

SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Minutes

Teleconference
April 1, 2025

Invocation

Mr. Elmer Seetot, Jr. provided an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 9:13 a.m. and was held via teleconference due to inclement weather in the Seward Peninsula region. Council members Ronald Kirk, Tom Gray, Elmer Seetot, Jr., Kelsi Ivanoff, and Chair Louis Green, Jr. were present at the meeting. Council members Martin Aukongak and Robert Moses, Sr. joined the meeting briefly. Council member Hunt was absent and excused. With five of the eight seated Council members present (Council has two vacant seats), quorum was established.

Attendees:

- Intertribal Agriculture Council: Katie Herzner
- Kawerak: Julie Raymond-Yakoubian, Lisa Ellana
- Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission: Terese Vicente
- Tanana Chiefs Conference: Krystal Lapp
- Village of Solomon: Lily (*unidentified last name*)
- National Park Service (NPS): Kim Jochum, Jeanette Koelsch, Ken Adkisson, Nicole Braem
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Bruce Seppi
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): Jill Klein, George Yaska
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): Glenn Chen, Rosalie Debenham
- U.S. Department of Agriculture: Greg Risdahl
- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Kristen Morrow, Brian Ubelaker, Scott Ayers, Gisela Chapa, Jarred Stone, Dr. Hannah Voorhees, Katerina Wessels, Nissa Pilcher, Robbin La Vine, Orville Lind, Chris Mckee, Pippa Kenner, Jason Roberts, Lisa Grediagin, Derek Hildreth
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Sarah Henslee, Alicia Carlson, Luke Henslee, Marianna Mallory, Brynn Parr, Phillip Perry, Tony Gorn, Quanit Ali, Caitlin Luby
- General Public: Ben Townsend, Laura Robertson, Caitlin Luby, Allison Johnson

Election of Officers

- Louis Green, Jr. was elected Chair
- Martin Aukongak was elected Vice-Chair
- Kelsi Ivanoff was elected Secretary

Review and Adopt Agenda

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Aukongak, to adopt the agenda with the following changes given the change in meeting format due to weather:
 - Move agenda item **9. Council Member Reports** after item **13. Action Items**
 - Remove agenda items **11. Council Member Training** and **12. Wildlife Reports**

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Aukongak, to approve the fall 2024 meeting minutes with edits to address spelling errors.

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

Action Items:

Deferred Wildlife Proposal WP24-01, Statewide Sale of Brown Bear Hides

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Gray, to support with the revised OSM modification. The Council stated that the sale of brown bear hides harvested for personal use is beneficial for subsistence users. The Council also noted that the proposal with the revised OSM modification, if adopted, is likely to create confusion for the residents of Unit 22C. The Unit is predominantly State-managed lands with a one bear harvest limit.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Wildlife Closure Reviews

Brian Ubelaker, OSM Wildlife Biologist, provided an overview of the wildlife closure reviews (WCR) to the Council.

WCR26-09A/B/C: Unit 22A, moose hunting closure to non-federally qualified users

The Council briefly discussed OSM's preliminary recommendation to rescind the closure of moose hunting on Federal public lands to non-federally qualified users. Council members expressed their apprehension about rescinding the closure as it may inadvertently promote competition for moose due to commercial guiding.

WCR26-11/12: Unit 22B, moose hunting closure to non-federally qualified users

The Council discussed OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo. Members agreed with OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo since there is a customary and traditional use on moose in Unit 22.

WCR26-13/14/15: Unit 22D, moose hunting closure except by residents of Units 22C and D

The Council discussed OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo. Council members agreed with OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo since there is a customary and traditional use on moose in Unit 22.

WCR26-16: Unit 22E, moose hunting closure to non-federally qualified users

The Council discussed OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo. Members agreed with OSM's preliminary conclusion to retain the status quo since there is a customary and traditional use on moose in Unit 22.

Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals

Mr. Ubelaker informed the Council about the window of opportunity to submit wildlife proposals to change Federal subsistence wildlife harvest regulations for the 2026 – 2028 regulatory years. The Council developed the following proposals:

Unit 22A muskox

- Motion made by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Gray, to submit a proposal recognizing the customary and traditional use of muskoxen in Unit 22A by the residents of Saint Michael, Shaktoolik, Stebbins, and Unalakleet, and establishing a Federal muskox hunt in Unit 22A to mirror the State hunt. The Council mentioned the proposal would address discrepancies between Federal and State hunting regulations. Additionally, the Council stated that Unit 22 A is the traditional use area for those communities.

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

Unit 22E moose

- Motion made by Member Gray, seconded by Member Ivanoff, to submit a proposal requiring a Federal registration permit for hunting moose in Unit 22E. The Council stated the Federal registration permit would allow for more harvest data to be collected and improve management of the moose in the region.

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

Unit 22A moose

- Motion made by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Kirk, to submit a proposal requiring a Federal registration permit for hunting moose in Units 22A, that portion north of the Egavik Creek drainage (Unit 22A North) and 22A Remainder. The Council shared the Federal registration permit would allow for more harvest data to be collected and improve management of the moose in the region.

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

Unit 22A Unalakleet moose

- Motion made by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Kirk, to submit a proposal extending the fall moose season to August 1 – September 30 and establishing a winter moose hunt in Unit 22A, December 1 – last day of February, all within the Unalakleet hunt area. The Council shared the proposal would address discrepancies between Federal and State hunting regulations within that Unit.

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

Muskox season

- Motion made by Member Gray, seconded by Member Kirk, to submit a proposal extending the Seward Peninsula Federal muskox season closing date in Units 22 and 23, south of Kotzebue Sound and west of and including the Buckland River drainage (Unit 23 southwest) from March 15 to March 31. The Council stated that winter weather has become more unpredictable and extending the season by 2-weeks will provide additional harvest opportunities for federally qualified subsistence users in the region.

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

Council Charter Review

Gisela Chapa, OSM Council Coordinator, provided an overview of the Council charter for review and renewal. The Council had no recommendations for changes to the existing Council charter.

Review and Approve FY2024 Annual Report

Ms. Chapa presented the information contained in the Council's FY2024 draft Annual Report for their review and approval.

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Gray, to approve the report as presented.

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

Alaska Board of Fisheries, Including Statewide Finfish

Ms. Chapa informed the Council of the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries' call for proposals for the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim area open period for the 2025–2026 Regulatory Year. The Council did not take action to submit any proposals, but they did vote to submit a letter of support to a proposal submitted by a resident of Nome requesting a change in the subsistence schedule on marine waters west of Cape Nome. The proposal requests the Alaska Board of Fisheries mirror the same subsistence schedule as in marine waters east of Cape Nome.

- Motion by Member Gray, seconded by Member Kirk, to submit the letter of support for this proposal.

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

Future Meeting Dates

The Council confirmed their fall 2025 meeting dates and location: October 1 – 2, in Nome.

The Council selected their winter 2026 meeting date and location: March 24 – 25, in Nome.

The Council selected their fall 2026 meeting date and location: October 20 – 21, in Nome.

Council Member and Chair Reports:

Elmer Seetot, Jr. of Brevig Mission reported that Port Clarence Bay froze by November, earlier than expected, and snowfall conditions were also less than ideal over the winter. He also shared there was persistent wind over the winter and a lack of good snow, delaying the start of the hunting season. He shared that caribou moved to Unit 22A, “turning their noses into the wind” to avoid predators. He encouraged ADF&G staff to travel to the field or contact Teller residents to report the arrival of Sockeye [Salmon] earlier in the fishing season and stressed the importance of incorporating Traditional Knowledge (TK) with Western science, something not commonly reported by ADF&G staff when discussing investigation plans. Member Seetot shared his observations that water temperatures [in riverine ecosystems] are increasing; thus, decreasing dissolved oxygen in the water and killing fish in the process; all to illustrate how important it is for state staff to engage with area residents and incorporate local and TK into fish monitoring projects. He concluded his report by encouraging more people to serve on the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

Ronald Kirk of Stebbins started his report with a community update on the Stebbins school destroyed in a fire last year. He shared that temporary buildings, such as yurts and Quonset huts, were secured as classrooms to allow the kids to attend school, but they are still unable to participate in sports activities. He also shared that subsistence activities through the fall were difficult, and salmon harvests over the summer were insufficient. He concluded his report on a hopeful note, hoping that Stebbins can have a new school in 2 – 3 years and that subsistence harvests are more bountiful in the upcoming seasons.

Kelsi Ivanoff of Unalakleet shared that moose hunting in the fall was bountiful, and the community was happy for the new moose season that opened earlier than before; it was the first hunt since the Alaska Board of Game approved the new hunting season. Prior to it, people were struggling to meet their quota, and rather than extending the hunt season into October, questioning the quality of the meat while bulls are in rut, the season was moved to open earlier, in August. She also shared that they had a good berry year.

Chair Louis Green, Jr. of Nome shared that they had a successful moose hunt season but reflected on how limited and competitive moose hunting is in Unit 22C, as it was only a three-day hunt. Salmon fishing on marine waters was challenging due to inclement weather and highlighted that this was likely a record rain year. He also stated that unpredictable weather, strong winds, and rain make the subsistence fishery schedule from Cape Nome to the west unsuitable to meet subsistence needs. He also shared that the whitefish fishery up the Kuzitrin River was successful, and ptarmigan hunting was good. He concluded by sharing that they had a good berry season.

Council members Tom Gray of White Mountain, Robert Moses, Sr. of Golovin, and Martin Aukongak of Golovin were not available at the time of Council member reports.

Agency Reports:

- OSM Winter 2025 Update, presented by Scott Ayers, Deputy Director
- Chum Salmon Bycatch EIS, presented by Terese Vicente, Policy and Programs Director, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and Krystal Lapp, Tribal Resource Stewardship Department, Tanana Chiefs Conference
- ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division, Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Monitoring Project update by Luke Hensley, Assistant Management Biologist for the Norton Sound region
- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Gray, to submit a letter of support for the project. AFD&G Division of Subsistence project updates, presented by Mariana Mallory, Subsistence Resource Specialist for the Arctic Region
- Bering Land Bridge National Preserve update presented by Jeanette Koelsch, Superintendent
- Youth Engagement update by Heather Bauscher, Fisheries Community Engagement Specialist, Sitka Conservation Society
- Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Update Program update, by Dr. Hannah Voorhees, OSM Anthropologist

Public Testimony:

- Lisa Ellanna, Manager of Social Sciences Department at Kawerak, Inc., urged the Council to send a letter to the new Secretary of the Interior about the significance of the ANCSA D-1 land protections to subsistence. The Council was interested in writing a letter to maintain protections on the D-1 lands; however, they no longer had a quorum to support a motion to write a letter at the time of public comment.

Other Business:

Council Correspondence:

Ms. Chapa provided an update on the following Council's correspondence sent since the fall 2024 meeting in Utqiagvik.

- Council letter to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) regarding the Council's concerns about the trawl fishery on Bering Sea salmon and the marine environment.
- Council letter to the Nome Public Schools and Bering Straits School District to explore opportunities to engage younger generations in the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Young Leader Seat Update

Ms. Chapa provided an update on the non-voting young leader seat. The Board had advertised the open period for the non-voting young leader membership on Councils, which closed on February 16th. No letters of interest were received from youth of the Seward Peninsula region.

Per Diem Card Update:

Ms. Chapa provided an update to the Council regarding Council member travel stipends and that two new payment options were to be implemented at the next fall meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m. on April 1, 2025.

Gisela Chapa, DFO
DOI Office of Subsistence Management

CERTIFIED by the Chair for accuracy on June 25, 2025.

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 and approved by the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its October 2025 meeting in Nome, Alaska. 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, or email gisela_chapa@ios.doi.gov.