

# **EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Via teleconference due to COVID-19  
October 14 and 15, 2021

### **Invocation**

Charles Wright gave the invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, October 14 at 9:00 AM. Council members Sue Entsminger (Chair), Andrew Bassich, Linda Evans, Vice-Chair William Glanz, Nicholas Henry, Charles Jagow, Donald Woodruff and Robert Wright participated in the teleconference. Tim McManus was not present. The Council has one vacant seat. A quorum was established with 8 of 9 seated Council members participating by phone. Vince Mathews served as acting Council Coordinator.

The Council recognized Andrew Firmin who passed away last spring. Mr. Firmin served on this Council for 14 years and was Vice-Chair of this Council when he passed. Mr. Mathews, Chair Entsminger, Mr. Wright, Ms. Pitka, Mr. Woodruff, Mr. Bassich, Mr. Stevens, Ms. Wessels, Mr. Jagow, and Ms. Bridges all recognized Mr. Firmin and were thankful for his good work.

### **Attendees participating via teleconference:**

- Federal Subsistence Board member- Rhonda Pitka
- YKD Council- Alissa Rogers
- WI Council- Jack Reakoff
- OSM- Vince Mathews, Katya Wessels, Tom Plank, Lisa Grediagin, Orville Lind, Cory Graham, and George Pappas
- NPS- Dave Sarafin, Dr. Barbara Cellarius, and Judy Putera (Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P); Amy Craver, and Pat Owen (Denali NP&P); Kim Jochum (Anchorage); Marcy Okada, and Matt Sorum (Yukon-Charley Rivers NP)
- USFWS- Nathan Hawkaluk (Arctic NWR); Gerald Maschmann (Fairbanks); Jimmy Fox, and Mark Bertram (Yukon Flats NWR); Jill Klein (Anchorage); Brent Jamison and Shawn Bayless (Tetlin NWR); Keith Harren Ivy
- BIA- Pat Petrivelli
- BLM- Jim Herriges and Tim Hammond (Eastern Interior Field Office)
- ADF&G- Ryan Scott (Juneau); Mark Burch, Todd Rinaldi and Ben Mulligan (Palmer); Tony Hollis, Ryan Klimstra, Lisa Stube, Brooke McDavid, Bonnie Borba, Sam Decker, Jason

Caikoski, and Christy Gleason (Fairbanks); Sara Longson (Galena); Jeff Gross and Darren Bruning (Tok); Deena Jallen.

- Tanana Chief Conf.- Bruce Ervin, Ben Stevens; and Jim Simon (Jim is also with the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Program)
- Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments- Bruce Thomas
- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)- Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff
- Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC)- Brooke Woods
- Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC)- Karen Linnell
- Healy Lake Village Council (HLVC)- Patricia McDonald
- Members of the public- Jamie Bridges, Paul Shewfelt and Jessica Black (Fort Yukon); Seth Wilson (Gakona); Carrie Stevens (Fairbanks); Virgil Umphenour (North Pole)

### **Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Vice-Chair Glanz to adopt the agenda with the following additions:

- Request from the Yukon Delta Council for a joint letter to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC)
- Alaska Board of Game proposals
- Joint teleconference with the Southcentral Council about FP21-10

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Vice-Chair Glanz, seconded by Mr. Wright, to approve the winter 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

*Don Woodruff from Eagle* reported that they have super habitat for rearing salmon in freshwater, and that there was really good success rates with twinning moose calves. He noted that he had participated in 3 of 5 YRDFA teleconferences. They had two ADF&G Advisory Council meetings in the village last summer, and those meetings went well. There were caribou in the area in July, but caribou haven't been around for a couple months. Very few moose were harvested in the Eagle area. He had very good success with a 3-4 inch mesh net feeding his family non-salmon species.

*Vice-Chair Bill Glanz of Central* reported that they finally got a chance to have their in-person Advisory Committee meeting after 18 months. The community got together with ADF&G to take 20 young caribou for research. The community received the caribou from ADF&G and distributed the meat to elderly and those needing caribou. There was tremendous hunting pressure for caribou last fall. Not very many moose were harvested around Central in the fall.

*Charlie Jagow of the Porcupine River* reported that he had a pretty good season. It was a super dry year. There was very little snow last year, and this resulted in a mild breakup. The dry conditions continued thru the summer. The water level in the Porcupine River was the second lowest he has ever seen. Luckily there wasn't much of a fire season. It rained in August just before hunting season and water levels returned to normal. There were definitely concerns for no fishing opportunity in Fort Yukon and Circle. Hunting season was especially important this year. We had a pretty mild fall. It appears that there are very few martin, fewer than last year. There are lots of mice and grouse; he is a little anxious to see what this winter actually shows when we get real snowfall.

*Charlie Wright of Tanana* reported that the fishing season was a disaster. The small female Chinook Salmon are having a hard time keeping the runs at sustainable levels. We need the fish to grow in size and numbers. Climate, predation and ocean conditions are all issues. We must be careful in the future to ensure that Chinook Salmon survive in our rivers. This is very hard on people who rely on the salmon for winter food. The Chum Salmon are also struggling. The NPFMC helps with genetic sampling to help understand what is going on with Chum Salmon bound for western Alaska rivers. The moose season this fall was hard on people of his area. Very few hunters got moose. He hunted from Rampart all the way to the Nowitna River, but the moose numbers were low. There were no tracks where there normally are many tracks. He is very worried about moose counts along the Yukon River. People in the villages are struggling. People don't have jobs and can't go the Costco or Fred Meyers. He is seeing more snowshoe hares this year in his area. He has heard about caribou on the road near Livengood.

*Andy Bassich of Eagle* reported that Don gave a good report for the Eagle region. He would like to add a couple things. The loss of Chum Salmon last summer was a huge economic impact to anybody trying to maintain a dog team. Trying to maintain a dog team in rural Alaska without having to buy food and cook food is very expensive. Maybe there will be more discussion about conservation and turning toward alternate resources and trying to give Chinook Salmon a break. Rebuilding the 7-year old component is a key aspect to rebuilding Chinook Salmon returns. There are still a lot of beavers in the country, and he has noticed more black bears than in the past. There is a lot of grizzly bear sign all around the Yukon River corridor. He has seen lots of cow moose with twins in spring, however by fall, most only have one calf. Wolf activity is still relatively high. Caribou are incredibly important with the lack of Chinook and Chum Salmon. He has concerns about the way ADF&G is trying to reduce the caribou herd. He said the movements of the caribou herd as a good sign.

*Nicholas Henry of Chalkyitsik* said that he was glad to be on the Regional Advisory Council and has been taking notes as others have been speaking.

*Linda Evans of Rampart* reported that she was raised at Manley Hot Springs in the 1970s and that she had lived most of her life by subsistence fishing and hunting. She grew up fishing every summer and fall at the mouth of Manley Hot Springs on the Tanana River. In the 1970s she moved to Rampart and raised a family there. Her kids live in New Mexico and at North Pole, and she visits them. She is sad about the lack of subsistence resources in her area. Moose, fish, and snowshoe hare numbers are down. She hasn't seen grouse. She is happy to be on the Regional Advisory Council and thanked all for the support.

*Chair Sue Entsminger of Mentasta* noted that she hoped that the Council would be able to meet in person for the next scheduled meeting. She noted that she has sheep hunting in her blood. She plans to go sheep hunting every year that her body allows. She got to go sheep hunting in the Wrangells last fall and noted that there are more and more bears. A bear got into their raft this year and luckily they had a patch kit which allowed them to limp out. She hunted the Fortymile caribou with her husband and got one. While hunting, she heard about either air taxi or a guide in an air taxi harassing other hunters. It seems like sheep in the Alaska Range have taken a dive and she doesn't believe that it is all weather. She thinks that permits in the Tok Management Area are down from 120 to 10 next season. She is on the Subsistence Resource Commission for the Wrangell Park and feels that so many things are falling through the cracks. She is disturbed that she didn't have information about the educational and cultural permit for the Gateway School District and found out later that the Ahtna Native Community didn't have information either. They were doing really great things with the school and the kids, and then they had to pull the permit. She is also concerned that things are falling through the cracks on the Arctic Village sheep issue. She wasn't able to let people know about the proposal book and had no idea what was in it. The Regional Advisory Council book was late, and she understands that there were printing problems. Then there is the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Council joint meeting. She found out from a person on the Southcentral Council that there wasn't going to be a joint meeting. She is frustrated and wanted to share. The public that hasn't been able to submit their written comments on Federal proposals by the deadline, had to call in the Council meetings or send comments via email. She considers this to be too complicated and should not be that way. She was talking with Andrew Firmin before the last meeting, and he was explicit about reports being brief and not taking a lot of time. Andrew was adamant about the need for in-person meetings.

### **Service Awards**

Ms. Wessels presented a 20-year service award to Chair Entsminger. Mr. Wright, Vice-Chair Glanz, Mr. Bassich, and Mr. Mathews all joined in to thank Chair Entsminger for her good work.

### **Public Testimony on Non-Agenda Items on day one:**

Karen Linnell from AITRC thanked the Council for the help with Copper River salmon issues and addressed the public comment process.

Bruce Ervin from TCC talked about the poor Kuskokwim and Yukon Chinook and Chum Salmon harvest last summer and the need for bycatch information. There was a poor moose season as well.

Ben Stevens from TCC talked about the poor Yukon River salmon return and struggles in the villages for food.

Bruce Thomas from CATG talked about the low Yukon River salmon runs last summer and the low moose population. He also expressed concern about the high wolf population.

Patricia McDonald from HLVC is concerned about the poor salmon runs and the need to lobby for Tribe's right for fishing.

Jim Simon from TCC and the YRITFC shared information about Yukon River subsistence fish harvests.

Paul Shewfelt of Fort Yukon provide an additional tribute to Andrew Firmin and raised additional concerns about the poor salmon returns last summer.

**Public testimony on non-agenda items on day 2 of the meeting.**

Ms. Carrie Stevens had process concerns. She is concerned about Council members who are not adequately participating. She was concerned about the Unit 25D Closure review yesterday. Wanton waste is a concern.

Mr. Umphenour expressed concern about bycatch and the Area M intercept of Yukon River Chum Salmon. He also has concerns about the impact of hatchery production on Yukon River Chum Salmon and Sockeye Salmon in Prince William Sound and Bristol Bay.

Dr. Simon raised concerns about Area M salmon intercepts and the need for genetic studies.

Ms. Jessica Black raised concerns about the extremely poor salmon runs last summer and climate change.

**Old Business**

Gerald Maschmann (USFWS), Deena Jallen and Christy Gleason (ADF&G) gave the Yukon River salmon post-season summary. Subsistence fishing was closed for Chinook and Chum Salmon for the entire season. Use of 4 inch or less nets was allowed for non-salmon species. The Chinook Salmon return was the fourth smallest since 1995. The summer and fall season Chum Salmon returns were the lowest on record.

**YRDFA-** Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff gave the YRDFA update with actions taken relative to the Yukon River salmon disaster and their Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) projects.

Darren Bruning, Jeff Gross (ADF&G); Jason Caikoski and Mark Bertram (USFWS); Matt Sorum (NPS) and Tony Hollis gave an update on moose population.

**Hunter ethics education and outreach update.**

Council members Bassich and Vice-Chair Glanz, and Mr. Irvine (TCC) reported on outreach efforts along the Taylor and Steese Highways and at Circle.

***2021 805(c) Report Summary***

Mr. Mathews provided summary of the Board's 2021 805(c) Report to the Council.

### ***Board's FY2020 Annual Report Reply Summary***

Mr. Mathews provided summary of the Board's FY-2020 Annual Report Reply.

### ***Annual Report Reply Process Review Briefing***

Ms. Wessels provided a briefing on the Annual Report Reply Process review. There was no feedback from the Council.

## **New Business**

### ***Wildlife Proposals and Closure Reviews***

#### **Regional:**

**WP22-51:** Remove Minto Flats moose registration hunt. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Vice-Chair Glanz, to **support** WP22-51. The Council supported this housekeeping issue because there are no Federal public lands in the hunt area. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WP22-52:** Lengthen moose season in Unit 25A. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. Wright, to **support** WP21-52 **with ADF&G modification** to extend the moose season in the Coleen, Old Crow and Firth Rivers. The Council supported the proposal with modification to provide additional moose hunting opportunity during winter. Current moose population data indicates a few more bull moose may be sustainably harvested to satisfy subsistence needs. The Council recommends further modifications to only include the Coleen, Old Crow and Firth River drainages. Moose densities are higher in those three river drainages compared to the central and eastern portions of the unit and would satisfy the needs of the proponent. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WP22-53:** Establish season/harvest limit for Arctic Fox in Unit 25. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Vice-Chair Glanz, to **support** the proposal. This proposal would align State and Federal trapping seasons and harvest limits. Establishing a trapping season for Arctic Fox in Unit 25 would be beneficial for Federally qualified subsistence users. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WCR22-22:** Unit 25D west moose hunting closed except by Unit 25D west residents. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, **to maintain status quo**. Maintaining the closure is in the best interest of the area's subsistence users and recognizes the low moose populations in the area. The motion **passed** unanimously.

#### **Crossover:**

**WP22-33:** Eliminate black bear sealing requirement for Units 11 and 12. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. This motion would align State and Federal regulations. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. Bassich, to **support** the proposal. Supporting the proposal is consistent with principles of

conservation and the sealing requirement is an unnecessary hardship for subsistence users. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WP22-34:** Modify sheep salvage requirements in Units 11 and 12. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Ms. Entsminger (Vice-Chair Glanz was chairing the meeting), seconded by Mr. Bassich, to **support** the proposal. The Council opposes this proposal as passage of a meat on bone requirement for sheep hunting would place an undue burden upon subsistence hunters requiring heavier packs or more trips to pack their harvest out. This would be especially more difficult on elders. They feel this is more of a hunter education issue and not to be dealt with by a regulation, which would make Federal regulations more restrictive than State regulations. If this wanton waste concern is a sport hunter issue, it should be addressed in State regulations, not Federal subsistence regulations. The motion **failed** unanimously.

**WP22-35:** Establish Nelchina caribou season in Unit 11 and conduct section 804 analysis. The analysis was presented by Mr. Plank. Motion by Ms. Entsminger (Vice-Chair Glanz was chairing the meeting), seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to **support** the proposal with the OSM modification to delegate authority to WRST superintendent to announce season dates, harvest quotas, number of permits, define harvest areas, and open/close season via a delegation of authority letter only and with additional modification to reinstate and update the Mentasta Caribou Herd Management Plan including Tribal input. Passage of this proposal as modified by OSM would be beneficial to subsistence users and the additional modification recognizes the importance of updated caribou herd management plans for current and future subsistence needs. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WP22-36:** Establish community moose/caribou hunt in Unit 12, modify community hunts in Units 11 and 13. The analysis was presented by Ms. Kenner. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. Wright, to **support** the proposal **with the modification by OSM and the Wrangell SRC**. The Council requests OSM and AITRC to develop language to modify this proposal before the Council makes a recommendation at its winter meeting. Specifically, the Council wants a description what lands in Unit 12 will be included in the Ahtna community harvest system and a description of any changes to the framework the Council should review. The Council voted unanimously to **table** the motion.

Statewide:

**WP22-01:** Define who is/is not a participant in a community harvest program and effects on harvest limits. The analysis was presented by Ms. Kenner. Motion by Ms. Entsminger (Vice-Chair Glanz was chairing the meeting), seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to **support** the proposal. This proposal is consistent with established fish and wildlife management principles. It is supported by substantial evidence. The proposal is beneficial to subsistence users who will find this regulation less confusing. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**WP22-02:** Rescind restrictions for designated hunters in areas with community harvest systems (Units 6, 9, 10, 22, 23, & 26). The analysis was presented by Ms. Kenner. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by

Mr. Wright, to **support** the proposal with the modification to clarify participants in a community harvest system cannot designate another Federally qualified subsistence user to take wildlife on their behalf. The modification was recommended by a representative of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission and also the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Resource Commission. This modification will allow people outside of a community harvest system to have a designated hunter to meet their subsistence needs. This will be beneficial to subsistence users. The motion **passed** unanimously.

National Park Service Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination Proposal:

**ICTP21-02:** Salmon Batzulnetas Area of Copper River Drainage/Prince William Sound. The analysis was presented by Dr. Cellarius. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Vice-Chair Glanz, to **support** ICTP21-02. Based on the information presented, there was sufficient evidence to support this individual C&T use determination. Ms. Martin has a long-established use of this area, which she learned from her grandmother, Katie John, and she continues those traditional practices today. The motion was supported unanimously.

Alaska Board of Fisheries Proposals:

Motion by Mr. Bassich to support **Proposals 54 and 55**, seconded by Mr. Woodruff. These proposals were submitted by Virgil Umphenour and deals with a reduction in hatchery production due to the affect hatcheries are having on wild stocks. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Bassich requesting that a letter be sent to the Alaska Board of Fisheries and ADF&G requesting Area M, Chum, Chinook and Coho Salmon, June fisheries genetic sampling. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wright. There is a very high probability that Area M fisheries are negatively affecting Western Alaska and Yukon River Chum, Chinook, and Coho Salmon stocks. The motion passed unanimously.

Letter to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC):

Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, requesting that the Council sign onto a letter with the WI and YKD Councils to the NPFMC requesting that bycatch of Chinook and Chum Salmon be reduced. A parallel letter to the Federal Subsistence Board would ask that this issue be elevated to the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. The request is that the Chinook Salmon bycatch be reduce to 16,000 or less, and that the Chum Salmon bycatch be reduced by at least half. This is based on an emergency situation. The motion passed unanimously.

***2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program***

Mr. Graham with OSM presented the Council with the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Statewide and EI Region overviews.



## ***Identifying Issues for FY2021 Annual Report***

The Council identified the following topics for inclusion into the FY-2021 Annual Report:

- Finding solution for Yukon River salmon fisheries problems. Better coordination between groups and stakeholders
- Need for moose count around Rampart and Nowitna River areas
- Need for improvement to public and tribal outreach and involvement in the review of Federal proposals
- Need for improvement of tribal consultation process and streamline some of OSM processes.
- Need for timely delivery of the Federal Proposal books
- Food security -- more dependence on moose and caribou because of fisheries collapse on the Yukon. Allow subsistence users to harvest non-salmon on species for sustenance and cultural practice
- Concerns regarding parallel meetings scheduled

## ***2022 Council application/nomination open season***

Mr. Mathews with OSM informed the Council about 2022 Council application and nomination open season that closes February 28, 2022 and requested Council's members help in reaching out to the rural communities in the region and recruit new applicants. Council member Bassich nominated Amanda Pope of Circle City, Alaska and William Koehler. Mr. Wright nominated Eva Burk, a Nenana Tanana Fisherwoman.

## **Agency Reports:**

- Jeff Gross with ADF&G gave an updated on the Fortymile Caribou Herd
- Kim Jochum with NPS gave an update on the Fortymile Caribou delegation of authority letter
- BLM and the NPS collaborate on management decisions
- Dr. Cellarius and Dave Sarafin gave the Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P and Subsistence Resource Commission update. Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff to appoint Chair Entsminger to the SRC. The motion passed unanimously
- Brian McKenna, Bruce Irvin and Ben Stevens gave the updates for TCC and noted that they have two FRMP projects
- Brooke Woods gave the update for the Yukon Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Karen Linnell gave the update for AITRC
- Brent Jamison gave the Tetlin NWR update
- Jimmy Fox gave the Yukon Flats NWR update
- Pat Owen gave the Denali NP&P update including bear, moose, sheep, wolf, golden eagle and nest predation monitoring

- Marcy Okada and Matt Sorum gave the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve update including moose, wolf, sheep and caribou monitoring
- Tim Hammond and Jim Herriges gave the BLM update including Arctic Grayling, moose and caribou monitoring
- Darren Bruning and Sara Longson gave the ADF&G Wildlife update
- Brooke McDavid gave the ADF&G, Subsistence update
- Katya Wessels gave the OSM update

### **Future Meeting Dates:**

Winter 2022 meeting to be held March 8 and 9 in Nenana with Tanana as a second choice.

Fall 2022 meeting to be held October 5 and 6 in Fort Yukon.

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Tom Kron, Statewide Support Division  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

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Sue Entsminger, 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 2022 meeting, 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 Katya Wessels, Council Coordination Division Supervisor, at 1-800-478-1456 or 1-907-786-3885, email [katerina\\_wessels@fws.gov](mailto:katerina_wessels@fws.gov).