

NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Hybrid Teleconference

March 7-8, 2023

Invocation:

Chair Thomas Baker called a moment of silence for those that have recently passed.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment:

The Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) was scheduled to meet at the Nullagvik Hotel Conference Room March 6-7, 2023. Due to a blizzard that hit the Kotzebue region and caused canceled flights, the Council meeting started a day later than scheduled, on March 7. Most Council members met together in Kotzebue with local agency staff at the Nullagvik Hotel Conference room, and most OSM staff and other presenters calling in telephonically from a conference room at the NPS regional office in Anchorage, or by individual phones.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am on March 7, 2023, by Chairman Thomas Baker. Council members Elmer Armstrong, Michael Kramer, Wilbur Howarth, Hannah Loon, Tristen Pattee, Robert Schaeffer, Raymond Woods, and Chairman Thomas Baker were present. Council members Verne Cleveland and Calvin Moto were unable to make the meeting due to weather conditions and job duties and were excused. With 8 out of 10 members present, **the quorum was established.**

Attendees:

In person in Kotzebue at Nullagvik Hotel Conference Room

- **Council Members:** Elmer Armstrong and Wilbur Howarth (Noorvik), and Vice Chair Michael Kramer, Hannah Loon, Robert Schaeffer, Raymond Woods, and Chairman Thomas Baker (Kotzebue).
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS):** Selawik NWR: Wilhelm Wiese, Bill Carter, Brittany Sweeney (Kotzebue)
- **National Park Service (NPS), Western Arctic National Parklands:** Emily Creek, Annie Carlson, Joe Dallemolle, Martha Fronstin (Kotzebue)
- **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G):** Alex Hansen, Christie Osburn (Kotzebue); Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- **State of Alaska Wildlife Troopers:** Trooper Cantine (Kotzebue)

In Person in Anchorage at National Park Service Conference Room-via Teleconference

- **Office of Subsistence Management (OSM):** Tom Plank, Dr. Hannah Voorhees, Scott Ayers, Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough (Anchorage)
- **US Geological Services:** Dr. Carey (USGS)

- **NPS- Regional Office:** Jon O'Donnell, Victoria Florey (Anchorage)
- **National Park Service (NPS), Western Arctic National Parklands:** Justin Junge (Kotzebue).
- **Court Recorder:** Tina Hile (Anchorage)

Via Teleconference:

- **Office of Subsistence Management (OSM):** Karen Hyer, Robbin Lavine, Orville Lind, Katya Wessels (Anchorage)
- **Interagency Staff Committee (ISC):** Jill Klein (FWS) (Anchorage); Chris McKee (BLM); Greg Risdahl (USFS); Glen Chen (BIA)
- **USFWS:** Ray Hander (Fairbanks)
- **NPS, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve:** Kyle Joly, Marcy Okada (Fairbanks); Ken Adkisson, (Nome/Fairbanks)
- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM):** Bruce Seppi, Walter Gussey, Craig Townsend, (Anchorage)
- **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G):** Alex Hansen, Christie Osburn (Kotzebue); Morgan Urquia, Helen Cold, Brian Scanlon (Fairbanks); Carmen Daggett (Barrow); Mark Burch (Palmer)
- **NANA Regional Corporation:** Robbie Kirk, Elizabeth Ferguson (Kotzebue)
- **Tribal Governments:** Emily Murray, Native Village of Elim and Norton Bay Tribal Watershed Council
- **Northwest Arctic Borough:** Clay Nordlum

Welcome of new and reappointed Council members:

Council Coordinator Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough welcomed newly appointed Council members Hannah Loon, Tristen Pattee, and Raymond Woods and congratulated reappointed Council members, Elmer Armstrong, Thomas Baker, Michael Kramer.

Review and Adopt Agenda:

Motion by Member Kramer, seconded by Member Howarth, to approve the agenda.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Election of Officers:

Motion by Member Armstrong, seconded by Member Loon, to nominate Thomas Baker as Chair.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Member Loon to nominate Michael Kramer as Vice Chair.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Member Armstrong to nominate Hannah Loon as Secretary.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

Motion by Member Kramer, seconded by Member Loon, to approve their fall 2022 meeting minutes.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Council Member and Chair Reports:

Secretary Hannah Loon (Kotzebue) spoke about her daughter helping to get fish for her right after the ice went out. They like to go to the slough, where the whitefish are plentiful. She thanked the Native Village of Selawik for providing fuel for their SnoGo (snow machine) so they could go out and fish. She is also being sent whitefish that was harvested in the fall from under the ice and dried fish if there is enough. She talked about ice fishing and going for pike, which were notably absent this year. Her daughter collected greens and noted the salmonberries, blueberries, and blackberries were not good last year. She spoke about how the caribou are no longer passing through to Selawik and the impacts it is having on the community. Normally the herd goes through Kiana and the mountains and then to Selawik in the fall.

Tristen Pattee (Ambler) noted a concern about Caribou showing up later each year. When they did finally arrive on October 9 this past season, folks were able to harvest what they needed. In previous years, locals had not been able to get their caribou because of how late the caribou had been showing up. Folks are spending a lot of time and money on fuel trying to hunt. Some folks were able to get moose, but not everyone. He reported a lot of sheefish had been harvested and folks in Ambler had been hanging salmon and gathering fish to offset the lack of caribou. He noted that he traveled the river from Ambler to Kiana during the summer and fall and had not seen much wildlife.

Vice Chair Michael Kramer (Kotzebue) heard reports and concerns from moose and caribou hunters that had been having issues with bears and wolves. It was reported that bears had taken caribou out of hunter's' boats and wolves approached hunters and there were packs hanging near camps. Folks were afraid to take one in self-defense because of the paperwork. He spoke about a gentleman who reported a nuisance bear within the city of Kotzebue to the troopers; after the troopers took no action, he took it upon himself to dispatch the bear, and when he turned it into Fish and Game he was cited. He spoke to the need for either more Law Enforcement or the ability for folks to dispatch animals that are harassing the public. He was most concerned for the safety of children in the community. He spoke about submitting a proposal to have a "no closed season and no bag limit" for bears and requesting that ADF&G do more bear and wolf studies. He also talked about empty shelves at the grocery stores, the lack of caribou, and the increasing costs of everything. The pandemic and the storms this past winter had hit the community hard. He spoke about folks pooling their money so they could afford to go out and harvest the food they needed and sometimes they came back with nothing. The caribou no longer travel through their community and the moose population within in the RM880 hunt area had dropped. He hadn't gotten a caribou or moose the past year. He reported seeing successful trappers the past season. He and his

brother harvested sheefish and sent to elders in Anchorage. He is interested in having a pre-meeting with the rest of the Council members as they have done in the past, which allowed them to talk through issues in advance and work on proposals. He'd like to look into doing that again if possible.

Calvin Moto (Deering) was absent.

Wilbur Howarth (Noorvik) said that it's been a tough season for caribou. They traveled up to Onion Portage where it was already snowing. He reported that fish were plentiful. Pike moved through earlier than normal possibly due to the high water, so they missed them. He reported that there were four different types of hybrid fish in the nets. Oogruk (bearded seal) hunting was good. He took a few young men out Oogruk hunting so they could harvest the seal oil. Moose were plentiful this year; he was able to get one and saw other moose on the landscape. He noted that by the time the season opened the moose had already begun moving north towards Kiana and stayed in the area around Noorvik. He said they were healthy and growing by two's right now. People from Noorvik had to go to Onion Portage to be able to get caribou as there weren't any that came through locally. He reported that the caribou were scattered and didn't move south because of the warm weather. He thought he saw roughly 30 caribou that traveled below Noorvik during the fall.

Robert (Bobby) Schaeffer (Kotzebue) congratulated the newly elected officers. He wanted to see more communication between Council members and suggested sending concerns to Chair Baker for distribution to the rest of the Council. He sees better communication helping with future meetings so that everyone is well prepared when the meetings start. He had been working for the tribe and the Alaska Observation Program; he has been observing local environmental changes and being an elder is able to compare what is happening today with what it used to be. He requested that anyone who observes changes to communicate them with him.

Elmer Armstrong (Noorvik) reported that he was able to get his net out in July and harvest salmon. Due to work, he was only able to get out a few times for moose and was unfortunately unsuccessful in harvesting one. In October the ice was eight inches thick, but he was able to put out a net under the ice for whitefish. He reported he still had whitefish and salmon in the freezer. He was gifted several caribou, which is good because the caribou didn't show up in the lower Kobuk. He has noted friends taking their kids out for rabbits and ptarmigan.

Vern Cleveland (Noorvik) was absent.

Raymond Woods (Kotzebue/Shungnak) would like to know about the caribou herd that just showed up at the headwaters of the Kobuk. They have been showing up in that area in February the past few years, and he wanted to know where this herd was coming from. Typically, caribou had shown up in their area in the fall. There had been very good fishing in the upper Kobuk. Folks were finally getting out on the landscape again after the pandemic. He had been working with the school district to help get kids out fishing and hunting. It is important to him to educate the kids on their cultural activities, and he is concerned about handing down knowledge about practices to future generations. Moose harvest had been pretty good this past year near the upper Kobuk.

Chairman Thomas Baker reported the caribou hadn't made their annual trek across the Kotzebue Sound, which generally happened mid-November to mid-December. Most local caribou hunters were not successful. Caribou hunters had tried traveling down to Buckland and upriver by snowmachine. In the

fall, most folks that went for moose were successful. People had harvested sheefish around Kotzebue and had been doing so for the past month or so.

Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

Marlene Moto from Deering expressed concern about sport hunting in Deering and the northern Seward Peninsula. They are becoming more and more desperate for caribou, and she is particularly concerned about the Kiwalik River where the herd migrates through. She thought nonresidents shouldn't be allowed in that area. She reported that National Geographic has been in the area for years and she believes they should be required to have hunting licenses. She noted that more gold mining operations are occurring above the Candle area and Deering, and she is concerned on the effects on salmon and belugas.

Old Business:

2023 North American Caribou Workshop & Arctic Ungulate Conference

Dr. Hannah Voorhees (OSM) followed up with the Council about the May 2023 North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate Conference they discussed last fall, including an overview for the new members. Some Council members were unfamiliar with the word "ungulate," which should be taken into consideration by OSM and other Conference/workshop planning authorities. She also introduced the list of potential topics that Councils suggested to be included at the conference. The Council Chair noted that for Unit 23, he'd like to see the topic of what effect hunter placement has on migration routes, as there is a lot of transporter traffic in the region. Ms. Loon noted that there is a lack of indigenous knowledge and representation regarding the issues that affect people living on the land, to which Lisa Grediagin (OSM) provided feedback over the phone. The topics fit well with potential topic item #2 (user conflict), with the addition of sport hunter "placement" to that topic, and # 17 (honoring and incorporating TEK into harvest management).

New Business:

Moose, Sheep, Caribou, and other Wildlife Updates for GMU 23

Will Wiese (FWS) and Alex Hansen (ADF&G) provided an overview of the December 2022 Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) Working Group meeting, including the recommendations made at that meeting. They also voted to submit a proposal to limit all residents who harvest WACH animals to 4 caribou per year, only one of which may be a cow. There was also a proposal to adjust the amount necessary for subsistence (ANS). A third motion was passed to ask agencies to work together with local residents and Tribes to do a better job collecting harvest data. Many development projects were discussed, with support for a letter to Secretary of Interior to protect calving grounds of WACH from development.

Ms. Loon made a recommendation to the WACH that they meet in Kotzebue so that local voices can be incorporated into their discussions. She said that folks were taken aback in the smaller communities when she informed them that there was a proposal to limit caribou harvest to 4 per year (from 5 per day). Mr. Wiese said that this has been a topic raised by the WACH and the agencies are in support of meetings in locations other than Anchorage.

Brittany Sweeney (FWS) noted that a draft summary of the last WACH working group meeting was just posted to their website and that she would provide that information to the Council and their Coordinator for further distribution.

Christie Osburn (ADF&G) provided an update on moose, Dall sheep, and other wildlife for GMU 23. Council members had questions on sheep harvest opportunities, which were answered by Marcie Okada (NPS).

Joelle Hepler (ADF&G) provided an update on an ongoing moose study in the lower Kobuk River study area. They will be capturing and tagging moose in the coming month.

Closure Review Process and Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals

Tom Plank (OSM) provided an overview of the closure review process, followed by an overview of WCR24-19 (MuskoX in Unit 23, south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage). Council members had questions about how to deal with muskoX when they become nuisances at camps, airports, etc. The Council also had concerns if the population objectives and harvest regimes for muskoXen take into account what is sustainable to the local people.

Mr. Plank (OSM) introduced the call for Federal Wildlife Proposals and opened the floor for Council action.

Motion made by Member Kramer, seconded by Member Woods, to submit the following special action request:

- Wildlife Temporary Special Action request for the 2023 season (to match the proposals submitted by the Kotzebue Advisory Council and the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group (WACHWG) to limit harvest in Unit 23 to 4 caribou (3 bulls and 1 cow or 4 bulls) per year. The Western Arctic caribou herd (WACH) has continued to decline with the most recent estimate being 164,000 caribou. The Council is greatly concerned about the precipitous decline of the WACH and feel that immediate action is needed to slow the decline and prevent the herd from reaching a point of no return. The request for a temporary special action will be followed with a wildlife proposal also to be submitted by the Council for regulatory change during the 2024-2026 Wildlife cycle. The Council feels that the harvest recommendations set forth by the WACH working group would be a starting point for the conservation of the WACH while still allowing some harvest. The Council recognizes that federally qualified subsistence users are already facing food insecurities, but this drastic reduction of caribou harvest is a means to help protect the caribou herd while still allowing some harvest.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion made by Member Kramer and seconded by Member Howarth to submit the following two proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board in the 2024-2026 wildlife regulatory cycle:

- Limit harvest in Unit 23 on Federally managed lands to 4 caribou (3 bulls and 1 cow or 4 bulls) per year. The Council's justification for requesting this change to reduce the caribou harvest limit in Unit 23 to 4 caribou (either 4 bulls or 3 bulls and 1 cow). The Council's justification for the proposal is over their concerns that the Western Arctic

caribou herd (WACH) has continued to decline with the most recent estimate being 164,000 caribou. The Council is greatly concerned about the precipitous decline of the WACH and feel that immediate action is needed to slow the decline and prevent the herd from reaching a point of no return. This proposal for regulatory change will follow the Council's request for a Special Action and if adopted would be in effect during the 2024-2026 Wildlife cycle. The Council feels that the harvest recommendations set forth by the WACH working group would be a starting point for the conservation of the WACH while still allowing some harvest. The NWARAC recognizes that federally qualified subsistence users are already facing food insecurities, but this drastic reduction of caribou harvest is a means to help protect the caribou herd while still allowing some harvest.

- A closure to non-Federally qualified users for the harvesting of caribou on Federal land of Unit 23 for the month of August, September, and October due to the declining WACH population and to curtail the harvest by nonresidents and sport hunters. This proposal is in support of what the North Slope Regional Advisory Council also submitted. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd population has been in decline for years and the low population level in 2022 is cause for concern. The Council wishes to adopt this proposal to close hunting of the herd to non-federally qualified subsistence users to help with conservation, while providing a meaningful subsistence priority for federally qualified subsistence users.

Motions passed on unanimous vote.

State Board of Game Call for Proposals

Christie Osburn (ADF&G) provided an overview of the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) call for proposals.

Motion made by Member Kramer, seconded by Member Loon, to submit the following proposal to the BOG for the Arctic/Western Region cycle:

- Limit harvest in Unit 23 on State managed lands to 4 caribou (3 bulls and 1 cow or 4 bulls) per year. The Western Arctic caribou herd (WACH) has continued to decline with the most recent estimate being 164,000 caribou. The Council is greatly concerned about the precipitous decline of the WACH and feel that this action is needed to slow the decline and prevent the herd from reaching a point of no return. The Council feels that the harvest recommendations set forth by the WACH working group would be a starting point for the conservation of the WACH while still allowing some harvest. The Council recognizes that subsistence users are already facing food insecurities, but this drastic reduction of caribou harvest is a means to help protect the caribou herd while still allowing some harvest.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion made by Member Loon, seconded by Member Kramer, to submit the following proposal:

- Change the brown bear season on State lands in Unit 23 to a year-round season to match Federal regulations. The Council's justification for this proposal was based on that

brown bear populations have increased in GMU 23, and there is currently no conservation concern for hunting in June and July, which is when many area residents are at remote subsistence camps yet do not have opportunities to hunt brown bear then. Open hunting year-round would also encourage hunting and assist with the recovery of the declining caribou and moose populations that often fall prey to bears and increase safety of residents. The current bag limit for residents is 2 bears per regulatory year of which can be taken in the general hunt or by permit. This regulation change would also match the Federal Regulations for Unit 23.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion made by Member Armstrong, seconded by Member Howarth to submit the following proposal:

- Close Unit 23 to hunting caribou by nonresident hunters to protect the declining caribou and to protect the lands to which the herd migrates. This will allow local people to harvest the caribou. There was some concern that limiting nonresident harvest would affect local residents that receive meat from the sport hunters. The Council and the stated that The Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) population has been in decline for years and the low population level in 2022 is cause for concern. They are asking to close hunting of the WACH on Federal public lands in Units 23 to non-federally qualified subsistence users to help with conservation, while providing a meaningful subsistence priority for federally qualified subsistence users.

The motion passed with 5 votes in favor to 1 against.

2021 Council Charter Review

Ms. Hutchinson-Scarborough provided an overview of review process for the 2021 Northwest Arctic Council Charter. Ms. Loon offered a friendly recommendation to ensure the Council had representation from the communities of Noatak, Kivalina, and Buckland.

Ms. Sweeney (FWS) offered the Council options that they could use to address Ms. Loon's recommendation. Katya Wessels (OSM) offered further clarification on this topic, noting that the Council could add to the charter their desire to have a representative from all communities in the Northwest Arctic region (but could not designate zones or specific communities for individual seats on the Council).

The Council took the following actions:

Motion made by Member Armstrong, seconded by Member Howarth, to redistrict the Council's area to get desired representation. The area would include the (1) Upper Noatak/Kivalina area, (2) Kotzebue area, (3) Kiana/Noorvik/Selawik area, (4) Seward Peninsula area, Buckland/Deering, and (5) Upper Kobuk (Ambler/Kobuk/Shugnak).

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion made by Member Howarth, seconded by Member Armstrong, to write a letter to all of the communities in the region to solicit applications to the Regional Advisory Council.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FY 2022 Annual Report

Ms. Hutchinson-Scarborough provided the Council with an overview of their draft FY 2022 annual report and requested feedback on any changes that they may have. It was noted that the dates of the meeting in the intro to the letter need to be updated as the Winter 2023 meeting was shifted by one day.

Motion made by Member Armstrong, seconded by Member Loon, to accept the annual report with an amendment to modify the dates of the meeting dates referenced in the letter.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

Ms. Wessels (OSM) provided the Council with an overview of the proposed changes to the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy and offered them an opportunity to comment. The Council was concerned about having to follow guidelines that limited their ability to communicate with who they want and felt restricted.

2020 Hunting and Trapping Regulations on National Preserves in Alaska

Emily Creek (NPS) provided the Council with an overview of the proposed changes to 2020 Hunting and Trapping regulations on National Preserves in Alaska and asked if the Council had any input to share. A Council member talked about how harvesting swimming caribou is a cultural practice. There was a reply from NPS that subsistence users are still allowed to use this method and that this would only apply to sport hunters. There was a discussion on what are considered navigable waters, differences in State and the BLM definitions, and where State jurisdiction is related to mean high water marks. There was also a reminder that this applies to National Preserves, and for this Council the Noatak Preserve in particular.

Subsistence Resource Commission Updates and Appointments

Ms. Creek (NPS) informed the Council that the NPS Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) meetings that were intended to happen earlier this year have been postponed due to poor weather and will be rescheduled to a later date.

Justin Junge (NPS) asked the Council to appoint a representative to the Kobuk Valley SRC.

Motion made by Member Loon, seconded by Member Armstrong, to appoint Tristen Pattee to the Kobuk Valley SRC.

Motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Marcy Okada (NPS) asked the Council to appoint someone to the Gates of the Arctic SRC. The Council is going to wait until their fall meeting to discuss any appointments to this SRC.

OTZ Telecom Microwave Tower Input

Ms. Sweeny (FWS) and Bruce Seppi (BLM) introduced a request for input on impacts to subsistence of proposed OTZ Telecom Microwave Tower project and asked the Council for feedback on how this project might affect subsistence resources. The project is looking to bring improved internet services to rural communities. The project plans to start and complete this year. The Council discussed aspects of the project, including why they plan to use propane instead of diesel to power the towers.

OSM Fisheries Updates

Dr. Voorhees (OSM) introduced the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) update and provided a general overview of the FRMP process. Following this update, Ray Hander and Bill Carter (FWS) provided a summary of the findings from the long term FRMP project, Selawik River Inconnu Spawning Population Age Structure Evaluation and Spawner Recruitment Response to a 2004 Permafrost Thaw Slump, that is funded by OSM's FRMP.

Karen Hyer (OSM) provided a briefing that updated the Council in the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. She also updated the Council on the most recent fisheries regulatory cycle, noting that there were no fish proposals for this region, and spoke about the next cycle in 2024.

Northwest and Arctic Beaver Studies

Dr. Ken Tape (UAF) provide an update to the Council on his project to look at changes in beaver populations over time in the region, noting that there has been a substantial increase in the number of beaver in the region as identified by historic photographs and current monitoring.

Ms. Helen Cold (ADF&G) spoke about a project to collect Indigenous Knowledge across the region that is occurring concurrently with the work from Dr. Tape.

Dr. Mike Carey (USGS) discussed research to examine the effects of the beaver expansion on thawing of permafrost, fish community structure, bioaccumulation of mercury in fish, and disease vectors.

Dr. Carey (USGS) also provided the Council with an overview of a new project to examine the recent increase in orange coloration in Arctic streams associated with iron release from thawing permafrost soils. The project will continue throughout the region for the next few years.

Other Reports

- Mr. Will Wiese (USFWS) provided an update on activities of the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge staff.
- Ms. Annie Carlson (NPS) provided an update on activities of the Western Arctic Parklands Parks staff.
- Ms. Marcy Okada (NPS) provided an update on activities of the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Park staff.
- Mr. Joe Dallemolle (NPS) provided an overview of commercial use operations and sport hunting for the Western Arctic Parklands. The information pertained primarily to the past three years. This covered commercial operations (transporters, air taxis, etc.) and sport hunting information from past seasons. State Wildlife Trooper Canteen also contributed to the discussion.
- Mr. Tom Sparks (BLM) provided an update, including the Ambler Road EIS, staffing changes, transporter activity, and an EIS for lifting of land orders.
- Ms. Morgan Urquia and Ms. Helen Cold (ADF&G, Division of Subsistence) provided an overview of the ongoing projects in the region, including updates and results. Projects include the Arctic Beaver Observation Network, Western Arctic Caribou Herd Harvest Assessment, and the Kiana Community Subsistence Harvest Assessment.
- Mr. Scott Ayers (OSM) provided the OSM update.

Future Meeting Dates

The Council confirmed its Fall 2023 meeting to be held October 16-17 in Kotzebue.

The Council selected preferred dates for the Winter 2024 All-Council: first choice week of March 11 and second choice week of March 25.

The Council selected its Fall 2024 meeting to be held October 28-29 in Kotzebue.

Closing Comments

Mr. Schaeffer: A lot has happened since the last meeting. It's been great to see the updates to the studies that have been taking place, especially the beaver studies. He noted that he's still concerned about the algae that they are seeing and hopes to see more information about this at future meetings. He also talked about the presentation on the Selawik slump and the rusting of Arctic streams presentations. He's impressed with the advancements with everything. Thanks to everyone that helped put the meeting on and participated.

Mr. Pattee: Thanks to everyone who provided reports. He's glad to be on the Council and be appointed to the Kobuk Valley SRC. He looks forward to the next meeting.

Mr. Armstrong: Thanked all the agencies for the reports that share what is really going on with the animals and waters. Thanks to the Council for talking about issues and hearing their reports as we try to work together to make the best-informed decisions in a way to protect the animals and fish that we live off.

Mr. Howarth: It's been a real good meeting. Thanks to everyone who participated. We need to educate our younger generation about hunting. The next meeting is probably going to be even better with all of the information given to us. He looks forward to providing this information at his next local tribal meeting.

Chairman Baker: Thanks for sticking it out. It's been a long couple of days. Thanks to the Council for the efforts. Hope everyone has a safe and successful harvesting season. Looking forward to seeing everyone in the fall.

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 pm on March 8, 2023.

Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough, DFO
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Mr. Thomas Baker, Chair
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its Fall 2023 meeting October 16-17, in Kotzebue, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

For a more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Lisa Hutchinson-Scarborough at: 1-800-478-1456 or 907-310-4097, email: lisa_hutchinson@fws.gov.