

**NORTH SLOPE FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC MEETING**

Heritage Center
Barrow, Alaska
February 26 - 27, 2013
9:11 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Harry Brower, Chair
Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak
Gordon Brower
Theodore Frankson
Lee Kayotuk
James Nageak
Roy Nageak
Robert Shears

Meeting attendees:

Agency staff in person:

Helen Armstrong, Anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Charlie C. (Maasak) Brower, Federal Subsistence Board Member
Pat Petrivelli, Anthropologist, Interagency Staff Committee, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Dave Yokel, Biologist, Bureau of Land Management
Neesha Stellrecht, Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks
Ernest Nageak, Native Liaison, Fish and Wildlife Service, Barrow
Vince Mathews, Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats
Greg Balogh, Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Martin Robards, Wildlife Conservation Society, Fairbanks
Jennifer Yuhas, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Brittany Retherford, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence
Geoff Carroll, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Barrow

Agency staff via teleconference:

Beth Lenart, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator, National Park Service.
Dan Sharp, Interagency Staff Committee, Bureau of Land Management
Tom Evans, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Karen Hyer, Fisheries Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Trevor Fox, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Chris McKee, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Jack Lorrigan, Native Liaison, Office of Subsistence Management

Andrea Medeiros, Outreach Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Melinda Hernandez, Council Coordination, Office of Subsistence Management
Kathy O'Reilly- Doyle, Acting ARD, Office of Subsistence Management

Tribal Organizations:

George Olemaun, Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
Joe Sage, Native Village of Barrow

Public:

Frederick Tukle, Sr. Barrow
Delbert Rexford, Barrow

Roll call and introductions: Quorum was established on both days with all 8 members present after new Council member Theodore Frankson arrived on the afternoon flight.

Adoption of agenda: Adopted by unanimous consent. *Asterisk identifies action item.

Election of officers:

Harry K. Brower – nominated as Council Chair and re-elected by unanimous consent.

Rosemary A. Ahtuanguaruak – nominated as Vice Chair, re-elected 5 yes one nay.

Lee Kayotuk – nominated as secretary and elected by unanimous consent.

Approval of meeting minutes:

Motion on the floor to adopt the minutes of August 14, 2012 and December 7, 2012 NSRAC meetings. Discussion about the long delay from one meeting to the next to approve minutes since the Council only meets twice a year. *Council unanimously approved both meeting minutes as written.

Annual Report

*The Council approved its draft annual report, adding two amendments to the Dalton Hwy topic as follows:

- 1) The Council requests monitoring of security of the oil pipeline to prevent any problems with vandalism or other security problems resulting in a spill that would impact subsistence resources in the area.
- 2) Bring to the attention of the Federal Subsistence Board that the scenic byways program has an impact on subsistence due to increased use by sport hunters and tourist activities along the Dalton Highway.

Council Recruitment and Membership:

The Council discussed the current membership of the North Slope Regional Advisory Council and expressed concern about the number of seats represented by Barrow residents and some communities not represented at all. The Council confirms that each member is nominated to represent the region; however, they stressed that detailed subsistence and community based knowledge can be best represented from the community itself. The Council discussed outreach to encourage applications from the

communities of Nuiqsut, Atqasuk, and Point Lay that are not currently represented on the Council. The RAC applications deadline was extended in an effort to increase applications and the Council will assist OSM staff in further outreach in the region.

Federal Subsistence Board report:

The Council was provided a summary of Federal Subsistence Board action on fisheries proposals.

The Federal Subsistence Board met in mid-January. There were no actions taken affecting the North Slope directly. However, the North Slope Regional Advisory Council had kept track of actions by other Councils in the region addressing customary trade such as Yukon River fisheries proposals FP13-06, submitted by the YK Delta, Western Interior and Eastern Interior Councils. All three Yukon River Councils supported the restriction of subsistence Chinook trade due to concern for shortages of Chinook for subsistence communities on the Yukon and repeatedly not meeting escapement. The Board felt compelled to follow the recommendations of the three Councils who have the primary responsibility for the Yukon River.

Council members expressed concern about regulation of harvest and sharing and trade of subsistence resources, noting that trade practices today include money because subsistence occurs in a cash economy. Cash is needed to purchase most goods and all whaling has been shifted to modern tools, with snow machines and gasoline and heating tents with fuels and other items costs money. The Council is very concerned that customary trade is a traditional economy and should not become highly restricted through regulation. The Council is very concerned in this case that subsistence fisheries are being limited when there are other pressures not being properly regulated such as offshore commercial fisheries.

Chair Report:

Chairman Harry Brower was only able to attend a portion of the Federal Subsistence Board meeting due to overlapping Ice Seal Committee meetings occurring at the same time. Vice Chair, Rosemary Ahtuangaruak attended via teleconference to cover the Board meeting for the North Slope Council. Chairman Brower also requested Bob Shears attend the Western Arctic Caribou Working Group meeting in his place.

The Council did not generate any fisheries proposals for the North Slope. However, the Chair recalled some of the concerns the council voiced on the need to do some kind of fisheries research in the Mead River Delta for Atqasuk. Requests an update if the State had conducted any fisheries research in that region.

Confirmed the finalization of James Nageak Council nomination and re-appointment to the Gates of the Arctic Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission.

The Council discussed the NSRAC request for seat on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group the Working Groups reply letter in response. Chair Harry Brower expressed dissatisfaction with the combined two North Slope villages per seat and wants greater involvement. WACH council responded in the reply letter provided to the Council that adding a seat for the RAC would require a Charter change and makes the Council too large and cumbersome to function well, but encouraged NSRAC participation and

input at the meetings. OSM supported funding a NSRAC representative to attend the fall 2012 WACH meeting in Anchorage and Robert Shears was able to attend the meeting in Harry's place.

Council Member Reports:

Rosemary Ahtuanguak: Provided an update on her attendance (via teleconference) for Federal Subsistence Board meeting in Anchorage, noting the issues and discussions related to customary and traditional use and barter and trade. She stressed that these issues are very important to the North Slope region and has concerns about the impact decisions made for other regions will also have in the North Slope region.

Rosemary provided an update on her ongoing involvement on the USFWS tribal consultation implementation policy guidelines working group. Noted the ongoing concerns the communities of Nuiqsut and Anaktuvuk Pass that the proposed "Road to Umiat" would intercept or change the caribou migration route. Overall is very concerned about the transportation and development processes with limited involvement of the local communities. Concerned about the impact of resource development on the tribes which are trying to protect their continued traditional and cultural uses and areas that are being impacted by changes to lands and waters and noted a draft report by Nuiqsut that shows changes to subsistence harvest activities around the Alpine development.

Rosemary asked to honor Ray Koonuk, who passed on recently and recognized him for his involvement in subsistence issues.

Lee Kayotuk: Discussed the request by the village of Kaktovik for a special action request for moose hunt season extension in 26C and 26B remainder due to the inclement weather conditions often preventing hunting in March. He also made the request to the Council to consider a wildlife proposal through the regular cycle process to extend the moose hunt season for Kaktovik for the same reasons.

He noticed a difference between the Brooks Range Caribou and the caribou along the Coast. Not sure if it's two different herds, but noticed the caribou in the Brooks Range stayed there during their hunt and the coastal herd fled quickly like something had been chasing them. He had reports from the community that wolves and wolverines on the coast had been following the herd around. Lee observes a big difference in behavior between the two caribou groups in their area.

They also noticed that ptarmigans came around early this year in January and there were fewer seen during their usual time of migration during freeze-up time. The snow conditions around the village of Kaktovik had been less than a foot of snow on the coast as usual but also less than a foot in the Brooks Range which is unusual. They have had some polar bears in the area. The runway development in Kaktovik is blasting gravel and is a which is a big concern to the community because it deflected a herd of caribou that came by the village and they fled 15 miles to the east and kept going, not lingering as they normally would.

James Nageak: Reports that Anaktuvuk Pass had a good trapping season. The young people that are trapping are getting wolverines and wolves and red foxes and they're doing good. They're having a good season this year because there are caribou around Kaktovik this winter helping the subsistence needs of the community. James reported the caribou are staying close to the village because of the wolves and the community is happy because the caribou come right in the village when the wolves are after them.

The community of Anaktuvuk Pass is very concerned about the proposed “Road to Umiat” impacts to caribou migration. James noted the community hunts caribou in the spring and fall and was especially concerned that the normal migration path in the fall brings the caribou in from the north and this passage would be bisected by the proposed road. He noted in his involvement with the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission they drafted a letter with the residents of Wiseman that clearly articulates why they are concerned about a road running from east to west in the region. An ice road or packed snow road has already been developed to make Umiat accessible from the Dalton Highway.

Robert Shears: Attended the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group bi-annual meeting in Anchorage December 4-5 2012. Enoch Oktollik in Wainwright is a representative on that group, but he also serves on the Walrus Commission which was meeting at the same time in Anchorage. NSRAC Chair Harry Brower also had competing subsistence meetings so Robert was requested to attend in his place. Robert noted he was impressed by the professional expertise and efforts to manage the caribou well and provided a brief summary of the data results and meeting discussion for the Council. He noted that climate and habitat changes in recent years were thought to be affecting the animals and communities concerns for increased sport hunting flights from Nome and Kotzebue into the Kobuk and upper Noatak River areas. Overall he expressed satisfaction that the monitoring is as intensive as it could possibly be without affecting the subsistence uses.

Roy Nageak: Described how he went out a lot this summer and kept waiting a long time for the Western Arctic Herd because it usually goes along the coast his way in the summertime but the herd never showed up as usual. Roy noted the Teshekpuk Herd always go around in front but he observed this herd is always scrawny and he waits to hunt the Western Arctic Herd. However this year the Western Arctic Herd took a different path and apparently went south from Wainwright. His observations are they usually follow the ocean side and arrive around Barrow by last of July or first part of August.

Roy expressed concerns about air traffic disturbing or pushing the caribou herd. Requests if there is a way to use GPS or other means to track air flight activity to prevent the caribou herd from being harassed or stressed and asked what can be done by the Subsistence Board to address tracking flight traffic.

Gordon Brower: Expressed concern about the Kuskokwim subsistence fishing closures, and felt it put people in peril to take their nets away and stressed it was against principal to fine people for fishing for food for their families when there were other impacts to the sustained yield. Gordon noted it was a very important issue to consider as they are embarking on an MOU between the State and the Feds for management of these resources on Federal lands. Gordon expressed the importance of land managers hearing about their (subsistence hunters and fishers) subsistence harvest and what they observe from subsistence activities.

His own observation was that a westerly wind was relentless; blowing from the west wind for a long time, noting the caribou will turn into the wind and then go with it for relief. He saw the caribou went west and he asked if Wainwright and Point Lay would confirm to caribou being in their presence for a longer duration of time. Noted that around Chipp River the caribou were sparse. Gordon noted that the caribou usually come around his area in mid-August but this year did not show up until the last week in September, saying they get antsy when the rut is about to begin and they came back. Last year the caribou harvest was very late and difficult and because they came back around during the rut he had to switch to hunting females because the chemistry of the meat changes and no one likes to eat rutting bulls.

Gordon noted a very big difference in freeze-up and expressed it had changed substantially. The rivers in Ikpikpuk in September were full bank to bank and this prevented them from freezing. He thought the fish had spawned because others caught some but it was difficult to put nets in with the high water. Fish harvesting was the most difficult he'd ever seen it, in his 30 years of fishing with his parents, and now with his own sons. Gordon described it as the most difficult time he's encountered in terms of climatic effects to subsistence fishing. It would freeze for a little bit and then the weather would change and it would melt with big chunks braking free and tearing nets up. Gordon noted good geese numbers and harvest.

Good hunting season for wolves and wolverines. Caribou was also good, but a little late in some areas, although Gordon reported a plane pushed the caribou out of reach when he was hunting recently with his son. He stressed subsistence resources are of major issue to be harvested when the time is right, when the caribou are fat and when the fish have eggs. Air traffic disturbance when the caribou were coming near and changes in weather and ice conditions was making this more difficult.

Very concerned about a pipeline being developed in the middle of NPR-A potentially preventing caribou from migrating to the coast and reaching Barrow – prefers a pipeline be close along the coast so at least the caribou can get there without being deflected.

Public and tribal comment:

Delbert Rexford, resident of Barrow: During Kiviuk week he attended community meetings with leadership of tribal governments and village corporations, with their leadership to discuss concerns about potential development within NPR-A. He reported after a full day they came up with 10 guiding principles that each tribal government and each village corporations will consider to mitigate and maximize protection of their subsistence way of life within NPR-A with the proposed development and potential of offshore development coming onshore through a pipeline. Mr. Rexford stressed it was a “strenuous exercise” as tribal governments and village corporations to identify guiding principles that were acceptable to all.

Mr. Rexford also noted the core of the discussions were on the Department of Interior's tribal consultation policy, Secretarial Order 3317 and Presidential Executive Order 13175 and stressed the tribe's authority and opportunity to sit at the table with each and every agency that may affect their communities. “We want to eat our traditional country foods. Simple and straight forward. What we grew up with, what sustained our cultures and utilizing in a sustainable matter since time immemorial.”

Mr. Rexford stressed the tribes and communities needed to be at the table on all discussions of potential impacts of development, especially for caribou. Strong emotions were expressed about how development will affect the lands and water and their subsistence way of life.

Wildlife Closure Reviews:

Tom Evans, wildlife biologist for the Office of Subsistence Management, provided a brief background on the closure review process and summary of OSM preliminary analysis for the following closure reviews:

Closure review WCR12-18:

OSM's preliminary recommendation is to maintain the status quo for this closure WCR12-18. The justification being that the number of sheep in the Baird Mountains has rebounded from a population decline that occurred in the 1990s; however the harvestable surplus remains low.

Jennifer Yuhas, Alaska Department of Fish and Game: The State had no objection to the status quo and agreed with the OSM conclusion for this.

Beth Leonard, Alaska Department of Fish and Game: For 26B, which includes part of the Dalton Highway, there is a State sheep hunting season that opens August 10th in the eastern in parts of 26A where it's not closed to non-Federally qualified users, there is a State sheep hunt.

*The Council voted unanimously to support the OSM preliminary recommendation on WCR12-18, maintaining the closure of the Unit 23 Baird Mountains to sheep hunting by nonsubsistence users.

Closure Review WCR12-25:

OSM's preliminary recommendation is to maintain the status quo for WCR12-25. The number of muskox have been below the 3 percent threshold from 2002 to 2007 and only one permit was issued in 2008. Due to conservation concerns, no permits have been issued since 2008 and the recommendation is that these Federal public lands should remain closed until the population increases to a more sustainable level. This is consistent with sound management principals and the conservation of healthy wildlife populations.

Jennifer Yuhas, Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The State is fine with maintaining the status quo on this. There's a clear conservation concern and the area should stay closed.

*The Council voted unanimously to support the OSM preliminary recommendation on the WCR12-25, maintaining the closure of Unit 26C to muskox hunting by nonsubsistence users.

Closure Review WCR12-31:

Hunting on Federal public lands in Unit 26B and the remainder of Unit 26C is closed to the taking of moose except by the residents of Kaktovik holding a Federal registration permit and hunting under these regulations. The harvest quota is three, which consists of two antlered bulls and one of either sex.

The OSM preliminary recommendation is to maintain the status quo for WCR12-22. The justification for this is that the low moose numbers in Unit 26B remainder and Unit 26C continue to be a conservation concern and additional moose harvest beyond the harvest by Kaktovik residents may not be sustainable. The harvest quota is limited to only three moose and Kaktovik residents continue to utilize these moose for subsistence purposes.

Jennifer Yuhas, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, provided the Council with a letter from ADFG Wildlife Director that outlines some concerns of the State and biologist Beth Leonard was also online to speak to the concerns. The State requested the Council defer action on WCR12-31 until they can bring more information to the fall meeting for a more thorough discussion about it with more time and data.

Public Comment on WCR12-31: The Council read and considered public comment letters addressed to the Council.

Council Discussed that if there are to be expanded hunting allowed on this moose population the residents of Kaktovik should be the first to be considered to meet their subsistence needs since they are currently restricted to only 3 moose per year by permit. The Council expressed they felt it was appropriate to be apprised of potential proposals in advance of the wildlife cycle so that they can fully informed and weigh in on the communities subsistence needs and traditional use of this moose population and hunting area. The Council also noted that more documentation of traditional knowledge should be used to understand the extensive travel of the area and historic use patterns. Some Council members reviewed the records for the region and noted a reduction in the cultural information documented in the wildlife analyses and asked for improvement on inclusion and consideration of traditional and cultural knowledge for management decisions.

*The Council made a motion and voted unanimously to defer decision on WCR12-31 until the fall meeting when additional data and information would be available for consideration.

Federal Wildlife Regulatory Proposals:

* *The Council voted unanimously to submit a proposal to eliminate the requirement for a brown bear State registration permit in Unit 26A. This Council felt this would make the State and Federal regulations consistent and reduce confusion caused by having two systems in place especially with increased bear interactions at camps and cabins.

* *The Council voted unanimously to submit a proposal for Unit 26B--remainder and Unit 26C to increase the moose harvest limit from 3 to 5 and to expand the season to year-round.

* *The Council voted unanimously to submit a proposal to expand the area for the summer moose hunt between July 1 and September 14, which currently is for Unit 26A the portion west of 156 degrees W. Longitude and excluding the Colville River drainage. Gordon Brower will consult a map to determine the exact longitude, but it won't be moved too far -- perhaps by 30 to 60 miles to the east so that it includes the Chip river drainage. This proposal would most likely only increase the moose harvest by a few moose and it would enable hunters to be able to save a lot of cost in fuel in not having to travel as far to take a moose.

Board of Game Proposals:

* *The Council made a motion to submit a proposal to the State Board of Game to amend the Controlled Use Area regulatory language for Anaktuvuk Pass by inserting specific language already existing in the Noatak Controlled Use Area regulations. The Council feels the specificity of hunting by aircraft regulations as stated in the Noatak CUA would assist the community of Anaktuvuk Pass in protecting subsistence resources and activities from airplane disturbance and sport hunter pressures. The dates for this closure will be determined after James Nageak has an opportunity to consult with the community of Anaktuvuk Pass. The Council passed this motion with 7 yes votes and 1 no vote.

Discussion: Council member James Nageak will consult with the village of Anaktuvuk Pass on this proposal to seek support on the specifics before it is submitted to the Board of Game. Chair Harry Brower cautioned that the current Controlled Use Area took several years of planning and communicating along with State, the user groups and North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee as

the local advisory committee to come to agreement and thought should consult with the community and others on this before submitting the proposal to the BOG.

Wildlife Special Action Request:

* *The Village of Kaktovik intends on submitting a special action to extend the season by at least one week until April 7th if the limit of three moose is not met by the end of March. The Kaktovik council member said that the weather has made it difficult to get into the mountains to hunt. The Council made a motion and voted unanimously to support the community of Kaktovik on this request.

Discussion by the Council included a request for interviews with Kaktovik residents to document subsistence activities and traditional knowledge and include this information the regulatory proposal assessment. The Council felt the extension is warranted considering the inclement weather challenges and long distance travel required to hunt moose.

Agency Reports:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game:

Jennifer Yuhas and Beth Leonard, ADFG wildlife biologist provided handouts on the Central Arctic and the Porcupine Caribou herds and were available for questions.

Geoff Carroll, ADFG Wildlife Biologist: The Council requested a report on population status of the arctic caribou herds and along with migration movement and telemetry study updates for the Western Arctic Herd. Mr. Carroll provided the most recent numbers on population trends. The Central Arctic Herd, Porcupine Herd seem to be on the increase. The Teshekpuk and the Western Arctic Herd are declining. Mr. Carroll also presented information on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd radio telemetry data on their reaction to a road on their fall migration.

The Western Arctic Herd has declined steadily from a high of about 490,000 in 2003 to 325,000 in 2011, down about 165,000 caribou. That was after many years of steady growth where it had become one of the largest caribou herds on the continent. More wolves and bears sited, predation may be an issue. Also some studies done by BLM and others indicate there are long-term changes in vegetation in the winter range are occurring and it may be a limiting factor for the herd.

Mr. Carroll stressed if the caribou herds do continue to decline, then management actions possibly including reducing harvest will be necessary and encouraged the Council to start thinking of ways to possibly reduce the harvest on the Western Arctic Caribou and possibly the Teshekpuk Herd.

Mr. Carroll also provided the Council with an update from the WACH meeting on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd radio collar information tracked by ADFG biologist Jim Dau. The caribou radio collar data indicated a change of migratory behavior around the Red Dog Mine road. He reported with radio collar data/caribou movement maps that the caribou deflected and sped up to go around the road and didn't meander and take their time passing through as they normally do.

Council discussion: Chair Harry Brower adds his own observation of caribou over time while hunting and out on the land noting he has experience large die-offs in some areas in the winter. He reported seeing

large numbers of dead male and female caribou of all ages in the Fry Creek, Alice Creek and up in the foothill areas after severe winter storms when the temperature dropped to over 50 below.

Council members also noted that the caribou herds will sometimes split and move different directions or merge into larger groups.

The Council discussed caribou radio collar data and behavior in relation to the Dalton Highway and expressed concern for the Teshekpuk reaction to a road during a southeasterly migration from their summer range.

The Council requested the Foothills West proposed road routes be superimposed on satellite caribou path data. The Council expressed great concern that the proposed "Meltwater" route would directly impact the Teshekpuk Herd migration go right through the Central Arctic Caribou Herd calving grounds.

Bureau of Land Management:

Dr. Dave Yokel reported ConocoPhillips plans to drill two exploratory wells in the NPR-A this winter and are currently building ice road access. They also plan to plug five abandoned exploratory wells.

Dr. Yokel presented the preferred alternative from the final NPR-A EIS and noted a record of decision was just signed. The Record of Decision is essentially unchanged from alternative B2 with the exception that they've added some language to establish the NPR-A Working Group. The intention with this working group to ensure that land managers have will consider local knowledge and concerns and the recommendations of local residents, institutions and the input of other agencies with relevant experience. The new working group will be made up of local communities, tribal organizations and Native corporations on the North Slope to make sure that the BLM has a continuing dialogue with the people of the North Slope as it progresses with implementation of this most recent NPR-A land use plan. There is also currently a NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel and the BLM plans to keep the two groups separate so that there will not be conflict with local subsistence and for profit interests but the plans are still in development.

Dr. Yokel gave the Council a map overview of the NPR-A areas that would be open for development on land and ways to bring petroleum resources from the Chukchi Sea on shore with the new land use plan. He showed which areas a pipeline could come across the NPR-A under this plan. There are currently no proposals for pipelines yet and they will be addressed when they are planned. Dr. Yokel also covered some of the mitigations in the B2 alternative with buffers around important rivers, along the coast, and sensitive caribou and bird areas.

NPR-A current research projects includes satellite telemetry work with the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd. BLM is working with Lincoln Parrett of Fish and Game to do a study of calf survival and the North Slope Borough, Department of Wildlife Management to do the body condition and health assessment on the Teshekpuk Herd.

The Fish Creek watershed is probably going to be the first watershed in NPR-A affected by development and they hope to focus fisheries research funds there in the future.

Arctic Landscape Conservation Coop:

Greg Balogh Arctic LCC/USFWS presented the Council with a history and update on the research work and community outreach efforts of the Arctic LCC on the North Slope. Detail was provided on some projects of interest to the region and it was noted that they could be more effective networking locally and soliciting traditional knowledge to help inform the studies.

Mr. Balogh stressed that the LCC was made up of partnerships directed by a steering committee and encouraged local participation and noted currently the Native Village of Point Lay was represented but the North Slope Borough was still open for representation on the committee. The LCC focus in Alaska is on providing information to resource managers and stakeholders especially how climate change is affecting the Arctic ecosystems and resources. They support landscape scale conservation efforts by providing information.

Conservation goals include better understanding the impacts of environmental change on subsistence resources and users and they seek additional participation from residents on the North Slope so they can support local adaptation needs. Mr. Balogh asked for feedback on community interest and concerns on research projects and assistance connecting with people active in subsistence activities to inform research priorities and work.

The Council discussed that the mandates for Inupiat History, Language and Culture Office is to identify areas where the elders have used the land and are concerned that elders knowledge be documented and handed down. Council member James Nageak noted that additionally there exist many historical archived tapes about subsistence activities and lives on the land by the Language and Culture office that have not yet been transcribed because it is a slow process and was encouraged that the Arctic LCC has the capability to assist with this type of traditional knowledge documentation work through local research funding.

The Council stressed water as the most important resource on the North Slope for drinking and for subsistence foods and travel. The Council observed all land (permafrost) and water processes are being profoundly affected by climate change. They encouraged the LCC to focus on more water related research since it was the building block of the land and everything in the Arctic.

Army Corp of Engineers:

The Army Corp of Engineers, Melissa Riordan, was online via teleconference and prepared to give an update to the Council on the draft "Foothills West Transportation Access" (road to Umiat) EIS but the Council meeting was running long and did not get to this topic during the time she was available to present. The public scoping meetings were completed and the draft EIS is scheduled to be published in early 2014. ANILCA section .810 hearings will be held after the draft EIS is released.

Discussion by the Council covered concerns that all the proposed "Road to Umiat" routes would involve some of the major subsistence fish areas in the region such Chandler Lake, Whittler Lake, Ulu Lake and six major important subsistence rivers that the proposed road would cross.

The Council is opposed to an east to west road because it would bisect the migratory routes of the caribou and are very concerned about the impact the "Road to Umiat" would have on the lifestyle and the culture of the Nunamiut people. The Council discussed preparing a comment letter on the proposed roads to the Federal Subsistence Board at the fall meeting.

Additional Council topics of interest:

* The Council still wants to consider drafting a comment letter to the Board and DOI on the NPR-A EIS especially now that the letter from the Secretary of the Interior states that pipelines plan to be developed in the in conjunction with the oil and gas exploration.

* The Council would like to better coordinate with their local State Advisory Committee which is organized under the North Slope Borough Fish and Game Management Committee and currently coordinated by Mike Peterson.

Future Meeting Dates:

* Fall meeting: August 20 and 21 (this is moved back one day later than the dates originally chosen in order to accommodate travel for the new Council member from Point Hope). Kaktovik was selected as a first choice for meeting location and Anaktuvuk Pass as a second Choice due to subsistence concerns and issue in each of those communities that the Council felt would facilitate addressing those concerns directly by meeting there. Barrow was noted as a backup.

* Winter meeting: February 12 and 13, 2014 in Barrow.

Council discussed closing comments additional agenda topics that would need to still be addressed at a subsequent meeting and adjourned at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 27th.

I certify to the best of my knowledge the forgoing minutes are accurate and complete.

Eva Patton, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Harry K. Brower, Chair
North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its August 2013 public meeting. Any corrections or notations will be incorporated at that meeting.