

LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK  
SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE COMMISSION  
Port Alsworth, AK

**SRC Minutes – Certified by Chair Warren Hill on 7/4/2025**  
**Saturday, April 26, 2025**  
**Meeting held at Pedro Bay Community Center**

**Call to order: 1:10 p.m.**

**Present**

SRC Members: Steve Kahn, Tinny Hedlund, Warren Hill, Ned Fowler

Absent: Billy Trefon Jr, Karla Jensen, Tim Anelon Sr.

NPS: Susanne Green (Superintendent), Liza Rupp (Subsistence Program Manager); Buck Mangipane (Natural Resource Manager); Dan Young (Fisheries Biologist), Eva Patton (NPS Regional Subsistence), Joe Dallemolle (Chief Ranger)

Guests: Public: Bianca Jensen Boschma, Justin Jurica, Verna Kolyaha, Linda Hedlund, Fred Roehl, Keith Jensen, Joel Jacko, Senafont Sugak Jr.

**Roll Call**

The roll call confirmed that four Commissioners were present, and three Commissioners had excused absences. A quorum was met.

**Introductions**

SRC (Subsistence Resource Commission) members and all those in attendance introduced themselves.

**Superintendent's Introduction**

Susanne Fleek-Green thanked everyone taking the time to attend the meeting and for Pedro Bay's hospitality. We rotate the meetings around to different communities so that we can hear from the public and hear what is going on in communities that utilize resources within the park. Welcome to Ned Fowler who is the newest member of the SRC and thank you to all the members who give up their time to discuss subsistence issues.

## **Approval of Agenda**

MOTION by Warren Hill to approve the agenda.

SECONDED: Steve Kahn

MOTION CARRIED

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

MOTION by Warren Hill moved to approve the September 28, 2024, SRC minutes.

SECONDED: Steve Kahn

MOTION CARRIED

## **SRC Status of purpose and role**

Chair Hill described the purpose of the SRCs as laid out .

Susanne Fleek-Green mentioned that an important role of the SRCs across the state that as proposals are made for the Federal Subsistence Board to take up annually, we start at the very local level to have a discussion of these proposals and use the SRC as a sounding board for the proposals' potential effects on federal lands.

Chair Hill provided the example of a 2023 proposal from the SRC to adjust the dates of the federal subsistence hunting season for moose in GMU 9B since they were not in alignment with the state rules. The Federal Subsistence Board ended up added more dates to the season than were originally requested.

## **Status of SRC membership:**

Liza Rupp shared that there are two vacant Governor of Alaska appointed seats, which only require that the applicant be a qualified subsistence user and the application can be filled out online. Karla Jensen is a Governor appointee and could help with any questions. Also, Liza is happy to help with questions. There are two meetings a year, one in the fall after moose and the other in the spring before fish arrive. The meetings have been moved to take place on weekends to help members who work during the week. The NPS pays for travel and the meetings rotate between five resident zone communities.

## **Commission member reports**

Warren Hill: Similar to Pedro Bay area, Port Alsworth had a terrible winter. Lack of ice and snow made it difficult to get out and harvest resources. There is the opportunity to hunt sheep and trap locally around Port Alsworth and gather firewood, but that is very limited to just off the beach when there is no ice on the lake.

Attended the SRC Chairs workshop in Anchorage in the fall and it was great. There are SRCs in parks all around the state and it was really interesting to hear from Chairs from the Yukon and the Kuskokwim about the issues they're having which are so different from ours. They have a lack of fish, we still have a lot of fish, but they have a lot of caribou, and we no longer have caribou. AlexAnna Salmon spoke about how they doing co-stewardship for running the new caribou hunt over by Kokhanok and how special it is. They have a community representative hunter who is chosen to hunt for each community and the communities are taking turns hunting.

Prior concerns for us were lack of ptarmigan and hare but have seen good numbers of both this winter. Still haven't seen a porcupine around Port Alsworth in over a year.

Ned Fowler: There are lots of porcupines west of Port Alsworth

Tinny Hedlund: There aren't any porcupines in Iliamna and haven't seen any for two years.

Keith Jensen: Has anyone seen any reduction in the number of lake trout around Lake Clark? There really aren't any in Lake Iliamna these days and we are thinking it might be related to the seals.

Tinny Hedlund: I asked that question to a researcher from the Fisheries Research Institute because when I first moved to Iliamna we used to catch a lot of lake trout and char and I asked what happened and they said that the seals get them. Lake trout are a slow-moving fish and the seals can catch them. This is the same with the char. We used to see schools of trout as big as schools of salmon, but they're being eaten by the seals.

Keith Jensen: They say there are only 120 seals in the lake but that's wrong, there must be at least 350.

Warren Hill: Isn't there going to be a seal survey this year?

Susanne Fleek-Green: We can track that down, if there will be a survey.

Public1: I lived in Sitka for a while, and they have a community subsistence person who would go out and get deer and seaweed and other resources for the community and would also get seals. Perhaps the Lake Iliamna communities should do the same with seals. Like the caribou hunt in Kokhanok.

Ned Fowler: It's difficult to find all of the information out about subsistence regulations in one place. It takes a lot of digging and people give up.

Public1: I know that marine mammal law has a lot to do with getting seals and otters. Need a card from the tribe.

Susanne Fleek-Green: We can bring more copies of the annual hunting and fishing regulation books for people to have.

Buck Mangipane: In the past we had a subsistence user guide that is now out of date, but it probably still has some useful information. Described the opportunities and how they're different, had maps and wood harvest information. We just haven't had capacity to update it. Would be a great resource.

Ned Fowler: Was out trapping this winter. It was slow but it was good to be out there. Weather was cold and then it wasn't, and it rained. Seemed like there was rain every month.

Steve Kahn: My comments go back to last summer, since I missed the fall meeting, but did others have issues with the smaller sized salmon we had last summer getting through the mesh of the net and not getting caught? I thought the fish were going to be late but they weren't. Saw a lot of black bears last year, but not a lot of brown bears or moose. Question about the seals – is there any harvest of the seals currently? Is there any tracking of the numbers harvested?

Susanne Fleek-Green: The seals on Lake Iliamna are out of NPS jurisdiction. I don't know if the state would manage that or NOAA? It's a marine mammal, so likely NOAA

Buck Mangipane: Would be under NOAA.

Tinny Hedlund: There is no tracking or reporting. No one keeps track. The only thing that matters is having the card stating you are legal to hunt them.

Susanne Green: I think the last study that was done was for Pebble Mine when they wanted to have the ferry going across the lake. We will pull that up and share it.

Tinny Hedlund: The only thing is that you're not supposed to waste it, but many people do.

Senafont Sugak Jr.: There are satellites that could look at heat signatures of seals, but that would take special security clearance to look at the data.

Tinny Hedlund: Not much to report from Iliamna. No caribou. There are a few moose. People are having a good goose hunt. Birds seem to be going through fast and not stopping like they usually do.

### **Superintendent Report: Susanne Fleek-Green**

We are acquiring a piece of property in Port Alsworth on the Point that was owned by Tanalian Inc and was then bought by our friends group and will become park property. Our plan is to improve the access road to the Point and then build a trail and a picnic area on the property.

Working with Kijik Corporation on a Lake Clark/Qejah Vena water trail. For years we've wanted to create a water trail that does a better job of describing places you can paddle to with information on camping areas and water sources, so that independent travelers can explore more.

Last fall we received money from Inflation Reduction Act to work on food security projects and have reached out to Nondalton, Igiugig and Ninilchik. Funds are currently frozen but we're hoping that they'll become unfrozen so that we can reach out to communities for ideas. Can be almost anything related to food security, including something like a freezer for community salmon.

Last year we completed a conservation easement with Kijik Corporation on their lands within the Chulitna River watershed. They're going to do baseline documentation of these lands through a cooperative agreement with the park. We are starting to talk to them about a second conservation easement on additional lands.

We are in conversation with Igiugig about supporting their Lake Iliamna Guardians project and we're hoping that we can get a cooperative agreement submitted by the end of May. Hopefully some of you have heard of this program. They are looking for at least one person per community to help with the effort.

Park staffing has been very unusual this year. Had a hiring freeze in January. We lost some of our staff who were terminated for about five weeks, but are back now. We have been slow to hire for the summer. We have been focused on hiring Natural Resources, so Dan's crew for Rivermile 22 is on track, but some of our other locations may look different but we continue to

Steve Kahn: the Point property improvements, when you say picnic area, will that be day use only?

Susanne Fleek-Green: For the moment yes. We also acquired the Hansen property on the other side of the Tanalian River and we're looking at that to be both day use and overnight camping. We will be monitoring use of these areas and will make changes depending on demand.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

**Chulitna River Overflights: Joe Dallemolle**

Joe Dallemolle: Introduced himself as the park's new Chief Ranger and Visitor, Resources, and Protection Division Lead and provided a summary of his background and his team and their activities.

My understanding is that there has been concern over the years with low flying aircraft over the Chulitna River, which is an important local moose hunting area, disturbing hunters.

Warren Hill: The proposal was what would it take to implement a TFR over the area.

Joe Dallemolle: The document in your packet answers this question. I included applicable federal and state regulations. In short, a TFR is not something that the park can implement or request. They are extremely difficult to get. They are airspace closures that relate to matters of national security. This question has been brought up in other parts of the state by groups such as yours. The best approach if a plane is purposely trying to disturb you or wildlife you can report this to the FAA, NPS, or the wildlife troopers. We take this very seriously, but it's very difficult to make a case without a lot of evidence. If there's a tail number, that is helpful. A video is even better.

Susanne Fleek-Green: Please see the contact numbers on pages 2-3 in Tab 4. The best action for the NPS is to continue pilot education efforts during moose season.

Leo Fowler: A lot of this is local operators out of Port Alsworth accessing the Mulchatna River. When the weather gets bad the Chulitna is the safest way to get there.

Tinny Hedlund: There is one airplane in particular that does it all of the time, even in clear weather. This is what people in Nondalton are really unhappy about.

Joe Dallemolle: I'm still learning the hunting regulations for this part of the state but am happy to work through any questions with individuals.

Public2: Do they have a digital app that tells you what the restrictions or regulations are based on your location?

Buck Mangipane: There isn't a one stop shop for this. Can use the state app, but maps are difficult to see.

Keith Jensen: There is a river that runs north of here into the park – Pile River. Multiple times flying back and forth to Anchorage during moose season there are small planes on the ground along the river on what appears to be park land and sometimes on corporation land. Not sure who they are. Does the park ever look at those?

Joe Dallemolle: It's definitely a concern. It's mixed land ownership between federal and corporation. It can be somewhat difficult for us to determine what the land ownership is and where the hunting is taking place.

Buck Mangipane: That is park land. There shouldn't be any hunting on federal land in that area.

Keith Jensen: We know there are big moose in there that are important to Pedro Bay.

Warren Hill: Call the park during moose season and remind them. Our pilot loves to fly and will go and check it out. I'd never heard about planes there before.

Susanne Fleek-Green: Yes, call the NPS number that's in the packet.

Joe Dallemolle: Please do contact us if you see something. We can work to build a relationship with the wildlife troopers and the corporation.

### **Subsistence Update: Eva Patton**

Eva Patton: Introduced the Regional Subsistence Program. Mentioned the annual funding available annually through the region to support subsistence-related activities in parks and resident zone communities. Mentioned the Federal Subsistence Board and its composition which now includes six public members.

### **Proposal WP24-01: "Allow Sale of Brown Bear Hides"**

There is one proposal from 2024 that the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) looked at again and deferred again to get more input from the Regional Advisory Councils and SRCs. This was in part because the proposal has evolved over time. The proposal is to allow the sale of brown bear hides from subsistence harvested bears. Currently this is allowed in state regulations in areas where there is a two brown bear harvest limit. The reason the state has the two bear limit is for conservation concerns because people are sport hunting for trophies. Under federal subsistence regulations, users harvesting brown bears on federal land must be harvesting them as food and all the edible meat must be salvaged and retained. This proposal would make it legal to sell the hide. NPS leadership had conservation concerns that if it were limited to areas with a two bear limit then in areas without a two bear limit there would be requests to increase the limit. To modify the proposal OSM removed the requirement for the two bear limit; allowed for the claws to be removed prior to sale; added a requirement to request a Customary Trade Permit from to sell the hide; added a requirement that the hide be sealed by ADF&G; added a restriction that sales can only take place within the United States for personal use and not resold.

If the SRC or the community has any comments, please share them.

Steve Kahn: Would the permit need to be filled out before the hunt?

Eva Patton: The permit could be filled out after. Subsistence regulations vary around the state. In some areas you must remove the hide and skull from the field as well as the meat which is a burden.

Steve Kahn: Right now you have to remove all of the edible meat and the hide from the field but afterwards there is nothing you must do with the hide?

Eva Patton: Correct. If this were to pass then it would make legal the opportunity to tan or sell raw the hide if you wanted to.

Leo Fowler: This permit would be part of the sealing process?

Eva Patton: Yes, but the permit comes from OSM. The FSB plans on taking action on this proposal at their summer meeting in July, but if they approve it, it will still take OSM some time to develop the permit. They cannot initiate the permit until it's in regulation and then it may take up to a year or more to be implemented because the Office of Management and Budget will need to review it.

Susanne Fleek-Green: The question for the SRC is whether or not you want to take action on a resolution to support this proposal before the July FSB meeting.

Steve Kahn: I see that many of the Regional Advisory Councils are supporting this proposal but that some are not. Do you know why they're opposing it?

Eva Patton: Either a concern from the Council that it might incentivize more bear harvest and may cause conservation concerns. Some Councils have traditional beliefs and reverence for the animal and do not believe that selling the animal was in alignment with their beliefs. FSB and OSM wanted to make sure that each region could weigh in and would consider adopting it region by region to respect these beliefs.

Steve Kahn: The brown bear harvest in our area is extremely low?

Buck Mangipane: Yes, through subsistence. The area is unique in that a lot of the area around the lake and Port Alsworth is Preserve where people have the opportunity to hunt bear using state regulations instead of subsistence and many people likely have done this. Our subsistence harvest is low. We have a quota that is pretty conservative, so in this case where harvest may be incentivized, we probably don't have a huge allowance for this because of the limited number of bears we permit to be harvested.

Warren Hill: We probably need to be unanimous in our support or opposition to have any kind of action. I feel both ways. It's good to be able to do more with your harvest, but it would be the only subsistence harvest that you're allowed to profit off of and that's not why we're given the opportunity.

Keith Jensen: What would happen to the hide otherwise? It might end up on your wall or thrown away. If someone needs to eat brown bear meat then he's obviously in more need of support and should be allowed to sell it.

Eva Patton: The proponent is from McCarthy in Wrangell St Elias and it's a lot to have to take the hide out of the field with you and get it sealed, so they were hoping for the possibility of some additional benefit to their hunt.



Public2: If it would help get rid of some of the bears in the area then I'm for it. In this area with a drone they counted 25 black bears in one day.

Eva Patton: There were questions from the public about whether or not old hides could be sold and this rule would only apply to bears taken after the rule goes into effect. Also about defense of life and property and that is solely managed by the state through ADF&G and would not apply to this situation.

Warren Hill: Is OSM already supportive of this?

Eva Patton: The FSB deferred it because of the information and changes that had come up, such as removing the applicability only to areas with a two bear limit and the fact that state regulations require that the claws remain attached but subsistence handicraft rules allow for them to be removed.

Tinny Hedlund: That's backwards from polar bears. With polar bears the federal regulations require that the claws are removed and it cannot be sold with claws attached. My feelings are mixed on this proposal. Yes, you should be able to sell it, but who is going to eat a brown bear? Especially in the fall. So what they're doing is shooting the bear for commercial purposes. If you want to get a bear, get a guide. This is a backdoor way of getting a bear. I don't think I approve.

Steve Kahn: I agree with Warren and Tinny. I am torn. I love the idea of more opportunity for subsistence hunters. But I go way back to when you could guide for a brown bear and get it sealed but then there was a gray area where you could remove the gall bladder and sell it for money. It never occurred to me at the time that anyone would shoot a brown bear just for the gall bladder and walk away, but I'm glad that they closed the loophole. But when you leave a loophole open some people will take advantage.

Steve Kahn: Is this going to be done by region?

Eva Patton: Yes, by RAC region.

Leo Fowler: In some places like the Chigniks they think there are too many bears so they want to incentivize taking them.

Public3: Couldn't they offer a more narrow permit for just the bear hide and regulate it more tightly.

Warren Hill: Do we want to take action or not? I'm leaning towards no action.

Tinny Hedlund: I really don't think they should be able to sell it unless the feet are cut off. They're cutting into the guides. But at the same time if I have a subsistence hide it would be nice to sell it.

Eva Patton: While SRC doesn't have the same deference with the FSB that the RACs do, they will read your recommendations into the record.

Warren Hill: Can we just send them a list of considerations of what we'd like them to think about?

Steve Kahn: We could take no action with comments.

Tinny Hedlund: How many brown bears are taken in Lake Clark each year?

Buck Mangipane: The most I remember is 4. There is a limit on 4 females or 10 total in a year at which point the hunt is closed down. I think a lot of people weigh their options. In the lower part of the lake it's the Preserve, so people use the regulations that work best for them.

MOTION by Steve Kahn To take no action but work with the park and write out comments to submit to the FSB

SECONDED: Leo Fowler

MOTION CARRIED

### **Cultural Resources Update: Liza Rupp**

Park and region just finished reviewing the Port Alsworth and Nondalton Subsistence Harvest Survey Report by ADF&G. Should be published in the next few months. Next communities up for survey are Pedro Bay, Iliamna and Newhalen, but funding is uncertain, so not sure when this will happen, but we hope in the next year or two.

We are reviewing the final draft of the Kijik Cultural Landscape Report.

Park archeologist Jason Rogers will be conducting an archeological survey of landforms in the Currant and Tommy Creek drainages just north of Port Alsworth.

### **Wildlife Research Update: Buck Mangipane**

Have been doing a project for the last four years looking at coastal ecology. Bears are a large part of it, but also sea otters who are starting to expand their territory back into the park's coastal area. In Katmai, the recolonization by sea otters has changed the food web. We are finishing up this project so are beginning to analyze data looking at where they live and what they eat. Also, potential influence of development in the Johnson Tract area.

Working with ADF&G on a bear survey of Game Management Units 9A and 9B. Previous surveys indicate that on the coast there has been a very slight population increase of 1%.

Lake Clark is the southern extent of the Dall sheep range. In general, sheep populations are declining statewide. The last time we surveyed a number of years ago we had the highest count

ever. We have had some high snow winters since the last survey, so we are planning on doing a survey in July to see how the numbers may have changed.

Park has had a long-term project monitoring bald eagles that started in the 1980s. Survey the park twice each summer looking for active nests and productivity. The population is stable and the dataset is deep so that if something does start to impact them we will be able to notice it.

Since the park was created there really haven't been any sea otters along the coast but this is changing. Have begun flying surveys along the coast. Seems they use the system on a seasonal basis. Seem to use the park's coast in the late winter, especially Chinitna Bay that has a lot of clams and is protected from orcas.

The park has been working with other researchers to map the bathymetry of the Tuxedni Bay channel using a multi-beam remote operated vehicle. This area is important to sea otters and beluga.

Researchers will also be working on the coast to document possible dinosaur tracks. Also, researchers will be repairing the seismic monitors on Mount Iliamna.

The park was not able to do moose surveys this year. They have become increasingly difficult to do because of uncertain and later snow. Fish and Wildlife is beginning to test infrared methods for surveying moose, but probably will need to contract this.

### **Fisheries Research Update: Dan Young**

Dan Young: Are the missing trout just lake trout or all types of trout?

Keith Jensen: It's all types of trout. All species are lower.

Working on a project monitoring water temperature in the gravels that the salmon eggs are experiencing which can be very different than the water temperature.

Also working on a long term project monitoring water levels in Lake Clark and water flow.

Bristol Bay salmon estimate is for 50 million fish with a harvest of 30 million. For the Kvichak they're estimating a run of about 8 million with an escapement of 4 million.

We've been in a period of high productivity and small fish. Most of the fish were four year fish and they were smaller.

Working on a synthesis of 30 years of data from the Newhalen River counting tower.

Last year we counted over 800,000 fish past the tower. It was the highest number in 24 years of counting. Usually about 12% of the fish that go up the Kvichak make it past the counting tower. That means in 2025 we're expecting around 500,000 fish.

On the Telaquana River we have a weir. It's primarily a sockeye run, with a very few other species. See anywhere from 20,000 to over 280,000 fish. In 2024 the count was just over 100,000.

Student from Sleetmute did a project where he studied the correlation between water temperature and salmon productivity and determined that April was the best month to use. He predicted around 100,000 fish for 2024 and for 2025 he's predicted 120,000 fish, so we'll see what the return is.

Continuing mercury in lake trout and elodea sampling projects.

Keith Jensen: have you ever seen any silver salmon in Lake Clark?

Dan Young: We don't generally see them in the lake. Over the past several years they have come into the Tazimina.

Keith Jensen: Over the past 10 years we have started to see them in Pedro Bay.

Tinny Hedlund: Lower and Upper Talarik Creek there's a big run there now.

Dan Young: Don't really see any salmon in the Chulitna River, but feel like that's perfect salmon habitat but haven't gotten there yet.

Keith Jensen: People are seeing a lot more grass/vegetation in the lake these days.

Dan Young: The water is warmer and the native plants are growing well. We are a high-risk location for elodea to come from people's float planes.

Susanne Fleek-Green: There are two invasive terrestrial plants, hawkweed and oxeye daisy, that people should look out for.

#### **Public and Agency Comments:**

Public4: Based on the lack of snow we're likely to have a high wildfire risk this summer.

Susanne Fleek-Green: Yes, there is a map showing the predicted risks across the state.

Keith Jensen: Bristol Bay region has had a huge increase in lightning strikes and fire vulnerability. The state would like to put another fire crew in King Salmon. First time in a long time that there has been a fire ban put in place in March.

#### **Set time and place of next SRC meeting:**

The next meeting will be held in Newhalen. Dates are Saturday, September 27, or October 18, 2025.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 3:55 pm