

NORTH SLOPE SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via Teleconference
Anchorage, Alaska
November 4-5, 2020

Invocation

Gordon Brower gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, November 4 at 9:16 am. The meeting was held by teleconference only due to COVID-19 health and safety protocols. Council members Gordon Brower, William Hopson, Steve Oomittuk, Wanda Kippi, Edward Rexford, Sr., and Peter Earl Williams were present participating by teleconference. Martha Itta was not present and was excused. The Council has three vacant seats. A quorum was established with six of seven seated Council members present and participating by phone.

Attendees:

Via teleconference:

- *Office of Subsistence Management, Anchorage:* Eva Patton, Karen Hyer, Hannah Voorhees, Greg Risdahl, Orville Lind
- *National Park Service, Anchorage:* Joshua Ream, Kim Yohung
- *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve:* Marcy Okada, Kyle Jolly, Will Lacey?
- *US Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks:* Vince Mathews; *Anchorage:* Carol Damberg
- *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Fairbanks:* Steve Berendzen, *Kaktovik:* Will Wiese,
- *Bureau of Land Management, Arctic District Office, Fairbanks:* Shelly Jones, Debbie Nigro, Ted Inman, Sarah LaMarr, Donna Wickson; *Utqiagvik:* Roy Nageak
- *Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage:* Glenn Chen
- *Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Palmer:* Mark Burch; *Utqiagvik:* Carmen Daggett; *Fairbanks:* Brendan Scanlon and Beth Mikow
- *North Slope Borough Wildlife Department, Utqiagvik:* Brian Person, Todd Sformo
- *Native Village of Point Hope:* Jack Schaeffer
- *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Juneau:* Ed Farley

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion #1 by Steve Oomittuk, seconded by Earl Williams to adopt the agenda with modifications to change the order of a few reports and add NOAA marine ecosystem report and Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) reports to the agenda. The motion #1 passed by unanimous vote.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion #2 by Mr. Oomittuk, seconded by Mr. Rexford, Sr. to approve the April 1, 2020 meeting minutes with the following modifications: A correction by Ms. Kippi to her comment to note she was referring to her village of Atqasuk – not Nuiqsut. A correction by Peter Earl Williams on his name as listed under Council reports. The Motion #2 passed by unanimous vote.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Gordon Brower of Utqiagvik reported that he listens to a lot of subsistence hunters and is a whaling captain with his own crew. He's grateful that all are alive and well after their boat flipped over this this spring and the whole crew was in the water. But thankfully everyone was alright and they were able to harvest a whale. This summer the caribou was really good. Gordon reported that his son got COVID-19 and they sent him to quarantine at the cabin for 14 days where he got a fat caribou and did some fishing while he recovered. He noted that there is a big lake about 18 miles out of Utqiagvik where subsistence hunters are doing well. There is an outflow on this lake with a spring that doesn't freeze that he has come across many times in the spring while hauling fish and wonders if geothermal activity may be keeping this area open while other sections are frozen solid. Gordon highlights these lake fish are prize fish and loves to eat them. He did not go fall fishing this year though because last year the warm weather affected his catch—the fish thawed out and got stinky. Neighboring villages are starting fishing, but there are still concerns about moldy fish from the Colville. Some Broad white fish have abrasions and scrapes but it does not seem to affect Cisco.

Gordon reported there is currently an abundance of caribou in the area with many hunters are reporting lots of good caribou hunting on outskirts of Utqiagvik. His nephew caught caribou and shared with him. Gordon highlighted a lot of our food is shared among our communities, especially among the elders who cannot hunt anymore. He noted that sharing this year will be different due to the COVID-19 virus with food distribution being organized outside rather than in the inside the usual community gathering places.

Wanda Kippi of Atqasuk reported that it is a busy time of year for subsistence right now although she had some slow times during caribou hunting. It was very eerie and quiet around her cabin for a while with no animals coming around – even the birds. There was a bear hanging around and then a muskox around her cabin too. Her son was able to catch both of them and that was quite the excitement during the month she was out at her cabin. Wanda reported the caribou come around after she went back home to Atqasuk just before it started freezing up end of October. And she didn't get to go fishing because it didn't freeze up until a few days after she got home. Then there was caribou going through the area and some foxes and ptarmigan. Back in the spring it was good - they had successful geese hunting and the fishing was good for grayling and burbot. Wanda noted that they also caught sucker fish in the net and pike too.

Edward (Eddie) Rexford, Sr. of Kaktovik reported that the community has been successful catching all types of fish, even salmon. There are salmon spawning in rivers up here now, all across the north, even on Barter Island. Eddie would like to do some research to see what kinds of new species are here. The

community was successful in harvesting caribou and there are still a lot caribou around even for this time of year. They also had a successful whaling season and got all three whales allocated to Kaktovik. The community also got their moose quota. He is glad agencies were accommodating to the communities' request for regulation changes and expanding the moose season so they are not restricted to just a month. Eddie reported that overall there has been no shortage of subsistence activities this year.

Peter Earl Williams of Anaktuvuk Pass (goes by his middle name Earl) reported that the caribou (Tutu) finally come in and everybody's out and hunting successfully. It's cold now and windy from south and it snowed the last few days. People have been out hunting moose too and a few people got lucky to get one of the moose that have been coming around the area. Earl wishes everyone to be successful in their hunting across the North Slope and hopes everyone gets their quota in Anaktuvuk Pass because they need a lot of caribou for the whole community.

William Hopson of Utqiagvik reported on his concerns about the potential for invasive species to impact important subsistence fish such as the grayling and whitefish that communities rely on. He is also very concerned about oil spills and contaminants affecting subsistence foods.

Steve Oomittuk of Point Hope reported that it's been a good year. There were a lot of caribou near Point Hope, similar to last year. Caribou are still around right now and people are catching them. He noted that in the last ten years the caribou came through in a ball, whereas in the old days they would come and hang around. This year they are still running into caribou now and it's been a pretty good season. There is a lot of snow this year and everyone can get around on snow machines. The last couple years there has been lots of rain, which is hard on the caribou because they can't get to the grass and lichens.

Point Hope is catching a lot of trout, some pretty good sized ones compared to last year - last year there were a lot of small ones. They used to only get Chum Salmon but now people catching Pink Salmon and while they used to catch King Salmon way out in the ocean, now they are getting them in nets rights on the edge. Fishing has been really good really good overall. They usually fish for Char upriver until November to stock up for winter. It used to be the elders and young would stay up at the camps but now people all come home at night. Steve hears the commercial fishing might be moving up here and NW passage is bringing more ship traffic and he is concerned the Council has no control over the ocean, only over the land. Subsistence is very broad and a lot of our Point Hope subsistence is from the ocean. Point Hope got 12 whales this spring. They put the whale tail in the ice cellar until it ferments and bring it out in the fall when the community celebrates the birth of the sea ice which is normally in October. Here it is November 4 and the ice is not frozen yet and last year they didn't have the tail until end of November, two days before Thanksgiving.

Point Hope is very concerned about the effects of climate change on the ice and animals. They are concerned about the effects on the caribou, especially in January and February when it rains because the icing causes problems for the caribou to eat and travel this time of the year. The community is still very concerned about the low caribou population. There is also concern about the Ambler Road construction

and effects on the caribou. They are worried that the caribou may change their migration because of the road.

Service Awards

Five Year Service Award presented to Council member Steve Oomittuk of Point Hope.

Old Business

805(c) Report – Update

The Council received a written report on the on the Federal Subsistence Board Action on 2020-22 wildlife proposals affecting the North Slope region as directed under 805(c) of ANILCA. Eva Patton, Council Coordinator provided a brief overview of this report.

New Business

Fisheries Closure Reviews

Hannah Voorhees, OSM Anthropologist presented two crossover fisheries closure reviews that come before this Council for consideration because of North Slope communities having customary and traditional use determination for fish in the proposal area.

Motion #3 by Mr. Oomittuk, seconded by Ms. Kippi to defer to the Western Interior Region on crossover proposal FCR21-04: Closure to Federally qualified subsistence users in the Yukon drainage, Jim River – all fish. The Council defers to the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council because this stream is in their region and they would be most familiar with subsistence fishing communities in this area to make an informed recommendation. The motion # 3 passed by unanimous vote.

Motion #4 by Mr. Oomittuk, seconded by Ms. Kippi to defer to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council on Crossover proposal FCR21-07: Closure to Federally qualified subsistence users in the Yukon drainage, Nome Creek – Arctic Grayling. The Council defers to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council because this stream is in their region and they would be most familiar with subsistence fishing communities in this area to make an informed recommendation. The motion #4 passed unanimously.

2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist, and Karen Hyer, Fisheries Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management, presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP). The Council discussed the FRMP program at length including development of subsistence fisheries research priorities in the region and recommendations for better engaging local communities and tribes in the research. The Council discussed the increasing prevalence of salmon in the region and concerns that Chum Salmon may be displacing their traditional subsistence foods such as whitefish and Char.

Motion # 5 by Mr. Oomittuk, seconded by Ms. Kippi to adopt the following research priority information needs (PINs) as refined by the Council:

- Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Harvest Monitoring, document new fish species and changes in abundance, size, timing, and distribution of existing fish species. Study impacts of new or expanding species on other fish that are important to subsistence.
- Document and investigate the possible causes of mold, disease, and discoloration on Broad Whitefish in the Colville River. Investigators are encouraged to draw on both Stock Status and Trends research and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Effects of climate change, including late freeze-up on subsistence access, practices, and fish preservation, and the impact of these changes on continuity of traditions and food security for communities on the North Slope. Studies including Ikpikpuk River are of particular interest.
- Monitoring and documentation of changing subsistence fish harvest and consumption, as well as subsistence user concerns, in the community of Nuiqsut.
- Baseline fish habitat and water quality monitoring (especially temperature, dissolved oxygen, and silt) on the rivers and tributaries important to subsistence fishing for communities of the North Slope. Investigators are encouraged to include overwintering areas.

The motion #5 passed by unanimous vote.

Identify FY2020 annual report topics

The Council discussed the following topics of interest during their meeting.

- Ongoing issues and challenges with climate change impacts to subsistence.
- Subsistence ecosystem way of life encompassing interaction between Federal lands and waters and marine environment and possible ways for subsistence program to engage in more integrated way.
- Review of Federal Subsistence Board makeup and decision making process – deference to RACs

National Park Service Subsistence Eligibility Permits/Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Marcy Okada, Subsistence Program Manager for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, presented an overview of the National Park Service request for delegated authority to make individual Customary and Traditional Use determinations on National Park Service lands.

Motion #6 by Mr. Oomittuk, seconded by Ms. Kippi for the Federal Subsistence Board to retain oversight of the Individual Customary and Traditional Use (C&T) determination process as it currently is with proposals going through the relevant Regional Advisory Councils and full and transparent public process. The Council is willing to reconsider this request at a later date after a full analysis is provided in order for the Council to gain a better understanding of what the effects would be for the National Park Service to independently make individual C&T determinations. The motion #5 passed unanimously.

Agency Reports:

- Jack Schaefer presented the Native Village of Point Hope report
- Steve Berendzen presented the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge report

- Marcy Okada presented the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve report
- Kyle Jolly presented the National Park Service caribou report
- Shelly Jones presented the Bureau of Land Management Arctic Field office and NPR-A report
- Brian Person and Todd Sformo provided information for the North Slope Borough Wildlife Department
- Carmen Daggett presented the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Department report
- Brendan Scanlon, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Fisheries, presented Colville River Arctic Grayling FRMP Project report. Beth Mikow presented the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division report and update on the Mead River, 2017-2019 FRMP project
- Ed Farley, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration presented a report on Beaufort and Chukchi Sea marine ecosystem research
- Eva Patton, Council Coordinator, presented the Office of Subsistence Management report

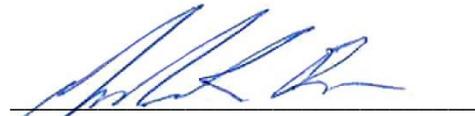
Future Meeting Dates:

The Council selected February 22-23 for the winter 2021 meeting to be held in Utqiagvik if COVID-19 restrictions allow meeting in person at that time.

The Council selected November 4-5 for the fall 2021 meeting to be held in Utqiagvik unless lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions allow for meeting in a non-hub rural community.



Eva Patton, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management



Gordon Brower, Chair
North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter2021 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 Eva Patton at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3358, email eva_patton@yahoo.com.