

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

BP Energy Center
Anchorage, Alaska
March 17, 2026

Invocation

Council Member Faye Ewan provided an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, March 17, 2026. Council members Ed Holsten, Dennis Zadra, Kirk Wilson, Faye Ewan, Andy McLaughlin, Edward GreyBear, Judy Caminer, Angela Totemoff, and Chair Richard [Greg] Encelewski were present in-person. Member Michael Ophiem was delayed due to weather, and he joined the meeting initially by phone, and after the lunch break in person. Members Hope Roberts, Diane Selanoff, and Heath Kocan were absent and excused. With ten of thirteen seated Council members present, quorum was established. There are currently no vacant seats on the Council.

Attendees

* *Denotes attended virtually*

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM): Regional Office – Brent Vickers; Glennallen Field Office – Caroline Ketron; Anchorage Field Office – Craig Townsend, Jake Vialpando*
- National Park Service (NPS): Regional Office – Victoria Florey, Eva Patton*; Wrangel-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (NPP) – Amber Cohen
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS): Kenai National Wildlife Refuge – Todd Eskelin*
- U. S. Forest Service (USFS): Chugach National Forest – Andrew Sanders*, Andy Morse*
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G): Subsistence Division – Laura Lake, Jackie Keating
- Other Organizations: Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) – Sterling Spilinek, Dan Gorze*, Karen Linnell, Deanna Kosbruk*; Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC) – Rick Merizon, Christine DeWeese*; Native Village of Eyak (NVE) – Matt Piche; Gakona Village – Linda Peet
- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM): Brian Ubelaker, Anna Senecal, Hannah Voorhees*, Robbin La Vine, Nissa Pilcher
- Public: David Sarafin of Tazlina, Jason Lesmeister of Cooper Landing, Barbara Cellarius formerly of Copper Center

National Park Service Acknowledgment / Special Guest

Barbara Cellarius, recently retired Subsistence Coordinator with NPS Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, attended in person and was recognized for her hard work and dedication to the NPS and subsistence users over the course of her career.

Election of Officers

- Greg Encelewski was re-elected as Council Chair
- Judy Caminer was re-elected as Council Vice Chair
- Angela Totemoff was elected as Secretary

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Member McLaughlin, seconded by Member Totemoff, to adopt the agenda with the additions listed below. *The motion passed on a unanimous vote.*

- Feedback requested by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council on adding tribal lands to maps in Federal hunting regulation 'handy dandy' booklet
- Discussion on recently released National Park Service proposed rule

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

The fall 2025 minutes will be reviewed and approved at the fall 2026 meeting.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Edward GreyBear of Kluti Kaah shared that he did not have a lot to report since the last meeting was only a few months ago, and he had spent much of the time between January and this meeting at university in Fairbanks.

Dennis Zadra of Cordova said that he also did not have much to report due to the short amount of time between meetings, although he noted that Cordova is experiencing an unseasonably cold winter, as is much of the rest of the state. Member Zadra noted that while there is not much snow, there is a lot of ice and, on the positive side, cold weather produces good pelts.

Judy Caminer of Anchorage reported that she, along with other Council members, had attended the Open House that was held by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to gather public feedback on the Federal Subsistence Management Program (FSMP) Secretarial review. She informed the Council it was very well attended, and that people attended in person from all over the state to testify, and that the comment period on the review had been moved back and she has not heard of when any potential decisions or changes will be made based on the review. She finalized her report by noting that there had been a few wolf sightings, and quite a few people reported hearing wolves, in the Chugach Mountains near Anchorage, and that there have been a lot of moose sightings in town itself as of late.

Angela Totemoff of Anchorage/Tatitlek reported that this winter in Prince William Sound was especially cold and snowy. She informed the Council that she was also at the Open House for the Secretarial review, and she was encouraged by the number of people that attended from all over the state, and how many were in support of the FSMP and the Federal Subsistence Board (Board). She felt that some of the conversations that are happening regarding changes to the FSMP are things that have already been hashed out in court and encouraged anyone who was attending the meeting that had not submitted comments to do so.

Faye Ewan of Kluti-Kaah expressed concern over the continued decline of access to subsistence resources and how it is affecting the next generations, as well as over the continued development of the subregion she resides in. She informed the Council that many resources, such as salmon, migratory birds, and caribou are declining and the changing weather patterns are exacerbating this trend, and expressed concern over flooding events that she predicted would happen in the Copper River drainage and the damage that would do to out-migrating salmon.

Andy McLaughlin of Chenega Bay reported that his subregion in Prince William Sound still has an overabundance of sea otters due to lack of available hunters and that clams and other species that the otters target are in a marked decline. He noted that there are other factors in play, such as commercial trawling for some of these species even though the gear is not supposed to be on or near the ocean floor, although satellite evidence demonstrates that this is happening. Member McLaughlin noted concern over tanner crabs and shrimp populations and reported that there have been no kings [Chinook Salmon] caught by subsistence trollers, where in the past they caught several per trip. He stated that more research needs to be done to better understand the habitat destruction as well as populations declines happening in the marine ecosystem. Member McLaughlin also relayed that his subregion saw long cold spells and significantly less snowfall than typical, which will be good for the deer but could also result in a bad fire year. He relayed that years like this make lowland and upland berries ripen all about the same time, which changes how the black bears move on the landscape.

Ed Holsten of Cooper Landing said that he did not have a lot to report from the last meeting as it was only a few months ago, other than winter had been abnormally extremely cold with very little snow. He noted the moose were probably happy with the low snow levels, but informed the Council that it has just rained in Cooper Landing which created areas of thick overflow.

Kirk Wilson of Tazlina reminded the Council of all the user conflicts that have been happening in Unit 13 and discussed alternative ways that those who reside in the area could have access to protein other than the current hunting system. He expressed great thanks to the current biologists at AITRC both in terms of their availability to people as well as their ability to think outside of the box about research techniques.

Greg Encelewski of Ninilchik reported that there was a listening session in Ninilchik last week hosted by the Ninilchik Tribal Council Tikahtnu Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, which is working on providing fish to the six tribes that make up the commission from the Economic Exclusion Zone, or EEZ, in Cook Inlet that is under Federal control. He noted that it was a great session, but it was heartbreaking to hear elders

speak to the loss of subsistence and the current state of things, but good to see engagement from all generations. He expressed concern over the children in his village growing up not knowing what a clam even is. Chair Encelewski expressed deep concern over the state of subsistence resources population across the region in both the marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments – that he has to boat across the inlet for clams and import kings [Chinook Salmon] from commercial fisheries in Southeast Alaska, but noted that on a lighter side the Niniilchik Tribal fishery provided close to 5,000 fish [Sockeye (Red) Salmon] for the community, which were very much needed. Chair Encelewski noted the need for people to stay aware and active in things that affect subsistence. He finalized his report by thanking everyone for attending and expressing pleasure in being on such a good Council.

Public and Tribal Comment on Non-agenda Items

Karen Linnell, AITRC Executive Director, expresses concern about fish, caribou management, and ongoing state land selections currently happening. She expressed concern that the State of Alaska has selected many Federal lands in their area, affecting Unit 13's connection to Yukon, Copper, and Matanuska river systems. She expressed the need to protect caribou habitat and river systems to avoid conflicts over diminishing resources and highlighted the pressures from non-federally qualified users and highway access to many of Unit 13's resources. Ms. Linnell stressed the importance of regulatory bodies listening to local voices.

Action Items

Call for Federal Fisheries and Rural Determination Proposals

Anna Senecal, OSM Fisheries Biologist, informed the Council the Board is accepting proposals to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of fish and shellfish on Federal public lands and waters for the 2027–2029 regulatory years.

Motion by Member Ewan, seconded by Member Totemoff, to submit a proposal requesting a dip net buffer in tributaries flowing into the Copper River, contingent on the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) passing a similar proposal during their next cycle. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Hannah Voorhees, OSM Cultural Anthropologist, informed the Council the Board is accepting proposals for customary and traditional use determinations for fisheries, and rural determination proposals. *The Council did not submit any proposals on this topic.*

Call for State of Alaska Board of Fisheries Proposals

The Council was informed that the BOF is accepting proposals for the Lower and Upper Cook Inlet finfish management for its 2026–2027 meeting cycle. *The Council did not submit any proposals on this topic.*

Review and Approve FY25 Annual Report

Motion by Member Totemoff, seconded by Member McLaughlin, to adopt the FY25 Annual Report with the following updates. *The motion passed unanimously.*

- Under Item 2. Use of Council Time and Lack of Compensation, add a request for an All-Council Meeting
- Remove subtopic of commercial trawling from Item 4. Concern Over Marine Subsistence Resources, make this a standalone topic with a requested action, and renumber the list of topics accordingly

Reconsideration of WP26-17: Unit 7 remainder moose, establish a late fall season

Andrew Sanders, USFS Subsistence Program Manager, and Lisa Grediagin, OSM Supervisory Wildlife Biologist, presented information on WP26-17. As the Council's previous recommendations were outside of the scope of the proponent's request, the Council was asked to review their recommendation.

Motion by Member McLaughlin, seconded by Member Holston, to support Proposal WP26-17 as written. *The motion passed unanimously.*

The Council supported establishing a late fall season as proposed in the submitted proposal, which mirrors the season in Units 15B and 15C. The Council stated the late fall season provides additional opportunities to harvest a moose for subsistence users who were not successful earlier in the season. The Council acknowledged there are some conservation concerns for the Unit 7 moose population and successfully harvesting a moose in that unit is difficult. However, they felt that the additional harvest pressure and the few additional moose that might be harvested during a late fall season is manageable and would not add to the existing conservation concerns. They also agreed that moose seasons during the peak of rut, as recommended at their fall 2025 meeting, are not good.

National Park Service Proposed Rule 1024-AE96

Amber Cohen, NPS Cultural Anthropologist/acting Subsistence Program Lead, provided the Council with a brief overview of the Proposed Rule (PR). The Council had an extensive discussion on the PR, which centered around how the passage of this PR would impact subsistence users, the complexity of the PR, and concern over the comment deadline.

Motion by Member McLaughlin, seconded by Member Holsten, to submit comments to the NPS on the Proposed rule outlining the Council's discussion. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

September 28-29, 2026, Anchorage was confirmed for the fall 2026 meeting

March 16-17, 2027, Anchorage was selected for the winter 2027 meeting

September 29-30, 2027, Copper Basin was selected for the fall 2027 meeting

Reports

- *AITRC Program Update* and *Community Hunt Program Update* provided by Deanna Kosbruk, Regulation Specialist
- *CRRC Kings Bay Moose Survey Update* provided by Rick Merizon, Tribal Wildlife Biologist
- *ADF&G Cordova Household Harvest Survey Update* and *Black Bear Project Report* provided by Jackie Keating, Lead Subsistence Resource Specialist
- *USFS Chugach National Forest Update* provided by Andrew Sanders
- *NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NPP Update* provided by Amber Cohn
- *BLM Update on ongoing Public Land Order Revocations* provided by Jake Vialpando, Anchorage Field Manager
- *OSM Report* provided by Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator

Fisheries Resource Monitoring and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Reports

- Fisheries Resource Monitoring and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Programs Update by Anna Senecal and Hannah Voorhees
 - Members Totemoff, GreyBear, and Wilson volunteered to serve on the working group to develop Priority Information Needs for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program for the Southcentral Region.
 - *NVE Copper River Chinook Salmon Mark-recapture Program* and *Radio Telemetry Sockeye Salmon Study Program Updates* provided by Matt Piche, Fisheries Biologist & Natural Resources Coordinator
 - *AITRC Tanada Creek Weir Report* provided by Dan Gorze, Fisheries Biologist

Other Business

- The Council received an update on correspondence sent since the last meeting
- The Council received an overview of their 805(c) report from the previous federal fisheries regulatory cycle
- The Council provided feedback to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council on the potential inclusion of ANCSA and Tribal Allotment Lands being denoted on the Federal Regulation Booklet maps.

Nissa Pilcher, Designated Federal Officer
U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Subsistence Management

Minutes were Chair certified for accuracy on 6/8/2026

Richard [Greg], Chair
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its fall 2026 meeting in Anchorage, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator, at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-891-9054, or email nissa_pilcher@ios.doi.gov.