

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Dillingham Middle School Gym

Dillingham, Alaska

October 30-31, 2019

Invocation:

Mr. Joe Chythlook of Dillingham provided the invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment:

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, October 30 at 10:30 am. Council members Frank Woods III, Dennis Andrew, Sr., Nanci Morris Lyon, Molly Chythlook, William Trefon, Jr., Dan Dunaway, and Richard Wilson were present in person. Mr. Robert Larson of Koliganek participated via teleconference. William Maines and Lary Hill were not present and was excused. With eight out of ten seated Council members present, the quorum was established.

Attendees:

In person:

Troy Hamon, Katmai NP King Salmon
Leslie Skora, Katmai NP King Salmon
Linda Chislom, Katmai NP King Salmon
Lauren Watine, ADFG
Lee Borden ADFG Assistant Area Mgr
Ross Rennick ADFG
Pat Walsh, Togiak NWR Dillingham
Andy Aderman, Togiak NWR Dillingham
Susan Alexander, AP/Becharof NWR King Salmon
Cody Larson BBNA Dillingham
Gayla Hoseth, BBNA Dillingham
Heidi Kris, BBNA Dillingham
Bonnie Million, BLM Anchorage
Bruce Seppi, BLM Anchorage
Walker Gusse, BLM Anchorage
Chris McKee, OSM Anchorage
Suzanne Worker, OSM Anchorage
Robbin La Vine, OSM Anchorage
Jared Stone, OSM Anchorage
Pat Petrivelli, BIA Anchorage
Courtenay Carty, Curyung Tribe Dillingham

Susan Fleek Green, LACL NP Anchorage

Thomas Doolittle, OSM Anchorage

Kenton Moos, Togiak NWR Dillingham

Joe Chythlook, Dillingham

Kenneth Nukwak, Manokotak

Moses Toyukok, Manokotak

Dillingham Middle and High School Students:

Chase Huffman, Kristin Beltran, Nicky Johnson, Haley Carty, Zoe Tilden, Katiana Bond, Jonas Tweet, Brexton Peters, Olivia Thames, Jenice Cox, Kinikin Larson, Abbey Whitcomb, Shania Johnson, Molly Shears, Evelyn Tinnerman, Matthew Robinson, Caleb Decker, Joseph Rohl, Lawrence Wolff, Canderlaria Percy, John Montooth, Robin Savo,

Via teleconference:

Vince Mathews Interagency FWS Staff Committee Fairbanks

Orville Lind FWS Office of Subsistence Management Anchorage

Joshua Ream NPS Regional Subsistence Program Manager Anchorage

George Pappas FWS Office of Subsistence Management Anchorage

Robert Larson BBRAC member Koliganek, Alaska

Mark Burch Alaska Depart of Fish and Game Anchorage

Rich Merizon Alaska Depart of Fish and Game Palmer

Ray Borne, Yukon Delta NWR Bethel

Jack Reakoff, Western Interior RAC, Wiseman

Tom Whitford US Forest Service, Anchorage

Ross Renick, ADFG, Kodiak

Review and Adopt Agenda:

Motion made by Mr. Woods seconded by Mr. Dunaway, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Remove agenda item 10. c. Alaska Board of Fisheries Proposals, Bristol Bay area. There are no fishery proposals affecting the region
- Add agency report to include Bureau of Land Management
- Add SA19-07 – Mulchatna Caribou Herd, limit harvest limit, under wildlife proposals.
- Add Pebble Mine issue for discussion at closing comments.

The motion passed unanimously as amended.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

Motion made by Ms. Morris Lyon, seconded by Mr. Trefon, Jr., to approve the winter 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports:

Mr. William Trefon, Jr., of Nondalton reported the ongoing concerns with aircraft traffic in the Chulitna River drainage. Extreme warm weather has caused rapid melting in the Lake Clark area resulting in higher turbidity in the lake affecting wildlife.

Mr. Dennis Andrew, Sr., of New Stuyahok reported the local caribou population and observed some caribou straggles migrating through and observed the population seems to be declining. Mr. Andrew, Sr. mentioned the smolt salmon if recent surveys had been conducted. Residents have observed dead fish in rivers and streams due to warmer water temperatures. Some streams had dried out and ORV travel on dried anadromous streams were observed and is concerned about smolts survival.

Ms. Nanci Morris Lyon of King Salmon reported shared concerns with residents on the weather conditions on how it affected the fish and how it will affect the spawners from this summer's fish and how it will be affected in the future. The Chignik area fishery is another issue with its poor returns and concerns for the stock in the future.

Mr. Richard Wilson of Naknek reported on the water conditions being very warm and concerns of how the warm water temperatures will affect the salmon returns. Fishers have observed more sea lice on salmon and the smolt out migration affected by warm waters. The caribou population in Unit 9B are healthy and scattered throughout the hills but few caribou have been harvested by residents. The local moose population was not moving during the hunting season making it a challenge to harvest. The ptarmigan and Arctic hare population is increasing.

Mr. Dan Dunaway of Dillingham expressed same concerns of the changing weather and how it will impact the fish and wildlife and observed fish die offs due to the warmer climate. The hot weather into August and September has affected the moose season and rivers low level affecting access to subsistence hunt areas. Mr. Dunaway expressed concerns for the declining caribou herds in the region.

Mr. Frank Woods III of Dillingham reported on the warmer climate and how it affects the local hunting and fishing season, particularly on when and how to access subsistence resources. The fire season are longer and it is concerning on how the villages are going to be protecting themselves. Mr. Woods III reports that the Alaska Board of Fish has the King Salmon/Nushagak Management Plan which is up for review, and that there should be no changes to it until the next cycle of the Board of Fish meeting. Public input is needed on the Plan by local advisory committees or input from the Council. Mr. Woods III expressed concerns of the lower counts for caribou, not only for the Nushagak and Mulchatna Caribou, but statewide caribou herds. The caribou herds are important subsistence resources in the fall and winter for families, and if populations continue to decline, reduced harvest limits will be imposed affecting subsistence families.

Mr. Robert Larson of Koliganek reported on the summer fire activity and commented that it forced a lot of moose to move within the Nushagak River drainage. Mr. Larson inquired about the local muskrat population and if the Department of Fish and Game has some recent population status.

Ms. Molly Chythlook of Dillingham reported the recent Federal Subsistence Board actions taken subsistence fish and shellfish and referred to the ANILCA Section 805(c) report. At the Federal Board meeting, the RAC chairs requested another all Regional Advisory Council meeting and advised the Council that there may be a 2021 meeting contingent on funding. Ms. Chythlook reported she was consulted on the possible closure for the Mulchatna Caribou and stated she would support a limit for one caribou and stated that fall moose season was poor and that one caribou would fill the need for those that did not harvest a fall moose.

Old Business:

- Wildlife Closure Review (WCR20-04/06)
Ms. Suzanne Worker, OSM Wildlife Biologist, provided a briefing on WCR20-04/06. No action required. At its winter 2019 public meeting in Naknek, the Council made its recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board that Units 9C remainder and 9E be retained. The briefing on the closure is to notify the Councils action and the Federal Subsistence Board will be addressing the closure in its April 2020 public meeting for final regulatory action.

New Business:

Wildlife Proposals:

Regional Proposals:

WP20-26. Requests that Federally qualified subsistence users be allowed to use snowmachines to position wolves, and wolverines for harvest on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in Units 9B, 9C, 17B, and 17C, provided the animals are not shot from a moving snowmachine.

Motion #1 made by Mr. Woods III to adopt the proposal and seconded by Mr. Dunaway to support the proposal as recommended by OSM.

Support.

Justification. Hunters using snowmachines to position wolves and wolverines for harvest is a traditional and common practice in the Bristol Bay area. No conservation concerns exist for wolf and wolverines. The proposal clarifies what is allowed and is supported by local users to use snowmachine to position wolves and wolverines for harvest on BLM lands. The Federal Subsistence Board adopted a similar regulation in Unit 23 recognizing snowmachine as a customary and traditional harvest method.

WP20-27. Requests a unit-specific regulation for Unit 17 allowing use of snowmachine to assist in the taking of a caribou and allowing caribou to be shot from a stationary snowmachine, using the regulatory language adopted by the Alaska Board of Game in February 2018.

Motion #2 made by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Woods III to adopt WP20-27 as recommended by OSM.

Support.

Justification. Proposal WP20-27 will clarify Federal hunting regulations and will also align with recent State of Alaska hunting regulation and reduce regulatory complexity between Federal and State regulations. The Council supports the proposal stating it is a long standing practice among rural residents of the region and any conservation concerns can be addressed through regulatory changes to protect the caribou herd if necessary.

WP20-28/29. WP20-28 requests that the bull moose season in Unit 17A be extended by 5 days, from Aug. 25-Sept. 20 to Aug. 25-Sept. 25. WP20-29 requests the addition of an Aug. 25-Sept. 25 antlerless moose season in Unit 17A.

Motion #3 made by Ms. Morris Lyon, seconded by Mr. Dunaway to adopt WP20-28/29 as recommended by OSM.

Support.

Justification. The proposal will provide for subsistence opportunity for rural residents of the region. Extending the season will provide for increased subsistence opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users. The changes will also align with current changes in State regulations and reduce regulatory complexity by aligning seasons and harvest limits in State and Federal regulations. The Council stated the proposal will help put a check on the growing moose population in the area. There has been an extensive habitat evaluation done and that the Togiak Refuge should be able to closely monitor this population and react accordingly if changes need to be made.

WP20-30. Requests that the Alaska hare season in Unit 9 be shortened from a year round season to Nov. 1-Jan 31, and that the harvest limit be reduced from no limit to 1 per day and 4 annually.

Motion #4 made by Ms. Morris Lyon, seconded by Mr. Woods III, to adopt WP20-30 as presented by OSM with modification.

Oppose.

Justification. The Council opposed the proposal voting 1-7 as written. The season end date seemed too restrictive and other Council members stated that harvest and population numbers were unknown. Additional information on the species is needed prior to adopting the proposal to

set season dates. Traditionally the winter months, are when hares are harvested for winter protein.

WP20-31. Requests that the harvest limit for ptarmigan in Unit 9 be decreased from 20 ptarmigan per day/40 in possession to 10 ptarmigan per/20 in possession and that the harvest season be shortened from Aug. 10-Apr. 30 to Aug. 10-last day of February.

Motion # 5 by Ms. Morris Lyon, seconded by Mr. Woods III, to adopt WP20-31 as presented by OSM.

Support.

Justification. The Council support the proposal to reduce the season and harvest limit. There is a conservation concern for the ptarmigan population in Unit 9. It is important to limit the harvest on ptarmigan in Unit 9 until the population numbers increase.

Statewide Proposals:

WP20-08 request implementing a statewide requirement that traps and snares be marked with either the trapper's name or State identification number.

Motion # 6 by Mr. Dunaway, seconded by Mr. Wilson, to adopt WP20-08 as presented by OSM.

Oppose.

Justification. Local users are opposed to the proposal and requiring local subsistence users to mark traps is unnecessary and burdensome. No conservation concerns exist to the furbearer population in the region.

SA19-07 – Mulchatna Caribou Herd, limit harvest limit

Mr. Chris McKee, OSM Wildlife Division Supervisor, provided a briefing, and a summary of the special action process, on Wildlife Temporary Special Action 19-07 (WSA19-07) request by the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge to limit the harvest of Mulchatna Caribou from two caribou to one in all or portions of Units 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A, and 19B for the 2019/20 regulatory year. The OSM is accepting public comments on WSA19-07 for the Federal Subsistence Board's to consider when they consider it at its November 2019 teleconference meeting.

Council comments on WSA19-07: Council members commented that they would support a limit of one caribou from two. Allowable harvest in past hunts was five caribou, and further reduced to two caribou. With the recent decline of the herd, land managing agencies are recommending the harvest limit be reduced to one caribou due to conservation concerns. Winter hunts are important for rural residents to harvest caribou, a time when families need the protein. Currently, local residents are having difficulty harvesting caribou and the Council is not in support of full closure. The Council also commented on the importance of compliance to report harvest, for purposes of management for the Mulchatna Caribou, and the Council also commented the need for enforcement for harvest limit. Other comments the Council

provided on the WSA, is to encourage and educate hunters on the importance of reporting their harvest to help resource managers to keep the Mulchatna Caribou at a healthy population to sustain future opportunity for harvest.

2020 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program:

Mr. Jared Stone, OSM Fisheries Technician, presented an overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the review of the funding process for the FRMP. Every two years, the OSM announces a funding opportunity for investigation plans addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. No action is necessary on this agenda topic.

Comments on the FRMP: The Council commented on the composition of the Technical Review Committee on the FRMP, representatives from Native organizations, when decisions are formulated to move forward with project proposals for funding. There is also a need for local agencies to develop project proposals to investigate Chinook Salmon, returns and abundance, within the Naknek/Alagnak River drainages.

Identify Issues for FY2019 Annual Report:

ANILCA established the Annual Reports as a way to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretaries' attention. The following topics were discussed, and through Council consensus, are the Annual Report topics to be included in the Bristol Bay 2019 Annual Report.

1. Climate change has brought concerns by rural residents on the effects of hotter summer weather conditions season and level of low river and streams due to climate change, and how climate change has affected subsistence resources.
2. The Chignik area fishery has continued to produce poor returns, and as a result, fishery managers have initiated limited closures for subsistence opportunities. This could be a stock of concern to begin management action through revisiting management plans, or establishing stakeholder meetings to develop strategies to protect the Chignik fishery.
3. The Mulchatna Caribou herd is an important subsistence resource for residents of the Bristol Bay region the population has been declining resulting in further harvest limits. Reporting a harvest is important to help managers keep its estimate on the population accurate to gage the health of the population within its range.
4. Out migration of salmon, as part of a stream study, on how the "blob"(large mass of relatively warm water in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of North America) affects the overall migration of smolts entering the marine environment.
5. Baseline study on the moose and caribou biology and their habitat due to climate change and how it will affect future populations.
6. Develop a TEK harvest area for the Mulchatna Caribou and other land mammals that also includes a baseline study for all communities that encompasses hunting and harvest locations that can be analyzed to studies conducted during the 1980s for any significant changes.

7. Caribou hoof diseases and other diseases are concerns for rural residents that requires additional biological investigation. Diseases of animals has effects on hunt areas traditionally used by rural residents. With these issues, focus on the health of the local caribou population and encourage collaboration to address these issues through collaborative management with local agencies can address consequence of declining resources.

8. Invasive species is a concern the Council would like to bring forward to the Boards attention. The Council is unsure on how invasive species affects the caribou and moose population, and how it affects the local native flora and other wildlife populations.

9. The Council requests additional data or briefings on any recent predator prey ratio for caribou, spring mortality of caribou calves by bears.

Agency Reports:

Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

- Courteny Carty reported on the Curyung Tribe and stated the Tribe has a long history of stewardship on the lands and are active in subsistence management issues. She also reported the Tribe is developing its Natural Resources Department
- Gayla Hoseth commented on the recent Federal Subsistence Board meeting and inquired on voting process of Board when ANILCA trumps agency regulations, who is to enforce ANILCA to protect subsistence opportunities? Ms. Hoseth requested the Council to place on its 2019 Annual Report, when regulations are conflicted, then ANILCA must be the default.

Native Organizations

- BBNA - Cody Larson/Gayla Hoseth stated on record they are in support ANILCA related subsistence issue. Mr. Larson summarized work in 2016 concerning the Togiak Chinook harvest and the health of population. Throught the FRMP process, BBNA was able to fund this project to investigate the Chinook harvest and assessment of the health using traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in the communities of Togiak and Twin Hills. Two other projects were presented, in summary, subsistence sharing networks on the Alaska Peninsula, and Dolly Varden migration and harvest/TEK in the Togiak River drainage.

USFWS

- Togiak NWR
Mr. Pat Walsh and Mr. Andy Aderman presented a powerpoint presentation on the moose collar project and the population status and biology on moose in the region. In addition to the moose biological report, status of the current wolf population was presented. Updates on the Nushagak Caribou population was also presented. Additional information from the refuge is provided in the Council meeting materials on other refuge projects and inventory activities.

- Becharof/Alaska Peninsula NWR
Ms. Susan Alexandra Refuge Manager presented an overview and current projects and activities occurring within the Refuge. Ms. Alexander referred to the agency's summary report.

NPS

- Lake Clark National Park
Ms. Susan Fleek Green presented a power presentation for Lake Clark on projects and studies occurring within Lake Clark National Park. Ms. Liza Rupp, Subsistence Manager, provided to the Council a written report to the Council and provided the highlights to the Councils.
- Katmai National Park/Aniakchak National Monument
Mr. Troy Hamon and Ms. Linda Chislom presented reports on invasive species projects within the National Park, and provided an update on the Pike Ridge Trail. Currently the NPS is working with communities in Naknek and King Salmon working on remediation solutions.

ADFG

- Ms. Lauren Watine, ADFG, reported on recent harvest data reports and the current status of Unit 17A moose population status.
- Mr. Lee Borden, Assistant Area fishery biologists for the Division of Sportfish. Kreeel surveys completed over the summer have completed a two year study looking at catch and release mortality of Chinook Salmon on the Nushagak River. The study is currently in the process of being written.
- Mr. Ralph Rennick, Kodiak ADFG area biologist, provided a summary of the fishery occurring in the Chignik area. The Chignik subsistence fishery was better in 2019 than 2018, and the early salmon run was late this season. There was no directed commercial fishery and the overall escapement improved and the minimum escapement goal was met

BLM

- Ms. Bonnie Million, Field Manager for the BLMs Anchorage Office; Mr. Bruce Seppe, subsistence wildlife biologists; and Mr. Walker Gusse, law enforcement officer/pilot. Ms. Million thanked the Council to introduce themselves and stated that the BLM office will plan on participating at the Bristol Bay RAC meetings. She provided a one page fact sheet for the Council's reference outlining the various projects occurring within the agency.

OSM

- General Update provide by Mr. Tom Doolittle and Mr. Chris McKee on staffing within the OSM program and recent management actions from the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Closing Comments

The Council is appreciative of the OSM staff for organizing a successful public meeting and acknowledged public participation, especially the Dillingham Middle and High school students. The Council also is appreciative of staff reports and look forward to future reports of ongoing projects.

Pebble Mine

Ms. Gayla Hoseth, BBNA, brought to the attention of the Council letter from the Department of the Interior, submitted comments for the draft environmental impact statement and requested the Council support the DOI's comments and copied to the Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Hoseth also requested the Council add it to its 2019 Annual Report.

Motion # 7 made by Mr. Woods III to support the Department of the Interior's comments on the draft environmental impact statement on Pebble Mine, seconded by Mr. Dunaway. The motion includes an 810 analysis be completed on the Pebble Mine project, and additional Tribal Consultation occur regarding the Pebble Mine project. Motion passes. Two abstained.

Future Meeting Dates:

Confirm Winter 2020 meeting date and location: Naknek, February 4-5, 2020

Select Fall 2020 meeting date and location: Dillingham, October 28-29, 2020



Donald Mike, DFO

USFWS Office of Subsistence Management



Nancy Morris Lyon, Chair, for Molly Chythlook, Former Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its February 4-5, 2020 meeting in Naknek, Alaska, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

For a more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Donald Mike at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3629, email Donald_mike@fws.gov.