

NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Teleconference
March 16, 2020

Invocation

Chairman Michael Kramer gave an invocation and called for a moment of silence for Northwest Alaskans who have passed.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order Monday, March 16 at 9:01 AM. Council members Michael Kramer, Barbara Atoruk, Louis Commack, Jr., Enoch Shiedt, Sr. and Replogle Swan, Sr. joined by teleconference. Raymond Lee, Jr. and Thomas Baker did not participate and were excused. The Council has three vacant seats. A quorum was established with 5 of 7 seated Council members participating by phone.

Attendees:

Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) (Anchorage) - Zach Stevenson, George Pappas, Karen Hyer, Orville Lind, Hannah Voorhees, and Tom Kron. **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** (Kotzebue) - Susan Georgette and Bill Carter. **National Park Service (NPS)** - Maija Lukin (Kotzebue), Hannah Atkinson (Kotzebue), Joshua Ream (Anchorage), and Marcy Okada (Fairbanks). **Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** (Anchorage) - Pat Petrivelli. Bureau of Land Management (**BLM**) - Walter Gusse. **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)** - Alex Hansen (Kotzebue), Beth Mikow (Fairbanks). **Alaska Department of Public Safety (ADPS)** - Captain Rex Leath (Kotzebue). **NANA** - Damon Schaeffer (Kotzebue).

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Shiedt, seconded by Mr. Kramer, to adopt the agenda with no changes. The motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Mr. Shiedt made a motion to table elections because the Council needs to have elections with all members. Ms. Atoruk seconded that motion. The motion passed unanimously. The election will be held in fall 2020.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Ms. Atoruk, seconded by Mr. Commak, to move the approval of the fall 2019 meeting minutes to the fall 2020 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Louis Commak, Jr. of Ambler reported that caribou were above Shungnak and Kobuk all winter long, and that they were grateful for that. People have been hauling wood to maintain heat in their homes.

Barbara Atoruk of Kiana reported that they have had rabid fox and lynx coming into the village and have had to put a lot of fox down. Pets are being attacked by the rabid fox and lynx. Hunters are coming in with caribou. A bull caribou taken yesterday still smelled like it was in the rut. It has been a hard winter; they are not used to -40 degrees F. any more.

Enoch Shiedt, Sr. of Kotzebue reported that it has been a long cold winter. Last fall a few people got Sheefish. A couple of people put nets at the mouth of Pike Spit and they hardly got any Sheefish. Mr. Shiedt said the people were getting rabid fox and lynx in the village. People of Kivalina are seeing rabid fox. Ice conditions are favorable this year with the cold weather.

Chairman Michael Kramer of Kotzebue reported that it has been a cold winter. They got a lot of snow in the first part of the winter up to January. Wind has blown the snow off the ice making travel safer. A lot of people have been harvesting caribou on the lower portion of the Noatak drainage and back behind Sheshalik and the Igikpak Mountains. He said that he had heard that some people are harvesting moose. There have been some rabid fox in town.

Old Business

Motion by Ms. Barbara Atoruk, seconded by Mr. Michael Kramer, to appoint Louis Commack to the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

New Business

Fisheries Program Update

Ms. Karen Hyer presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) update. She noted that two FRMP projects were funded this year. The first is a traditional ecological knowledge project for Dolly Varden and whitefish species in Northwest Alaska. The second is on life history variability in mixed stock analysis of Dolly Varden on the Noatak River. The year 2020 will be the first year for both of these projects. Ms. Hyer asked if any Council members were interested in helping to develop Priority Information Needs for the FRMP; there was no response.

Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Proposals

Ms. Hyer informed the Council that the Board is accepting proposals through April 20, 2020 to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of fish and shellfish on Federal public lands and waters for the 2021-2023 regulatory years. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence fish and shellfish seasons, harvest limits, methods, and means related to taking of fish for subsistence uses, as well as customary and traditional use determinations. The Council did not develop any fisheries or customary and traditional use determination proposals.

Review and approve FY2019 annual report

The Council reviewed the fiscal year 2019 draft annual report and provided some additional wording for the Ambler Road portion of the annual report. Motion by Mr. Swan, seconded by Mr. Commack, to approve the amended annual report and it passed on a unanimous vote.

Agency Reports:

- Marcy Okada from with the NPS noted that they had released the draft Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) for the Ambler Road for public review and comments. The document was prepared in response to the right-of-way application by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority as part of the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project. Approximately 20 miles of the proposed road crosses NPS lands in the western Kobuk River unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve. The comment period for the EEA closed on October 29, 2019 and the final EEA was expected to be completed in March, 2020 along with the BLM Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Damon Schaeffer from NANA reported on the NW Arctic Conservation Law Enforcement Working Group. They have been providing communications, posters, and patrols. They had 10 officers in 2018, 15 officers in 2019, and expect to have 20 officers in 2020, with the hire of two people from each village. The Council requested an update from Mr. Schaeffer at their fall 2020 meeting.
- Bruce Seppi from the Anchorage BLM Field Office noted that the EIS for the Ambler Road would be coming out in March, 2020 from the Central Yukon Field Office in Fairbanks. This will also include an ANILCA Title VIII Section 810 analysis. It was noted that the EIS looks at three alternative routes for the Ambler Road. The Council wanted to send a thank you letter to the Anchorage BLM Field Office for the law enforcement help.
- Hannah Atkinson from the NPS provided an update on Western Arctic National Parklands.
- Susan Georgette and Bill Carter gave the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge report.
- Alex Hansen from ADF&G gave a caribou update. He said that the 2017 count was 259,000 animals and that in 2019 they counted 244,000 animals. He noted that there are 49 radio collars on Northwest Arctic caribou. He discussed State proposals 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 from the Alaska Board of Game.

- Captain Rex Leath reported on law enforcement activities.
- Tom Kron gave the OSM report.

Future Meeting Dates:

The Council reaffirmed their fall 2020 meeting dates of November 3 and 4 in Kotzebue. The Council agreed to have their winter 2021 meeting on February 18 and 19 in Kotzebue, as well.

Zach Stevenson, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Michael Kramer, Chair
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its fall 2020 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 Zach Stevenson at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-444-4009, email Zachary_Stevenson@fws.gov.