

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

Grand Hall
UAF, Northwest Campus
Nome, Alaska
January 20 – 22, 2025

Moment of Silence

The Council held a moment of silence.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 11:43 a.m. Council members Kelsi Ivanoff, Elmer Seetot, Jr., and acting Chair Martin Aukongak were present in person at the meeting. Council members Robert Moses, Sr., and Louis H. Green, Jr. were present via teleconference. Council member Ronald Kirk was absent. With five of the six seated Council members present (Council has four vacant seats), quorum was established.

Tribute to Council Member Thomas Gray

Prior to the beginning of business, the Council took time to pay tribute to Council member Thomas L. Gray of White Mountain who passed away unexpectedly in January 2026.

Attendees

*Asterisk * identifies if present via teleconference.*

- Kawerak, Inc: Lisa Ellana*, Heather Payenna*, Spencer Weinstein*,
- Native Village of Savoonga: Edwin Noongwook*
- Yakutat Tlingit Tribe: Matt Anderstrom*
- Elim Native Corporation: Frederick Daniels*
- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation: Renae Ivanoff*
- City of Brevig Mission: *Unidentified participant**
- Office of the Secretary, Department of the Interior (DOI): Kara Moriarty
- National Park Service (NPS): Jeanette Koelsch, Letty Hughes, Nicole Braem, Kim Jochum*, Eva Patton*, Kyle Joly*
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Craig Townsend*, Donna Bach*
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA): Glenn Chen, Rosalie Debenham*
- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Orville Lind, Brian Ubelaker, Brent Vickers, Gisela Chapa, Jarred Stone*, Dr. Hannah Voorhees*, Katerina Wessels*, Grace Cochon*, Robbin La Vine*, Jason Roberts*, Lisa Grediagin*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Sarah Henslee, Alicia Carlson, Marianna Mallory, Brendan Scanlon*, Aaron Poetter*, Ethan Kelso*, Phillip Perry*, Brynn Parr*

- General Public: Roy Ashenfelter, Allison Johnson, Ben Townsend*, Drew McCann*

Review and Adopt Agenda

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Report from the Secretary's Office

Kara Moriarty, Senior Advisor for Alaskan Affairs with the Office of the Secretary, gave the Council an overview of the Secretaries' targeted review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Council heard public comments on the subject, and the Council developed their recommendations for the Secretaries' consideration.

- Motion by Member Green, seconded by Member Ivanoff, to submit the Council's comments for the Department of the Interior's consideration as discussed.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

At the time of this agenda item the Council lost quorum and deferred approving the winter 2025 meeting minutes to their winter 2026 meeting.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Louis Green, Jr. of Nome reported on subsistence activities and wildlife observations from the recent fall season. He noted that many community members experienced successful moose harvests and heard reports of good beluga sightings. Member Green reported that berry season was abundant, allowing residents to gather a substantial harvest and that people were able to harvest muskoxen despite their less-than-ideal numbers. He expressed concern regarding the ongoing decline in caribou populations and stated that predator control should be evaluated as a management strategy to help reduce ungulate mortality and support caribou recovery in the region. In closing, Member Green shared his concerns upon observing salmon spawning beds in the Nome River that were completely empty, emphasizing the seriousness of the situation for both the local ecosystem and subsistence practices.

Keli Ivanoff of Unalakleet provided an update on local subsistence activities and wildlife observations over the past season. She reported that, for the second consecutive year, the moose population in Unalakleet remained abundant, allowing community members to harvest moose without any imposed quota. Notably, many individuals were able to harvest moose for the first time, and as a result of these successful first-time harvests, the people of Unalakleet are planning to host a "first catch" potluck in the near future. Member Ivanoff also expressed encouragement regarding the results of a recent population survey conducted by the State. Additionally, she noted that there were numerous sightings of beluga whales, and that residents experienced a successful beluga harvesting season. She shared optimism about reports of sea ice presence along the coast, an indicator of an opportunity to harvest crab for the first time in a decade. To conclude her report, Member Ivanoff reflected on the good summer weather experienced

in Unalakleet, and despite the low numbers of Chinook Salmon, community members were still able to harvest salmon.

Elmer Seetot, Jr. of Brevig Mission reported on several notable observations and experiences from the past season. He shared that, for the second time, he witnessed hooligans spawning on the northern shores of Port Clarence Bay, while both Pink Salmon and fall Chum Salmon were scarce. The marine mammal harvest season was unusually brief due to ice conditions. In terms of berry harvests, Member Seetot explained that blueberries and crowberries were limited due to low spring temperatures and flooding. The few berries that were available for harvest contained excess salt, which further impacted their quality. Despite these challenges, he was able to harvest whitefish and a good amount of Sockeye Salmon during the fall. However, Dolly Varden, which he typically relies on to stock up for the winter months, were not as plentiful as in previous years. Regarding seasonal conditions, Member Seetot noted that the fall was short but expressed gratitude for the minimal number of storms, which helped to reduce shoreline erosion. He also observed the presence of sea ice and anticipated that it would contribute positively to water quality and help minimize the risk of toxic algal blooms. Additionally, he reported that several walrus carcasses had washed up on the northern shore of the Bering Sea, and suspected that toxic algae may have been the cause. In concluding his report, Member Seetot expressed sincere gratitude for the late Council Member Gray. He acknowledged Member Gray's passion for subsistence and youth engagement, highlighting the positive impact Member Gray had on the community of White Mountain, as well as on the various Councils and Boards he served on.

Robert Moses, Sr. of Golovin addressed the Council regarding the profound impacts of changing weather patterns on subsistence activities and wildlife. He emphasized that weather in the region has become increasingly unpredictable, which has in turn affected the movements and behaviors of animals crucial to subsistence. Member Moses noted that temperatures are rising and reported experiencing stronger winds during the previous fall and summer. He reflected on past experiences and recalled being able to travel 50 miles south of Fish River from Golovin to harvest a wolf back in 1994. In contrast, he pointed out that in January 2026, travel has become much more challenging, and people can barely cover similar distances due to changing conditions. Discussing local harvests, Member Moses reported that saffron cod were abundant this year, while trout were scarce. Salmon numbers were also low, but people were still able to harvest and store some for future use. He added that commercial fishermen have also observed declines in fish abundance, with one fisherman reportedly catching only five fish during a 48-hour opener. He has also observed declines in other animals, stating that the numbers of spotted seals and young *oogruks* (bearded seal) are not as high as they were in the past. On a more positive note, Member Moses reported that berries—including blueberries, salmonberries, and cranberries—were abundant, and many people were able to harvest greens. He noted that times are drastically changing in the region, anticipating increased shipping and marine traffic through Diomedes, Shishmaref, and Kotzebue. Member Moses expressed concern that boat traffic, particularly vessels arriving from the south, could introduce green algae to local waters. In closing, Member Moses thanked all those who attended the meeting and stressed the significance of subsistence as a way of life in his village. He highlighted the importance of harvesting, storing, and sharing food, as well as sharing knowledge about hunting and gathering locations, as essential practices for maintaining their way of living and ensuring the well-being of community members.

Chair Martin Aukongak of Golovin shared that several of his friends were successful in harvesting moose, which contributed positively to the local subsistence efforts during the season. However, Chair Aukongak noted that salmon numbers were not as abundant as in previous years, indicating a decline that has impacted the community's ability to rely on this resource as much as in the past. In contrast, he reported that ptarmigan were plentiful in the region. Chair Aukongak expressed encouragement at seeing many young men and women actively participating in hunting activities.

Public Testimony

Lisa Ellana, Manager of Kawerak, Inc.'s Social Sciences Department, shared Kawerak's position and resolution on the Department of the Interior's review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Chum Salmon Bycatch DEIS

Spencer Wienstein with Kawerak, Inc. provided an overview of the alternatives considered by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) on their Chum Salmon bycatch Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The Council discussed the need to protect Western Alaska Chum Salmon stocks and recommended an overall Chum Salmon Prohibited Species Cap limit (Alternative 2) of 100,000 fish, establishing in-season corridor closures (Alternative 5), as well as incorporating provisions in the Salmon Bycatch Incentive Plan Agreements (Alternative 4), as the best alternatives to reduce Chum Salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery.

- Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to submit comments as discussed.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Action Items

Wildlife Proposals

Brian Ubelaker, OSM Wildlife Biologist, and Hannah Voorhees, OSM Anthropologist, provided an overview of Federal wildlife statewide, regional, and crossover proposals and closure reviews to the Council.

WP26-01, Move authority delegated through letters into unit-specific regulations

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to support WP26-01 as modified by OSM. The Council stated this is a housekeeping action and expect little to no effect on end users. This will simplify management actions for in-season managers, which may benefit users on the ground.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-01(g), Move authority delegated through letters into unit-specific regulations

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to support WP26-01(g) as written. The Council stated this is a housekeeping action and expect little to no effect on end users. This will simplify management actions for in-season managers, which may benefit users on the ground.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-52 Unit 22 brown bear, align with State regulations

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support as written. The Council stated that this proposal will align Federal regulations with State, reduce confusion and increase opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users. As all of the brown bear harvest already occurs under State regulations, this increase will not pose a conservation concern.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-53 Unit 22B and 22D caribou, modify season dates

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to defer until more information regarding the reindeer herd is available. Leaving this area open will maintain the current level of opportunity for users. Delaying a decision until the status of the reindeer herd is determined will keep this opportunity open unless the closure is necessary.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-54 Unit 22A moose, rescind closure

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support with Council modification to maintain the closure in Unit 22A, Unalakleet. The Council expressed concerns about harvest and hunting pressure increasing if the closure is rescinded for the Unalakleet area. They recognize there is currently no State non-resident season but fear one may be established if the closure is lifted. The moose population appears to be very healthy in Units 22A North and 22A remainder. Competition from non-federally qualified users is low, even after Federal lands reopen during the State season. Based on the last two seasons, local residents have been able to harvest what they need. The justification for the original closure does not appear to exist anymore, so there is no reason to keep the closure in these two subunits.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-55/56 Unit 22A moose, modify season dates and establish winter hunt

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to support WP26-55 and take no action on WP26-56. The Council stated that most users already rely on the State permit for harvesting moose in Unit 22A Unalakleet since the State season was extended to match the Federal season. As a result, having the Federal permit is not necessary. Codifying the winter season will increase opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users, and there are no conservation concerns.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-57 Unit 22A moose, modify permit requirements

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support WP26-57. The Council opposed creating a new permit. Due to the previous recommendation on WP26-54, establishing a new Federal

permit will be unnecessary. If the closure in Units 22A North and remainder are lifted as recommended, all users will be able to hunt using a State harvest ticket, making an additional Federal permit burdensome to federally qualified subsistence users.

The motion **failed** unanimously.

WP26-58 Unit 22B moose, modify permit requirement for winter hunt

Motion by Kelsi Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support as written. The Council stated that removing the Federal permit is a housekeeping action as it has not been used in over 20 years. Changing the harvest limit to “one antlered bull” will add protection for a struggling moose population while maintaining opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-59 Unit 22B moose, modify fall season dates

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support WP26-59. Adopting this proposal could reduce harvest opportunities for local residents by increasing pressure from hunters outside the area for the late season hunt. If the State season dates do not change, the harvest quota may be achieved before the Federal season opens, further reducing Federal subsistence opportunity. This hunt usually meets its harvest quota quickly, resulting in an early closure.

The motion **failed** unanimously.

WP26-60 Unit 22D moose, modify harvest limit and hunt area and establish “may be announced season”

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support as written. The Council supported aligning State and Federal regulations and changing the harvest limit to “one antlered bull” citing conservation concerns over the moose population in Unit 22D. Furthermore, the Council stated that the harvest quota for moose in Unit 22D is typically met in the fall, limiting opportunity under the RM849 permit but concluded that the “may be announced season” in the winter could provide additional opportunity for harvest.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-61 Unit 22E moose, require Federal registration permit

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to support with the OSM modification. Requiring this registration permit will supply very good and much needed information on moose harvest in Unit 22E. Obtaining the permit will be an additional burden for users, but the Council thinks that since the moose population is low, requiring a Federal registration permit will help conserve the moose population.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-64 Unit 22 and Unit 23 Southwest muskox, extend season to close March 31

Motion by Kelsi Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to support as written. Changing weather patterns have recently made it more difficult to access muskoxen herds. A two-week extension will provide users more opportunity to harvest if there is a delay in access due to weather. As there are no conservation concerns and the season will not affect calving, the Council supports this proposal.

The motion **passed** unanimously

WP26-62a Unit 22A muskox, recognize customary and traditional use by Unit 22A residents

Motion by Kelsey Ivanoff, seconded by Louis Green, to support WP26-62a, with OSM modification. The Council stated that there are multiple uses for muskoxen in the region, including use of *qiviut* (muskoxen underwool coat) in arts and crafts. The meat is valued in the region. If a hunt is established, this will provide a new opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-62b Unit 22A muskox, establish hunt

Motion by Kelsey Ivanoff, seconded by Louis Green, to support with the OSM modification. This would provide a new opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users of Unit 22A as the State permits are quite limited. The muskoxen population appears to have stabilized and remains in the area, so there is no conservation concern. Access to muskoxen is difficult and far from town, which will limit harvest, but the additional opportunity is welcomed.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WP26-63 Unit 22D muskox, combine hunt areas and Federal permits

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to support WP26-63. Combining these areas would limit opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users. There is no conservation concern with how tightly managed the harvest is.

The motion **failed** unanimously.

Wildlife Closure Reviews

WCR26-09a Unit 22A moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to rescind the closure. The Council stated that the moose population appears to be very healthy in this area. Competition from non-federally qualified users is low, and based on the last two seasons, non-local residents have been allowed to hunt under State regulations and federally qualified subsistence users have still been able to harvest what they need. The justification for the original closure does not appear to exist anymore, so there is no reason to keep the closure.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-09b Unit 22A moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to retain the status quo. The Council expressed concerns about harvest and hunting pressure increasing if the closure is rescinded for the Unalakleet area. They recognize there is currently no State non-resident season but fear one may be established if the closure is lifted.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-09c Unit 22A moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to rescind the closure. The moose population appears to be very healthy in this area. Competition from non-federally qualified users is low, and based on the last two seasons, non-local residents have been allowed to hunt under State regulations and federally qualified subsistence users have still been able to harvest what they need. The justification for the original closure does not appear to exist anymore, so there is no reason to keep the closure.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-11 Unit 22B moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to retain the status quo. Rescinding the closure would increase competition on Federal public lands as this area's harvest quota is reached quickly every year. Keeping the Federal lands closed will maintain opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users. Additionally, the moose population is below management objectives, raising conservation concerns.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-12 Unit 22B moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to retain the status quo. Rescinding the closure would increase competition on Federal public lands as this area's harvest quota is reached quickly every year. Keeping the Federal lands closed will maintain opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users. Additionally, the moose population is below management objectives, raising conservation concerns.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-13 Unit 22D moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to retain the status quo. There is a conservation concern for moose in Unit 22D and little is known about movements between Units 22D and 22E. As a

result, Federal public lands should be limited to federally qualified subsistence users to prioritize their harvest opportunity.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-14 Unit 22D moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to retain the status quo. There is a conservation concern for moose in Unit 22D and little is known about movements between Units 22D and 22E. As a result, Federal public lands should be limited to federally qualified subsistence users to prioritize their harvest opportunity.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-15 Unit 22D moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to retain the status quo. There is a conservation concern for moose in Unit 22D and little is known about movements between Units 22D and 22E. As a result, Federal public lands should be limited to federally qualified subsistence users to prioritize their harvest opportunity. The Council also stated that Unit 22D remainder is heavily used by Nome residents on the road system. Most of the harvest quota is taken by these hunters, leaving little opportunity for residents of Brevig Mission to harvest moose.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-16, Unit 22E moose

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Seetot, to retain the status quo. Retaining the closure will provide as much opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users as possible due to conservation concerns for moose in Unit 22E. Therefore, limiting harvest to federally qualified subsistence users only is necessary to provide a subsistence priority.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

WCR26-45 Unit 23, caribou

Motion by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Louis Green, to retain the status quo on WCR26-45. The Council stated that this closure was put in place due to increased conflict and hunting pressure from non-federally qualified users that were affecting the migration pattern of the caribou herd around the Noatak River area. After the closure was established, residents of Noatak were again able to harvest caribou near their community. In addition to these original concerns, which still apply, the herd also needs to be protected due to serious conservation concerns, with the population recently having dropped to about 120,000. It would be detrimental to federally qualified subsistence users in this area to open up the area to competition from non-federally qualified users. Maintaining the closure will protect the herd when it starts to grow again. The Council emphasized that it is important to continue to rely on Traditional Ecological Knowledge about changes to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Annual Report

Board FY2024 Annual Report Reply Summary

Gisela Chapa, Council Coordinator, provided an overview of the Board's replies to the Council's FY-2024 Annual Report topics.

Identify Issues for FY2025 Annual Report

Motion made by Member Ivanoff, seconded by Member Green, to approve the following items be included in the FY2025 Annual Report to the Board:

1. Natural disaster response to address the impacts on subsistence communities
2. Prioritization of subsistence uses in light of caribou declines
3. Elevating ongoing salmon concerns
4. Documenting caribou migration impacts from the Ambler Road project

Future Meeting Dates*

The Council changed their winter 2026 meeting date and location: March 30 – 31, in Nome.

The Council modified their fall 2026 meeting date and location: October 14 – 15, in Nome.

Fisheries Program Updates

Jarred Stone, OSM Fisheries Biologist, provided the following updates related to the Federal Fisheries Programs:

1. An overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funding process and an overview of the projects that were proposed for the northern region for the upcoming funding cycle
2. An update on the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program

Reports

1. Where Caribou Reside in the Bering Land Bridge Preserve, presented by Letty Hughes, Wildlife Biologist, and Nicole Braem, Cultural Anthropologist, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
2. Western Arctic Caribou Herd Status, presented by Kyle Joly, Wildlife Biologist for the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
3. Bering Land Bridge National Preserve Fall 2025 updates, presented by Jeannette Koelsch, Superintendent for the Bering Land Bridge National Park and Preserve
4. Nome Comprehensive Project, presented by Marianna Mallory, Subsistence Resource Specialist for the Arctic Region, ADF&G Division of Subsistence
5. OSM Fall 2025 update, presented by Brent Vickers, Anthropology Division Supervisor

Other Business

805(c) Report

Ms. Chapa provided a summary of the 805(c) Report outlining actions taken by the Board on fisheries proposals and closure reviews impacting residents of the northern region.

Correspondence update

Ms. Chapa also provided an update on the following correspondence:

1. Council comments to the Alaska Board of Fisheries on proposals considered for Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim finfish for the 2025 – 2026 regulatory year.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m. on January 22, 2026

Gisela Chapa, DFO
DOI Office of Subsistence Management

Certified by the Chair for accuracy on _____

Louis H. Green, 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 March 2026 meeting in Nome, AK. 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.