

**SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes**

Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center  
600 W 7th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501  
Anchorage, AK  
March 8, 2024

**Invocation:**

Elmer Seetot, Jr. provided an invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order on Friday, March 8, 2024, at 1:53 p.m. Council members Louie Green, Jr., Patrick Reynolds, Robert Moses, Sr., and Elmer Seetot, Jr., were present in person at the meeting. Council member Mary Freytag was present via teleconference. Members Hunt, Gray, Aukongak, and Kirk were not present and were excused. With five of the nine seated Council members present (Council has one vacant seat), quorum was established.

**Attendees:**

*Asterisk \* identifies if present via teleconference.*

- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Amee Howard, Brian Ubelaker, Karen Hyer, Jarred Stone, Thomas Plank, Hannah Voorhees, Katerina Wessels, Gisela Chapa
- National Park Service (NPS): Jeanette Koelsch, Nicole Braem\*, Letty Hughes\*, Ken Atkinson\*
- Public: Melanie Brown

**Review and Adopt Agenda:**

The Council reviewed the agenda, but no motion was made to adopt the agenda.

**Election of Officer:**

Member Louis Green, Jr. was elected the Council's Chair.

Member Thomas Gray was elected the Council's Vice Chair.

Member Robert Moses, Sr. was elected the Council's Secretary.

**Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:**

Motion by Member Seetot, seconded by Member Moses, to approve the fall 2023 meeting minutes as presented.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

## **Council Member and Chair Reports:**

Mary Freytag of Unalakleet reported that people really enjoyed ice fishing and trappers have enjoyed the opportunity to travel further with all the snow they had. Member Freytag also reported everyone had a good season.

Elmer Seetot, Jr. of Brevig Mission reported that he was able to fish for saffron cod out of Port Clarence and was able to share with community members and relatives for the first time in his lifetime. Member Seetot also reported that the snow this winter has been blowing sideways as they have had mostly easterly winds, forcing the animals to move easterly from their hunt area. As a result, trapping and caribou hunting were not very successful this season. Additionally, Member Seetot shared that they have had a warm winter with temperatures mostly above zero degrees and wet snow conditions. Little snow stuck to the ground. The weather also made it difficult to harvest moose this season.

Patrick Reynolds of Savoonga reported Minke whales tangled in nets washed ashore. A lot of trash and empty whiskey bottles also washed ashore. He believes most of this trash comes from the Russian trawlers that go up and down the Bering Strait. Member Reynolds also shared the Savoonga Native Council went to Washington, D.C. to try to convince the administration to stop all foreign trawling in Alaskan waters.

Robert Moses, Sr. of Golovin reported that tomcod and smelt were about a month late this season. Caribou has been harvested and a lot of ptarmigans were seen going west. Member Moses also reported they have had a lot of easterly and northern winds and a lot of snow. Lastly, he shared that crabbing, normally starting as early as January, is late and hadn't started.

Chair Louis Green, Jr. of Nome reported he participated in *Oogruk* hunting in the springtime and it was a successful season for most. Chair Green also noted the ice in the Strait departed late towards early June. Salmon fishing was slow for folks, and they had another low return. Chair Green commented on how low returns seem to be the norm as that's what he's witnessed for the last four decades. On the other hand, people did well with subsistence pots in the winter king crab fishery. Another entity that did well in the summer and winter was the Norton Sound Seafood products commercial red king crab fishery through the Community Development Quota (CDQ) program. Tomcod and beluga were also plentiful. Chair Green also reported a lot of wind and rain in the fall and, despite the weather, people that went out to hunt for moose in the three-day hunt were successful. Lastly, Chair Green shared that his son was able to catch his first whitefish in the Kuzitrin River and gave it to his grandmother as it is tradition.

## **Action Items:**

### ***Deferred wildlife proposal(s)***

*WP24-28/29: Reduce caribou harvest limit to 4 per year, only one of which may be a cow in Units 21D remainder, 23, 24B remainder, 24C, 24D, 22, 23 and 26A*

The Council had the opportunity to discuss these proposals with the Western Interior Alaska, North Slope, and Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Councils on March 7, 2024, in a joint-Council meeting. The Seward Peninsula Council did not have quorum at the time of the joint-meeting and revisited the deferred proposals for action during this meeting.

- Motion by Member Moses, seconded by Member Reynolds, to support as modified by the Alaska Board of Game, to exclude the eastern portion of Unit 26A from the harvest limit reductions and to change the harvest limit to 15 caribou/year, only one of which may be a cow in Units 22, 23, and the western portion of Unit 26A, also including Units 21D and Unit 24. The Council concurred with the justification presented in the joint-Council session.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

Additionally, the Council discussed and carried over an action item, from the joint-Council meeting, to nominate a member from each Council to form a quadrilateral working group to address the issue of non-local/non-resident hunters on Western Arctic caribou.

- Louis Green, Jr. was requested to participate in a working group with the Western Interior Alaska, North Slope, and Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Councils to develop a joint-Council letter to address the issue of non-local/non-resident hunters on Western Arctic caribou.

### ***Review and approve FY2023 Annual Report***

- Motion by Member Reynolds, seconded by Member Seetot, to approve FY-2023 annual report as presented.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

### ***Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Regulatory Proposals***

#### ***Development of Regulatory Fish and Shellfish Proposals***

Jarred Stone, OSM Fisheries Biologist, informed the Council about the upcoming Federal fish and shellfish regulatory call for proposals for the 2025 – 2027 regulatory years. The Council did not develop or submitted any proposals at the time of the meeting.

#### ***Introduction of Draft Federal Fisheries Closure Review analyses***

Karen Hyer, OSM Fisheries Biologist, and Jarred Stone, OSM Fisheries Biologist, informed the Council about Federal Closure Review, **FCR25-01**, the closure to subsistence harvest of Chinook Salmon in the Unalakleet River upstream from the mouth of the Chirokey River. This topic was informational and required no action from the Council.

### ***Selection of Working Groups Participants for Development of FRMP Priority Information Needs***

Member Freytag volunteered to serve on the working group to develop Priority Information Needs for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for the Norton Sound-Port Clarence Area.

### ***Temporary Special Action Request***

**Temporary fisheries Special Action FSA24-01:** Yukon River Chinook, summer and fall Chum and Coho Salmon fisheries.

- Motion by Member Reynolds, seconded by Member Moses, to support FSA24-01 as written. While the Council recognizes the hardships of the closures in the Yukon River, the Council supports the request to help fish populations in the area.

The motion **passes** on a unanimous vote.

### ***Future Meeting Dates***

The Council confirmed their Fall 2024 meeting dates and location: October 24 – 25, in Nome.

The Council selected their Winter 2025 meeting date and location: April 1 – 2, in Nome.

The Council selected their Fall 2025 meeting date and location: October 14 – 15, in Nome.

### **Public and Tribal Comments on Non-Agenda Items:**

The Council heard public comments from Ms. Melanie Brown, Outreach Director for Salmon State, regarding the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals. Ms. Brown asked the Council to elevate the request to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) and the Secretary of the Interior, for the BLM to retain ANCSA 17(d)(1) designation.

- Motion by Member Freytag, seconded by Member Seetot, to submit a transmittal letter to the Secretary of the Interior to support Alternative A of the draft EIS on ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals.

The motion **passes** on a unanimous vote.

Additionally, Ms. Brown discussed needed changes to the national standard guidelines of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Ms. Brown informed the Council that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries is considering a revision of National Standards 4, 8, and 9 on "Allocations, Communities, and Bycatch," respectively. Once the draft language for each is released, there will be a comment period for the public to provide input.

## **Council Correspondence:**

Gisela Chapa, OSM Council Coordinator, provided an overview on the correspondence sent by the Council:

- Comment letter to BLM regarding the draft EIS on ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals.
- Joint Council letter from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior Alaska, Eastern Interior Alaska, and Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding concerns about salmon bycatch and lack of tribal representation.

## **Other Business:**

### ***Charter Review:***

Gisela Chapa, OSM Council Coordinator, provided an update on the 2023 Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council charter changes.

### ***Joint Council action items:***

The Council discussed and made decisions on the following:

- Motion by Member Moses, seconded by Member Reynolds, to support a joint-Council letter to the Board to address bycatch and interception of subsistence resources in commercial fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. Louis Green, Jr. was requested to assist with this effort.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

- Motion by Member Seetot, seconded by Member Moses, to support a joint-Council transmittal letter to the Secretary of the Interior for fair Council members' time compensation.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

- Motion by Member Seetot, seconded by Member Moses, to support a joint-Council letter to the Board to address timeliness and direct replies to Council correspondence.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

- Motion by Member Seetot, seconded by Member Reynolds, to support a joint-Council letter to address caribou issues statewide.

The motion **passed** on a unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. on March 8, 2024.

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Gisela Chapa, DFO  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

*CERTIFIED by the Chair on 6/12/2024*

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Louis Green, Jr., Chair  
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

This document is a DRAFT version of the meeting minutes that has been certified by the Council Chair. These minutes will be formally considered by the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its October 2024 meeting in Nome, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcripts, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Gisela Chapa at 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 310-6129, email [ana\\_chapa@fws.gov](mailto:ana_chapa@fws.gov).