

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Meeting Materials

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Egan Center
Anchorage, Alaska
March 9, 2016
1:30 p.m.

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: 1 (877) 638-8165 then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*)..... WI-3
- 2. **Invocation**
- 3. **Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 4. **Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. **Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*) WI-1
- 6. **Election of Officers**
 - Chair (*DFO*)
 - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
 - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*** (*Chair*) WI-4
- 8. **Reports**
 - Council Member Reports
 - Chair’s Report
- 9. **Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items**
- 10. **Old Business** (*Chair*)
 - a. Refuges Proposed Rule on Hunting – Update 210

b. NPS Proposed Rule on Subsistence Collections*	218
11. New Business (Chair)	
a. Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Regulatory Proposals * (OSM Fisheries).....	225
b. Identify Priority Information Needs for FRMP* (OSM Fisheries)	
c. Approve FY2015 Annual Report* (Council Coordinator)	WI-14
d. WSA16-01 (closure of caribou hunt in Unit 23 to non-Federally qualified users).....	Supplement
12. Agency Reports	
a. Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge Report.....	WI-17
b. Subsistence caribou household harvest and sharing patterns (Jim Magdanz, University of Alaska Fairbanks)	
<i>Unless a special report is requested by the Council, all agencies should be prepared to only provide written reports for this meeting.</i>	
13. Future Meeting Dates*	
Confirm date and location of Fall 2016 meeting	235
Select date and location for Winter 2017 meeting	236
14. Closing Comments	
15. Adjourn (Chair)	

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1 (877) 638-8165 then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Zach Stevenson, (800) 478-1456, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 20, 2016.

REGION 6
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Apptd Term Expires	Member Name Community
1	2001 2016	Robert A. Walker Anvik
2	2004 2016	Donald V. Honea, Jr. Ruby
3	2010 2016	Pollock Simon, Sr. Allakaket
4	1993 2017	Raymond L. Collins McGrath Vice Chair
5	1993 2017	Jack L. Reakoff Wiseman Chair
6	2014 2017	Darrell M. Vent, Sr. Huslia
7	2008 2017	Timothy P. Gervais Ruby
8	2015 2018	Dennis R. Thomas, Sr. Crooked Creek
9	2006 2018	Jenny K. Pelkola Galena Secretary
10	2015 2018	Fred W. Alexie Kaltag

MEETING MINUTES
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
November 3-5, 2015
Community Building, Galena

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Jack Reakoff at 8:23AM

Roll Call and Establish Quorum

WIRAC Council members present: Jack Reakoff, Raymond Collins, Donald Honea, Timothy Gervais (via teleconference), Pollock Simon Sr., Darrell Vent
Excused: Carl Morgan, Robert Walker, James Walker, Jenny Pelkola

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Reakoff welcomed guests and staff members.

The following personnel and members of the public were in attendance:

Government Agency Employees

Karen Bodony	U.S. FWS Koyukuk Nowitna Innoko
Melinda Burke	U.S. FWS OSM
Stewart Cogswell	U.S. FWS OSM
Jeremy Havener	U.S. FWS Koyukuk Nowitna Innoko
Palma Ingles	U.S. FWS OSM
Lisa Maas	U.S. FWS OSM
Gerald Maschmann	U.S. FWS
Vince Matthews	U.S. FWS Kanuti
Chris McKee	U.S. FWS OSM
Ryan Mollnow	U.S. FWS
Kenton Moos	U.S. FWS Koyukuk Nowitna Innoko
Bob Reborslide	U.S. FWS
Donald Rivard	U.S. FWS OSM (via teleconference)
Aimee Rockhill	U.S. FWS Koyukuk Nowitna Innoko
Brad Scotton	U.S. FWS
Heather Tonneson	U.S. FWS RO (via teleconference)
Pat Petrivelli	Bureau of Indian Affairs

Erin Julianus	BLM
Bruce Seppi	BLM
Dan Sharp	BLM (via teleconference)
Drew Crawford	ADF&G (via teleconference)
Jill Klein	ADF&G (via teleconference)
Seth Wilson	ADF&G
Mary McBurney	NPS (via teleconference)
Jeff Rasic	NPS

NGOs/Public

Tim Bonony	KIYU Radio/Galena
Ken Chase	Gash AC
Jessica Evans	AECOM
Donne Fleagle	AECOM
Wayne Jenkins	YRDFA
Fred Huntington	Galena
Eric Huntington	Galena Tribe
Gilbert Huntington	Galena
Sidney Huntington	Galena
Chris McLain	Galena
Catherine Moncreith	YRDFA (via teleconference)
Teddy Nassmer	Galena

Tribal Organizations

Arnold Demoski	Nulato Tribe
Percy Lolinzki	Koyukuk Tribe

Review and Adoption of Agenda & Review/Approval of Minutes

Additions to the agenda: Appointment of SRC member to GOA National Park SRC and the Board of Game Commission on Dall Sheep Management; YRDFA staff Update.
The Council unanimously adopted the agenda as modified.

The Council unanimously adopted the minutes from the previous meeting as modified.

Council Reports:

Don Honea (Ruby): Attended the TCC/UAF training along with portions of the EIRAC meeting and expressed his appreciation for all of the support provide to this Council. Reported good hunting with fishing that could have been better. Concerned about the low level of interest users have in resource issues and participating in these public processes.

Pollock Simon Sr. (Allakaket): Predator control is helping in the area and more people are successful at harvesting moose as a result. Discussed the need for Chinook salmon to return as fish are main diet for the native people; hopefully there will be more salmon in the near future.

Raymond Collins (McGrath): Pleased about the staff retained by the USFWS in the community, even though the location of the Innoko Refuge office has changed. Encouraged by the good report of the bison now present in the region. Denali National Park SRC received a winter season approved for Nikolai to hunt sheep. Moose numbers in the area seem good and happy to see the successful hunting for sheep by the Nikolai residents.

Darrel Vent (Huslia): Reported a good TCC/UAF training and expressed appreciation for the information that comes from other regions. Stressed the importance of co-management for fisheries on the Yukon. Lots of issues with moose, but no accurate count or management plan yet; many more predators present. Pike are becoming an issue in the area—they are even eating ducks and affecting our resources.

Jack Reakoff (Wiseman, Chair): submitted a proposal (WP 16-37) and stressed the importance of similar Federal and State harvest regulations. Early break-up; lots of moose calving on time with plenty of food available. Largest WACH caribou calves were observed and weighted as they are crossing the Kobuk River. Rainy fall and summer-healthy and fat to produce good calf weights—not everything is dark with these populations. Downside: 4” or 3” of hard snow currently on the ground, then rain on top that makes a glaze in the southern end of the Brooks Range.

Appointments to Sheep Working Group and Gates of the Arctic SRC:

The Council unanimously approved Jack Reakoff to the Board of Game Committee on Dall Sheep Management and reappoint Pollock Simon Sr. to the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission.

Federal Wildlife Proposals

WP 16-37 (Unit 21D & Unit 24)

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as written (not including OSM modifications)

JUSTIFICATION: Decline of the WACH warrants the proposed season changes, and adopting as written would be more aligned with current State regulations to minimize regulatory complexity. The Council felt the proposed modifications restricting cows with calves was not warranted, as cows accompanied by calves are typically not present during the recommended closure period.

Unit 26B:

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Adopt WP 16-61 for Unit 26B as proposed by the NSRAC (would retain the two hunt areas)

JUSTIFICATION: The State regulation eliminates one month of prime bulls in the spring, which is detrimental for subsistence users. WP 16-61-64 as proposed is more appropriate for the unit.

Remaining Units (22, 23, 25, 26A):

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Take no Action

JUSTIFICATION:

Proposed actions are outside of the immediate area and the Western Interior Region. Defer action to affected Regions.

WP 16-49/52

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Take no Action

JUSTIFICATION: Defer action to the NWARAC

WP 16-61-64

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Adopt WP 16-61 for Unit 26B as proposed by the NSRAC (would retain the two hunt areas). Take no action on the remaining units.

JUSTIFICATION: Elimination of one month of prime bull harvest is detrimental for subsistence users and WP 16-61-64 as proposed is more appropriate for Unit 26B

Currently, no one from the Western Interior Region is eligible in the remainder of Unit 26. Defer action to the appropriate RACs.

WP 16-43 & WP 16-45

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Take no Action

JUSTIFICATION: Defer action to the appropriate RACs

WP 16-38

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Oppose

JUSTIFICATION:

The Council is concerned with Federally qualified users having difficulty distinguishing federal lands in the hunt area (already quite complex, patchwork) and there may be a hardship if they risk the possibility of being cited. The Council wishes to accommodate subsistence needs but does not want to set the users up for failure with little potential for benefit. Due to moose population concerns and the potential for enforcement issues, this Council is in opposition to this proposal. Moose bunched up on river corridors and islands—easy to affect the population because of the concentration in one area. The full ramifications of the proposed actions are not fully understood and the Council heard from the local GASH State Advisory Committee which is strongly opposed to the proposed action. Defer to local GASH A/C and their opposition.

WP 16-39

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Adopt as modified by OSM

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposed action is beneficial to subsistence users, and take is minimal with no anticipated enforcement concerns. Federally qualified subsistence users will not have to travel as far, saving fuel and weather exposure if these hunt areas are opened up on the Eastern portions of the refuge for nearby villages.

WP 16-25/26

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Take no action

JUSTIFICATION:

Currently, no one from the Western Interior Region is eligible for this hunt area.

WP 16-31/32

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: Take no action

JUSTIFICATION:

Currently, no one from the Western Interior Region is eligible for this hunt area.

WP 16-40

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt as modified by OSM**

JUSTIFICATION:

This is a safety issue for a customary and traditional practice and the Council is agreeable with the light specification as described in the modification. These decisions should be left to those who still practice this culturally sensitive hunt, and this is already allowed under state regulations.

WP 16-42

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt**

JUSTIFICATION:

The need for a winter moose hunt in this area has increased as the Teshepuk herd has been in a state of decline since 2013; the take will be minimal. Subsistence users who were not able to harvest a moose in the fall will benefit from this additional opportunity and winter bull moose harvest has historically been low. Good bull:cow ratios indicate a harvestable surplus, making this a sustainable hunt.

WP 16-41

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt with modification**

“By Federal registration permit, OR by community household survey.”

JUSTIFICATION:

This interim measure will protect the resource population and harvest limits can be adjusted, and this will eliminate burden of sheep horn sealing requirement. The Council’s modification accommodates communities like Allakaket who are opposed to registration reporting requirements which do not fit with culturally sensitive practices.

WP 16-29/30

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Adopt WP 16-29; Take no Action on WP 16-30**

JUSTIFICATION:

The bull/cow ratio is below management objectives, and the Council is concerned about the herd recovery rate with increasing harvest, especially the bull component. The Mulchatna caribou

herd is reduced distance and changing migration patterns has resulted in fewer communities being able to harvest and rely on this resource. More recent biological data is needed and there is lack of a population estimate. The Council is supporting WP 16-29 with reservations to align state and federal regulations. The Council cannot support increasing season length when population is trending downward and better population estimates and bull: cow ratios are not available.

WP 16-34

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Oppose**

JUSTIFICATION:

The Council agrees with the YKDRAC and OSM conclusion. The need to harvest the moose population in the area is imperative to prevent habitat degradation and a possible population crash as was seen in the 60s and 70s.

WP 16-35

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Support as modified by OSM**

JUSTIFICATION:

The Council agrees with the language as modified from a safety standpoint which eliminates confusion for the public and clarifies the meaning of artificial light.

WP 16-36

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Support**

JUSTIFICATION:

This is a housekeeping proposal. Local people want more clarity about landmarks—this is a positive direction and the council has dialogued with the community of Aniak, and other affected communities when they last visited there regarding this issue.

WP 16-33

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION: **Support**

JUSTIFICATION:

The Council agrees with the justification provided by the YKDRAC and feels boundaries more clearly identifiable in the field and more aligned with geological features is beneficial fur users.

Draft 2015 Annual Report List to the FSB

1. Co-management issues on the Yukon need to be discussed as they are currently for the Kuskokwim
2. Request the FSB to specifically address the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior regarding the subsistence users not getting their fair share of available fish.
3. Need for Mulchatna caribou herd current biological information.
4. King salmon recovery efforts. Important issue we keep working on to rebuild the stocks.

Board of Fish Proposal Comment Letter:

The Council voted unanimously to provide a letter of comment on Board of Fish proposals: 123, 125, 126, 127, 128, 142, and 144.

Miscellaneous Presentations and Updates

Erin Juliannis and Bruce Seppi provided updates for the Central Yukon and Anchorage Field offices. The Council voted to have a letter drafted to the Regional Director regarding the guide use concession areas.

Wayne Jenkins provided an update from YRDFA and the Council voted unanimously to support a request from Holy Cross to nominate an Area of Critical Concern near their community.

Seth Wilson provided an update on ADF&G subsistence research.

Jeff Rasic (NPS) provided updates on projects within the Western Interior Region.

Chris McKee provided the Fall 2015 OSM Report outlining personnel changes as well as an update on the Rural Determination Process.

Ryan Mallow, Mitch Ellis, and Holly Gerbr (USFWS) provided an overview of the Refuges Proposed Rule on Hunting. The Council provided comments and feedback to the presenters and also voted unanimously to draft a formal comment letter to the USFWS.

Stewart Cogswell (OSM) provided an overview of the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project. Greg Rosicka (YDKRAC) also provided input from the Intertribal fish commission and the YKDRAC via teleconference. The Council unanimously support the Subcommittee Charge (as modified by YKDRAC) and named Carl Morgan and Raymond Collins to represent the WIRAC. The Council also provided a small edit to the proposed language: "The councils will each provide two councilmembers **or designees** to serve on the committee".

Stewart Cogswell (OSM) provided an overview of the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects and modifications which have been made to the program processes. The Council provided feedback on the mentioned projects and expressed appreciation of the fine tuning and the transparency described.

Gerald Maschmann (USFWS) provided the Yukon River overview.

Eric Huntington from Galena spoke about the desire for tribes to begin to assume jurisdiction over subsistence regulations. Challenge the tribes to draft these regulations; request funding from federal and state entities to move toward self-governance.

Donnie Fleagle and Jessica Evans (AECOM) provided an overview and update of the Donlin Draft EIS and proposed activities. The Council has extensive concerns regarding this issue and unanimously approved a letter to be written.

Arnold Demoski spoke to WSA 15-11

Orville Huntington (TCC) spoke about the conservation of resources.

Motion to adjourn. 1:07 PM

Future Meeting Dates

Winter 2015 meeting dates: March 7-11, 2015 in Anchorage, AK

Fall 2016 meeting dates: McGrath, Oct. 11-12

The Council discussed a future meeting in Aniak, but the acoustics in the room makes it difficult for both the teleconference and the physical meeting.

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

Melinda Burke, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Jack Reakoff, Chair

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its next public meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated into the minutes of that meeting.

DRAFT

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
c/o U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RAC WI15055.CJ

Mr. Tim Towarak, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121
Anchorage, AK 99504

Dear Mr. Towarak:

The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) submits this fiscal year 2015 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805 (a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting in Galena on November 3-5, 2015, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report, approving it at its winter 2016 public meeting in Anchorage. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Western Interior Region.

1. Co-Management for the Yukon River

The Council has received a briefing on the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project and related Tribal co-management efforts, and endorses these efforts. The Council requests that a similar co- management system be explored for the Yukon River, especially with the more complicated management challenges faced on that river.

2. Fair Share of Fish

This Council has, on several occasions in recent years, expressed concerns to the Board regarding the ability of subsistence users on the Yukon River to obtain their needed supply of Chinook Salmon. In recent years, there have been several restrictions on the subsistence harvest of Chinook Salmon. While subsistence users have to abstain from harvesting Chinook Salmon, Bering Sea commercial fishing operations are permitted to waste some 20,000 Chinook Salmon as bycatch. This is an inequitable distribution of such a valuable resource, and subsistence users are entitled to a fair share of the resource. As current management stands, subsistence users are not receiving their fair share. The Council is aware that the Board has previously communicated concerns to the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior regarding this issue, but again asks that the

Mr. Towarak

Board stress to these secretaries that subsistence users are not getting the share of fish that they need and deserve.

3. Mulchatna Caribou Herd Information Needed

As this Council makes recommendations to the Board on wildlife proposals, it is crucial for us to be provided with updated information on relevant populations. This fall, the Council discussed WP 16-29, related to the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. The Council disagreed with the conclusion that there is no biological concern for this herd, noting that there is no survey or composition data to substantiate that claim. Harvest objectives for this herd were set before the herd declined, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has been derelict in its management of this herd. High harvest objectives were established to maintain intensive management – too many bulls were taken and with the low productivity and a low bull:cow ratio, the population crashed. The Council is concerned that Federal and State managers do not have current population and composition data – this crucial information needs to be developed for this important resource. With dwindling caribou populations statewide, it is important for any management decisions to be well-informed.

4. Chinook Salmon Recovery Efforts

There have been several efforts in recent years, both by State and Federal managers, to ascertain the cause of the Chinook Salmon population declines and to take efforts toward recovery of those populations. The Council appreciates these efforts and urges that all possible steps be taken to continue working on the recovery of this important subsistence resource. Subsistence users, particularly on the Kuskokwim River, have been subjected to strict conservation measures recently. These restrictions are worthwhile only if broader conservation measures are taken and real recovery of the populations can be achieved.

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal Public lands and waters. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Western Interior Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456 or (907) 786-3676.

Sincerely,

Jack Reakoff
Chair

Mr. Towarak

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Euene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

DRAFT



Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge's Report to the Western Interior Regional Subsistence Advisory Council February 2016

Wildlife/Fish/Plant Work

Moose Population Surveys

In November 2015, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) participated in a multi-agency effort to estimate the moose population over a large part of GMU 24B. This survey again employed the widely used GeoSpatial Population Estimator (GSPE) method. While the entire effort included portions of State, BLM, and private lands west of the Refuge, we report preliminary estimates for the **Kanuti NWR area only** in this report (Table 1). Observers surveyed 171 units in 2015 which resulted in a relatively precise moose population estimate ($1,158 \pm 211$ moose, 90% C.I.; Figure 1). The adult cow population appears to be stable, consistent with a low-density dynamic equilibrium. In 2015, we estimated 559 cows, only slightly below the high in 2010 (Table 1). The total population estimate and density, including bulls, cows, and calves for 2015 were the highest we have recorded on the Refuge since we started using the GSPE method (1999, Table 1). Calf productivity, at 50 calves/100 cows, was the third highest ever observed.

Table 1. Summary Statistics for last 10 moose population estimates (90% Confidence Interval), in the Kanuti NWR Survey Area, Game Management Unit 24B, Alaska. Survey conducted in 1993 employed the Gasaway method while subsequent surveys were conducted using the GeoSpatial Population Estimator method.

	1993	1999	2004	2005	2007	2008	2010	2011	2013	2015
Survey Area (sq. miles) ¹	2,644	2,715	2,710	2,710	2,714	2,715	2,714	2,714	2,714	2,714
# Units Surveyed	NA ²	108	103	82	150	80	164	151	105	171
Population Estimate + Range	1,759 (1,435–2,083)	1,003 (794–1,211)	842 (602–1,083)	1,025 (581–1,470)	588 (463–714)	872 (669–1,075)	1,068 (946–1,191)	797 (644–951)	551 (410–693)	1,158 (947–1370)
Standard Error	NA	127	146	270	76	124	75	93	86	129
Moose Density (moose/mi ²)	0.67	0.37	0.31	0.38	0.22	0.32	0.39	0.29	0.20	0.43
Estimated Cows	NA	542	403	471	276	432	569	388	283	559
Estimated Bulls	NA	320	252	331	167	199	293	268	183	316
Bulls:100 Cows	61	59	62	70	60	46	51	69	65	56
Yearling Bulls:100 Cows	8	4	9	20	13	14	7	10	11	9
Calves:100 Cows	33	30	46	43	53	58	33	41	36	50

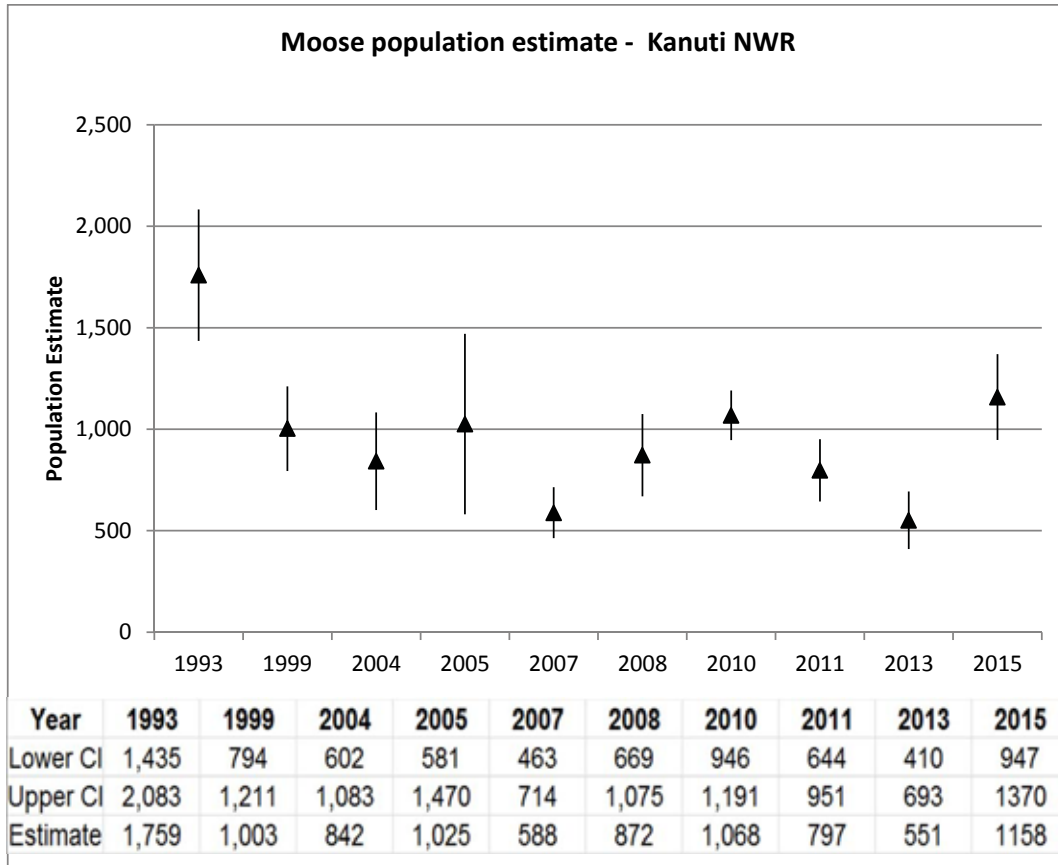


Figure 1. Observable moose population estimates by year on Kanuti NWR, Game Management Unit 24B, Alaska. Error bars represent the 90% confidence interval for each year.

Moose Radio Telemetry Study Update

Beginning in 2008, Kanuti Refuge, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, cooperated in a radio-telemetry study of moose in Game Management Units (GMU) 24A and 24B. In 2015 the principal investigators published three papers about the study, and expect another 2–3 papers in 2016. Below are the citations for three recent papers.

Joly, K., T. Craig, M. S. Sorum, J. S. McMillan, and M. A. Spindler. 2015. Moose (*Alces alces*) movement patterns in the upper Koyukuk river drainage, northcentral Alaska. *Alces* 51: 87-96.

Joly, K., T. Craig, M. S. Sorum, J. S. McMillan, and M. A. Spindler. 2015. Variation in fine-scale movements of moose (*Alces alces*) in the upper Koyukuk river drainage, northcentral Alaska. *Alces* 51: 97-105.

Cameron, M. D., K. Joly, M. S. Sorum. 2015. Analysis of VHF moose telemetry data within the upper Koyukuk River drainage, 2008-2013. Natural Resource Report NPS/GAAR/NRR—2015/970. National Park Service, Fort Collins, Colorado. 12 pp.

Trail camera surveys

Refuge biologists deployed nine trail cameras again this year near the Kanuti River. The pictures from the cameras were downloaded in June 2015, having been out 11 months. The typical boreal forest animals were observed including black and brown bears, wolves, moose, red fox, lynx, mink, otter, beaver, and muskrat.



Above, pictures from trail cameras on Kanuti NWR April-June 2014.

Other Projects

The following projects were conducted by Refuge staff and/or our cooperators in 2015. See the Fall 2015 WIRAC briefing booklet for details.

- Raptor Stick Nest Survey
- Breeding Bird Surveys
- Scaup and Scoter Survey
- Molting Goose Survey
- Snowshoe Hare Survey
- Post-fire Vegetation Survey
- Henshaw Creek Weir
- Dalton Highway Weed-pull
- Stream Gage Monitoring
- Lake Level Survey

Subsistence Updates

Federal Subsistence Moose Hunting

Kanuti Refuge was pleased that 100% of Allakaket-Alatna-Bettles/Evansville moose hunters reported on their federal subsistence permit hunts for the 2014 and 2015 seasons.

Fire Management

Wildfire Activity

Five-million acres burned statewide, making 2015 the second largest fire season ever recorded in Alaska, only surpassed by the 6.6-million acres that burned in the 2004 season. However, Kanuti NWR was largely spared this year with only two fires burning within refuge borders. The Sushigitit and Torment Creek fires burned a total of 31,655 refuge acres.

Administration

Personnel News

Newly-hired Maintenance Worker **Eric Burrows** will operate out of Bettles starting in March.

Former Assistant Fire Management Officer **Brian Haugen** was promoted to Fire Management Officer in January 2016. Brian will oversee fire management on four refuges, including Kanuti, Yukon Flats, Arctic, and Tetlin NWRs.

Outreach

Website and Facebook

The Refuge website has been updated and contains reports, photos, maps, and other helpful information. Folks are encouraged to visit the website to learn more about Kanuti Refuge.

<http://www.fws.gov/refuge/kanuti/>.

The Refuge has a Facebook page, too (www.facebook.com/kanuti.refuge). Interesting information about happenings on the Refuge and its wildlife and habitats are contained in this regularly updated web page.

An 11-minute video describing Kanuti Refuge's resources and subsistence is available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-yTc7JsUv8&list=PL69649DDC950D8A14&index=1>

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Refuge, feel free to call the refuge staff at 877-220-1853. Our headquarters office is located in the Fairbanks Federal building at 101 12th Avenue. Our field station is located near the airport at Bettles, along with the NPS ranger station and visitor center. If any WIRAC members are ever in the vicinity of Fairbanks or Bettles, we invite you to stop by for a visit!



**Department of the Interior
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory (Council).
2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)), and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.
3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.
4. **Description of Duties.** The Council has authority to perform the following duties:
 - a. Recommend the initiation of, review, and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decisionmaking process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the Region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region.
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region.

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
 - e. Appoint one member to the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
 6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
 7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$160,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 staff years.
 8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - Approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
 - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
 - Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings,
 - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
 - Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless prior to that date it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

Ten members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council. To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that seven of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the Region and three of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the Region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

- Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Council members will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for a 1-year term.

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under Section 5703 of Title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department.

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.



Secretary of the Interior

NOV 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed