HUNTING, FISHING, GATHERING TASK FORCE
2016 Strategy Update

Khehlok gwitr’it t’agwarah’in: Working Together as One (Gwich’in)

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS OF

Allakaket, Beaver, Birch Creek, Circle, Eagle, Evansville, Grayling, Holy Cross, Hughes, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Manley, Minto, Nenana, Rampart, Shageluk, Takotna, and Venetie

Photo courtesy of Brooke Wright, HFTF Intern
We Have to Come from the Position of Strength
~Paul Shewfelt, Task Force Member~

Our traditional hunting and fishing practices, which include the ceremonies that accompany these practices, provide for the social, cultural, economic, and spiritual wellbeing of our people and communities. These practices are in jeopardy, with our people disenfranchised in a highly complex management regime dominated by federal and state governments and commercial interests.

Scarcity, limited access, and limits on gathering of our traditional foods directly impact the health and wellbeing of our tribes. As Native peoples, without access to our traditional food resources our economic security and food sovereignty is threatened.

In 2013 the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors passed Resolution No. 2013-19 to create a joint Hunting and Fishing Task Force strategy. The founding resolution mandates the purpose of the Task Force strategy “to direct the regional advocacy efforts to protect Athabascan and Alaska Native rights to hunt and fish.” Since 2013, TCC has been successfully implementing the comprehensive strategy developed by the Task Force.

**Mission**
Direct advocacy efforts to protect Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights central to our traditional way of life and wellbeing.

**Objectives**
1. Speak and act with a unified voice.
2. Protect Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights including the harvesting and sharing of fish, game and other resources.
3. Ensure Alaska Native management of traditional lands and resources.
STRATEGIES
1. Increase Alaska Native influence in regulation/policy.
2. Enhance Alaska Native management.
3. Seek legislation, administrative action, and litigation.
4. Impact climate change and arctic policy, research, and international dialogue.

METHODS

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING
- Develop an education/outreach plan to mobilize Alaska Natives, Tribal Governments, Corporations, and allies for action.
- Strengthen Alaska Native, national Native American, and ally advocacy network.
  - Identify opportunities for effective use of civil disobedience.

NATIVE VOTE
- Establish a region-wide Alaska Native voter database.
  - Initiate a civic engagement campaign.
  - Participate in regional, state, and national campaigns.
- Identify and support pro-Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights candidates.

PUBLIC EDUCATION
- Develop consistent, positive messaging.
- Implement high profile, professional public education media campaign.
- Strengthen relationships with opposition, leaders, legislators, and agencies.
- Invite people of influence to spend time with our people, in our homes.
**Strategy 1**

**Increase Alaska Native Influence in Regulation/Policy.**

**Current Priorities**
- Educate tribal advocates on Federal and State fish and wildlife regulations and management systems.
- Coordinate increased attendance and messaging at all pertinent regulatory and decision-making boards and councils.
- Provide analysis, drafting, comments, positions, and testimony related to pertinent regulations, policies, and management plans.

**Long Term Goal**

Alaska hunting and fishing management policy and regulations established by Alaska Natives based upon the traditional way of life, providing for food security and community wellbeing.

**Pertinent Boards, Councils, and Agencies**
- US Fish & Wildlife Service Federal Subsistence Board, Regional Advisory Councils
- State of Alaska Board of Fish, Board of Game, Advisory Councils
- Yukon River Panel, Joint Technical Committee
- North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
- Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council
- Bureau of Land Management, Management Plans
- National Park Service Subsistence Resource Committees

Ben Stevens, Hunting and Fishing Task Force Director, attends North Pacific Fisheries Management Council Advisory Panel. He was recently appointed by Governor Walker.
CURRENT PRIORITIES
- Develop the Yukon River and Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commissions.
- Identify potential areas for increased self-governance and co-management agreements.
- Support Alaska Native natural resources management capacity building: promote, develop, and implement appropriate training programs; provide technical assistance support; and leverage funding and other resources.

LONG TERM GOAL
Established, well staffed, highly trained Alaska Native Tribal, Inter-Tribal, and Corporate natural resources management programs actively managing traditional resources based upon the traditional way of life, providing for food security and community wellbeing.

Defining Co-Management

A fair sharing of the responsibility and authority for managing fish, wildlife, or lands as mutually negotiated, defined and agreed by indigenous peoples and managing agencies.

Indigenous Self-Governance
Indigenous people hold all responsibility and authority in fish, wildlife, and land management. Laws, regulations, management functions, and decisions made by indigenous people and heard in indigenous judicial systems.

Indigenous Management
Management by indigenous peoples within an external governmental legal framework.

Co-Management
Indigenous people and government agencies have a fairly shared responsibility and authority for managing fish, wildlife, and land.

Management Boards
Indigenous people have a voice in planning and decision-making.

Advisory Committees
Indigenous views begin to impact agenda, issues, and decision-making.

Consultation
Indigenous views and knowledge sought on some issues prior to decision-making.

Government Control
Government holds all responsibility and authority in fish, wildlife, and land management. Laws, regulations, management functions, and decisions made by governments and heard in governmental judicial systems.

UAF CRCD Co-Management Symposium, November 18th & 19th, 2015, Tribal Management Program, Illingworth and Stevens
STRATEGY 3
SEEK LEGISLATION, ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION, AND LITIGATION.

CURRENT PRIORITIES
- Reauthorize the Magnuson Stevens Act to include subsistence throughout, provide for tribal representation on the North Pacific Management Council, and provide requirements/mechanisms for further reducing king salmon bycatch.
- Seek Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission legislation/regulation to establish federal/state/tribal management regime.
- Draft federal and/or state legislation, regulation, or administrative order that protects Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights and management authority on Alaska Native lands.
- Monitor, and when possible, initiate litigation to develop favorable case law.

LONG TERM GOAL
Hunting and Fishing Rights legislation enacted for adequate protections of Alaska Native hunting and fishing rights on all Alaska lands and waters including the Outer Continental Shelf and the Exclusive Economic Zone.

COMPONENT 4
IMPACT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ARCTIC POLICY, RESEARCH, AND INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE.

CURRENT PRIORITIES
- Develop joint positions on international management, climate change, and arctic policy to include positions on critical issues, priorities, and action areas.
- Coordinate increased Alaska Native participation in climate change and arctic research, such as the Local Environmental Observer Network.
- Coordinate effective participation with critical forums:
  - President Obama’s Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience (Reggie Joule)
  - Alaska Arctic Policy Commission
  - Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Working Group
  - Arctic Council with members states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States and Permanent Participants Arctic Athabaskan Council and Gwich’in Council International

LONG TERM GOAL
Interior Alaska Natives are engaged in climate change and arctic policy and research, strengthening community resilience and adaptation to provide for food security and community wellbeing.
Protecting the Alaska Native Way of Life

Community Organizing
- Mobilization Plan
- Strengthen Advocacy Network
- Action & Civil Disobedience

Native Vote
- Voter Database
- Civic Engagement
- Regional, State, National Campaigns
- Pro-Alaska Native Rights Candidates

Public Education
- Tell Our Story
- Professional Media Campaign
- Strengthen Relationships

METHODS: THE STRENGTH OF OUR PEOPLE
**Highlights of Major Accomplishments**

**2014-2016**

**Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission**

**Power in Tribal Unity**

~ 1st Yukon River Inter-tribal Fish Commission Meeting ~ St. Mary’s ~ 2014 ~

- Tribal unity on self-imposed Yukon King fishing moratorium.
- For the first time in years the US met the escapement goal to Canada, with an ~66,000 kings across the border.
- *Proven commitment of Alaska Natives and Tribal Governments to conservation and stewardship for the future.*

**Setting a Strong Foundation: Building Tribal Power and Unity**

~ 2nd Yukon River Inter-tribal Fish Commission Meeting ~ Tanana ~ 2015 ~

- Approved Constitution for Tribal Ratifications.
- Elected an Interim Chair & Interim Executive Council.
- Passed Resolutions for: NPFMC reduction of salmon bycatch, Unified Management, and protection of female Kings.
- Again, Tribal unity on conservation measures for Yukon King fishing, for the second consecutive year the US met the escapement goal to Canada, with an ~ 83,000 kings across the border.
- *Proven commitment of Alaska Natives and Tribal Governments to conservation and stewardship for the future.*

**Reduced the King Salmon Bering Sea Bycatch**

**Strength in Unity With Partners**

After a strategic alliance with AVCP, BSFA, Kawerak and YR DFA, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) reduced the performance standards and hard caps for chinook bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery, lowering the bycatch limit by 25%, from 60,000 to 45,000.

The action to reduce bycatch included:

- Resolutions and letters writing campaign from individuals, Tribal Governments and partners.
- Special Action request in August 2014.
- Coordinated testimony at NPFMC and Advisory Council through 2014 and 2015.
- Organized comments at USFWS and NOAA Tribal Consultations advocating for increased bycatch limits.
Established Relationships with Federal, State and Industry Leaders and Managers

A Seat at the Table
TCC tribal leadership and staff established relationships in the effort to ensure tribal representation in management systems.

Placed and Recommended Advocates to Relevant Boards:
- Board of Fish Member Orville Huntington (TCC Wildlife & Parks) appointed.
- NPFMC Advisory Panel Ben Stevens (TCC Hunting & Fishing Task Force) appointed. NPFMC Art Nelson recommended.
- Yukon River Panel members recommended.

TCC staff building relationships with partners to protect the traditional way of life:
- UAF School of Fisheries and Ocean Science, American Fisheries Society, Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council and sportsman’s associations.

Promoting Co-Management

Creating a Positive Environment for the Advancement of Co-Management
Alaska Federation of Natives:
- 2014 Statewide Hunt Fish Share Rally. Resolution passed by the full AFN Board in support of Co-Management.
- 2015 TCC President Joseph shared progress and meaningful insight at Co-Management work session.
- 2015 Resolutions: two resolutions passed by the full AFN Board in support of Co-Management and the Fish Commissions.

UAF Co-Management Symposium:
TCC Administration and Hunting & Fishing Task Force sponsored a historic co-management symposium that brought over 200 participants and 45 speakers from across the state that included representatives from Tribal Governments, ANCSA Corporations, State/Federal agencies, and multiple Universities together at UAF.
- TCC Administration sponsored evening reception, TCC HFTF sponsored travel for ~12 village-based participants from our region.
- Natasha Singh and Ben Stevens participated in co-management panel highlighting Fish Commission.

Tribal Capacity Building

Building a Strong Team of Tribal Advocates
In partnership with UAF Tribal Management Program, TCC developed and delivered, “Intro to Federal Subsistence Management” in the spring and fall of 2015 to strengthen advocacy in the Federal Subsistence Management system.
- 40 advocates attended and participated in FSB Regional Advisory Council meetings.
- Attendees submitted regulatory proposals and provided testimony on Rural Determination, which was adopted by the FSB.

The Power of Our People
In partnership with UAF Tribal Management Program, the Task Force is utilizing student interns to develop the program.

Impacting Climate Change and Climate Change Research
TCC leaders, PJ Simon, Julie Roberts and Mickey Stickman elected to serve as leaders in the Arctic Athabaskan Council.
Partnered with Association of Interior Native Educators and International Arctic Research Center to hold Indigenous Exchange on Climate Change Forum in spring of 2016:
- shared and learned about our changing climate; heard from Arctic leaders and scientists; explored climate change education resources; and oriented to upcoming critical events to ensure participation.
FOR MORE INFORMATION
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