CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS

Public Meeting Minutes

October 10, 2026 | Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting detail	Information
Meeting format	Public meeting/hearing, with in-person and remote participation
Meeting time	9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Chair	Charlie Lean
Staff	Kim Griffith, Executive Director

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Charlie Lean directed that roll call be conducted. Kim Griffith called the roll, and a quorum was confirmed.

Commission members recorded present	Role or participation
Charlie Lean	Chair, Bylaws Committee Chair
Susan Smith	Vice Chair, Communications Committee Chair
Frank Woods	Commissioner
Nate Turner	Commissioner
Randy Zarnke	Commissioner, Cabin Committee Chair
Teresa Hanson	Commissioner
Cathy Giessel	Commissioner
Angela Ludwick	Commissioner
Will Koehler	Commissioner
Representative Ashley Carrick	Participating remotely

Unfinished Business

1. Bylaws Amendments

Chair Charlie Lean presented recommendations developed through the Bylaws Committee process. The proposed amendments addressed:

- Membership provisions and statutory citations.
- Appointment terms and staggered terms.
- Designation of regular meetings as public hearings.
- Thirty-day public notice for regular meetings.
- Shorter notice periods for committee meetings.
- A time-certain public participation period.

- Ethics-disclosure language.
- Minor formatting, grammar, and order-of-business revisions.

Kim Griffith explained that meeting notices had been issued at 30 days and refreshed approximately 10 days before the meeting with the agenda to ensure applicable notice requirements were addressed.

Ethics Discussion

Members discussed the difference between holding strong views and having a disclosable financial or personal conflict. Cathy Giessel suggested that qualified staff provide ethics education at a future meeting. Frank Woods also requested clarification concerning applicable ethics statutes, gifts, financial benefit, and circumstances requiring recusal. The Commission favored leaving the general ethics language in the bylaws while obtaining additional training before making more detailed changes.

Bylaws Vote

Frank Woods moved to approve the bylaws as amended, and Angela Ludwick seconded the motion. A roll-call vote resulted in ten affirmative votes. The motion passed.

2. Appointment Terms and Membership Requirements

Kim Griffith reported that the original legislation establishing the Commission used staggered initial appointments, but subsequent appointments should follow the governing statutory term requirements. She noted that legislative appointees appeared in statute as having four-year terms, while another appointment chart reflected three-year terms.

The Commission also reviewed judicial-district representation. After excluding legislative and specified Native-interest seats from the calculation, Kim Griffith reported that the current membership appeared to comply with the judicial-district distribution. Members agreed that the applicable statutory requirements should be communicated to future administrations when appointments are made.

Highlighted Guest Speakers and Topics

Guest Speaker: Sara Boario

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Region

Agency Overview

Sara Boario described her Alaska background and approximately 20 years of federal conservation work. She explained that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages 16 national wildlife refuges covering nearly 77 million acres in Alaska and directly connected to approximately 135 communities.

Topics Presented

- Federal priorities affecting Alaska.
- Environmental reviews supporting industry and development.
- Hunting, fishing, recreation, and tourism access.
- Rights-of-way and access to inholdings.
- Land exchanges.
- Outfitter and guide permitting.
- Snowmachine race routes, including the Iron Dog.
- Fish-passage projects.
- Invasive-species prevention.
- Co-management and co-stewardship with tribes and Alaska Native organizations.

- Infrastructure supporting public access and local businesses.

Guide-Concession Engagement

Nate Turner described the importance of federal guide-concession programs and requested meaningful industry consultation before prospectus requirements are changed. Sarah Boario said the agency had engaged with an Alaska professional association and would seek better engagement regarding future changes.

Historic Trails and Access

Charlie Lean emphasized historic winter trails, long-standing travel routes, and the importance of keeping access available. Sarah Boario said that documenting historic trails and locating historic maps were matters the agency was considering following a prior listening session.

Subsistence and Economic Value

Frank Woods discussed the economic and replacement value of subsistence resources and asked whether the agency quantified the economic contributions of refuge-related uses. The discussion also addressed federal agency responsibilities for different marine-mammal species.

Guest Speaker: Bill Hedman

Acting District Manager, Bureau of Land Management Fairbanks District

Topic: Winter Trapping-Cabin Policy

Bill Hedman gave an update on BLM's work to revise the 1987 Alaska Supplement governing cabin authorizations. He said the new supplement was being drafted specifically for winter trapping cabins and was intended to create a streamlined system resembling the State of Alaska's process where possible.

BLM's Proposed Approach

- Replace or substantially revise the 1987 Alaska Supplement.
- Treat trapping as inherently commercial for purposes of FLPMA authorization, without requiring applicants to meet the previous percentage-of-income test.
- Prepare a programmatic environmental assessment.
- Initially analyze up to 20 cabin authorizations.
- Include main cabins and line cabins within an authorization.
- Reduce individual cost recovery by having BLM sponsor the programmatic environmental review.
- Consider avoiding bonding requirements where construction standards and permit conditions adequately protect the land.
- Use annual reports and photographs, with periodic agency inspection.
- Develop standard conditions while recognizing that some applicants may present unusual circumstances.

Commission Concerns

- Relying primarily on FLPMA rather than ANILCA.
- Characterizing trapping principally as commercial rather than cultural, traditional, and subsistence related.
- Limited CACFA involvement during development of the draft policy.
- Cabin-size flexibility for families.
- Seasonal occupancy and access outside the formal trapping season for preparation, freeze-in, maintenance, and repairs.
- Fuel storage.
- Main cabins and safety-related line cabins.
- Permit fees and separate charges for multiple cabins.

- A clear process for exceptions or unique circumstances.
- Preserving statutory protections associated with traditional Alaska activities.

Bill Hedman stated that the policy draft was close to internal review, that a draft environmental assessment would later be available for public review, and that members could continue providing relevant information directly to him.

Guest Advisor: Tina Cunning

Tina Cunning discussed the National Park Service's right-of-way regulations. She explained that a regulatory correction could make the Park Service language consistent with Fish and Wildlife Service language recognizing Alaska's exemption from certain general regulations. She identified either an agency-initiated correction or a petition for rulemaking as possible paths.

She also suggested developing background or white-paper materials concerning federal commercial-service concession rules and the possibility of an Alaska-specific exemption for future Commission consideration.

Public Participation

Paul Shearer

Paul Shearer updated his previously submitted comments concerning the Banjo and Pass mining claims. He asked that Page 9 of his written comments be replaced and submitted an October 9 letter from the Alaska Miners Association requesting prompt issuance of the patent. He stated that Banjo and Pass are two adjoining claims totaling approximately 35 acres and asked that the supporting material be added to the meeting packet.

Charles McKee

Charles McKee provided materials and spoke about personal property, mining, legal, court, and trust-related concerns. When asked what action he wanted, he requested that the Commission read his materials and assist him in obtaining access to what he described as a trust account.

Ray Kreig

Ray Kreig supported issuance of the Banjo and Pass mining patent. He disclosed that he could potentially compete with the claim owner but stated that justice and the public interest supported issuance of the patent. He also discussed prior National Park Service permitting and environmental-review disputes and encouraged CACFA to continue exposing regulatory delay and agency overreach.

Listening Participants

Jen Yuhas, Reid Harris, and Lee Ann Kreig indicated that they were attending to listen and did not provide substantive public testimony.

Mining and Patent Issues

The Commission discussed two separate mining-related matters:

- The Banjo and Pass patent matter presented by Paul Shearer.
- The Portage-area patent issue involving a historic land-title and land-transfer problem.

Members distinguished the matters but agreed that both warranted correspondence. Regarding the Portage matter, members discussed whether an administrative error or unresolved land status prevented completion before the federal patent moratorium. Members favored addressing the broader agency error and affected class of claimants rather than advocating solely on the basis of an individual claimant's circumstances.

Cathy Giessel moved that the Executive Director prepare two letters addressing the mining issues presented to the Commission. Frank Woods seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Representative Ashley Carrick subsequently clarified that she supported this motion.

National Park Service Right-of-Way Regulations

Following Tina Cunning's explanation, Frank Woods moved that CACFA request that the National Park Service undertake the identified rulemaking or regulatory correction. Cathy Giessel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, including an affirmative vote from Representative Ashley Carrick.

Future Business and Meeting Planning

Proposed Next Meeting

The Commission discussed holding its next meeting in Juneau, Alaska, tentatively on February 19-20, 2027. The dates were discussed but were not adopted through a formal motion in the draft minutes.

- Traveling on Thursday.
- Holding the public meeting on Friday and Saturday.
- Scheduling legislative visits before or during the meeting.
- Requesting a committee room in the Capitol.
- Presenting CACFA's work to the House and Senate resource committees.
- Inviting Forest Service representatives.
- Receiving an update on the BLM trapping-cabin policy.
- Reviewing responses to the Commission's letters.
- Discussing commercial-service concession rules and a possible Alaska exemption.
- Addressing the Roadless Rule and Southeast Alaska concerns.

Cathy Giessel and Representative Ashley Carrick advised that legislators are heavily scheduled early in the session. Members planning individual legislative visits were encouraged to arrange appointments in advance.

Motions

No.	Motion wording	Moved by	Seconded by	Vote / result
1	"Move to approve the bylaws as amended."	Frank Woods	Angela Ludwick	Roll-call vote: 10 yes; motion passed.
2	"I move that the CACFA Commission formally communicate to BLM that, in developing or revising trapping-cabin policies and regulations for BLM-managed lands in Alaska, the agency must recognize and give precedence to ANILCA over FLPMA wherever applicable; ensure ANILCA compliance; conduct open and meaningful consultation; recognize Alaska's unique circumstances; provide legal justification and adequate public review; transmit this position to the BLM Alaska State Director; and request that BLM engage directly with CACFA before adopting or implementing significant changes to the cabin policy."	Angela Ludwick	Cathy Giessel	Unanimously approved.
3	"Move that we request our Executive Director to write two letters related to the mining issues brought before the Commission today: the Paul Shearer matter and the Portage patent issue."	Cathy Giessel	Frank Woods	Passed unanimously. Representative Ashley Carrick later confirmed an affirmative vote.
4	"CACFA will submit a request that the National Park Service go through the rulemaking process" to make the identified right-of-way regulatory correction.	Frank Woods	Cathy Giessel	Passed unanimously. Representative Ashley Carrick voted aye.
5	Motion to adjourn.	Nate Turner	Susan Smith	Second recorded; no separate result stated in the draft minutes.

Action Items

No.	Action item	Responsible party	Timing / status
1	Arrange an ethics presentation or training addressing disclosures, financial interests, gifts, recusal, and applicable statutory requirements.	Kim Griffith	Suggested for the next or a future meeting.
2	Draft formal correspondence to BLM concerning ANILCA precedence, consultation, Alaska-specific circumstances, legal justification, public review, and CACFA engagement in the trapping-cabin policy.	Kim Griffith, with input from Nate Turner, Randy Zarnke, the Chair, and other members	Prepare and circulate through the Commission before issuance.
3	Include the Commission's specific trapping-cabin concerns in the BLM communication, including seasonal use, family and cabin-size flexibility, main and line cabins, fees, fuel storage, and an avenue for exceptions.	Letter drafting group	To be addressed in the BLM correspondence.
4	Prepare a support letter concerning the Banjo and Pass mining-patent matter presented by Paul Shearer.	Kim Griffith	Authorized by unanimous motion.
5	Prepare a separate letter concerning the Portage-area patent and land-title issue, focusing on the administrative or land-transfer problem and similarly situated claimants.	Kim Griffith	Authorized by unanimous motion.
6	Request National Park Service rulemaking or a regulatory correction concerning Alaska right-of-way regulations.	Kim Griffith	Authorized by unanimous motion.
7	Develop background or white-paper materials concerning federal commercial-service concession scoring and a possible Alaska exemption.	Tina Cunning and supporting experts	Proposed for Commission review; no final motion adopted on this separate concession issue.
8	Add federal concession rules and the possible Alaska exemption to the next meeting agenda.	Chair and Kim Griffith	Proposed for the February meeting.
9	Invite Forest Service leadership to address cabin policy, the Roadless Rule, and Southeast Alaska concerns.	Kim Griffith	Proposed for the Juneau meeting.
10	Obtain contact information for the acting Tongass National Forest supervisor.	Sara Taylor	Volunteered during meeting planning.
11	Explore inviting Jim Clark to discuss the Roadless Rule.	Chair and Kim Griffith	Suggested as a future-meeting topic.
12	Coordinate with Representative Ashley Carrick regarding use of a legislative committee room in Juneau.	Cathy Giessel and Representative Ashley Carrick	Proposed during meeting planning.
13	Prepare CACFA's annual report for submission early in the legislative session and use it to support legislative outreach and the Commission's funding request.	Chair and Kim Griffith	Due within the first 10 days of the legislative session.
14	Consider making the issue-review form available to people presenting matters to CACFA and adding clearer information about the Commission's federal scope.	Angela Ludwick, Kim Griffith, and Commission members	Suggested for further refinement and possible website or meeting use.
15	Review the draft BLM trapping-cabin environmental assessment when it is released for public comment.	CACFA members and interested stakeholders	Public review expected after BLM completes its draft; no exact release date established.

Commissioner Comments

Members emphasized:

- The value of in-person public meetings.
- The breadth of knowledge and lived experience represented on the Commission.

- The importance of respectful but decisive agency correspondence.
- The Commission's role in bringing federal land-management concerns into public view.

Adjournment

Nate Turner moved to adjourn, and Susan Smith seconded. The meeting concluded at approximately 4:30 p.m.