CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS

Morning Session Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2026 | Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting detail	Information
Session	CACFA public meeting, morning session
Call to order	Approximately 9:14 a.m. (inferred from transcript timing)
Morning session end	Approximately 12:17 p.m.; recessed for lunch until 1:30 p.m. (inferred from transcript timing)
Chair	Charlie Lean
Staff	Kim Griffith, Executive Director

Call to Order, Roll Call, and Introductions

Chair Charlie Lean called the meeting to order, confirmed a quorum, and directed Executive Director Kim Griffith to conduct roll call. Representative Ashley Carrick joined remotely shortly after roll call. Will Koehler arrived later during the communications report.

Commission members recorded present	Role or participation
Charlie Lean	Chair, Bylaws Committee Chair
Susan Smith	Vice Chair, Communications Committee Chair
Sen. Cathy Giessel	Commissioner
Teresa Hanson	Commissioner
Angela Ludwick	Commissioner
Nate Turner	Commissioner
Frank Woods III	Commissioner
Randy Zarnke	Commissioner, Cabin Committee Chair
Representative Ashley Carrick	Remote participation
Will Koehler	Arrived during morning session

Staff and guests introduced themselves. Guest participants included representatives of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, State of Alaska, mining claimants and families, landowners, and members of the public.

Approval of Agenda and Prior Minutes

The Commission approved the agenda without objection. The Commission then approved the May 29–30 meeting minutes as amended. The amendment added "National Park Service rights-of-way regulations" to Tina Cunning's public comments.

Reports and Discussion

State Federal Program / ANILCA Update

Guest speaker Cathe Heroy, Statewide Federal Program Manager and former Statewide ANILCA Coordinator, summarized current and anticipated federal reviews affecting Alaska. Her update covered BLM grazing administration, Denali vehicle use, climbing policies across agencies, Forest Service recreation and organizational rules, Wrangell-St. Elias compendium updates, travel management, Roadless Rule rescission, concessions, appraisals, tribal gathering plans, bicycle use, the Chugach plan revision, proposed winter trail rights-of-way, the Iditarod National Historic Trail, the Alaska Long Trail feasibility study, wildlife rules, Katmai backcountry planning, and the executive order concerning America's hunting heritage.

Frank Woods III asked about ANILCA training. Cathe Heroy recommended the Institute of the North's intensive two-day ANILCA course and offered to supplement the training or answer topic-specific questions.

Cabin Committee Report

Randy Zarnke reviewed the Commission's work on BLM trapping-cabin permits. He reported that BLM leadership had indicated an intent to remove prior barriers, including bonding, and to model portions of the process on the State of Alaska system. The initial process was expected to focus on Interior Alaska as a test case. He emphasized the need for CACFA and affected users to be involved during policy development rather than only after a draft is completed. BLM representative Bill Hedman was scheduled to report during the following day's session.

Bylaws Committee Report

Charlie Lean summarized proposed amendments to the 2016 bylaws, including a membership section and statutory reference, clarification of staggered terms, ethics disclosure considerations, 30-day notice for public meetings, shorter notice for committee meetings, budget approval language, and authority for public communications. Members were asked to review the highlighted draft before the planned vote the next day.

Communications Committee Report

Susan Smith reported that the committee had refreshed the CACFA logo, updated the website with current and historical materials, and begun planning a social-media strategy. Discussion included monthly online updates or newsletters, Facebook and Instagram, educational content on land status and access, updated printed handouts, and use of the CACFA email address for public contact. Teresa Hanson suggested using ANILCA experts to identify educational topics where federal commitments may not be followed.

Chair's Report

Charlie Lean discussed establishing a time-certain public participation period, upcoming agency presentations, the need for future Forest Service participation, the Roadless Rule, and the value of recurring ANILCA refresher training.

Executive Director's Report and Budget

Kim Griffith reported that the CACFA office was fully established and requested commissioner signatures on travel authorizations, outstanding biographies, photographs, and activity photos for the website. She summarized thirteen recently completed federal comment letters, ongoing efforts to locate historic summit videos, the need for a plan to redact electronic records, and preparation of deliverables for the annual report to the Governor and Legislature.

The FY2026 budget was $221,000, with approximately $159,000 returned to the general fund, including unused Department of Law RSA funds. The FY2027 appropriation was approximately $222,000. Projected travel for the Anchorage and Juneau meetings left limited travel flexibility. Kim Griffith proposed modest RSAs for legal and web support and reported submitting a $25,000 travel amendment request for FY2028–FY2030 to support three statewide meetings annually. Commissioners thanked her for improving the budget structure and protecting travel capacity.

Public Participation

Rose Edgren and Will Smith: Portage Creek Mining Claims

Rose Edgren and Will Smith requested CACFA assistance in securing patents for five family mining claims on Portage Creek. They described nearly 60 years of family involvement, continuing assessment filings, state land selection, mineral closure orders, a memorandum of understanding, a completed mineral survey, patent applications that BLM declined to accept during the federal patent moratorium, and a BLM economic and validity review that supported validity. They stated that the unresolved federal-state land transfer and patent process has prevented mining and that their objective is ownership through federal patent, not merely a cabin site or state lease.

Commissioners discussed whether CACFA should communicate with BLM, the Department of the Interior, or Alaska's congressional delegation. The Chair noted that CACFA's statutory role centers on federal agencies and federal land issues. The testimony was accepted for further review together with the written timeline and supporting correspondence.

Paul Shearer: Banjo and Pass Mining Patent

Paul Shearer requested CACFA support for issuance of the Banjo and Pass mining patent. He stated that BLM approved the patent in 1996 and that the application was grandfathered under the 1994 appropriations moratorium. He summarized administrative proceedings, federal court decisions setting aside adverse Department of the Interior actions, an Alaska Superior Court title determination, and an amended federal judgment directing the Secretary of the Interior to render a prompt decision. He reported that the patent remained unsigned approximately 30 years after approval and described substantial legal costs and lost mining opportunity.

Angela Ludwick suggested requesting a BLM presentation on the patent moratorium and possible remedies. Drue Pearce, counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals, stated that she had contacted the BLM representative scheduled for the next day and would seek information on the moratorium and potential remedies.

Ray Kreig: Wrangell-St. Elias Superintendent Selection

Ray Kreig urged consideration of Joshua Scott for the permanent superintendent position at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. He emphasized Scott's Alaska experience, work on access certificates and land issues, community involvement, and credibility with inholders. Susan Smith supported the comments and described improved relations and access administration under Scott's involvement. The discussion also recognized Regional Director Don Striker's outreach and efforts to improve National Park Service relationships in Alaska.

Motions

No.	Motion wording	Moved by	Seconded by	Result
1	"Move to approve [the agenda]."	Frank Woods III	Not clearly identified in the transcript	Approved without objection.
2	"I'll move approval of the minutes as amended." The motion covered the May 29–30 minutes and the correction adding National Park Service rights-of-way regulations to Tina Cunning's comments.	Sen. Cathy Giessel	Frank Woods III	Approved without objection.

Action Items

No.	Action item	Responsible party	Status / timing
1	Provide signed travel authorizations and any missing commissioner biographies and photographs.	Commission members	Requested during the meeting.

No.	Action item	Responsible party	Status / timing
2	Develop the communications and social-media plan, including intended audiences, content strategy, posting schedule, permissions, newsletter use, educational content, and platform recommendations.	Communications Committee with Kim Griffith	For submission to DNR.
3	Continue updating the CACFA website and add the remaining completed federal comment letters.	Kim Griffith	Two letters were still pending website upload.
4	Develop a plan for redaction and management of returned electronic records.	Kim Griffith	To be presented after development.
5	Compile meeting deliverables for the annual report to the Governor and Legislature.	Kim Griffith and Commission leadership	Annual report due near the beginning of the legislative session.
6	Pursue an FY2027 travel waiver or authority for a third statewide meeting if funds remain available.	Kim Griffith / DNR leadership	To be requested when appropriate.
7	Continue pursuing the $25,000 travel amendment for FY2028–FY2030.	Kim Griffith	Submitted; response pending.
8	Bring CACFA participation concerns to BLM and request earlier involvement in development of the trapping-cabin policy.	Randy Zarnke and Cabin Committee	To be raised with Bill Hedman during the next day's session.
9	Review the proposed bylaws amendments in preparation for the next day's vote.	Commission members	Before the next session.
10	Provide information on the federal mining-patent moratorium and possible remedies during the BLM presentation.	Drue Pearce / BLM representative	Requested for the next day's session.
11	Review the Portage Creek and Banjo/Pass mining materials and consider appropriate federal correspondence or other CACFA support.	Commission and staff	Carried forward for Commission business.

Morning Session Recess

At approximately 12:17 p.m., Chair Charlie Lean recessed the meeting for lunch and directed participants to return at 1:30 p.m. for afternoon presentations by National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership.