

Board of Game Testimony March 14, 2014

On behalf of the community of Mekoryuk, we are here today representing our people to testify on Nunivak Island Musk Ox. Myself, Howard T. Amos, Edward I. Kiokun, Solomon Williams comprise the Nunivak Island Tribal Conservation District (TCD) Board of Directors. Also present today is Dale Smith, Native Village of Mekoryuk Operations Director, which he has been spearheading this issue since day one.

The Nunivak Island Tribal Conservation District (TCD), which is under the umbrella of the Tribe (Native Village of Mekoryuk) was created to look at natural resources on Nunivak Island. On January 20, 2014, a community meeting was held in which TCD's were explained to the community. From this meeting generated one of the TCD's focus, the **subsistence use and co-management of Musk ox on Nunivak Island**. In addressing this issue, TCD staff researched and reviewed the eight criterion for customary and traditional use, in which we believe the community meets. In addition, eighty two residents of Mekoryuk signed a petition to BOG, to request additional permits for subsistence harvest for local residents, considering for the past three years, only fifteen cow permits had been issued to Mekoryuk residents (five per year).

We would like to address Proposal 179. First, we thank the BOG for making this possible as we continue our quest for subsistence harvest priority of musk ox on Nunivak Island. Specific to Proposal 179, **1)** we recommend the language "first come first serve" be stricken from proposal, **2)** include Mekoryuk residents take priority, **3)** strike the on line registration (a letter dated January 24, 2014 to communities of Nelson Island, but since Nunivak Island is still under Unit 18, we believe this may effect Nunivak Island), **4)** we request tribal consultation (ADF&G meet with community yearly regarding musk ox), and **5)** we request an allocation of at least 30 musk ox (cows in preference) for subsistence harvest for Mekoryuk residents yearly.

We realize the five requests are quite strong in nature, but we believe this is for the betterment of Mekoryuk residents. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and we look forward to a working relationship with ADF&G. We also like to express our thanks to the organizations that have supported our cause, which is a subsistence harvest priority for residents of Mekoryuk. Quyana!

Customary and Traditional Use Determination

Criterion 1: Length and consistency of use

A long term consistent pattern of noncommercial taking, use, and reliance on fish stock or game population that has been established over a reasonable period of time of not less than one generation, excluding interruption by circumstances beyond the user's control, such as unavailability of the fish or game caused by migratory patterns.

The first muskoxen were taken for subsistence in 1976, 1977 season. The first generation that took the muskoxen for their subsistence purpose are now in their late 60' or 70's. The second generation are now claiming customary and traditional use of muskoxen for subsistence harvest.

Criterion 2: Seasonality

A pattern of taking or use recurring in specific seasons of each year.

Muskoxen are harvested every spring. We follow all regulations to harvest the muskox.

Criterion 3: Methods and means of harvest

A pattern of taking or use consisting of methods and means of harvest that are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost.

We use our own snow machines, sleds, guns, ammunitions, knives, gasoline, and oil to harvest the muskox.

Criterion 4: Geographic areas

The area in which the noncommercial, long term and consistence pattern of taking, use, and reliance upon the fish stock and game population has been established.

Nunivak Island is considered a refuge. The majority of the muskox taken are right in the refuge.

Criterion 5: Means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing

A means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing fish or game that has been traditionally used by past generations, but not excluding recent technological advances where appropriate.

The first generation has passed on the handling, preparing, preserving, and storing to the second generation. This knowledge of subsistence harvest has been passed on from our fore fathers. Every game such as reindeer, walrus, seal, fish, and birds have been passed down to the next generation. We still practice that today.

Criterion 6: Intergenerational transmission of knowledge, skills, values, and lore

A pattern of taking or use that includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing or hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation.

The first generation that took the muskoxen has passed their knowledge of harvesting muskox to the second generation. The second generation in turn will pass the knowledge to their children.

Criterion 7: Distribution and exchange

A pattern of taking use, and reliance where the harvest effort or products of that harvest are distributed or shared, including customary trade, barter, and gift-giving.

Every community member has been taught to share what has been harvested to family and elders.

Criterion 8: Diversity of resources in an area; economic, cultural, social, and nutritional elements

A pattern that includes taking use, and reliance for subsistence purposes upon a wide variety of fish and game resources that provides substantial economic, cultural, social, and nutritional elements of the subsistence way of life.

We depend on fish and game resources for harvest. For example spring time allows sea mammals, herring, tom cods and arctic char. Summer provides halibut, cod, and reindeer. Fall allows birds, seals, silver salmon, and berries. Winter allows reindeer and muskox.

NATIVE VILLAGE OF MEKORYUK

Indian Reorganization Act Council
P.O. Box 66 • Mekoryuk, Alaska 99630
(907) 827-8828 • Fax: (907) 827-8133

RESOLUTION 14-05

A RESOLUTION TO THE ALASKA STATE BOARD OF GAME TO MODIFY THE HUNT STRUCTURE REGULATIONS FOR THE NUNIVAK ISLAND, UNIT 18 SUBSISTENCE MUSK-OX HUNTS

WHEREAS, Proposal 179-5 AAC 85.050 Seasons and bag limits for musk-ox is scheduled for passage and,

WHEREAS, Subsistence hunts are determined for September 1 to 30 and February 1 to March 15 and,

WHEREAS, priority should be given to Mekoryuk residents for subsistence and,

WHEREAS, Mekoryuk residents want thirty (30) animals for subsistence irregardless of the gender of the musk-ox and,

WHEREAS, additional permits should be issued when allotted to Mekoryuk residents, and,

WHEREAS, on-line permits should not be allowed, and

WHEREAS, the first come-first serve basis should be stricken from regulations and,

WHEREAS, tribal consultation should be provided prior to the subsistence hunt,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the State of Alaska Game Board pass regulations for Proposal 179-5 AAC 85-050 inclusive of all the above referenced WHEREAS's for the Nunivak Island, Unit 18, subsistence musk-ox hunts.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was passed by the Native Village of Mekoryuk Tribal Council at a duly convened meeting held on 5th day of March 2014 at which a quorum was present.

FOR 7 NO 0 ABSTAIN 0 ABSENT 0

Albert R. Wells
President: Native Village of Mekoryuk

Henry E. Smith
Secretary: Native Village of Mekoryuk

PAST PRESIDENTS

Moses Nayiruk • Peter Smith, Sr. • Tom Dotomain • Jesse Moses • Walter Amos • George K. Whitman, Sr.
Edward J. Shavings, Sr. • George King, Sr. • Henry J. Shavings • Joseph David, Sr. • Jerry David, Sr.
Fred Don • Howard T. Amos • Samson Weston • Hultman Kiokun
Tom Amos • Solomon Williams • Daniel Olrun, Sr.



CALISTA CORPORATION

March 10, 2014

Dale Smith
Native Village of Mekoryuk
P.O. Box
Mekoryuk, Alaska 99630

Dear Mr. Smith:

Calista Corporation fully supports the initiative of the Native Village of Mekoryuk (NVM) in creating the Nunivak Island Tribal Conservation District (TCD). This step is a powerful move towards cooperative resource management and demonstrates NVM's desire to take an active role toward greater self-determination.

One stated objective of the TCD is to secure additional musk oxen permits for subsistence harvest. The stakeholders meeting in Bethel on February 10th between USFWS, ADF&G, AVCP, the Subsistence Advisory Board Council coordinator and NVM was productive and resulted in a revision of the 1992 musk oxen cooperative management plan.

Calista strongly supports TCD's request for a greater allocation of permits for Nunivak residents and granting a subsistence harvest priority if the currently healthy herd population should decline. While musk oxen were not a traditional subsistence food source in this region, musk oxen can now supply a secure and economic source of subsistence food for the NVM people. Subsistence harvests should have the highest priority when tough decisions need to be made in the allocation of game between rural residents and sport hunters. We encourage the Federal Subsistence Advisory Council to include musk oxen as a subsistence resource in the Federal regulations.

Calista urges the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to meet with NVM annually to discuss the success of these management actions and the overall health of the Nunivak Island musk oxen population

Sincerely,

CALISTA CORPORATION

Andrew Guy, President & CEO

Cc: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Federal Subsistence Advisory Council

Raymond Watson, Chairperson
Myron P. Naneng Sr., President
Phone: (907) 543-7300
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Web: www.avcp.org

AVCP
Association of Village Council Presidents
Administration
Pouch 219, Bethel, AK 99559
The Voice of the Region



Akinchak
Akiak
Alakanuk
Andrafsky
Aniak
Atmautluak
Bethel
Bill Moore's Sl.
Chefornak
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Chuloonawick
Crooked Creek
Eek
Emmonak
Georgetown
Goodnews Bay
Hamilton
Hooper Bay
Lower Kalskag
Upper Kalskag
Kasigluk
Kipnuk
Kongiganak
Kotlik
Kwethluk
Kwigillingok
Lime Village
Marshall
Mekoryuk
Mtn. Village
Napaimut
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Newtok
Nightmute
Nunakauyak
Nunam Iqua
Nunapitchuk
Ohogamiut
Oscarville
Paimiut
Pilot Station
Pitka's Point
Platinum
Quinhagak
Red Devil
Russian Mission
Scanmon Bay
Sleetmute
St. Mary's
Stony River
Tuluksak
Tuntutuliak
Tununak
Umkumiut

March 11, 2014

Dale Smith, Tribal Operations Director
Native Village of Mekoryuk
Mekoryuk, AK 99630

RE: Musk Ox Subsistence Priority

Dear Mr. Smith:

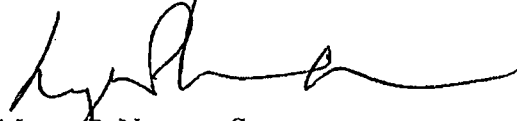
This letter is sent on behalf of the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) and its 56 member Tribes. AVCP expresses support for the efforts by Native Village of Mekoryuk to modify the musk ox hunt on Nunivak Island to provide for a subsistence priority. We understand that the current musk ox population has been above management goals of 500-550, and its continued growth, without good management practices, could damage the range. We also believe that the current allocation of five musk ox to a population of approximately 180 people is not even close to meeting subsistence needs; especially with the failure of the reindeer population to sustain itself.

Alaska state law directs the Board of Game and Board of Fisheries to provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses first, before providing for other uses of any harvestable surplus of a fish or game population. *AS 16.05.258 (b)*. Once the Board of Fisheries or Board of Game has determined that there are customary and traditional uses of a fish stock or game population, they must set the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence uses, considering the Alaska Native subsistence principle. Unfortunately, for Nunivak Island, the net result as it applies to the musk ox herd on Nunivak Island, is that commercial and sport hunting is prioritized over subsistence, contrary to state law.

AVCP supports your ongoing efforts to obtain a subsistence priority that will not only enhance the well-being of the Mekoryuk people but also the musk ox herd on Nunivak Island.

Sincerely,

ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS


Myron P. Naneng, Sr.
President



**PETITION TO THE ALASKA STATE BOARD OF GAME FOR THIRTY (30) BULL
MUSK-OX TO BE HARVESTED FOR SUBSISTENCE ALONG WITH THE FIVE (5)
FEMALE PERMITS**

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6. Patricia R. Williams	PO Box 75 Mekoryuk, AK 99630
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9. Dale Smith	P.O. Box 111 Mekoryuk, AK 99630
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- 50. Edward Shauf... Box 33 Mekonguk, AK 99630
- 51. Mariann... P.O. Box 82 Mekonguk AK 99630
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