

# **SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Via Teleconference Due to Covid-19

October 28, 2020

### **Invocation**

Elmer Seetot, Jr. gave an invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 9:07 a.m. Council members Tom Gray, Elmer Seetot Jr., Leland Oyoumick, Deahl Katchatag, Lloyd Kiyutelluk and Ron Kirk, were present via teleconference. Louis Green, Jr. Chair was absent (excused). The Council has two vacant seats. A quorum was established with six of eight seated Council members present.

### **Attendees:**

#### ***Via teleconference***

- Karen Deatherage, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Fairbanks
- Orville Lind, Karen Hyer, Hannah Voorhees, Gene Pelkola, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Anchorage
- Patricia Petravelli, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Anchorage
- Carol Damberg, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage
- Jeanette Koelsch, Ken Adkisson, Nicole Braem, Letty Hughes, National Park Service (NPS), Nome
- Hannah Adkisson NPS, Kotzebue
- Tom Sparks, Brian Uberlaker, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Nome
- Chris McKee, Walker Gusse, BLM, Anchorage
- Jim Menard, Kevin Clark, Jenifer Bell, Bill Dunker, Sara Germain, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Nome
- Beth Mikow, ADF&G, Fairbanks
- Charlie Lean, Northern Norton Sound Advisory Committee, Nome

### **Review and Adopt Agenda**

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

- Add Election of Officers
- Remove Service Awards
- Remove FCR20-06 due to ineligibility for Customary and Traditional Use

The motion passed unanimously.

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

Motion by Mr. Seetot seconded by Mr. Katchatag, to approve the winter 2019 meeting minutes with the following modifications: Change Mr. Seetot's location from Elim to Brevig Mission.

The motion passed unanimously.

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

*Mr. Kiyutelluk* of Shishmaref reported there was good hunting and fishing this past season. The lack of sea ice made many hunters have to go further out for marine mammals. The caribou travelled down earlier this year so the community was able to get some. There was hardly any guiding in the area so we were also able to get our moose.

*Mr. Katchatag* from Unalakleet reported that moose season was good. He did share concerns that one moose showed signs of disease in his ribcage and remarked that moose in the area are being infected by their water or food. There were very few Chum or Coho Salmon this year, but millions of Pink Salmon. The seal hunting was good and bird hunting was great. Mr. Katchatag has concerns with climate change and global warming impacts, and would like to speak with the agencies later in the meeting.

*Mr. Oyoumick* of Unalakleet reported that he agreed with the issues brought up by Mr. Katchatag. He said moose season went well this year. Mr. Oyoumick is very concerned with the low number of Coho Salmon. Generally he catches 40 Coho Salmon during the season, but only caught one this year on rod and reel. There are very few Coho Salmon compared to what it used to be and he hopes that someone will be able to provide some answers.

*Mr. Gray* of Nome reported that the Nome, White Mountain, Kuzitrin moose season was over in the blink of an eye, faster than any previous season. Caribou were sparse, and did not show up at Onion Portage. Apparently, they are still up on the North Slope, and have not moved down yet. Looks like another bad year for caribou. Nome didn't have many berries. The fish numbers were concerning. Millions of Pink Salmon with low numbers of Silver Salmon, even late in the season. Unfortunately, commercial fishing was still going on. Subsistence users have been warning managers about Silver Salmon declines. When you don't have Chum Salmon, you don't have many Silver Salmon. Managers said Fish River had a good Silver run, but fishermen on the ground disagree. There was a really good beluga whale hunt with thousands of belugas in Cape Nome. Crabbing this year was horrible. Mr. Gray typically sets subsistence pots during the winter and brings in 200-300 crabs. This season he got two. He did catch a couple of Halibut and some Pacific Cod in early August but not in September. Mr. Gray is concerned that these local resources will be wiped out.

Mr. Seetot of Brevig Mission reported that the area spring marine mammal harvest was minimal. The ice was thick but went out fast so there wasn't much time to hunt. Salmonberries were non-existent, perhaps due to the dry weather in May that left the tundra dry. Salmon fishing wasn't very good, and they came in late in low numbers at Salmon Lake. This was the first time Mr. Seetot had seen large concentrations of snow geese in the area. He reported that they were staged west of Brevig Mission, across Port Clarence Bay. Moose registration permits went by pretty fast, and I applied for one but didn't use it. Mr. Seetot was asked to turn it in anyway so they could keep track of what happened.

Mr. Kirk of Stebbins reported fishing was not good this year, with very few Coho Salmon. There was good marine mammal and bird hunting, and very good moose hunting. We got our moose, and young *oogruk* seal hunting was also very good. Summer gathering is going to meet our winter needs. Our freezer is full of berries. COVID-19 has been a big problem for Stebbins, as people traveling are bringing it in. Global warming continues to be an issue that Mr. Stebbins and he would like to discuss later.

## **Old Business**

- Ms. Deatherage presented the 805c report from the Board to the Council.

## **New Business**

### ***Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews***

#### *Regional:*

FCR21-01 Unalakleet River upstream of the confluence of the Chirosky River Closure – Chinook Salmon

Mr. Katchatag moved, seconded by Mr. Oyoumick, to retain the closure under FCR21-02.

The Council recognizes that 2019 reflected a healthy return of Chinook Salmon to the Unalakleet River. The Council is concerned, however, that due to COVID-19, the weir operation last summer had both gear and count limitations, and therefore cannot be relied upon to provide any updated trend information. The Council believes that until Chinook Salmon returns display consistently increased trends through time, the regulatory closure should remain in place. The Council is also concerned about smaller sized fish, which could represent a systemic issue for this population.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

#### *Crossover:*

FCR21-04 Yukon Drainage/Jim River Closure – All Fish

Mr. Kirk moved, seconded by Mr. Oyoumick, to defer to the recommendation of the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to eliminate the closure under FCR21-04 with the

modification to allow a bag/possession limit of 10 grayling per day by rod and reel in the Jim River, including Douglas and Prospect Creeks.

The Council agrees with the decision of the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to eliminate and modify this closure. The Council wishes to recognize a subsistence priority for the communities that use this important resource.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FCR21-07: Yukon Drainage/Nome Creek Closure – Grayling

Mr. Kirk moved, seconded by Mr. Seetot, to defer action to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

The community of Stebbins has a customary and traditional use determination for Yukon Drainage/Nome Creek. The Council voted to defer any recommendation for this proposal to the home region's recommendation.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program***

Ms. Karen Hyer with OSM presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Priority Information Needs (PINs).

Motion by Mr. Seetot, seconded by Mr. Kiyutteluk, to adopt the PINs for the Seward Peninsula region:

- Chinook and Coho Salmon abundance in the Paragon, Boston, Fish and Wagon Wheel drainages
- Fall and summer Chum Salmon estimates in the American, Agiapuk and Igloo Creek/River.
- Abundance estimates of salmon on the Unalakleet River
- Abundance estimates of Chinook and Coho Salmon on the Pikmiktalik River
- Impacts of Climate Change on Grayling, Dolly Varden and Sheefish on Federal waters and tributaries in the Seward Peninsula Region.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Identifying Issues for FY2020 Annual Report***

The Council identified the following topics for inclusion into the FY2020 Annual Report:

- Norton Sound Red King Crab Fishery – Request to close 2021 Commercial Red King Crab Fishery in Norton Sound.

- Low returns of Coho. Chum and Chinook Salmon in the region

### ***Proposed Review Processes for NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations***

Nicole Braem, NPS, presented proposed changes to the NPS individual customary and traditional use determinations review process, and requested the Council's action on the changes.

Motion by Mr. Kiyutelluk, seconded by Mr. Kirk, to defer action on the NPS's proposed changes to the Subsistence Eligibility Permits and Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations process. The Council agreed that more time was needed to fully understand the issue prior to their approval of the proposed changes.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### **Agency/Tribal/Organization Reports:**

- Jim Menard, Kevin Clark, Jenifer Bell, ADF&G, Norton Sound Red King Crab Update

Motion by Mr. Kiyutelluk, seconded by Mr. Kirk that the Council send a letter to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, copying the Board, ADF&G, Northern Norton Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee, Kawarek, Inc., and Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation, asking that the Norton Sound Red King Crab fishery be closed for the 2021 season to protect subsistence. The letter will site justification for the Council's position, including continued low male population numbers, small sized crabs, recruitment failures, handling mortality, and the inability of Norton Sound users to get their subsistence needs met.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

- Letty Hughes, BELA FRMP Project Update
- Tom Spark, BLM Update
- Beth Mikow, ADF&G Fairbanks Update
- Bill Dunker, Sara Germaine, ADF&G Nome Update
- Orville Lind, OSM, Office Update

### **Future Meeting Dates:**

Winter 2021 meeting to be held March 11-12 in Nome

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 26-27 in Nome

KAREN DEATHERAGE Digitally signed by KAREN DEATHERAGE  
Date: 2021.03.16 08:33:51 -0800

Karen Deatherage, Designated Federal Officer

USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

*Signature on File*

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Tom Gray, Acting Chair  
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2021 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 Karen Deatherage at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-474-2203, email [karen\\_deatherage@fws.gov](mailto:karen_deatherage@fws.gov)