

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via Teleconference due to Covid-19
February 17-18, 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/6-western-interior-alaska>

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Council members Jenny Pelkola, Donald Honea, Jr., Pollock Simon, Sr., and Goodwin Semaken were on teleconference. A quorum was established with 4 out of 4 seated Council members participating by phone (Council has six vacant seats).

Attendees:

Via teleconference

Karen Deatherage, Fairbanks, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)

Tom Kron, Pippa Kenner, Robbin LaVine, Cory Graham, Brent Vickers, Anchorage, OSM

Glenn Chen, Anchorage, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Vince Mathews, Interagency Staff Committee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Gerald Maschmann, Holly Carroll, Randy Brown, Fairbanks, USFWS

Bob Rebarchik, Jeremy Havener, Galena, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)

Tina Moran, Joanna Fox, Chris Harwood, Fairbanks, Kanuti NWR

Boyd Blihovde, Aaron Moses, Bethel, Yukon Delta NWR

Kenton Moos, Dillingham, Togiak NWR

Hans Klausner, Kodiak, USFWS Refuge Subsistence

Frank Harris, Soldotna, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

Tom Heinlein, Bonnie Million, Bruce Seppi, Walker Gusse, Anchorage, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Tim LaMarr, Erin Julianus, Fairbanks, BLM

Victoria Foley, Anchorage, National Park Service (NPS)

Marcy Okada, Fairbanks, Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve (GAAR) and GAAR Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC)

Will Deacy, Matt Cameron, Fairbanks, GAAR

Eric Row, Ben Stevens, Bruce Irvine, Jim Simon, Fairbanks, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)
Mary Peltola, Terese Schomogyi, Bethel, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC)
Kevin Whitworth, McGrath, KRITFC
Dr. Daniel Schindler, Seattle, University of Washington Fisheries
Serena Fitka, Catherine Moncrieff, Anchorage, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)
Darrell Vent, Carl Burgett, Huslia Tribe
Mark Burch, Todd Rinaldi, Rick Merizon, Palmer, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
Deena Jallen, Christy Gleason, Chris McDevitt, Alida Trainor, Glenn Stout, Brooke McDavid, John Chythlook, Klaus Wuttig, Sara Longson, Fairbanks, ADF&G
Joshua Peirce, McGrath, ADF&G
Sabrina Garcia, Charles Brazil, Anchorage, ADF&G
Brian Riley, Dillingham, ADF&G
Danielle Stickman, Anchorage, Interagency Research Policy Committee
Ellen Yasumiishi, Diana Stram, Juneau, National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA)
Jim Murphy, Juneau, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Jack Reakoff, Wiseman
Arnold Demoski, Nulato
Tim Gervais, Ruby

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Honea, to adopt the agenda as read with the following additions/changes:

- Mulchatna Caribou Herd Update, Small Game Regulatory Updates and Kuskokwim River Post Season Survey (ADF&G) (Todd Rinaldi, ADF&G)
- All NOAA presentations from 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. 2/18/2021
- Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan (BSWI RMP)
- NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Determination Permit Update
- Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Funding Opportunities

The motion passed unanimously.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mr. Simon to approve the fall 2021 meeting minutes.

The motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mr. Simon, to delay the Council's election officers until the Fall 2021 meeting. The decision was based on the current high vacancy rate on the Council.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Jenny Pelkola of Galena reported that there is a lot of snow in the woods. A few moose are around town, and there are lots of lynx and foxes. Residents have been staying close to home due to COVID-19. Mrs. Pelkola also remarked that she participated in the Federal Subsistence Board meeting in January, and would like to see some Board members attend the Council meeting in the future.

Donald Honea, Jr., of Ruby received information on moose surveys from Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko NWR. Wolves are being heard and he was aware of wolves killing moose down by the river. Mr. Honea would like to see a survey on wolves in the area. He mentioned that the deep snow had an impact on the moose population. The snowpack is not as deep this year so hopefully the moose will have an easier time. The Middle Yukon Fish and Game Advisory Committee met last week but he wasn't able to attend.

Goodwin Semakan of Kaltag reported that the snow is pretty deep and there seems to be some wolves around, across the river. They have been getting wolves down below Kaltag. Mr. Semakan is also concerned about the moose because of deep snow. It's been a chilly winter and the moose are thin and just surviving.

Pollock Simon, Sr., of Allakaket reported a mild winter and not too cold. Last year it was -50 for two months. There's about 2-3 feet of snow on the ground and the weather has been pretty good. People are not stressing out over firewood like last year. There were no caribou this winter, and a limited number of moose. However, Mr. Simon said that most people got their moose because of the extended moose season. There wasn't much salmon either, and the wet fall produced high water in the spring, forcing some subsistence users to pull their nets.

Public Comment

Darryl Vent of Huslia testified on behalf of the Huslia Tribe. He stressed the need for the Federal Subsistence Board to increase interior Alaska subsistence council member representation. Mr. Vent re-applied to serve and is hoping to get back on the Council. He believes that the community of Huslia is a critical area in Western Interior Alaska, especially with the threats of the Ambler Road and its impacts on subsistence. Caribou migrations will be affected, and along with the low fish counts, Koyukuk River area subsistence users will have few resources to harvest.

Jack Reakoff of Wiseman testified that he re-applied to serve on the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, due to the status of his current application which had not yet been reviewed by the Department of Interior. At the time of the Council meeting, the Southeast Alaska, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Councils had received no appointments for the 2020 RAC appointment cycle. Mr. Reakoff is hoping that out of cycle appointments will be made, and the Council will soon have adequate representation from the region. Mr. Reakoff also shared information on the conditions and wildlife populations in the Brooks Range. He reported that snow depth was about 25% less than last year, with about 14 inches of snow on the ground. The snow is dry, and the wind is blowing it off the mountains, benefitting Dall's sheep populations. The caribou are to the east and north, and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is around the John River. Wolf populations are high and moving with the caribou. The lynx population is fluid, so everyone is seeing lynx from Kotzebue all the way up in the Brooks Range. Mr. Reakoff stated he will speak to his concerns with the BLM's Central Yukon Resource Management Plan (CYRMP) later in the meeting when the topic arises.

Agency/Tribal/Organization Reports

- Todd Rinaldi, ADF&G and Boyd Blihovde, Yukon Delta NWR, Mulchatna Caribou Herd Update
- Rick Merizon, ADF&G, Small Game Regulatory Updates
- Chris McDevitt, ADF&G, Kuskokwim River Post Season Report

New Business

Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals

Pippa Kenner, OSM, read the Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals. There were no proposals submitted by the Council for this cycle.

Council Charter Review

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mr. Simon, to accept the Council Charter with modification to include the following new language: “Any member of this Advisory Council may serve after the expiration of the Member’s term until a successor is appointed”.

Motion passes unanimously.

Finalize FY2020 Annual Report

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mr. Simon, to finalize the Council’s Annual Report as written.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agency/Tribal/Organization Reports Continued:

- Eric Row, TCC 2020 Update including Henshaw Creek Escapement
- Kevin Whitworth, KRITFC Update
- Daniel Schindler, Kuskokwim River Meeting Outreach
- Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff, YRDFA Update
- Gerald Maschmann, Deanna Jallen, 2020 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary
- Jeremy Havener, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR Update
- Chris Harwood, Kanuti NWR Update
- Aaron Moses, Boyd Blihovde, Yukon Delta NWR Update
- Victoria Foley, NPS Individual C&T Determination Permitting Review
- Tim LaMarr, BLM CYRMP and Dalton Highway Corridor Guided Hunting. Public member Jack Reakoff shared comments regarding the CYRMP and invited the Council to adopt these comments as their own. Mr. Reakoff provided those comments to Ms. Deatherage for reference.

Motion by Mr. Simon, seconded by Mr. Honea, to adopt and submit Mr. Reakoff’s comments on behalf of the Council to the BLM for the CYRMP. The Council also requests that OSM send a copy of the comments to as many affected tribes in the region as possible.

The motion passed unanimously.

- Marcy Okada, Matt Cameron, Will Deacy, GAAR and SRC Updates
- Tom Kron, OSM Office Update
- Cory Graham, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Call for Funding Opportunities
- Darrell Vent, Huslia Tribe Update on Ambler Road and CYRMP
- Tom Heinlein, Bonnie Million, BLM Anchorage Field/District Offices & BSWI RMP Updates
- Ellen Yashamiishi, Eastern Bering Sea Research
- Diana Stram, Salmon Bycatch Update
- Jim Murphy/Sabrina Garcia, Northern Bering Sea Juvenile Salmon Ecology

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mr. Simon, to adjourn the meeting at 1:50 p.m. on February 18th.

The motion passed unanimously.

Future Meeting Dates:

The Council confirmed its fall 2021 meeting to be held October 13-14, in Fairbanks
 The Council selected its winter, 2022 meeting to be held February 16-17, in Galena.

_____/signature on the original/_____
 Karen Deatherage, Designated Federal Officer
 USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

_____/signature on the original/_____
 Jack Reakoff, Chair
 Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes were formally considered and approved by the Western Interior Alaska 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 Karen Deatherage at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-474-2203, email karen_deatherage@fws.gov