

# **ANIAKCHAK NATIONAL MONUMENT SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE COMMISSION Meeting Minutes**

1000 Silver St. Bldg 603, King Salmon, AK 99613

04/16/2025

## **Invocation:**

No invocation.

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

The meeting was called to order Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:12pm. Council members John Christensen Jr., and Scott Anderson were present by teleconference. Ronal Lind, Andrew Lind Sr., and Colleen Jones were not present. With 2 out of 5 seated Council members present (Council has 4 vacant seat(s)) the quorum was not established

## **Attendees:**

- John Christensen Jr., Port Heiden, SRC Chair
- Scott Anderson, Port Heiden, SRC Member
- Mark Sturm, King Salmon, NPS
- Leslie Skora, King Salmon, NPS
- Sebastian Wetherbee, King Salmon, NPS
- Suzanne Sanders, King Salmon, NPS
- Mallory Zharoff, King Salmon, NPS
- Dillon Patterson, Anchorage, NPS
- Eva Patton, Anchorage, NPS
- Cody Larsen, Dillingham, BBNA
- Amy Vandevort, King Salmon, ADF&G
- Bryce Woodruff, King Salmon, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

## **Review and Adopt Agenda:**

No motions were made due to not meeting established quorum.

## **Election of Officer:**

No election of officials due to not meeting established quorum.

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

No meeting minutes were approved due to not meeting established quorum.

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

Scott Anderson of Port Heiden: I attended the SRC Chair Workshop held in December 2024. We thought getting school involvement in the Subsistence Resource Commission meetings would be beneficial to see in the future. We also talked about possibly incentivizing young adult involvement by offering college credits for participation in the SRC. The SRCs are also struggling to fill their commission seats, and that it might be a good idea to look for guidance from the local Tribes to find people to fill them. Other things like a map showing all the different RAC regions for our next meeting, and maybe investing in a better conferencing system for hybrid meetings.

John Christensen of Port Heiden: We have been seeing ptarmigan around and hearing of reports of them showing up more. There are very few caribou around. Some people have found small herds of them, but we haven't had the same amount in probably two years. It doesn't help that the weather is 45 degrees and sunny. They're probably in a different part.

## **Action Items:**

No action items.

## **Deferred wildlife proposal(s)**

No deferred wildlife proposals.

## **Subsistence Coordinator's Report:**

Mallory gave an update on the Federal Subsistence Board's final decision for the 2025 and 2026 fishery proposals. In our 2024 fall SRC meeting, fishery proposal FP25-09 and FP25-10 were supported by the SRC with modification which is in line with Federal Subsistence Board's decision. The SRC took no action on FP25-11, but the Federal Subsistence Board supported fishery proposal 11 with modification. Finally, for FP25-13, the SRC took no action, and the Federal Subsistence Board opposed the proposal.

## **Future Meeting Dates**

The Council selected their Fall 2025 meeting date and location: October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in King Salmon Office with a virtual option. Time: 1pm-5pm

Alternate date: October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in King Salmon Office with virtual option. Time: 1pm-5pm

## **Other Business:**

### **SRC and RAC Compensation:**

Mark Sturm: Are there any updates on the status of SRCs being compensated for their time and knowledge?

Eva Patton: The National Park Service (our regional office) had sent a request into our previous National Park Service Director Sarah Creachbaum and our National Park Service Director Charles Sams requesting fair compensation for our Subsistence Resource Commission members. This had been a long-standing issue put forth by the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence Board, which was then elevated to the Secretary of the Interior. We followed-up with an equivalent request to our National Park Service Director for fair compensation. However, we received word that although the current administration supported fair compensations, it was ultimately up to the next administration to authorize funding. They encouraged National Park Service to present the same case to the next administration. We understand that your knowledge of the area, communities, and resources cannot be replaced by any other means, and recognize your service to the Subsistence Resource Commission. We have commitment from the Federal Subsistence Board and the Park Service to pursue this funding from our next administration.

### **Status of SRC Membership:**

John Christensen: What is the status of SRC membership?

Mallory Zharoff: It looks like we have four vacancies, two from Bristol Bay RAC, one from Governor of Alaska, and one from Secretary of Interior. John and Colleen's Secretary of Interior appointment have expired and will need to be renewed. We will need a letter of intent and a resume speaking to your subsistence history and use of the area.

Eva Patton: Yes, the Secretary of Interior appointments are simple. Currently the Federal Register notice has been placed on hold with the current administration so the call for SRC nominations and applications has not been posted. This will affect reappointments for expiring terms. There may be a lag in when we can officially get reappointment applications submitted. Mallory should be able to help you resubmit your applications and resumes. The State of Alaska applications are open all the time with an online application system. They have moved to an online application process only which can be a challenge for folks, but we at the regional office or Mallory can assist.

Cody Larsen: I serve on a council that gets appointments through the governor's office and the process has been challenging. I have found that if frequent phone calls and consistent communication to Office of Boards and Commissions has been the only way to get traction on applications being processed. I can pass on SRC recruitments efforts to BBNA and hopefully fill in some of these seats.

Eva Patton: Yes, there has been some inconsistent communication from Boards and Commissions, and we are hoping to help with that. When you have someone apply, please keep the regional office in the loop so we can help with the follow-up, too.

Mark Sturm: We have shared a SRC flyer to help with filling the appointments. Was there any interest?

Mallory Zharoff: Not that we have seen.

Mark Sturm: The flyer is showing that someone can apply for an SRC appointment if they have a 13.440 permit. Can someone speak to that?

Dillon Patterson: 13.440 permits are intended for federally qualified subsistence users that don't live in the park or monument's resident zone. They may have, at one point, lived in Port Heiden and then moved to another rural community such as King Salmon for example. With a 13.440 permit they can hunt in the monument still.

Mark Sturm: Great. We have John and Scott on the call who have expired appointments. Are you willing to serve another term?

John Christensen: Yes.

Scott Anderson: I think so.

Eva Patton: I wanted to note from our Secretary of Interior Appointment, we have an agreement that expired terms will continue until a new appointment is made. This is mainly due to long delays in Secretary of Interior appointments being made.

Mark Sturm: One of the issues that we struggle with is the available pool of potential candidates is limited and outreach can be challenging in rural Alaska Peninsula.

## **Statewide Proposals Board of Game:**

Mallory Zharoff: I added in statewide proposals for the SRC members to look through. If there are any proposals that are of interest, we can go through them. Proposal 134 and 135 to start with.

Amy Vandervoort: A few of these proposals are strictly for drawing permits, which on the Alaska Peninsula we don't have. There are only registration permits.

Mallory Zharoff: Ok, great. Proposal 139 would not require evidence of sex connected to part of the hindquarter on horned animals.

Mark Sturm: Amy, making sure I have my facts straight, but we don't have any horned game animals on the section of the peninsula relevant to the SRC, is that right?

Amy Vandervoort: Yeah, there are not any sheep, goats or musk ox on the peninsula. There's sheep in 9A and 9B but not 9E.

Mallory Zharoff: The last proposal is for the selling of skins, skulls and trophies by the taxidermist in 60 days instead of six months when it goes unclaimed.

Mark Sturm: About the sale of skins, skulls, and trophies, these are only applicable to animals harvested through the state's administered hunts, right? Would this include subsistence harvested through the federal process?

Eva Patton: The Federal Subsistence Board had a subsistence proposal specifically for the sale of brown bear hides harvested under subsistence regulations on federal lands. FSB requested Office

of Subsistence Management to investigate options for issuing federal permits for sale of brown bear hides harvested under federal subsistence regulations. OSM did find an avenue, but the proposal was deferred again to give the Regional Advisory Councils an opportunity to review the updated proposal with its modifications. That will be coming up in the fall and spring meetings. Mark Sturm: Thank you for that, Eva. If there is anyone wanting to comment on these statewide proposals, you have until March 7<sup>th</sup>. Please notify us if you would like to convene a separate meeting to discuss anything people bring forward.

### **Agency Reports:**

- Alaska Department of Fish & Game Update presented by Amy Vandervoort

We don't have a lot to update on as far as wildlife surveys go. Bryce is going to update on the moose population survey we helped with last November. Moose harvest is similar to last year. Caribou harvest is down due to winter travel not being conducive to getting out on a snowmobile this year. Only 12 reported harvested. We had a Board of Game meeting in January. A decision that was made that affects residents of 9E is brown bear season dates have been extended to what they were. We still have the every other year hunt but the seasons are going to be October 1<sup>st</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>, and May 10<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> for residents and nonresidents. Also, the board got rid of the two per day bag limit for beaver. Other decisions that affect 9E are a shortened wolverine hunting season and closed Alaska hare season starting next season.

- Alaska Peninsula-Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Update presented by Bryce Woodruff

Last fall with the help of ADF&G, Park Service, and Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, we conducted a moose survey. We flew six days and covered 279 sample units with each unit being about seven square miles. The entire area is about 12,000 square miles. Also conducted 30 sightability trials to correct for missed moose during standard intensity surveys. Incorporating the sightability correction factor, we calculated a moose population estimate of 1994 in GMU 9E. The last populations survey conducted was in 1983 with a population estimate of 2,500 moose. Since then, biologists have characterized the population on the Alaska Peninsula as stable at low density to slightly declining. That makes sense with our current estimate.

- Katmai National Park Service Update presented by Leslie Skora, Sebastian Wetherbee and Mallory Zharoff

#### Leslie Skora:

I'm the wildlife biologist at Katmai and I will go over some of the research we did in Katmai last summer. John you mentioned seeing more ptarmigan. We did a small sampling of sites for ptarmigan abundance estimates, and we are seeing higher numbers there. We also did caribou surveys in Katmai Preserve. For the years 2021 and 2022 we got a minimum count of 109 and

315. A repeat of those surveys this spring showed around 425 caribou. Slight increase. We are also looking to do some summer counts to see where the caribou are during the summer and fall months. Also, we will try to look into composition information for those surveys. Next, our aerial survey for brown bears shows a decrease from what we have previously seen near the Brooks River area, but still within what we typically see. We were able to continue our moose fall trend area surveys. We were able to complete all four trend area surveys that we normally do. Those moose numbers are consistent to what we had last year. We had similar bull-cow ratios and calf-cow ratios.

Cody Larsen:

What are the dates and years for those brown bear aerial surveys?

Leslie Skora:

We do them in June and early July in the sedge meadows in Aniakchak and several along Katmai coast. We also do stream surveys in Aniakchak and Katmai in late July and August, and into late September. We try to survey the bears along the streams at different times of the season to see how it varies through time.

Sebastian Wetherbee:

There are a few updates for the cultural resources division in the last year. We received funding for Aniakchak village, an archeological site in Aniakchak bay. It was excavated in early 2000s with the collection not being very well studied afterward. There is still work being done to rehouse and catalog the artifacts from the collection. Katie Myers our collections curator designed a project to pay for elder and youth to visit Anchorage to view the collection and share their knowledge about the area. There is also funding for a museum intern hire who would help rehouse and catalog those artifacts. Another big project we completed was removing an unplanned road from a culturally sensitive area in Brooks Camp. We had a tribal monitor and SCA crew to help with this endeavor.

Mallory Zharoff:

We are also working on a traditional ATV/ORV route to be used by residents of Kokhanok and Igiugig to have access to their traditional hunting grounds. The superintendent was delegated authority to manage a caribou hunt in the Katmai preserve. We are currently working with the communities to issue permits for this hunt.

Sebastian Wetherbee:

We had culture camp in Perryville in 2024. This was in partnership with Bristol Bay Foundation. We had a portion of this culture camp in Brooks Camp where we took six kids and two adults to visit different archeological sites and the Valley of 10,000 Smokes. Another project we have going on is the Place Name Project where we travel to different villages to learn from the elders about what they historically called certain locations and places in the park and preserve. Our last project would be working with Igiugig to produce educational material on traditional plants and medicines. That's all we've got.

- National Park Service Alaska Regional Office Update presented by Dillon Patterson and Eva Patton

Dillon Patterson:

I have some updates from the regional office. Our regional director Sarah Creachbaum announced her retirement and our current deputy regional director, David Alberg will be stepping in. Our associate regional director of resources, Grant Hildebrand took another position with the park service. I also wanted to give an update on federal financial assistance. The park service is reviewing pending financial assistance obligations for compliance and is moving the requests forward through the process to obligate financial assistance funding that do not conflict with executive orders.

Eva Patton:

Yeah, Dillon was reading from essentially the prepared talking points or guidance that we've recently received from our National Park Service financial assistance office, which manages all of our cooperative agreements that we have with the park and park communities. The Inflation Reduction Act grants have all been put on temporary hold. Our financial assistance office informed us that cooperative agreements that have both IRA funding and base funding are also on a temporary hold. They are trying to work through those combined agreements to ensure that all those cooperative agreements with base funding—that is the core of those agreements—can proceed with invoicing. If you are having issues access funds from cooperative agreements that have both IRA and base funds, reach out to your financial assistance officer.

**Closing Comments:**

- Mark Sturm: Thanks Eva and Dillon. Any questions from the SRC members?
- John Christenson: None from me.
- Eva Patton: We will keep you as updated as we can. We have our Subsistence Advisory Council meeting this Thursday and we will keep folks updated of any new developments.
- John Christensen: Thank you. Moving on to public and agency comments. Hearing none we will adjourn our informational meeting. Thank you, everyone.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:57 p.m. on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

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Mark Sturm, DFO  
Katmai National Park & Aniakchak National Monument

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John Christensen, Chair  
Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission

These minutes will be formally considered by the Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission at its October 14th meeting in King Salmon office, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

Disclaimer: These minutes of the Subsistence Resource Commission for Aniakchak National Monument are NOT an official transcript of the Commission proceedings. Rather, the minutes serve as a summary of the topics discussed and actions taken by the Commission.