Issues for FY2019 Annual Report***

The Council identified the following issues of concern to be included in FY2019 annual report:

- Request for annual surveys of Adak Island caribou
- Request to maintain Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) full funding
- Educational opportunities for Council members
- Request for evaluation of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) project selection process
- Agencies timely reports
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Resource Information Technicians (RIT)
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge staffing
- Access and harvest limits of subsistence salmon
- Attendance at the Summer 2020 Coastal Communities Forum in Unalaska
- Sea Otters impacts on subsistence resources in the region
- Request to share National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Alaska Fisheries Science Center research findings in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea with all ten Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils

## **Public – Tribal comments on non-agenda items**

Ms. Angela Simpson from the City of Cold Bay provided public testimony and encouraged hiring from the local community to fill vacant positions in the Izembek NWR. Ms. Simpson commented on the need for law enforcement presence in the community due to influx of brown bear hunting activities. She also brought forth concerns of water quality studies in the community and inquired if these studies include monitoring of the ground water or water table for potential contaminants. Contaminants affect the community as well as the wildlife resources in the area. The community wants to form a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) and inquired if the Izembek NWR could be part of the RAB.

## **Agency Reports**

- Kodiak NWR projects report by Tevis Underwood, Deputy Refuge Manager
- A report on the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd in Unit 9D and other Izembek NWR projects by Pat Fitzmorris, Biologist, Izembek NWR
- Briefing on possible reorganization of Refuges in Alaska by Ronnie Sanchez, Refuge Supervisor for the South Refuges in Alaska
- A report on composition surveys of the Unimak Caribou Herd, the Southern Peninsula Caribou Herd, and the Adak Caribou Herd and information on brown bear and wolf harvest and populations by Chris Peterson, ADF&G
- Update through July 31, 2019 on the Buskin River Sockeye Salmon Fishery and Stock Assessment Project by Mark Witteveen, ADF&G
- ADF&G Subsistence Division report by Ms. Jackie Keating
- The Gulf of Alaska Ecosystem Status Report by Ellen Yasumiishi, Fishery Scientist, NOAA
- OSM staff update and other subsistence management issues by Tom Whitford, Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, OSM

## **Sea Otter Working Group**

The Council continues to support the Sea Otter working group and appointed Ms. Rebecca Skinner, Mr. Chris Price, and Ms. Coral Chernoff to continue to serve on the working group. The working group will meet to investigate management strategies to manage the sea otter population in the Kodiak Island area.

## **Future Meeting Dates:**

The Council confirmed February 27-28, 2020, and Kodiak as its winter 2020 dates and location, respectively.

The Council proposed two options for the fall 2020 meeting dates and location:

1. Dutch Harbor – week of August 24 in conjunction with Life Forum—dates may change
2. Cold Bay/Sand Point – September 10 -11



Donald Mike, Designated Federal Officer  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management



Della Trumble, Chair  
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2020 meeting in Kodiak, 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, Subsistence Council Coordinator at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3629, or email [donald\\_mike@fws.gov](mailto:donald_mike@fws.gov)