

**Bering Sea Elders Advisory Group  
Nome Summit  
January 26-28, 2011**

**Summary Report**

**Participants:**

Elders from 14 tribes in the Bering Straits region:

- Charlie Fitka, Jr. - St. Michael
- Allan Atchak - Stebbins
- Kermit Ivanoff - Unalakleet
- William Takak, Sr. - Shaktoolik
- Kenneth Dewey, Sr. - Koyuk
- Charles Seccheus, Sr. - Elim
- Robert Tocktoo - Brevig Mission
- Velma Brown - White Mountain
- Norman Menadelook - Teller
- Pat Omiak, Sr. - Diomede
- Ronnie Toolie - Savoonga
- Iver Campbell - Gambell
- Pete Sereadlook - Wales
- Francis Alvanna - King Island

A delegation of Elders from the Yukon/Kuskokwim region:

- David Bill Sr. - Toksook Bay (Chair)
- David O. David - Kwigillingok (Executive Committee)
- John Phillip Sr. - Kongiganak (Executive Committee)
- Paul John - Honored Guest & Traditional Chief of Toksook Bay

Other members who planned to attend but were not able to travel due to emergency circumstances or weather:

- David Carl - Kipnuk (Executive Committee)
- Peter Moore - Emmonak
- Michael Hunt - Kotlik

Elders Group Staff:

- Fred Phillip, Executive Director

Collaborating organizations:

- Kawerak - Vera Metcalf, Rose Fosdick, Eva Menadelook and Julie Raymond-Yakoubian
- Association of Village Council Presidents - Tim Andrew
- Native American Rights Fund - Natalie Landreth, Erin Dougherty
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council - Muriel Morse, Dorothy Childers

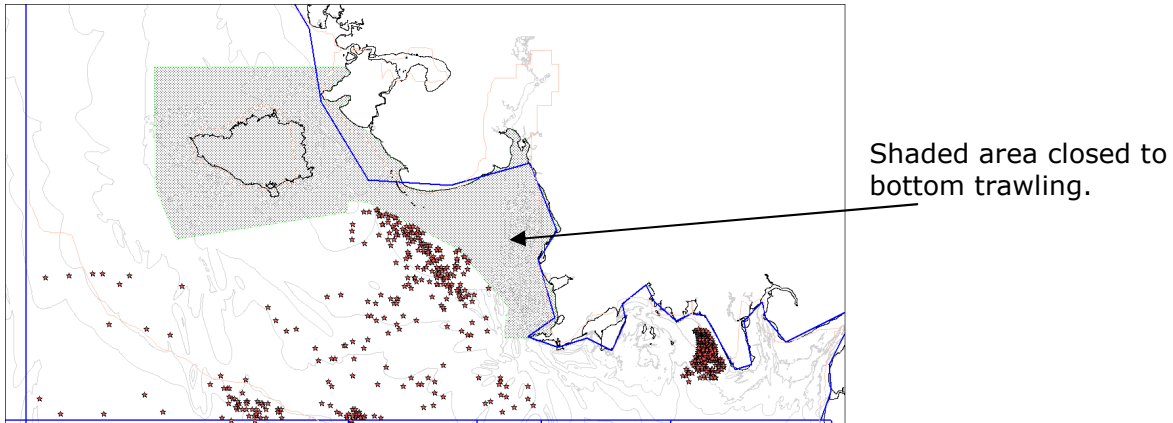
**Day 1** - The Elders from the Yukon/Kuskokwim region were not able to arrive until that night due to weather. Charlie Seccheus, member of the Executive Committee from Elim, chaired the meeting.

Opening prayer was offered by Pete Sereadlook.

A review of the Northern Bering Sea bottom trawl boundary and Northern Bering Sea Research Area was presented and discussed. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will make two decisions in the near future:

1. Consider possible changes to the existing bottom trawl boundary to better protect subsistence near Nunivak Is., Etolin Strait and Kuskokwim Bay.
2. Develop a research plan for the Northern Bering Sea Research Area. The research plan may lead to opening some or all the area to bottom trawling in the future.

In the afternoon, representatives from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative presented information about the flatfish fishery and their seafood business.



Bottom trawl hauls along current trawl boundary adjacent to Kuskokwim Bay & in Bristol Bay – 2008

Representatives from the Alaska Seafood Cooperative were:

- Dorothy Lowman, liaison to Bering Sea villages on this issue
- Jason Anderson, manager
- Mark Gleason, *F/V Ocean Peace*
- John Nelson, captain of *F/V Rebecca Irene*
- Keith Bruton, owner of 3 bottom trawl catcher processors (*F/V Constellation*, *F/V Defender* and *F/V Enterprise*)

They expressed interest in continued discussion with the Elders Group about potential solutions to our concerns about bottom trawling in and near subsistence use areas. They hope to meet again soon to discuss specific proposals for adjusting the current boundary and timing of trawl activity. This will be on the agenda at the June meeting of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council in Nome.

**Day 2** – The Yukon/Kuskokwim delegation arrived the night before. David Bill resumed as chair of the meeting.

Guest presentation – John Weller, film maker

John presented a proposal to make a film about the northern Bering Sea and the importance of subsistence to our way of life. The film would help to show people and outside decision makers why it is important to protect our waters.

The Elders Group appreciated the proposal and will consider arrangements that would allow the film to be made with proper control over the use of footage involving our people and subsistence.

Mapping project report – Dorothy Childers presented the draft report that includes maps depicting general subsistence use areas for marine mammals and fish as well as observations of eiders. The report includes quotes from interviews with Elders and hunters conducted in 17 villages over the last 2 years. The purpose of the maps is to show extensive use area in the northern Bering Sea and other sensitive ecological areas as a tool to make the case for protecting subsistence.

### Day 3 – Discussion and Resolutions

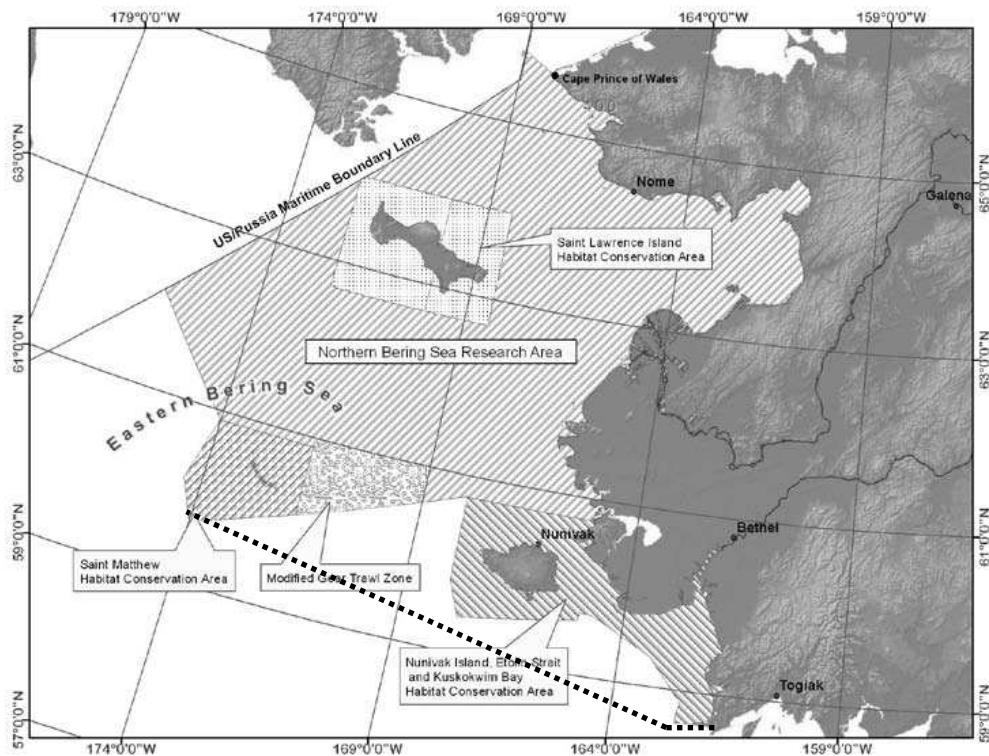
The Elders discussed concerns about conflict between bottom trawling and subsistence culture. Themes in the discussion included:

- We need to take care of the Bering Sea as a whole ecosystem, not debate which parts of it are more important than other parts.
- The Elders Group will support one line to protect the region from bottom trawling. We will not promote separate lines for protecting St. Lawrence Island, Norton Sound, Yukon Delta, etc.
- We will work together as one voice.

It was also discussed that:

- The Elders Group supports an amendment to the Magnuson-Stevens Act to add tribal representation to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.
- The Elders Group could consider how to support tribes in the Federal Subsistence Board process.

A motion was made by Charlie Fitka and seconded by Velma Brown: The Bering Straits region Elders support Kuskokwim region Elders in working to move the existing bottom trawl boundary farther away from areas important for subsistence and the ecosystem.



..... Elders Group - Recommended bottom trawl boundary

The motion passed unanimously.

In final comments, the Elders reaffirmed that the Elders Group will work together as one voice, bridging the Yukon/Kuskokwim and Bering Straits regions.

Closing comments from the chair:

"The ocean is like a table. We eat together from the ocean. They [city people] are not eating from the same plate as us. If we take and throw away what we catch, our Elders will scold us. We're told to leave things alone that you don't need. They say 'save the food for the future.' Our wives tell us when we have enough and to stop hunting. That is to protect our future."

**Thank you's were extended to everyone who helped make the Nome summit possible, including:**

Funders –

- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation - \$3,717 for Bering Straits Elders airfare & lunch on the first day
- Donlin Creek - \$10,000 for hosting Nome summit
- Alaska Conservation Foundation - \$12,500 for hosting Nome summit
- World Wildlife Fund - \$4,000 for hosting Nome summit
- Grant Aviation & Bering Air – Elder discounts

Kawerak – For hosting the Native foods feast on Day 2. Delicious reindeer stew, walrus, greens and berries – many thanks to the hunters, gatherers and cooks who made that possible! Also convenient van transportation was provided by generous Kawerak volunteers made sure that the Elders got where they needed to be on time.

Association of Village Council Presidents – For ongoing cooperation and support from Tim Andrew at this meeting.

Native American Rights Fund – For providing legal support to the Elders Group efforts.

Fred Phillip – For Yupik/English translation throughout the summit.

Alaska Marine Conservation Council – For support by Muriel Morse, who organized Elders travel and other logistics for the summit; Dorothy Childers for other assistance.

Bering Sea Fishermen's Association – For ongoing support as the Elders Group fiscal agent.

Closing prayer by Paul John.