

EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Pike's Waterfront Lodge
Fairbanks, Alaska
October 8–10, 2024

Invocation:

Council member Sue Entsminger provided an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment:

The meeting was called to order Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at 9:07 am. Council members Sue Entsminger, Andrew Bassich, Donald Woodruff, Eva Burk, and Chair Charlie Wright were present in-person on the first day of the meeting. Member Amanda Pope attended via teleconference on the first day and in person on the remaining days. Member Dorothy Shockley attended via teleconference on the first and second day but was absent and unexcused on the last day. Member Charlie Jagow was absent and unexcused. Member Linda Evans was absent and unexcused the first day but attended in-person on the remaining days. Member Burk was absent and excused on the last day of the meeting. With seven out of nine seated Council members present, a quorum was established. There is currently one vacant seat on the Council.

Attendees:

* *Denotes attended virtually*

- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Brooke McDavid, Brent Vickers, Cory Graham, Liz Williams, Orville Lind, Tom Plank*, Lisa Grediagin*, Hannah Voorhees*, Robbin La Vine*, Kristen Morrow*
- U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) – Office of the Secretary, Office of Policy and Environmental Management – Eric Werwa*
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Fisheries and Ecological Services – Keith Herron, Shane Ransbury; Science Applications – George Yaska; Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) – Clayton Merrill, Jimmy Fox; Arctic NWR – Merben Cebrian, Tim Knudson; Regional Office – Jill Klein*; Refuge Law Enforcement – Curtis Stevens*
- National Park Service (NPS): Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (NPP) – Barbara Cellarius, Benjamin Pister, Amber Cohen*; Gates of the Arctic NPP and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve – Mark Dowdle, Ellen Lyons, Marcy Okada, Mat Sorum, James Cash, Matt Cameron; Denali NPP – Amy Craver*, Regional Office – Kim Jochum*, Victoria Florey*; Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate – Hanem Abouelezz
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Eastern Interior Field Office – Emmanuel May, Angela Yemma, Jim Herriges; Glenallen Field Office – Caroline Ketron; Regional Office – Chris McKee

- Bureau of Indian Affairs: Dr. Glenn Chen
- U.S. Geological Survey: Jeff Conaway*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Wildlife Conservation – Jason Caikoski*, Mark Nelson, Tony Hollis, Tom Seaton; Commercial Fisheries – Kristy Gleason, Matt Olson, Deena Jallen; Sport Fisheries – Lisa Stuby
- Tribal and Native Organizations: Doyon – Cheryl Cadzow; Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) – Karen Linnell, Jim Simon; Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) – Chief Brian Ridley, Diloola Erickson, Krystal Lapp; Village of Beaver – Chief Rhonda Pitka (also a Federal Subsistence Board (Board) member); Dot Lake Tribe – Cary Fremin; Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission (YRITFC)– Karma Ulvi, Olivia Irwin; Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) – Bruce Thomas
- Non-profits and Other Organizations: Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) – Catherine Moncrieff, Grace Kirkey; Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) – Mark Richards
- Public: Ross Martin (PhD student, Yale School of the Environment), Jack Reakoff (Western Interior Council Chair)

Review and Adopt Agenda:

- Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Entsminger, to adopt the agenda as amended to group and consolidate fisheries presentations and discussions. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

- Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to approve the Winter 2024 Council meeting minutes and the Joint Councils' meeting minutes. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Council Member and Chair Reports:

Andy Bassich of Eagle reported that one of his community's top priorities is to get a Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition meeting together because the herd is struggling and it is one of the top food sources for Eagle residents. The Coalition is past due to meet. Member Bassich has observed that beavers are moving into his area in greater numbers and causing ecosystem changes. Although beavers are a good subsistence food source, their impacts to waterflow and passage of fish need to be monitored. He continues to notice a decline in songbirds and is curious what larger scale changes this could be signaling. Member Bassich reported that Peregrine Falcons in the upper Yukon River are at their lowest recorded numbers besides when DDT insecticide was affecting them decades ago. Another top priority for Member Bassich continues to be fisheries issues. He implored everyone in attendance at the meeting to work together toward meaningful actions and pointed out that agencies need to break down barriers and collaborate better. He shared his opinion that fisheries disaster relief funds should be better allocated to help struggling subsistence users and that more food replacement programs need to be developed.

Member Bassich ended his report by emphasizing the need for international discussions between all Pacific Rim countries about hatcheries production and the impacts to wild fish and the ecosystem.

Donald Woodruff of Eagle reported that he saw 62 grouse on the Taylor Highway on his drive into the meeting, more than he's ever seen. He seconded Member Bassich's concerns about the declines in Peregrine falcons, which are down by 50 percent below their typical numbers. Member Woodruff reported that it was a good berry year, but moose harvests were low and only three caribou were harvested so far. He has seen few bear tracks and has not seen many bears being harvested this year. The salmon season was a bust once again, and the lack of harvest continues to contribute to the cultural and spiritual degradation of the people of the river.

Sue Entsminger of Mentasta Pass reported that she has been seeing wolves around close to her house recently. She agreed with Member Woodruff that there are a lot of grouse this year. In her area in Unit 12 the moose harvest has seemed to be fairly successful. A girl from Mentasta harvested her first moose this fall and shared some of the meat and the tongue with her. Member Entsminger guided for bear hunting in the spring and got two very large grizzlies (brown bear). She feels that local predator hunters and trappers really help with keeping the numbers a bit lower which in turn helps the moose numbers. When glassing the mountains, she has noticed more lambs this year than in the last couple years and hope that it is a good sign that the sheep populations might start to recover. Member Entsminger said that blueberries were poor in her area this year. People continue to be concerned about the rapid decline of the Nelchina Caribou Herd. She reported that it has been a warm fall with lots of rain. She said that Copper River salmon are showing signs they are not doing as well as they have in the past and that it is something to keep monitoring.

Eva Burk of Nenana/Fairbanks agreed with many of the concerns shared by the other Council members and in particular that a Fortymile Caribou Herd Coalition meeting needs to happen. Like others she has seen more beaver in the Nenana area and encouraged folks to get out and trap them. Member Burk shared that she has heard from people who fish in marine waters that they have observed an uptick in the number of forage fish. Additionally, the ocean is not as hot as it has been in past years. She is hopeful these could be indicators of better conditions for rebuilding salmon stocks. Member Burk spoke about the interest she has been hearing in identifying a conservation corridor for migrating salmon between Western Alaska and the Alaska Peninsula regions. She agreed with Member Bassich that hatchery releases need to be addressed. She reminded everyone that the Yukon River salmon crisis is not new, even though people talk about it like it is a recent development. Her family had to stop commercially fishing in the early 2000s, which was over 20 years ago. She would like to see more studies published on fisheries induced evolution — how fisheries management actions and how people fished in the river and the ocean in the past have affected where we are today. She has seen documentation during her research of people mentioning the impacts of commercial salmon fishing over 100 years ago when it first started on the Yukon River and feels we have to be open and honest about how that history has contributed to the status quo. Member Burk is happy to see agencies and Tribes coming together for the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative. She would like to see more focus on community-based monitoring. Despite all the current struggles, she strives to stay hopeful and is thankful for the ability to still cut fish, even if it is frozen fish

flown in from Bristol Bay. Member Burk described challenges for moose hunting in Nenana. There have been a number of big projects in recent years, including building a bridge across the Nenana River, the possibility of extending the road toward Kantishna, a land parcel sale, and the Wood Bison reintroduction. Despite all this activity, which has brought more hunters to the area, there has not been a moose count in Unit 20C since 2011, so there is no monitoring of how these projects have had an impact on moose or local subsistence users. She said that the lack of monitoring of bear populations is concerning because numbers of black bear seem to be declining but hunts are very liberal.

Amanda Pope of Circle agreed with the concerns expressed by other members. She said that fish and wildlife populations in the Interior are scarce and many people are without the food they need. She feels that management actions need to be re-evaluated. Member Pope would love to see more local people involved in monitoring and management, and invited to participate by agencies. She thanked everyone who has been working to increase collaborations between managers and local people who live out on the land. She also thanked all the people of the region who do advocacy work or serve on councils and committees like this one.

Dorothy Shockley of Manley Hot Springs/Fairbanks reported that there were more signs of moose on the drive to Manley Hot Springs this fall. She also saw lots of grouse like others reported. Member Shockley said that her biggest concern continues to be the inability of people to feed themselves like they could in the past. Populations of fish and wildlife are down all over the state. She said the current Western management system is not working for the people who truly rely on subsistence resources, and she wants to see more Indigenous management. Member Shockley is hopeful because of the young people she sees getting involved, especially with climate change work. She said that natural adaptations are happening, and we have to pay more attention to what the animals and environment are telling and showing us. We need to work with nature instead of trying to force a different system upon it.

Linda Evans of Rampart/North Pole thanked everyone for their participation in and contributions to the meeting. She shared that Rampart still has no fish, no berries, and no birds. One positive note was that she hunted some grouse this fall and saw more than she'd seen in recent years. The lack of salmon is particularly hard on the people of the river. It is sad to not see full fish camps and families busy working together to put up fish. Despite no fishing, she brought her grandson to Rampart during the summer to allow him to experience village life, and he loved it. Member Evans said she is inspired by elders like Sarah James of Arctic Village who continue to live their traditional lifestyle whether they are in the city or in the village.

Charlie Wright (Chair) of Tanana/Rampart reported that he noticed a positive indicator while traveling rivers this summer: the gnats and mosquito numbers are coming back. Chair Wright expressed his gratitude for being mentored as a youth by a very traditional Native man who taught him about natural cycles to pay attention to. He shared that it starts with the small things, like the bugs and small animals, and then it passes up the chain to the larger animals that eat the smaller ones. Chair Wright agreed that the salmon runs were a bust this year and people are still having to buy fish or rely on donations. He put in a four-inch mesh net to get some whitefish this fall. He saw a couple more moose than the previous

few years, but the numbers are still depressed from what they should be and there aren't enough moose to harvest and share as they normally would. There were a few moose hiding in town in Rampart because there were so many wolves. He heard that upriver there were dogs snagged off their chains by wolves. He thinks it could be a sign there isn't a lot else for them to eat. Chair Wright heard the Porcupine Caribou Herd did not come into the region around Arctic Village and Venetie like it usually does, and that is concerning because it is their main food source. He is also concerned about the low number of black bears along the Yukon River from the flats down to Tanana and said that it might be time to reconsider the five-bear limit in parts of the region. Chair Wright said he tries to stay hopeful like Member Burk and he wished everyone a great meeting.

Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

Day 1 – Chief Karma Ulvi from the Native Village of Eagle said that she is very concerned about low moose numbers around Eagle and the decline of the Fortymile Caribou Herd. She then commented in her role as Director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and shared that the YRITFC is working on becoming an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit, building capacity of staff and commissioners, and that they received a Gravel-to-Gravel grant. Jim Simon with AITRC expressed disappointment that Copper River Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) proposals were not on the Council's agenda. In response, the Council decided to add some of them to their agenda. Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Chair Jack Reakoff informed the Council about BOF Agenda Change Request 13 submitted by his Council. The Council also decided to add this to their agenda. Carrie Stevens of Fairbanks provided personal comments regarding the continued salmon crisis and need for conservation corridors in the marine environment to help get more salmon to the spawning grounds and rebuild runs. She said that moose numbers are low in the Yukon Flats, but record numbers of nonlocal hunters are traveling upriver to hunt there. Subsistence needs are not being met for salmon or moose. She suggested increased outreach materials for hunters at the Yukon River bridge and an increase in trespassing enforcement. She encouraged the Council to comment against oil and gas drilling in the Yukon Flats NWR. Bruce Thomas with CATG shared concerns about a large increase in traffic and nonlocal hunters along the river in the Yukon Flats, which scared moose off the river and made it extremely difficult for local people to get their meat. Karen Linnell with AITRC stated that the Eastern Interior Council should have jurisdiction for the entire Copper River, not just the headwaters, because the salmon have to pass through the lower river to reach the upper river. She also stated that mapping apps like Hunt onX are not accurate and because of that Ahtna Inc. has developed their own map app to help prevent and document trespassing.

Day 2 – Ross Martin, PhD student, told the Council he is planning to analyze the transcripts from the past 30 years of Council meetings as part of his research and will share results in the future. Mark Richards with RHAK requested that the Council consider asking Alaska Board of Game to restrict non-resident hunting of Fortymile caribou before taking steps to close hunting to all non-federally qualified users, including resident Alaskans. Chief Brian Ridley of TCC discussed the on-going salmon crisis and impacts it is having on regional residents. He asked the Council to continue advocating for a reduction in bycatch in the Bering Sea and Area M fisheries and the establishment of a conservation corridor. He also requested that any hunter ethics initiatives include trespass education and reduction efforts. Jim Simon of

Salcha provided personal comments about pitfalls in State and Federal subsistence law that work against subsistence users. Tonya Garnett, representing the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government and the Arctic Village Council, told the Council about issues they have been having with a new-to-the-area transporter called Kavik Aviation harassing the community and animals by flying extremely low.

Day 3 – Christopher Sherry of Minto commented on wood bison reintroduction and requested the Council's support to establish a customary and traditional use determination of wood bison and allowances for ceremonial harvest by Tribes. The Council requested additional information and opted to revisit this at their next meeting. Sarah James of Arctic Village shared her concerns about development in the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and increasing competition and impacts from sport hunters. She shared that hunters from Arctic Village were unsuccessful harvesting sheep in Red Sheep Creek this year even though they saw sheep sign. She echoed concerns shared by others about the harassment of animals by low-flying aircraft.

Council Member Training on Delegation of Authority

Cory Graham, OSM Fisheries Biologist, gave a presentation to the Council about Delegation of Authority. Thomas Plank, OSM Wildlife Biologist, briefed the Council on proposed changes to wildlife Delegation of Authority Letters.

Action Items:

Wildlife Proposal WP24-01 Nelchina Caribou Seasons, Hunt Management, and §804 user prioritization analysis

Hannah Voorhees, OSM Cultural Anthropologist, presented the draft analysis to the Council.

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to support WP24-01 as modified by OSM, and to additionally modify to add Gakona to Unit 13A, Gulkana to Unit 13C, and Mentasta Lake and Chistochina to Unit 12 remainder. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

The Council **supported WP24-01 as modified by OSM and further modified by the Council** because there is a significant conservation concern for the Nelchina Caribou Herd and the population is so low that hunting is currently closed to all users. It will likely be years before there is any harvestable surplus, and even longer until a hunt can be opened without restrictions. The Section 804 analysis process was designed to help establish a priority for hunt eligibility in times of conservation. The Council feels that OSM has done a thorough job in the analysis but would also like to see the modification made to add Gakona to Unit 13A, Gulkana to Unit 13C, and Mentasta Lake and Chistochina to Unit 12 remainder. Evidence for the importance of Nelchina caribou for these four communities in these areas was provided through Tribal and public testimony, and Council member discussion. Although some federally qualified users will benefit from this Section 804 prioritization, and others will not, the temporary restrictions are necessary to protect the resource during times of conservation.

Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews:

Cory Graham presented the draft analyses to the Council for all the Eastern and Western Interior proposals and closure reviews.

Eastern Interior Region:

FP25-17 Delta River Add Rod and Reel with Limits Matching State

Motion by Member Woodruff, seconded by Member Burk, to support Proposal FP25-17 as modified by OSM. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

The Council **supported FP25-17 as modified by OSM**. The Council supports this proposal with the OSM modification because it will correct a current inequity in the system where sport fishing is allowed but Federal subsistence fishing is prohibited. The Council supports limiting gear type to rod and reel only because nonsalmon are not immune to overharvest. Although there are no present conservation concerns, the Council noted that it will be important to monitor fish populations to stay ahead of any future issues. Many of the resources that federally qualified subsistence users depend on are in decline and rescinding this closure will create additional opportunities for harvest.

FCR23-05 (deferred) Delta River Closure to Harvest of All Fish

The Council did not consider this closure review due to their action on FP25-17.

FCR25-02 Nome Creek Closure to Harvest of Arctic Grayling

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Entsminger, to retain the closure to the harvest of grayling in Nome Creek. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

The Council voted to **retain the status quo**. The Council felt that it is premature to rescind the closure before fully understanding the population dynamics of Grayling in the area. Grayling populations are vulnerable to overharvest and can take a long time to recover. Although the current Grayling population appears to be stable, the closure should not be rescinded until conservation minded regulations can be enacted to prevent conservation issues. Any future regulations should also seek to minimize impacts to salmon spawning in the area. Retaining the closure for the time being will not have a substantial impact on subsistence users because the area is not commonly used for subsistence harvesting.

Crossover with the Western Interior Region:

FP25-16 Kanuti River and Bonanza Creek Gear Types and Harvest Limits

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to support FP25-16. *The motion passed on a vote of 6-1.*

The Council **supported FP25-15**. The Council supported the proposal because it will benefit local federally qualified subsistence users by allowing them to harvest a few additional Grayling. The Council

noted that there are no conservation concerns for Grayling based on Western biology or traditional ecological knowledge.

Crossover with the Southcentral Region:

Hannah Voorhees presented the draft analyses to the Council for the two Tolsona customary and traditional use (C&T) determination proposals.

FP25-03a Tolsona C&T Salmon in the Chitina Subdistrict of the Upper Copper River District

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Entsminger, to support FP25-03a. *The motion failed on a vote of 1-6.*

The Council **opposed FP25-03a** because they did not feel that enough of the eight factors for determining customary and traditional use were met. The Council noted there was not enough evidence of intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices or historical use of the resource. Additionally, there are conservation concerns and the amounts necessary for subsistence have not been met recently for salmon in the upper bounds of the Copper River.

FP25-03b Tolsona C&T Freshwater Fish in the Copper River Drainage Upstream from Haley Creek

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to support FP25-03a. *The motion failed on a vote of 0-7.*

The Council **opposed FP25-03b** because not enough of the eight factors for determining customary and traditional use were met. Although the Council noted that significant conservation concerns are not present for nonsalmon fish as they are for salmon, they re-iterated that there was no strong evidence presented for longstanding historical use or passing on of knowledge and practices through generations.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Agenda Change Requests and Proposals

Agenda Change Requests (ACRs)

ACR 1 – Remove restrictions on gillnet mesh-size and length in the subsistence fishery for non-salmon fish in non-flowing waters of the Yukon Area (5 AAC 01.220)

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to support ACR 1. *The motion failed on a unanimous vote.*

The Council **opposed ACR 1** and does not recommend that it be taken up out of cycle. This ACR does not meet any of the criteria specified in 5 AAC 39.999. It actually goes against criteria (A) fishery conservation purpose or reason and would create further conservation concerns for Yukon Area fisheries. It does not address an immediate need and therefore does not need to be taken up outside of the regular Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim meeting cycle.

ACR13 – Reduce maximum depth of hand and purse seines, maximum length of leads, eliminate minimum length of leads, and allow leads to be attached to either end of a seine in the Alaska Peninsula Area commercial salmon fishery (5 AAC 09.332)

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Burk, to support ACR 13. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

The Council **supported ACR 13** and recommended that it be taken up out of cycle. This ACR meets the criteria outlined in 5 AAC 39.999. ACR 13 specifically meets criteria (A) for a fishery conservation purpose or reason and (C) to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.

- For a fishery conservation purpose or reason – Returns of Chinook and fall Chum salmon to the Yukon River drainage have been at historical lows for the past several years. There are no further conservation measures that can be taken within the Yukon River drainage for Chinook and fall Chum salmon; subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries have all been closed. Therefore, additional conservation measures outside the drainage must be immediately put in place to help protect and rebuild these stocks. A reduction in Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) salmon interception during the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands June fishery can be achieved through the measures requested in ACR 13.
- To correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted – when seine net specifications and operations were adopted by the BOF for the Alaska Peninsula Area (5 AAC 39.999) the effects to AYK salmon stocks were unforeseen. A change to gear specifications and operations would help correct this effect by reducing interception of AYK salmon in Alaska Peninsula Area commercial salmon fisheries and help more salmon return to AYK drainages.

Copper River Salmon Management Proposals

Motion by Member Entsminger, seconded by Member Woodruff, to support BOF Proposal 51 and take no action on Proposals 52 and 53 in reference to support of 51. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Proposal 51 – Reduce commercial salmon fishing opportunity in the Copper River District

The Council **supported Proposal 51**. The Council agrees with the proponent that BOF action is needed to mitigate the persistent disproportionate exploitation of salmon stocks with early migratory timing. The Council emphasized that subsistence needs are not being met in the upper Copper River. The commercial fishery must share in the burden of conservation to protect the future viability of these stocks and to ensure all users can rely on this important resource for generations to come. The Council asks the BOF to take action to ensure that the current management plan is revised so that that harvest is more evenly distributed throughout the salmon runs, in an effort to protect stock diversity and provide for more equitable harvest opportunity among users of the resource.

Proposal 52 – Reduce commercial salmon fishing opportunity in the Copper River District

The Council **took no action on Proposal 52** and referenced their support and justification for proposal 51, which addresses similar issues.

Proposal 53 – Allow the Copper River District commercial salmon fishery to open for the first two periods, then close until the Copper River cumulative salmon management objective is met

The Council took **no action on Proposal 53** and referenced their support and justification for proposal 51, which addresses similar issues.

2026 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and Priority Information Needs (PINs) development

Cory Graham presented a draft list of PINs for the Yukon Area to the Council and the Council discussed the list.

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Entsminger, to **approve the Yukon Area PINs with the following amendments:**

- modify the PIN “estimates of Chinook, summer Chum, fall Chum, and Coho salmon escapements and/or harvests” to emphasize discrete stocks for Chum Salmon
- request that community-based monitoring be included by proponents as part of their proposed methods for each project
- add a PIN to include studies of “the effects of in-river predation on salmon as they migrate up-river,” as suggested by the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC)

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Annual Report

Federal Subsistence Board FY2023 Draft Annual Report Reply Summary

Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator, provided an overview of the Board’s replies to the Council’s FY-2023 Annual Report topics. During the review, the Council decided that many topics are on-going issues that should be carried forward into next year’s report.

Identify Issues for FY2024 Annual Report

The Council identified the following issues to include in their FY2024 annual report:

1. Yukon River salmon crisis
2. Co-management and co-stewardship
3. Hatchery salmon
4. OSM BOF/BOG and NPFMC comments
5. Area M genetics
6. Dall sheep
7. Fortymile caribou
8. Moose in Unit 20F
9. Hunter ethics
10. Regulations and maps
11. Climate change
12. Food insecurity

13. Cabin uses for subsistence activities
14. Technology at Council meetings
15. Copper River salmon management
16. Federal Subsistence Use Amounts

The Council identified the following correspondence to send during discussion of their FY2024 Annual Report:

1. A letter to a variety of management agencies and stakeholder groups in the Eastern Interior Region requesting the formation of a Dall sheep management coalition
2. A letter to ADF&G regarding management of the Fortymile Caribou Herd
3. A letter to the Board regarding U.S. and international salmon hatcheries with a request to elevate to the State Department and Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture
4. A letter to ADF&G and BOF regarding the need to reduce hatchery releases
5. A letter to ADF&G in support of funding for genetic sampling of commercial salmon harvests in Area M for stock identification purposes
6. A letter to BLM and ADF&G requesting that moose surveys in Unit 20F be funded and prioritized
7. A letter to USFWS and ADF&G in-season managers advocating for co-management of Yukon River salmon fisheries with the YRITFC

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to include the identified topics in the FY2024 annual report and send the identified correspondence. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Later in the meeting, another motion was made to add two additional topics to the Annual Report. Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Chair Wright, to add Copper River salmon management and Federal subsistence use amounts to the Annual Report. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Council Representatives for Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRCs)

Barbara Cellarius, Cultural Anthropologist with Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, notified the Council that terms were expiring for Council representatives serving on the Wrangell-St. Elias and Denali National Park SRCs. She informed that Council they need to re-appoint representatives or nominate new ones.

Motion by Member Evans, seconded by Member Woodruff, to **re-appoint Member Entsminger to serve as the Council representative on the Wrangell-St. Elias SRC.** *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Motion by Member Entsminger, seconded by Member Woodruff, to **re-appoint Chair Wright to serve as the Council representative on the Denali National Park SRC.** *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Draft Eastern Interior Dall Sheep Management Strategies*

The Council was briefed on the Eastern Interior Dall Sheep management strategies that were drafted by Member Woodruff. Because of limited time to review them during the meeting, the Council decided to form a working group to review and edit the strategies for further discussion at a future meeting. Members Woodruff and Entsminger volunteered to participate. The Council would also like to get feedback and input from the various agencies who manage sheep.

Motion by Member Bassich, seconded by Member Woodruff, to accept the draft Eastern Interior Dall Sheep Management Strategies as a working document and continue to refine it through working groups or a possible sheep management coalition. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Future Meeting Dates:

The Council confirmed its winter 2025 meeting dates as February 19–20 in Fairbanks.

The Council confirmed its fall 2025 meeting dates as October 8–10 in Tok.

The Council is still waiting to hear back on their request to add Tanana to the list of approved hub communities for the region.

Agency and Organization Reports:

- *TCC Tribal Resource Stewardship Division Update* by Diloola Erickson, Director
- *Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Wrangell-St. Elias NPP Bison Project Report* by Martin Robards, WCS Arctic Beringia Program Regional Director, and Taylor Stinchcomb, Social Scientist and Co-production Specialist
- *YRITFC Update* by Karma Ulvi, Executive Director
- *Bristol Bay-Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim (BBAYK) Coalition Update* by Gale Vick, Co-Organizer
- *Fairbanks Advisory Committee Update* by Gale Vick, Fairbanks AC Fisheries Subcommittee Chair
- *Porcupine Caribou Herd Report* by Mark Nelson, ADF&G Northeast Alaska Area Biologist
- *Unit 20F Moose Report* by Tony Hollis, ADF&G Fairbanks Area Biologist
- *Interior Alaska Wood Bison Reintroduction Update* by Tom Seaton, ADF&G Wildlife Biologist
- *Fortymile Caribou Herd Update* by Jeff Gross, ADF&G Tok Area Biologist, and Jason Caikoski, Division of Wildlife Region III Management Coordinator
- *Yukon Area Federal Salmon Management Update* by Keith Herron, Federal In-Season Manager
- *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Update* by Clayton Merrill, Subsistence Coordinator, and Cody Smith, Law Enforcement Officer
- *Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge Update* by Jimmy Fox, Refuge Manager
- *Yukon River Water Monitoring Update* by Jeff Conaway, US Geological Survey Hydrologist
- *BLM Eastern Interior Field Office Report* by Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist
- *Briefing on NPS Amended Alaska Sport Hunting and Trapping Regulation Final Rule* by Victoria Florey, Subsistence Program Analyst

- *Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Report* by Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator and Wildlife Biologists Mat Sorum, Matt Cameron, and James Cash
- *Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Updates* by Barbara Cellarius, Cultural Anthropologist, and Benjamin Pister, Resource Stewardship and Science Lead
- *Office of Subsistence Management Update* by Brent Vickers, Anthropology Division Supervisor

Additional Correspondence

The Council voted to send the following correspondence in addition to that discussed during their Annual Report formulation:

1. Letters to Doyon and Yukon Flats NWR opposing oil and gas exploration and compatibility within the Refuge.

Motion by Member Burk, seconded by Member Woodruff, to send the letters. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

2. A letter to North Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service in support of a Chum Salmon bycatch cap and a time and area fishing closure.

Motion by Member Burk, seconded by Member Woodruff, to send the letters. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

Other Business:

The Council received briefings on the following topics:

- Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach Initiative Working Group
- 805(c) Report and summary of Board wildlife regulatory actions
- 2025 Council application/nomination open season
- Correspondence update
- Special Action Updates
- Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program update
- Briefing on Council Member Declining Balance Cards

Brooke McDavid, Designated Federal Officer
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management

Certified by Chair for accuracy on 12/27/2024

Robert “Charlie” Wright, Sr., Chair
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its Winter 2025 meeting in Fairbanks, 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 Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator, at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-891-9181, or email brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov.