

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

## **Meeting Minutes**

Pike's Waterfront Lodge  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
March 3-4, 2020

### **Invocation**

Donald Woodruff gave an invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 at 9:00 am. Council members Sue Entsminger, Andy Bassich, Andrew Firmin, Bill Glanz, Tim McManus, Donald Woodruff, Robert Wright, and Charles Jagow were present in person. The Council has two vacant seats. A quorum was established with eight of eight seated Council members present.

### **Attendees:**

#### ***In person***

- *Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Anchorage:* Tom Kron, Pippa Kenner, Zach Stevenson, Tom Doolittle, Frank Harris
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Fairbanks:* Gerald Maschmann, Randy Brown
- *USFWS, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (NWR):* Steve Berendzen, Nathan Hawkaluk
- *USFWS, Arctic, Kanuti, and Yukon Flats NWRs:* Vince Mathews
- *USFWS, Yukon Flats NWR:* Bill Hedman
- *Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):* Glenn Chen
- *Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Fairbanks:* Alida Trainor, Brandy Baker
- *Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA):* Serena Fitka, Catherine Moncrieff
- *Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Eastern Interior Field Office:* Craig Townsend, Jim Herriges
- *National Park Service (NPS), Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve (NP):* Marcy Okada
- *NPS, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (NPP):* Barbara Cellarius, Caroline Ketron
- *NPS, Denali NPP:* Patricia Owen
- *NANA Regional Corporation:* Damon Schaeffer
- *Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC):* Jim Simon, Eric Rowe, Ben Stevens
- *Upper Tanana Fortymile Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC):* Barb Pine
- *Delta AC, Delta Junction:* Tisha Kennell
- *Members of the public:* Jennifer Yuhas (Fairbanks), Gerald John (Arctic Village), Pamela Miller

### ***Via teleconference***

- *OSM*: Lisa Maas, Robbin La Vine, George Pappas, Suzanne Worker
- *NPS, Anchorage*: Joshua Ream
- *ADF&G*: Christy Gleason, Beth Lenart, Mark Burch, Nathan Chakowski, Holly Carroll, Doreen Parker McNeill, Tony Hollis
- *Federal Subsistence Board (Board)*: Ronda Pitka
- *Cruikshank School, Yukon Flats School District, Beaver*: Paul Williams, Jr. and students

### **Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Under Old Business add report on Council's request to establish an Arctic Village Sheep Management Area subcommittee by Tom Doolittle.
- Under New Business add Unit 13 caribou Special Action Request by Lisa Maas.
- Under Agency Reports add Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association update by Catherine Moncrieff; Tanana Chiefs Conference update by Ben Stevens; Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission report by Karen Linnell; University of Alaska update by Carrie Stevens; Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge update by Nathan Hawkaluk; Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge update by Vince Mathews; 23 year review of the Andraefsky and Gisasa weirs by Randy Brown; Denali National Park and Preserve Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) update by Marcy Okada; Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve update by Marcy Okada; and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve report by Barbara Cellarius.
- Allow for Chair's discretion to change the order of agenda items as necessary.

The motion passed unanimously.

### **Election of Officers**

Ms. Sue Entsminger was elected Council Chair.

Mr. Andrew Firmin was elected Council Vice Chair.

Mr. Robert Wright was elected Council Secretary.

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

Motion by Mr. Firmin, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to table the winter 2019 meeting minutes approval until the second day of the meeting. The motion was not voted on. The minutes were not reviewed and approved on the second day of the meeting.

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

*Donald Woodruff of Eagle* reported more sightings of deer near Eagle and plenty of caribou around all winter. A very large cougar took a caribou on the airstrip. Harvested lynx were fat; the hare cycle peaked and just started going down. Mr. Woodruff attended the Eagle AC meeting where intensive management,

Unit 20E south of Chicken cow caribou harvest, and the Fortymile Caribou Herd were discussed. Mr. Woodruff participated in the NPS subsistence working group that talked about cabin permits, oral history, place names, and the mail trail. The moose population in the Yukon-Charley Rivers NP is down 23 percent, which brings it to about the 40 year average.

*Tim McManus of Nenana* reported lots of snow shoe hares. Two large lynx roamed in the village. Fishing was really good this year, and they met their escapement goals on the Chena. One fisherman reported strange white dots of unknown origin on his fish. Ice on Nenana was 34 inches thick in early March. Many moose come to the highway for salt, and there have been about five road kills between Fairbanks and Nenana, most were calves. Construction of a bridge across the Nenana River started and will create road access to subunit of Unit 20, which previously had no access except by boat. The Minto/Nenana AC has concerns that this road will create an easy access to hunting moose in this area for non-local hunters and the AC is exploring options for restricting access before problems occur. Mr. McManus reminded the Council appointed him and Mr. Wright to the Denali Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC). Mr. McManus attended the SRC meeting on August 28, 2019. The SRC submitted a temporary wildlife Special Action Request to the Board to change the harvest limit for ptarmigan from 20 a day, 40 in possession, to 10 a day, 20 in possession and the season from August 10 through March 10, in Subunit 15 in 2019/2020 regulatory year. The SRC made a motion to change the residency requirement: the only residents qualified to hunt in the Park must have lived in the three-mile corridor of Cantwell post office for at least five years.

*Robert Wright of Tanana* spent a lot of time working in Rampart where he reported lots of snow causing havoc for the moose (loss of calves and cows in deep snow). He saw many small moose tracks. Mr. Wright thought that perhaps these were deer tracks or that the moose are breeding later in the year producing small calves. Mr. Wright has seen huge cats (cougars) in the Rampart/Tanana/Manley area two days ago. They have been seen there since 1970s, they come into people's yards and swim in the river, but most of the time you can hear them more than see them. People are reporting that they saw deer in Middle Lake area last year. The marten are really down in the area and the lynx's cycle is picking up. The lynx are hunting snowshoe hares in the community. It was nice to have a normal cold winter, which holds bugs back and eliminates the weak and sick land mammals, ensuring good, sustainable, and healthy populations. Mr. Wright is concerned about fish loss in the Interior rivers this past summer and wonders about future fish reports and what management is going to do. He is also concerned about the future of salmon.

*Andrew Firmin of Fort Yukon* reported a lot of moose activity close to town, which is welcomed. Perhaps wolves that are close to Fort Yukon drove the moose into town. One wolf was snared a mile away from Mr. Firmin's house. Another resident saw a pack of wolves four miles away at Twelvemile River and took eight of them. Mr. Firmin is happy about the nice cold winter that allowed thick ice to form. He received suggestions to put in a proposal to shorten the State's December or February moose hunt dates or eliminate them because the area has one of a lowest moose populations in the State. People are also concerned that hunters shoot cows by accident.

*Bill Glanz of Central* said his wife saw two cougars and one of his neighbors chased another one down the road for over two miles. Mr. Glanz himself saw cougar tracks. Caribou were overharvested (about 16,000 to 17,000 caribou taken) during the fall season due to inadequate enforcement (not even troopers were there) so there was no winter season. In the past, they used to have six or eight troopers enforcing. However, the caribou are still there and someone reported to Mr. Glanz that they were at Eagle Summit along the Beamerburg Trail. Mr. Glanz advised that they were still legal to hunt on Federal public lands until March 31. When Mr. Glanz was driving into the meeting, he saw many caribou going up the hillside heading west. The wolves are hunting around the community and several were snared. A small 40-pound wondering black bear cub was captured in February on the Yukon (must have been pushed out of the den). It lived at somebody's cabin all winter and left in the spring; they didn't see it again. (Chair Entsminger reminded everyone that it was illegal to feed wildlife.) Mr. Glanz said that people felt sorry for the cub and thought they were helping him.

*Andy Bassich of Eagle* was disappointed that some Council members were not reappointed and said that it is important to engage the younger members so they can learn the process and "hopefully take our places." Having younger Council members means building the future foundation for protecting the resources in our region. "This is very important to our livelihood and our existence out in the rural areas." Mr. Bassich reported that the winter was windy and snowy, but good for most people in the region. The marten population is down. Caribou have been consistently present around Eagle-Seventymile-Ogilvie Mountain Range area all winter long. He had seen them every day while mushing. A fair number of wolves are in the area, as well as cow moose with calves that perhaps have been pushed down by the heavy snow. He is not sure about the calf survival rate because of wolves. The community of Eagle lives on caribou, King Salmon and fall Chum Salmon, so it has been a good year for people to satisfy their subsistence needs.

Mr. Bassich has a lot of concern about the fall Chum Salmon run that came in steady but very slow. This made it difficult for people to meet their subsistence needs. People fished till mid-October and fish wheels started to ice up before they finished fishing. Catch was minimal, sometimes under a hundred fish a day. It took Mr. Bassich more than twice as long to catch the fish that he needed for winter and he has one of the better spots. Mr. Bassich believes that when weather conditions prevent people from fishing, management needs to make adjustment to fall Chum Salmon fishing regulations. Eagle, Fort Yukon, and Tanana/Rampart areas are the only remaining dog mushing areas that depend heavily on fall Chum Salmon. He will work with managers to find solutions.

Even though the King Salmon run was really good, it is still lower than historical runs, and didn't meet the full escapement goal to Canada. That is creating a lot of bad feelings and hardship, and Mr. Bassich thinks that we're not rebuilding the fish runs by not getting the right quality and the right number of fish up to the spawning grounds. There is a lot of need for outreach primarily on the Alaska side to get the message out to people that we want to rebuild or stabilize this run into the future, to get people to think long term.

*Charley Jagow of Porcupine River* reported that it was a very cold, windy winter, more than any winter he had seen in the past. The lynx population is on the decline. Very few caribou wintered in the Rampart, Upper Porcupine area, which is unusual. As a result, there were very few wolves.

*Susan Entsminger of Mentasta*, the Council's Chair, reported that in her area there were periods of heavy wet snow with rain in between in the beginning of winter. Her son has been highly successful in trapping 20 to 40 wolves a year in a 50-mile radius around Mentasta. Chair Entsminger took clients on guided bear hunts over bait and they got 5 grizzly bears and 12 black bears. People now are more successful in getting moose because of less predators. A 20-year-old girl died in Mentasta for unknown reasons and there was a big potlatch funeral with three moose.

Chair Entsminger was frustrated about the formation of the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) subcommittee and confusion between formation of a working group versus subcommittee. She talked about her participation in the November 5, 2019 Board meeting when the Council's request about the formation of the AVSMA subcommittee was discussed. The Board requested that the Council develop the subcommittee expectations, goals, time frame, frequency of meetings, and costs, and OSM was supposed to help the Council to do this. Chair Entsminger said that this information was never presented to the Board. Nathan Hawkaluk with the Arctic NWR was willing to work with her on the AVSMA issue. Now Chair Entsminger thinks that it might be better to work directly with the Refuge and ADF&G instead of forming the AVSMA subcommittee, since creating one seems to be so complicated. Chair Entsminger encouraged ADF&G to develop the hunter ethics and orientation course for potential future opening of AVSMA as outlined in the Section 5 of Alaska Administrative Code § 92.003 (i), and that was the essence of the Council's proposal 82 to the Board of Game. Chair Entsminger also said that if ACs talk about Federal proposals the State should provide their minutes to the Council sooner.

Tom Doolittle, acting Assistant Regional Director for OSM, and the Council discussed the challenges associated with formation of the AVSMA subcommittee and the best way to move forward.

### **Wildlife Special Action Request**

Lisa Maas, Wildlife Biologist with OSM, presented information on Wildlife Special Action Request WSA20-01, which requested a continuous caribou season in Unit 13 from Aug. 1 to Mar. 31 and that the caribou harvest limit in Unit 13 remainder be changed from two bulls to two caribou for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 regulatory years. Barbara Cellarius, Subsistence Coordinator with Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, reported that the Wrangell-St. Elias NP Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) voted to support a modified version of WSA20-01. "Specifically, the SRC supports the portion of the request that would change the harvest limit in Unit 13 remainder to two caribou. Changing the limit from bulls only to any caribou will provide additional subsistence opportunity. The SRC opposes the elimination of the closed season from October 1-20 which overlaps with the rut. The meat of bull caribou harvested during the rut is potentially unpalatable and could result in meat being wasted. Additionally it's problematic to disturb caribou during the rut."

Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. [unidentified] to support special action request WSA20-01. The motion was withdrawn with the concurrence of the second. Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to support the modified version of WSA20-01, as proposed by Wrangell-St. Elias NP SRC. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

## **Public and Tribal Comments on Non-agenda Items**

Sarah James, spokesperson for Arctic Village Tribe, presented Tribal comment on the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA). Pamela Miller, public member, spoke about the importance of allowing public comments during the meeting, the conservation of sheep in the Arctic Refuge, the importance of subsistence as a purpose of the Refuge, and the importance of good government-to-government relations.

## **New Business**

### ***Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update***

Frank Harris, OSM, presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the Partner's Program updates and asked if anyone on the Council is interested in developing Priority Information Needs (PIN) for the Eastern Interior Region. Mr. Bassich, Mr. Wright, and Mr. McManus volunteered to help in PINs development.

### ***2020 Yukon River Pre-season Outlook***

Gerald Maschmann, assistant Federal in-season manager for the Yukon River with USFWS, presented the 2019 fall season summary and 2020 salmon season outlook. Mr. Maschmann and Holly Carroll, ADF&G summer in-season manager, answered the Council's questions. Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to make a formal recommendation to the Federal in-season manager to not allow seven and a half inch gear for fishing the late run Chinook Salmon in order to provide for conservation of older larger female fish. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan 2019-2023***

Jeff Gross with ADF&G and Jim Herriges with BLM presented the *Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan 2019-2023* (Plan) developed by the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Coalition and discussed it in detail with the Council. Mr. Bassich spoke about the Plan discussion that occurred at the Eagle Advisory Committee (AC) meeting. The Upper Tanana Fortymile AC also discussed and voted on the Plan. Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Firmin, to support the Plan and request to open a Federal hunt prior to Aug. 10, if the caribou migration allows, as recommended by the Upper Tanana Fortymile AC. The motion passed with seven votes in favor to one against.

### ***Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Proposals***

Frank Harris with OSM informed the Council that the Board is accepting proposals through April 20, 2020 to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of fish and shellfish on Federal public lands and waters for the 2021-2023 regulatory years. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence fish and shellfish seasons, harvest limits, methods, and means related to taking of fish for subsistence uses, as well as customary and traditional use determinations. The Council elected not to develop and submit any fish or shellfish proposals this cycle.

### ***Alaska Board of Game Proposals***

The Council voted to support Alaska Board of Game proposals 45, 54, 83, 86, 88, 91, 141, 142, and 145, to support with modification proposal 82, and to oppose proposals 49, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 63, 64, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 140, and 143.

Public comments were presented on the following proposals:

- Proposal 91: Tisha Kennell of Delta Junction talked about why the Delta Advisory Committee, that she is a member of, made this proposal.
- Proposal: 82: Gerald John from Arctic Village talked about Red Sheep Creek and its importance. Public member Jennifer Yuhas talked about how the ethics and orientation class requirement for AVSMA was passed by the State. Public member Pamela Miller talked about the importance of a hunter ethics course in helping to mitigate the Arctic Village issues.

Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Wright, to write a letter to the Alaska Board of Game to seek their support and cooperation in developing a hunter ethics and education program in the Eastern Interior Region. Motion withdrawn. Motion by Mr. Bassich, seconded by Mr. Woodruff, to submit a letter to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to move forward with developing a hunter education and orientation program for sheep hunting in Red Sheep Creek and Cane Creek within the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area, Unit 25A as outlined in the State regulations (Section 5 AAC 92.003 - Hunter education and orientation requirements). The motion passed on a unanimous vote. The Council selected Chair Entsminger to represent them at the Alaska Board of Game meeting.

### ***Review and approve FY-2019 annual report***

The Council agreed to add the following topics to the FY-2019 annual report:

- Importance of having balanced geographical membership representation (specifically desire for representation from Arctic Village, Venetie, and Chalkyitsik), as well as a broad spectrum of age groups represented on the Council. Importance of training and the possibility of having another all-Council meeting.
- Improving communication between the State and OSM, and having a clear protocol on how to obtain information. Working with Arctic Village on the hunter ethics and education initiative topic.

## Agency Reports:

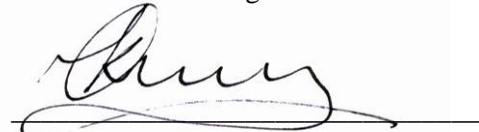
- Catherine Moncrieff presented the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association update.
- Tom Doolittle, OSM, presented the Regional Advisory Council appointment process and the *Executive Order on Evaluating and Improving the Utility of Federal Advisory Committees* (June 14, 2019).
- Karen Linnell presented the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission report.
- Eric Rowe with TCC presented on the Henshaw Creek weir project.
- Randy Brown with USFWS presented the 23 year review of the Andreafsky and Gisasa weirs.
- Vince Mathews with the Yukon Flats NWR talked about cooperative work with the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments, gave a staffing update, and provided information on the Native Youth Congress program.
- Steve Berendzen, Arctic NWR Manager, provided an update on the fall 2019 summary of activities.
- Shawn Bayless, Tetlin NWR Manager, provided a staffing update, and Tim Lorenzini, Visitors Services Manager, provided the Refuge activities summary.
- Brandy Baker with ADF&G Division of Sportfish reported on FRMP project 18-250, documenting salmon for the anadromous waters catalog in the Upper Yukon Flats.
- Patricia Owen, wildlife biologist with Denali NPP, gave a wildlife update and an update on two Denali SRC projects.
- Marcy Okada, subsistence coordinator for Yukon Charley Rivers National Preserve, provided a preserve update.
- Barbara Cellarius, subsistence coordinator and cultural anthropologist, and Caroline Ketron, biological technician for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, provided a wildlife report and other updates.
- Jim Herriges with the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office provided the agency update.
- Tom Kron provided the OSM report.

The Council thanked former member Michael Koehler for his service on the Council, help with the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Coalition, and expressed their appreciation for his enthusiasm and commitment.

## Future Meeting Dates:

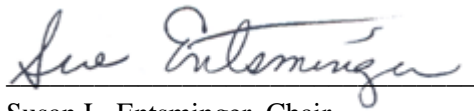
Fall 2020 meeting to be held October 14-15 in Fairbanks

Winter 2021 meeting to be held March 4-5 in Arctic Village (or Fairbanks)



Katerina Wessels, Designated Federal Officer  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management





Susan L. 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 fall 2020 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 Katerina Wessels at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3558, email [katerina\\_wessels@fws.gov](mailto:katerina_wessels@fws.gov).