

UTQIAGVIK2017

ALASKA ESKIMO WHALING COMMISSION

Annual Whaling Captains' Mini-Convention

February 6 – 8, 2017, Utqiagvik, Alaska



OUR MISSION

To safeguard the bowhead whale and its habitat; and To support the whaling activities and culture of our member communities.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To preserve and enhance the marine resource of the bowhead whale, including its habitat.
- To protect Eskimo subsistence whaling.
- To protect and enhance Eskimo culture, traditions, and activities associated with bowhead whales and bowhead whaling.
- To undertake research and educational activities related to bowhead whales.

AEWC COMMISSIONERS

Harry Brower, Jr., Chairman (Barrow)
John Hopson, Jr., Vice Chair (Wainwright)
Christopher Oktolik, Secretary (Pt. Hope)
George Noongwook, Treasurer (Savoonga)
Thomas Napageak (Nuiqsut)
Enoch Adams, Jr. (Kivalina)
Joseph Kaleak (Kaktovik)
Raymond Seetook (Wales)
Julius Rexford (Point Lay)
Edmond Apassingok (Gambell)
Ronald Ozenna, Jr. (Little Diomed)

STAFF

Arnold Brower, Jr., Executive Director
Lesley Hopson, Administrative Manager
Jessica Lefevre, Legal Counsel
Sarah D. Espelin, CPA, Finance Director
Jenny Evans, Grant Writer/Administrator
Martha Koonaloak, Secretary
Evelyn Aamodt, Accounting Specialist
Lucy Benson, Accounting Clerk
Corrine Danner, Gaming Manager

SPONSORS

Achieving the mission of AEWWC would not be possible without the generous support of the following organizations. Quyanaqpak!

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CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

On behalf of AEWK, I welcome you to the 2017 Annual Whaling Captains' Convention. Many of you have traveled a long distance to join us and we are honored by your presence.

This is always an exciting time of year for me as I look forward to seeing old friends who have helped us renew our quota and in obtaining our mission of protecting and preserving our Inupiaq and Yupik cultures through the subsistence hunt of the Bowhead whale. Our work would not be possible without collaboration from each of you and your organizations. This annual meeting signifies that on-going collaboration and is vital to our success.

I am grateful for the support of so many people and organizations. I thank our friends at NOAA, the North Slope Borough, and the Oak Foundation for their continued support through funding of our efforts, not only for this convention, but for our work toward obtaining our quota, developing the Conflict Avoidance Agreement, our Weapons Improvement Program, and the Annual Bilateral Agreement with the marine mammal hunters of Chukotka. The operation of AEWK would not be possible without your support. Quyanaqpak!

We also extend our gratitude to the many sponsors of the convention, both large and small. The success of this convention is your doing. Your contribution will ensure that our way of life will flourish into the future and we thank you for your generosity. A full list of sponsors is listed in this program.

I warmly welcome all visiting AEWK Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, and Whaling Captain Association Presidents. As whaling captains, you are the leaders in each of your villages and it is through your leadership that our traditions continue and our communities are fed. Together with your wives and families, you make sacrifices to ensure the well being of your crews and the sustenance of your communities. You are the essence of our mission.

Lastly, I thank the staff of AEWK for their efforts in planning the convention. You are a dedicated and reliable group of people and I thank you for your tireless contributions to the success of this organization.

Quyanaqpak!

Harry Brower, Jr., Chairman
Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission

PAST AEWK CHAIRMEN

Since its inception in 1977, AEWK has proactively lead the way for Native Organizations in ensuring the voices of the Yupik and Inupiat Eskimos are heard, their subsistence rights are protected and their resources managed cooperatively and responsibly. The organization has achieved success and prominence through the leadership of our Commissioners, particularly the AEWK Chairmen.

We cannot look forward without giving credit to the past. We salute the past chairmen of the AEWK for their insight, their dedication, their leadership and their passion for making a difference in the lives of our people. Quyanaqpak!

Jacob Adams, Sr.	Barrow	1980
Eugene Brower	Barrow	1981
Roger Silook	Gambell	1982-1983
John Okrollik	Point Hope	1983-1984
Lennie Lane	Point Hope	1985-1986
Arnold Brower, Jr.	Barrow	1986-1987
Thomas Napageak	Nuiqsut	1988-1989
Edward Hopson, Sr.	Barrow	1989-1990
Burton Rexford	Barrow	1991-1998
Thomas Napageak	Nuiqsut	1998-2005
Harry Brower, Jr.	Barrow	2006-2010
George Noongwook	Savoonga	2011-2014
Harry Brower, Jr.	Barrow	2014 - present



AEWK

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INUPIAT CORE VALUES

Avoidance of Conflict

Try not to argue or fight

Humility

Don't brag or be boastful

Spirituality

Individual beliefs about God or the creator

Cooperation

Willingly working together

Compassion

Understanding, kindness and love for others

Hunting Traditions

Following traditions and rules of hunting in order for the hunt to be successful

Knowledge of Language

It is important to know your language in order to better understand your culture

Sharing

Willingly offering the use of one's possessions to another person

Family and Kinship

Love of family and the knowledge of who one's relatives are

Humor

Ability to laugh at something without hurting somebody's feelings, joking

Respect for Elders and for each other

It is important to listen and learn from people who are experienced

Respect for Nature

The earth and its inhabitants deserve to be healthy because this is home





Merlin Koonooka

Gambell, Alaska

The whaling captains of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) extend their appreciation to Merlin Koonooka for his many years of dedication and service to our subsistence whaling communities through his work as a Commissioner of the AEWC. We thank him for his leadership, his continued guidance in the preservation and protection of our traditional subsistence lifestyle, his tireless work and personal sacrifice in support of our mission. His infinite patience, wisdom, and his ability to bridge the information gap between traditional knowledge and modern science have been invaluable.

Through his tenure representing the subsistence hunters of the Native Village of Gambell, the AEWC has benefited from his adherence to the AEWC By-laws and Management Plan and the example he has set for all of us in displaying the highest ethical standards in both his personal and professional conduct.

Quyanaqpak Merlin!

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

AGENDA | Monday, February 6, 2017 | Whaling Captains' Convention

8:00 - 9:00AM	BREAKFAST Provided by NSB School District	NOON	LUNCH Provided by Fairweather Science, LLC
8:30 - 9:00AM	REGISTRATION	1:30PM	CALL BACK TO ORDER Harry Brower, Jr., AEWK Chairman
9:00 - 9:10AM	CALL TO ORDER INVOCATION	1:30 - 1:45PM	AUDIT REPORT Donald Hanni, Altman Rogers
9:10 - 9:20AM	ROLL CALL / DECLARATION OF QUORUM Christopher Oktollik, AEWK Secretary	1:45 - 2:30PM	WEAPONS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM Harry Brower, Jr., George Noongwook, Dr. Egil Oen, Billy Adams, Arnold Brower, Jr., Jessica Lefevre & Jenny Evans
9:20 - 9:30AM	ADOPTION OF AGENDA	2:30 - 2:45PM	WEAPONS QUALITY CONTROL Andrew Tooyak, Jr.
9:30 - 9:40AM	WELCOME ADDRESS Harry Brower, Jr., AEWK Chairman	2:45 - 3:00PM	COFFEE BREAK Provided by Illisagvik
9:40 - 10:00AM	INTRODUCTIONS John Hopson, Jr., AEWK Vice Chairman	3:00 - 4:00PM	SCIENTIFC REPORT Dr. Robert Suydam, NSB DWM Dr. Craig George, NSB DWM
10:00 - 10:15AM	KEYNOTE ADDRESS Harry Brower, Jr., Mayor, NSB	4:00 - 4:45PM	SIKULIAQ: Compliance Document Lauren Frisch & Murray Stein
10:15 - 10:30AM	COFFEE BREAK Provided by Hilcorp	4:45 - 5:00PM	ARCTIC WATERWAYS SAFETY COMMITTEE AWSC Update: Willie Goodwin, SOC for Research Vessels: Candace Nachman, NOAA
10:30 - 10:45AM	AEWK CHAIRMAN REPORT Harry Brower, Jr.	5:00 - 5:15PM	ICE CELLAR PROJECT Marnie Isaacs, Kaktovik Comm. Foundation
10:45 - 11:00AM	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT Arnold Brower, Jr.	5:15PM	ADJOURN
11:00 - 11:15AM	GRANT REPORT Jenny Evans, Grant Writer	5:30PM	POTLUCK & ESKIMO DANCE Ipalook Elementary School
11:15 - 11:30AM	FINANCE REPORT Sarah D. Espelin, CPA, Finance Director		
11:30 - NOON	LEGAL REPORT Jessica Lefevre, Legal Counsel		

AGENDA | Tuesday, February 7, 2017 | Whaling Captains' Convention

7:30 - 8:00AM	BREAKFAST Provided by Hilcorp	1:30 - 2:30PM	DISCUSSION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS Dr. Dalee Sambo Dorough
8:00 - 8:05AM	CALL TO ORDER INVOCATION	2:30 - 3:30PM	INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS VILLAGE CAUCUS ON RESOLUTIONS
8:05 - 8:30AM	ROLL CALL DECLARATION OF QUORUM Christopher Oktollik, AEWG Secretary	3:30 - 3:45PM	COFFEE BREAK Provided by Umiag
8:30 - 10:00AM	EXECUTIVE SESSION AEWG Whaling Captains & NOAA <i>Closed to Public</i>	3:45 - 4:30PM	EXECUTIVE SESSION <i>Closed to Public</i>
10:00 - 10:15AM	BREAK Provided by Umiag	4:30 - 5:00PM	ACTION ON FINAL RESOLUTIONS AEWG BUSINESS WRAP-UP ON ISSUES DURING THE MINI-CONVENTION
10:15 - 10:30AM	IWC REPORT Ryan Wulff, Deputy U.S. Commissioner	5:00PM	ADJOURN
10:30 - 10:45AM	RUSSIAN FEDERATION Dr. Valentin Ilyashenko		
10:45 - 11:00AM	UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ADDRESS Rear Admiral Michael F. McAllister 17th District Commander		
11:00AM - 12:15PM	COMMITTEE SESSIONS Resolutions Committee, G. Noongwook Credential Committee, C. Oktollik Research Committee, H. Brower, Jr.		
12:15 - 1:30PM	LUNCH <i>Internal AEWG Working Lunch</i> <i>Closed to Public</i> Provided by Kuukpik		

AGENDA | Wednesday, February 8, 2017 | 1st Quarterly Meeting

8:30 - 9:00AM	BREAKFAST Provided by Hilcorp
9:00 - 9:10AM	CALL TO ORDER / INVOCATION
9:10 - 9:20AM	ROLL CALL APPROVAL OF AGENDA APPROVAL OF MINUTES
9:20 - 9:45AM	CERTIFICATION OF ELECTIONS OATH OF OFFICE Barrow, Pt. Hope, Savoonga, Wainwright
9:45 - 10:15AM	REORGANIZATION FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer
10:15 - 10:30AM	COFFEE BREAK Provided by Kuukpik
10:30 - 11:00AM	NEW BUSINESS
11:00 - 11:30AM	OLD BUSINESS
11:30 - 11:45AM	VILLAGE CONCERNS Kaktovik, Kivalina, Pt. Hope, Wainwright, Nuiqsut, Wales, Gambell, Savoonga, Barrow, Little Diomedede, Pt. Lay
11:45 - NOON	DATE, TIME & LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING ADJOURN
NOON	LUNCH
*12:30 - 2:00PM	USCG BOATING SAFETY WORKSHOP Barrow High School Pool Provided by Fairweather Science

NUIQSUT

AEWC Commissioner: Thomas Napageak

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Steve Leavitt

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Carl Brower

The village of Nuiqsut has a population of approximately 380 people. The Barrier Islands to the east of Nuiqsut are a productive area for hunting marine mammals, and the fall whaling sites of Cross Island and Narwhal Island have a long history. Today, Nuiqsut whalers travel to Cross Island in late August and early September to begin whaling. This long journey takes them past the oil fields surrounding Prudhoe Bay and into the often icy waters of the Beaufort Sea. The hard work of the journey and the hunt is rewarded when successful whaling captains share the whale with the community and other villages at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and at Nalukataq the following spring.



AGENDA | Wednesday, February 8, 2017 | Conflict Avoidance Agreement

1:15 - 1:30PM **ALASKA GASLINE DEVELOPMENT CORP.**
Roseetta Alcantra

1:30 - 1:45PM **HILCORP**
Jim Winegarner

1:45 - 2:00PM **EXXONMOBIL**
John Moore & Sonia Henrick

2:00 - 2:15PM **CAELUS**
Dale Hoffman

2:15 - 2:45PM **PORT ACCESS ROUTE STUDY (PARS)**
LCDR Mike Newell, D17 Prevention
Waterways Management Branch

2:45 - 3:00PM **POLAR CODE**
LCDR Mark Neeland, D17 Prevention
Inspections and Investigations Branch

3:00 - 3:15PM **BREAK**
Provided by Umiag

3:15 - 3:30PM **ENI PETROLEUM**
Robert Province

3:30 - 3:45PM **NOAA: 2017 Vessel Based Activities &
2017 Distributed Biological Observatory Surveys**
Candace Nachman, NOAA

3:45 - 4:00PM **NOAA: 2017 Proposed Charting Work**
Lt. Matt Forney, NOAA

4:00 - 4:30PM **ALTERNATE PLANNING CRITERIA (APC)**
LCDR Mark Neeland, D17 Prevention

4:30 - 4:45PM **SAExploration**
Rick Trupp

5:00PM **ADJOURN**

KIVALINA

AEWC Commissioner: Enoch Adams, Jr.

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Austin Swan

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Lowell Sage

The village of Kivalina sits on a narrow gravel island near the mouth of the Wulik River on the northwest coast of Alaska. Although the permanent village is less than a century old, the whole coast of this region has long been used for whaling and other hunting camps. In addition to whaling, Kivalina residents hunt caribou, sheep, walrus, seals, beluga whales, birds, and fish. Kivalina has close ties with Point Hope, sharing many of the same festivals and whale distribution customs. The village has a current population of approximately 350 people.



Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission

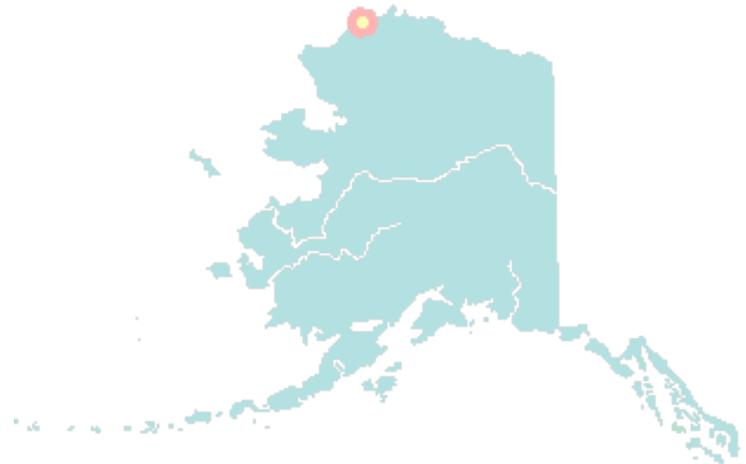
BARROW

AEWC Commissioner: Harry Brower, Jr., Chairman

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Joe M. Leavitt

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Eugene Brower

With a population of approximately 3,500, Barrow is Alaska's largest subsistence whaling community. Seat of the North Slope Borough and home of the AEWc office, Barrow also has several sites of great archeological significance, and continues to have a strong subsistence tradition. Hunting and sharing Native foods is a central part of life, and skins and meat can be seen curing throughout the village. Residents of Utqiagvik – the Inupiaq name for Barrow – take whales, caribou, seals, walrus, bears, birds, and fish, and like all subsistence hunters they are active year-round. Barrow's whale hunt takes place in both spring and fall. Following the spring hunt, successful captains host Apugauti and Nalukataq, drawing people from throughout the region to take part and enjoy the celebration and the sharing. The whale is shared at other community events, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, potlucks, as well as in people's homes.



WAINWRIGHT

AEWC Commissioner: John Hopson, Jr., Vice-Chair

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Walter Nayakik, Jr.

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Chester Ekak

The village of Wainwright—Ulguniq in Inupiaq—has approximately 600 residents. For subsistence, they rely on whales, caribou, seals, birds, bear and fish. During the spring, Wainwright whalers travel north to Point Belcher, where the open lead is closer to the coast. Here, on a low hill, several old whale jaw bones have been erected as navigation aids for hunters out on the ice and in the open lead. Successful Wainwright whaling captains host Nalukataq in June. This feast centers on sharing the whale, and includes the Eskimo blanket toss, which gives the festival its name. The whale is also shared at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and informally throughout the year.



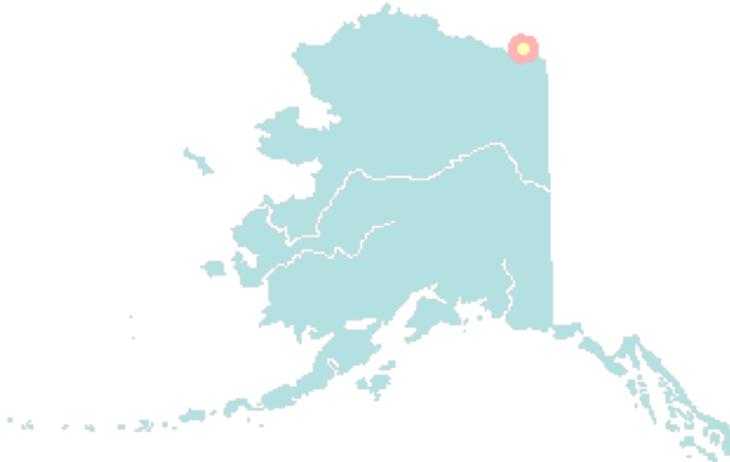
KAKTOVIK

AEWC Commissioner: Joseph Kaleak

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Sheldon Brower

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Christopher Gordon

Kaktovik has long been a place of trade, as indicated by its English name, Barter Island. The settlement's Inupiaq name, Qaaktugvik, means "Place to net fish." Caribou, sheep, musk ox, bears, birds, seals, and whales are also taken for subsistence. While the present settlement was established early in this century, the region is dotted with old village sites and hunting camps. Today, the population of Kaktovik is about 230. Kaktovik whalers hunt in the fall, going out from the village in search of bowheads. Near the village are many ancient whale bones, as well as bones from whales taken in recent years. As in every community, the meat and maktak of the bowhead whale are highly prized in Kaktovik, providing a large and necessary component of the subsistence food for the village.



LITTLE DIOMEDE

AEWC Commissioner: Ronald Ozenna, Jr.

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Ronald Ozenna, Sr.

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Henry Soolook

In the middle of the Bering Strait, the island of Little Diomedes rises sharply from the sea. There is no room for an airstrip on the island, so planes to the community of Ignaluk can land only in winter on a plowed stretch of sea ice between Little Diomedes and its neighbor, the Russian island of Big Diomedes two miles to the west. Because of its remoteness, Little Diomedes was not included in the formation of the AEWK and its needs were not taken into account in determining the bowhead quota for Alaska Eskimos. In 1992, Little Diomedes was formally recognized by the AEWK as a whaling community. Like Wales, Little Diomedes has a population of approximately 170. Residents take walrus, seals, polar bears, birds, fish and crabs, hunting from the sea ice in winter and from walrus-skin boats in summer.

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission

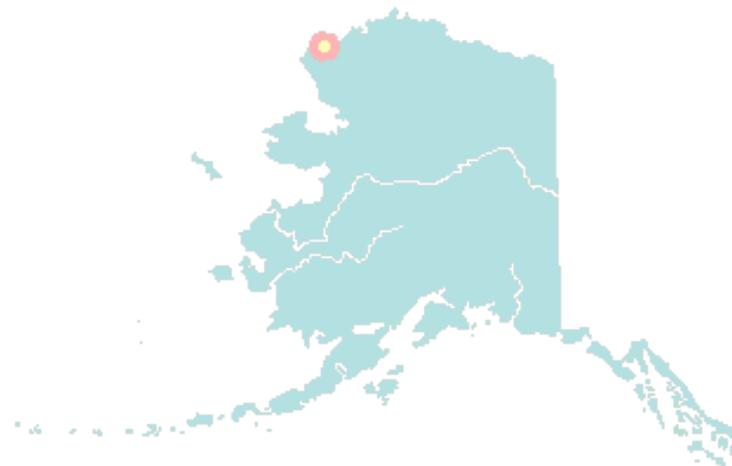
WALES

AEWC Commissioner: Raymond Seetook, Sr.

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Roy Komonaseak

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Forence Seetook

As the point of mainland North America closest to Asia, Wales has long been a site of travel and trade between the two continents. Ancient artifacts, grave sites, and village mounds show the long history of settlement at Kingigin, the Inupiaq name for the village. For local hunters, the Bering Strait is a productive area for marine mammals, migratory birds, and fish. On land, people hunt moose and herd reindeer. With approximately 170 residents, Wales is one of the smallest of the whaling communities. Its whaling traditions extend far back, and as the only whaling village on the Seward Peninsula, when a whale is taken, the whaling feast in Wales attracts visitors from many communities in the region. These guests return home with full sled loads of meat and maktak, extending the network of sharing far up and down the coast.



POINT LAY

AEWC Commissioner: Julius Rexford

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Thomas Nukapigak

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Thomas Nukapigak

The village of Point Lay is located near the Chukchi Sea about 175 miles southwest of Barrow. With a dwindling population in the 1960s and 1970s, Point Lay was not among the original nine villages to receive a quota when the IWC formally recognized the Native subsistence bowhead hunt in 1978 and authorized the landing of 12 whales. Even as the population grew over the next several decades, villagers bore the burden of traveling significant distances to other whaling villages to participate in bowhead hunts as a means to provide meat for their families. It was not until 2008 that Point Lay became officially recognized by the AEWK as a whaling village and provided with its own quota. In addition to the bowhead, the Inupiat of Point Lay subsist on seal, walrus, beluga, bowhead, caribou, and fish as staples of their diet.

GAMBELL

AEWC Commissioner: Edmond Apassingok

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Paul Apangalook

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President: Rodney Unwiluk, Jr.

Located on a gravel point on the northwest tip of St. Lawrence Island, Gambell is an ancient village site and an excellent location for hunting. For centuries, residents of Sivuqaq—the Yupik name for both the village and the island—have taken bowheads. In addition, fish and crab can be caught near shore, birds nest on nearby cliffs, and walrus, seals, polar bears, and whales are abundant in the waters and on the ice around the island. St. Lawrence Island whalers use large walrus-skin boats, called angyapik. These are powered by sail and paddle. Gambell has a population of approximately 500, most of whom are St. Lawrence Island Yupik.



POINT HOPE

AEWC Commissioner: Christopher Oktollik, Secretary

AEWC Alternate Commissioner:

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President:

Rich in subsistence resources and archeological sites, Point Hope is one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in North America. Its whaling traditions extend back thousands of years, and Tikigaq—its Inupiaq name—is widely regarded as one of the most traditional villages in Alaska. The people hunt caribou, moose, seals, walrus, birds, fish, beluga whales, and polar bear, but the bowhead whale remains the focus of the annual subsistence cycle. Today the population of Point Hope is approximately 700.



Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission

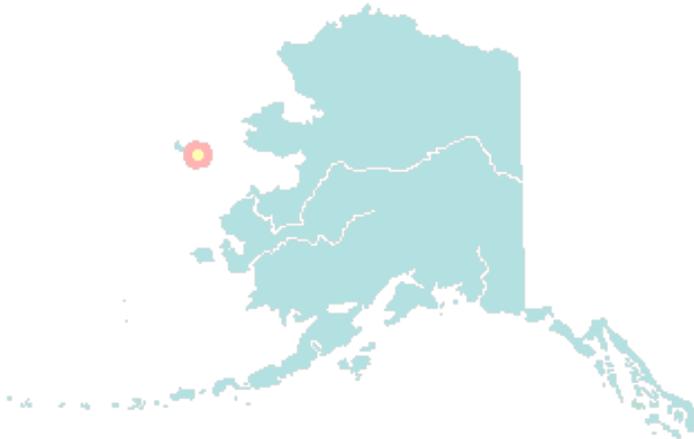
SAVOONGA

AEWC Commissioner: George Noongwook, Treasurer

AEWC Alternate Commissioner: Perry Pungowiyi

AEWC Whaling Captains Association President:

Fifty miles to the east of Gambell along the north coast of St. Lawrence Island lies the village of Savoonga. Originally a reindeer herding camp, today Savoonga is about the same size as Gambell. Family ties between the two villages are strong. Each year, the first whale caught on the island is divided equally between the two villages regardless of which village actually lands it. Savoonga hunters travel fifty miles across the island to the ancient village and whaling site of Pugughileq each spring for the bowhead hunt. In addition to bowheads, Savoonga residents subsist on walrus, polar bears, seals, birds, and fish. With changes in sea ice in recent years, Savoonga and Gambell now hunt in the late fall and winter as well as the spring.



BOWHEAD HARVEST QUOTA

The AEWK serves as an integral part of the United States' efforts to carry out its responsibilities as a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC). The IWC requires detailed harvest-related information, information on management responses to possible infractions, regular updates on subsistence need for bowhead whales, presentations on annual harvest reports, presentations with scientific evidence of population size, catch and population structure of the bowhead whale, presentations on weapons improvement work, and a presentation on progress toward improvements in the humaneness of the hunt.

The U.S. Delegation to the IWC relies on the AEWK for advice on U.S. strategy, preparation of documents required by the IWC, reporting of hunting information and results required by the IWC, and cooperation and support in scientific research on the biology of the bowhead whale, as required by the IWC. The IWC sets quotas on whale stocks, not by country or hunting region. Aboriginal subsistence quotas are set by the IWC only upon a demonstration of biological sustainability and subsistence need. Prior to 1997, only Alaska's AEWK hunters had documented their subsistence needs for bowhead whales, and thus were the only hunters allowed to hunt under the IWC's bowhead whale subsistence quota. In 1997, Russian subsistence hunters obtained the right to hunt whales from the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Seas (BCBS). That year, the U.S. (through NOAA) and Russia entered into a bi-lateral agreement for sharing of the bowhead whale quota; a companion bi-lateral quota allocation and management agreement was entered into between the AEWK and the Association of Traditional Marine Mammal Hunters of Chukotka (ATMMHC) at the same time.

The AEWK harvest quota is determined by the IWC every six years. The harvest quota is based upon the following:

1. The nutritional and cultural needs of Alaskan Eskimos and Eskimo and Chukchi people of Chukotka
2. Estimates of the size and rate of growth of the bowhead whale population

AEWC Bowhead Block Quota for 2013-2018

AEWC's Block Quota for 2013-2017 was reviewed at the 2012 IWC meeting in Panama City, Panama, and was renewed. Since the IWC decided to change their Commission meetings to every other year instead of annually, the quota was approved for the years 2013 through 2018, allowing Alaskan and Chukotkan whalers to land up to 336 whales over the next six years. This provides for the same annual limits and carryovers as have been in place for the last 15 years, including the 2008-2012 quota outlined below.

- The 5-year harvest quota is 280 whales landed or 335 strikes. Cannot exceed 67 strikes in any one year, although 15 unused strikes can be transferred from previous years.
- Harvest is approximately 0.1-0.5% of population.
- Cannot harvest cows with calves.
- Quota reviewed annually by IWC Scientific Committee and NOAA-NMFS. AEWC is allowed to hunt under the IWC's Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling provision.

Allocation by the AEWC of the IWC block quota for 2008 to 2012 per village:

- Barrow: 22 (increased to 25 in 2014)
- Gambell: 8
- Kaktovik: 3
- Kivalina: 4
- Little Diomedede: 2
- Nuiqsut: 4
- Point Hope: 10
- Point Lay: 1 (increased to 2 in 2014)
- Savoonga: 8
- Wainwright: 7
- Wales: 2

ARCTIC SAFETY & COMMUNICATION

As a result of increased marine traffic in the arctic waterways, the AEWC has worked to develop a hunter-lead, collaborative organization to create a management structure for overseeing non-oil and gas vessel traffic. The Arctic Waterways Safety Committee (AWSC) brings together whaling captains, other marine mammal hunting organizations, the North Slope and Northwest Arctic Boroughs, Tribal entities, the U.S. Coast Guard, oil and gas, tug and barge, and the Alaska Marine Pilots and will provide the forum for this work.

The AWSC is the largest Harbor Safety Committee by geographic region and the only one that includes subsistence hunters. The purpose of the Committee is to establish stakeholder-driven guidelines for use of our waterways. These guidelines will then be published as the Arctic Waterways Safety Plan. The U.S. Coast Guard will then look to these guidelines for direction in managing vessel movements in our waters. The AWSC has the unique responsibility for developing waterways management guidelines that accommodate increasing commercial traffic with the potential to bring development opportunities to our shores, while also keeping our waters safe for our subsistence hunters and coastal communities who rely on the sea for their livelihood.

Additionally, with Shell's decision to leave the Arctic, the Bering Strait and Chukchi Sea ComCenters have been decommissioned. Shell donated the equipment to Arctic Slope Energy Services. However, without financial support, the ComCenters cannot be reactivated and staffed. The AEWC is working with the AWSC, the Alaska Delegation, and the Department of Transportation to identify funds to support a coastal communications infrastructure that is not 100 percent dependent on the oil and gas sector. The AEWC hosted a workshop on coastal communications in Anchorage on July 20, 2016 to begin to map out a configuration for communications in coming years that will provide effective coverage for all arctic coastal villages, along with a long-term funding plan to support equipment and operations.

Support AEW C's Mission

AEWC PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

The AEW C is a not-for-profit corporation and a federally recognized Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) charitable and educational organization (IRS No. 92-0081760). As a tribal entity, the success of AEW C is made possible by funds provided through federal and private grants, as well as private donations, all of which assist with the daily operations of the organization allowing us to meet our mission. Following is a list of AEW C programs and initiatives that rely heavily on outside funding. For additional information on how you can contribute, please contact Jenny Evans at (907) 727-2585 or through email at jennykevans@gmail.com.

CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT

The AEW C is the only Alaska Native Organization that works with offshore oil and gas developers to develop and refine mitigation measures in support of NMFS' issuance of small take authorizations for offshore oil and gas activities in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. The AEW C reviews draft small take authorizations and participates in the Open Water Season Peer Review Meeting. The AEW C is also responsible for development of the Conflict Avoidance Agreement (CAA), the key initiative in cooperation with industry to ensure mitigation of impacts of industry activities on subsistence whaling.

The AEW C began work on the CAA in 1985, with a goal of balancing development with our subsistence so that our subsistence resources and livelihood are protected, while our country and our communities receive the benefits of development.

The management of impacts from offshore oil and gas development that directly affects the subsistence hunting grounds of our villages is arduous work. It involves development and annual updating of the CAA, extensive collaboration with the industry and whaling captains, refinement of the Agreement, and implementation, all which take extensive time throughout the year.

Support for this initiative helps defray administrative expenses arising from the scope of work involved in the development and implementation of the CAA.

WEAPONS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A key part of the AEW C's work is the Weapons Improvement Program (WIP). The program is key to AEW C's fight to maintain its subsistence whaling quota. The AEW C is scrutinized closely by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) with strict mandates placed on whalers to utilize the penthrite projectile for a more efficient and humane killing of the bowhead whale. This effort does not come without cost. With the use of the penthrite, there are costs involved in refinement of the penthrite projectile and darting gun as well as safety standards, which must be met by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

The safety of our whaling community is the highest priority for the AEW C. Training and certification for whaling captains on the proper use of the penthrite projectile is conducted annually for whaling captains by the WIP Committee. Additionally, the AEW C has developed both a training manual and a refresher course DVD, which can be used as supplemental programs to the training course.

Whaling captains may contact the AEW C office to request training and certification as well as a copy of the DVD for supplemental training.

VILLAGE WHALING CAPTAINS' ASSOCIATION NEEDS

The eleven (11) whaling villages represented by the AEW C are among the most remote villages in Alaska, none of which are accessible by road. Many of these villages are based on a cash economy and are some of the poorest in the state, which makes them heavily reliant on the subsistence hunt of the bowhead whale to feed their families and communities.

The subsistence hunt does not come without cost to the whaling villages. It includes the use of equipment and tools, both traditional and non-traditional. Harpoons, darting gun, the penthrite projectile, block and tackle, and float coats are just a few of the items needed for a successful hunt. Additionally, climate change has presented new obstacles to hunters with the receding sea ice and the melting of ice cellars. Hunters must now change their approach to the hunt and look for new ways to store their harvests (often in the form of walk-in freezers), which do not come without costs to hunters.

Although AEWCC receives grant funding for its operations, it does not often receive funding to assist the individual whaling villages. Donations to assist with the purchase of whaling equipment and tools can feed an entire village.

ANNUAL MINI-CONVENTION

The AEWCC hosts an annual Whaling Captains' Convention and Open Water Season Conflict Avoidance Agreement (CAA) Meeting, often referred to as the Mini-Convention. It is attended by the Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners, and Presidents of the Village Whaling Captains' Associations, each traveling from remote villages. Every six years, following the renewal of our bowhead whale subsistence quota by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the AEWCC hosts a full Convention, attended by all of the Whaling Captains from our eleven (11) villages.

The Convention is an important facet of the AEWCC's continued effort to protect and preserve the subsistence way of life for our whaling communities. It gives whaling captains an opportunity to interact with each other, to learn from each other, to share information on hunting techniques, and to exchange ideas on meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing climate and a rapidly changing Arctic.

Each year the AEWCC seeks donations to defray the tremendous cost of this undertaking. This is an event the AEWCC cannot accomplish without financial support from partners throughout Alaska. Donations will help ensure the vital cultural traditions of our communities are continued for generations.

JOHNNY L. AIKEN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Johnny L. Aiken was the AEWCC Executive Director from 2010 - 2013. He dedicated most of his life to public service and the betterment of his community through his work on the North Slope. It is in his memory that the Johnny L. Aiken Memorial Scholarship was established by AEWCC so that his name and legacy of giving back to the community and passing along traditional knowledge to youth will live on for generations to come.

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