

Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas

DRAFT Meeting Minutes February 13-14, 2026

Location: Hilton Garden Inn, Anchorage, AK, and online via Zoom

February 13, 2026

1. **Call to Order 1:45 PM and Roll Call:**

Present (Quorum = 7) - Dave Brown, William Koehler, Charlie Lean (Chair), Frank Woods III, Susan Smith (Vice Chair), Randall Zarnke, Nathan Turner

Excused - Teresa Hanson, Alice Johnson Smith

Absent - Representative Andy Josephson, Senator Cathy Giessel, Elizabeth Jerue

2. **Public/staff/agency introductions:**

Ray Kreig (former ASLAG member) and Lee Ann Kreig

Sally Gibert – ANILCA trainer (former State ANILCA Coordinator)

Cathe Heroy – State's Federal Program and ANILCA Coordinator

Reed Harris – lobbyist for Safari Club Alaska

Dick Mylius – State-federal land law trainer (former Director DNR Div Mining, Land & Water)

Joe Meehan – staff for Representative Andy Josephson

Emma Torkelson – Chief of Staff for Senator Kaufman

Senator James Kaufman – sponsoring legislator CACFA reauthorization

Brad Dunker – Dept. of Fish & Game, ANILCA and Access Defense Program Manager

Sara Taylor – former CACFA Executive Director

Tina Cunning – ANILCA trainer (former ADF&G ANILCA Coordinator)

Mitch Laird, EBO Consulting Inc. – Zoom/tech support

3. **Approval of Agenda:**

Motion to approve by Frank Woods; seconded by William Koehler; minor correction of wrong year on handout (is correct on-line); no objections; agenda approved unanimous.

4. **Approval of Previous Minutes:**

Motion moved by Susan Smith to approve Dec 19 & Nov 26, 2025 minutes with corrections, seconded by William Koehler. Corrections: Date on both minutes; general check for errors/omissions; commissioners found them "sufficient"; David Peterson incorrectly listed as commissioner was guest staff to Rep. Josephson. Corrected minutes approved unanimous.

5. **Communications:**

- Chair reported receipt of multiple applications for the Executive Director (ED) position; Chair will email file to commissioners to review overnight; detailed discussion of applicants by all commissioners scheduled for Executive Session tomorrow.
- Chair invited Cathe Heroy to provide an update on federal & ANILCA-related items. Cathe provided a handout summarizing recent and upcoming federal actions, noting open comment periods where commissioners/public may comment. Commissioners may follow up with Cathe or her office for detailed questions.

6. **Budget - Presentation (FY25/FY26) by Susan Smith on behalf of Budget Committee:**

- CACFA must adopt a budget for remainder of FY26.
- Bylaws require ED draft a budget for commission approval then consult with DNR before submit to Legislature; in absence of an ED, Commission responsible for drafting. DNR submitted FY27 requested funds; no CACFA consultation to date.
- **Historical funding** \$236.7k/year (ED + NR specialist + interns, \$34k travel for ED and CACFA conduct of 3 meetings/year around state, \$32k services).

- **Current fiscal note** (FY26) of \$201.5k total (a \$60k reduction; only staff is ED); \$10k travel (\$8.7k used on current meeting); and a \$30k RSA DNR issued to Dept. of Law.
- **Concerns identified:**
 - DNR issued RSA to Dept of Law without CACFA request or approval, DNR advises that Law is charging \$7.1k for services; these services were not requested by CACFA and are unprecedented involvement in meetings, plus Law drafted required scripts, and provided written legal advice DNR requested on conduct and public notice. Former EDs and records indicate minimal help requested from Law in prior decades; monies better spent for travel for legislatively-required three meetings/year around state.
 - DNR charging to ED salary funds line item for set up services, incorrectly claiming filling ED duties, while core services line for DNR administrative support unused
 - DNR services done by high level staff; Chair requested lower pay persons do tasks
 - Surplus ED wages exist due to late hiring, but DNR incorrectly asserting CACFA's options to reallocate personnel funds to travel & items to fulfill CACFA's mission are not allowed; repeatedly and incorrectly claiming Fiscal Note (drafted by OPMP in 2024) is unchangeable operating budget.
- **Adoption of Budget:** on agenda tomorrow to discuss:
 - FY-to-date expenditures, identification of unspent funds, and reallocation options (travel, services, Law RSA). **See attached "Fiscal Note Expenses to 1/31/2026.**
 - Discussion of RSA validity and identify any future DNR/Law support needed
 - Sufficient funds to plan for travel to at least one more in-person meeting this fiscal year per bylaws requirement.

7. Chair's Report by Charlie Lean

- Commission dormant since 2017, reconstituted with 8 new, 4 returning members
- Importance of this in-person meeting to build working relationships for electing officers tomorrow: Chair, Vice Chair, three Executive Committee members.
- Hiring of ED is top priority: plan for remote video interviews with top 2–3 candidates.
- Annual Report to Legislature and Governor statutorily required report deadline last week, missed due to late restart; draft report distributed for review and finalize by adding recommendations to resolve issues with DNR's administrative support and add priority issues for 2026, then vote adoption tomorrow.
- Need decision on future meeting in-person vs remote, subject to adopt CACFA budget.

8. CACFA and ED Historic Duties and Activities – presentation by former ED Sara Taylor

- Reviewed CACFA history 1981–1999, 2007–2017, and mission as state-sanctioned watchdog on federal land management decisions and ANILCA implementation.
- One task is outreach so Alaskans know CACFA helps protect Alaskans' rights and traditional activities from federal encroachment, including have and may need to testify to Congress and the Legislature.
- CACFA implements subcommittees to work on specific issues; e.g., BLM recommendation to adopt ANILCA-based regulations to permit cabins and a policy in interim; invite federal managers to meetings and make recommendations, e.g., 2015-2016 NPS and FWS access regulations.
- Highlighted long-term work on unresolved issues; e.g., cabins, access for traditional activities & inholders, federal management state navigable waters, and land use plans.
- Legislation authorizes CACFA to recommend litigation or amicus briefs to the AG.
- Brief review of unfinished project, such as: ANILCA amendments, make public documents database available on website, rulemaking petitions, implement Alaska State Lands Advisory Group (ASLAG) recommendations.

- Described needed ED qualities: strong research and monitoring skills, public engagement, confidentiality, advocacy, and patience for resolving long-term issues.
9. **Commissioner Round-Table:** Randy, Susan, William, Nate, Frank, Dave, and Charlie summarized backgrounds and experiences in trapping, guiding, fisheries, subsistence, Tongass issues, Nat'l Park access and commercial services issues, BLM failure to permit trapping cabins, NPS cabin and horse restrictions, subsistence enforcement abuses, Tongass Roadless Rule, sea otter impacts, and desire to be sure ANILCA/statehood implemented as intended.
10. **Public Comment:** Chair opened floor; checked online; no public callers or commenters.
11. **Recess at 4:41 PM**
- Motion to recess for the day by Frank Woods, seconded by Susan Smith. No objection.

February 14, 2026 Reconvene

12. Call to Order, 8:38 AM Roll Call:

Present: Dave Brown, Senator Cathy Giessel, William Koehler, Charlie Lean (Chair), Susan Smith (Vice Chair), Nathan Turner, Frank Woods III, Randall Zarnke, Representative Andy Josephson (on line from Juneau)

Excused: Teresa Hanson, Alice Johnson Smith

Absent: Elizabeth Jerue

13. Legislative Update by Senator James Kaufman and Chief of Staff Emma Torkelson

- Described how CACFA is able to work on finding ways to resolve conflicts with federal agencies without litigation, which saves the State money, reduces impact on individuals, and helps local economies based on uses of federal lands
- CACFA re-established in 2024 as independent board; emphasized that CACFA is **administratively housed within DNR but not a piece of and not directed by DNR**; DNR is statutorily limited to provide administrative support that CACFA identifies it needs to fulfil CACFA's responsibilities.
- CACFA scope of duties limited to issues on federal land (explicitly not private lands).
- Composition changes: judicial-district balance (≤ 3 members per district, excluding legislators) and designated corporate/tribal seats with documented nomination from the respective entities. (Need a process to acquire written nominations)
- Suggested administrative issues with DNR may be resolved by sending recommendation for change to DNR Commissioner for follow-up by CACFA

14. Bylaws & Open Meetings Act - Presented by Sarah Taylor, former Executive Director

- 2016 bylaws remain in force until amended; not yet posted online by DNR, along with other historical documents provided to but not posted by DNR.
- Key structural points:
 - Quorum is a majority of seated positions.
 - Regular meetings: three per year; schedule at first meeting of calendar year.
 - Bylaws Amendments: 2/3 vote of Commission; 30-day public notice required.
- Public notice & Open Meetings Act:
 - Three regular meetings per year receive full "max" public notice (30-day, publish in newspaper general statewide or trade print + online).
 - Other meetings are noticed as practicable; advisory groups use "reasonable notice."

Role of Executive Director & CACFA Structure - Presentation cont'd by Sara Taylor

- ED handles all CACFA affairs, e.g., public notice, records, budget prep, staff supervision; is a non-voting member of all committees. Updates financial report every meeting.

- In ED's absence, Chair assumes all ED functions (including signing payment vouchers).
- Executive Committee: 5 members; is the steering body; participates in hiring ED.
- Officers: Chair and Vice Chair elected annually at first meeting; 1-year terms; removal from office requires 2/3 of full Commission.
- Chair sets agenda, presides over meetings, supervises ED, speaks for Commission unless another member authorized.
- Budget & Fiscal Management Process: ED drafts proposed budget; CACFA reviews and approves; ED then works with DNR and Governor's Office to integrate into state budget
 - Concern raised – The bylaw phrase "Commission shall approve the budget" viewed as implying automatic approval of ED's proposal. General agreement that bylaw language needs to clarify it is CACFA's (not ED) authority to modify/approve a budget.
- Ethics & Conflicts:
 - Executive Branch Ethics Act applies to all members.
 - Suggestion (discussion only) to add a standing conflict-of-interest question at start of each meeting/vote; consider potential future bylaw or procedural change
- Administrative home within DNR has always been within Commissioner's Office:
 - Members request return to CACFA being administratively housed in Commissioner's Office rather than OPMP, administrative approvals done by a Deputy Commissioner. Discussed resolution, annual report recommendation, and legislative engagement.

15. Overview of ANILCA & State-Federal Land Laws – Presented (3 hours) with powerpoints by Sally Gibert, Dick Mylius, and Tina Cunning

- Alaska's unique land law framework in ANCSA/Statehood Act/ANILCA; ANILCA's four purposes; ANILCA titles and amendments; access protections for uses such as subsistence, traditional activities, inholdings, transportation and utilities. Detailed video on ANILCA's provisions for cabins and temporary facilities held to later in agenda.
- Materials: Annotated ANILCA booklet; trainers will email copies of slides to members

16. Elections & Governance

- Election of Chair: Susan Smith nominated Charlie Lean; William Koehler seconded; passed without objection. Charlie Lean elected Chair.
- Election of Vice Chair: Nathan Turner nominated Susan Smith; Cathy Geissel seconded; passed without objection. Susan elected Vice Chair.
- Election of Executive Committee (per bylaws - Chair and Vice Chair are members; 3 more needed) Frank nominated Nate; Susan nominated Teresa, noting vital role in prior communications committee; Susan nominated Sen. Giessel; others nominated declined. Frank moved to close nominations; unknown second; passed with no objections.

17. Executive Session

- Cathy moved, Nate seconded, discuss ED applicants and resumes in executive session with commissioners only, Rep Josephson on-line. Passed no objections.
- Post-Session Report - candidate pool narrowed to two. Executive Committee will interview and check references. Randy moved, William seconded, Executive Committee make final decision from shortlist. Passed with no objections.

18. Budget and Fiscal Decisions

- Susan presented spreadsheets of possible reallocations to use surplus estimated \$79,000, summarized issues discussed yesterday: FY24-FY30 Fiscal Note reduced CACFA's appropriation to \$201.5k, further reduced by inclusion of authorization to RSA \$30k for DOL. The significant surplus in ED salary line due to delayed hiring, all expenses may total \$54,000.
- Discussed frustrations with DNR exceeding legislatively-limited administrative support:

- OPMP rejected Charlie's attempts to expedite set-up earlier, less costly in October 2025 so could meet in December by contracting former ED (on federal furlough) and OPMP refused to acknowledge Charlie continues as Chair until new election
- OPMP **exceeding legislative limits to DNR's authority by unilaterally claiming to serve as ED** until ED hired (Note - ED is hired by and works for CACFA, not the reverse; in absence of an ED, CACFA members assume responsibilities of ED.)
- No breakdown of Dept of Law's charges yet for services CACFA didn't request, plus OPMP issuance and backdated a \$30k RSA to Law without CACFA consultation
- Repeated requests to task administrative support to lower level, less expensive staff
- OPMP charged \$1000 for setup of state email no one wanted and not using
- OPMP incorrect claims had applied for travel authorization for two months but hadn't, then granted authorization in January same day as filed
- OPMP refusal to acknowledge CACFA sets own budget, limiting travel to Fiscal Note line items so blocked in-person meeting incorrectly claiming travel would exceed \$10k
- OPMP established 2nd website instead of activating existing CACFA website
- OPMP failure to provide requested documentation of correspondence regarding OPMP's expenses charged to CACFA, such as hiring waiver application, requests for Law' advice and involvement
- Frank moved to approve FY 26 budget with the modifications discussed to the Fiscal Note and to task ED (with the Executive Committee) to draft Fy27 budget. Cathy seconded. Accepted friendly amendment that authorizes Executive Committee to move monies between line items as progress toward end of fiscal year:
 - Approve a working budget for remainder of FY26.
 - Reallocate surplus ED salary funds into:
 - Enough funds for travel to at least one more in-person meeting before June 30, including travel and costs to bring in subject matter experts
 - Set aside funds for Services/training/travel for ED onboarding and support
 - Encumber remaining surplus specifically for ED training and related support, including materials, training, and travel by ED and/or subject-matter experts.
 - Authorize future ED + Executive Committee to fine-tune line items, e.g., move funds into travel and service and begin planning for FY2027 within this framework.
- Roll-call vote – unanimous “Yes” from all commissioners present. Budget subsequently amended, see below, to use FY26 funds in the RSA for Law to redact documents CACFA already paid to have digitized, estimated \$8-10,000.
- Consensus for Charlie to talk to DNR Commissioner, ask to commit to consult with CACFA before signing an RSA for FY27 funds or use any more of FY26 funds. The Governor's Statehood Defense addresses issues of federal laws and Alaskans rights, which should pay for legal advice in resolving costs incurred by Dept of Law. This would enable moving the \$20,000 remainder of \$30,000 into personal services and/or travel, based on facts that CACFA has used maximum \$5,000 of Dept of Law services since 1981, and only paid travel for one former Law employee who wanted to attend a CACFA meeting for his improved understanding, not because CACFA needed Law's services.
- **See attached FINAL “FY26 CACFA Budget Adopted February 14, 2026”**

19. Public Comment (time certain)

- (1) Ray Kreig, former ASLAG committee member and national park inholder, requested CACFA use surplus funds to have the 50,000+ historical documents (Sara paid to have digitized while ED) processed by Law—those records cannot be posted online until reviewed and redacted to remove sensitive and personal information.

(2) Described events that contributed to legislation sponsored by Bettye Fahrenkemp that established CACFA in 1981, involving Chuck Cushman of the National Inholders Association and NPS overreach impacts on Skagway residents.

- Nate moved, Frank seconded to use funds in the existing RSA with Dept of Law to fund a law clerk (or equivalent) to review digitized records, redact sensitive information, and prepare them for public access. No objections. Clarified intent that this is added to the FY 26 Budget RSA sent to Dept of Law, explain in the Annual Report, and press DNR to combine CACFA websites so these records can be made available to the public.

20. Cabins & Temporary Facilities - video from ANILCA Training

21. Next Meeting, Set Priority Topics to Seek Resolution, Public Information, Agenda

- Consensus priority: ANILCA cabin implementation, with first emphasis on BLM, seeking all four federal agencies consistently apply ANILCA's applicable cabin provisions.
- Consensus for in-person meeting about late April 2026 in Fairbanks; focus agenda on:
 - BLM long-term cabin permitting & interim policy solutions under ANILCA; invite BLM:
 - Inform delegation
 - Provide background on efforts and solutions proposed by RAC and CACFA, request ANILCA-based regs, provide interim recommendation for BLM to adopt as policy in Alaska Supplement to the BLM Manual, already developed by ATA
 - Presentation from Wrangell–St. Elias NP (checkerboard/cabin/airstrip issues)
 - Brief status reports from other federal agencies as feasible
 - Provide ANILCA briefing for public
 - Include bylaws as an agenda item (for potential revision) with proper public notice.

22. Annual Report to Legislature

Discussion of and consensus reached to update draft 2025 Annual Report to reflect;
(1) actions from this meeting (elections, budget decisions, RSA use, ED hiring path),
(2) focus on 2026 priorities (cabins/BLM, ED hiring & training, records project, next meeting in-person), and

(3) add recommendations to resolve issues with DNR's administrative support, including posting on combined, single website. Circulate revised draft to commissioners with brief email review period, then Chair to finalize and submit to Legislature and Governor asap.

23. Records, Website, and Minutes

- Consensus to use meeting recording and transcript to prepare draft minutes within 30 days for posting as draft for action at next meeting along with recording of meeting.
- Request DNR to consolidate CACFA's web presence, restore to a single CACFA page, update with current commissioners, and ensure prompt posting of notices, minutes, and archived records. Resolve posting of meetings by DNR administrative staff on State Public Notice website to include CACFA contact information instead of DNR staff.
- Ray Kreig advised the links to the video recordings of the Legislature-CACFA Overreach Summit archived on KTOO's Gavel Alaska website for many years no longer work and need to be recovered.

24. Adjournment: 4:59 PM

FY26 CACFA BUDGET ADOPTED FEBRUARY 14, 2026

Allocation	\$201,500	Expense	Remaining
Personnel	50,000 Executive Director salary March-June 2026	0	50,000
	10,874 DNR payroll to 1/31/26 (Should have been charged to "Services")	-10,874	0
	<u>\$60,874 Total Personnel</u>	<u>-\$10,874</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>
Travel	10,000 Commissioner travel - Feb 13-14 meeting Anch	-6,877	3,123
	10,000 Executive Director travel, training	0	10,000
	20,000 Commissioner travel - April meeting Fbks	0	20,000
	10,000 Commissioner training	0	10,000
	10,000 ANILCA presenters - travel & lodging to Fbks, training	0	10,000
	<u>\$60,000 Total Travel (Encumbrance)</u>	<u>-\$6,877</u>	<u>\$53,123</u>
Services	15,000 Core office charges	0	15,000
	14,126 Estimated DNR payroll Feb 1 - June 30	0	14,126
	1,600 Conference room February meeting	-1,573	27
	2,500 EBO AV setup for April meeting	0	2,500
	2,000 Conference room April meeting	0	2,000
	8,900 Future Contractor engagement (Encumbrance)	0	8,900
	<u>\$44,126 Total Services</u>	<u>-\$1,573</u>	<u>\$42,553</u>
Law	10,000 Law clerk - Redaction of CACFA digital materials	0	10,000
	7,110 Law payroll to 1/31/26 (Pending)	-7,110	0
	12,890 Future Department of Law/Clerk assistance (Encumbrance)	0	12,890
	<u>\$30,000 Total Law</u>	<u>-\$7,110</u>	<u>\$22,890</u>
Commodities	1,500 Supply costs	0	1,500
	5,000 Printing costs	0	5,000
	<u>\$6,500 Total Commodities</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$6,500</u>
\$201,500 Total CACFA Allocation		-\$26,434	\$175,066

**CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS
FISCAL NOTE EXPENSES TO 1/31/2026**

FY26 BUDGET	OPERATING EXPENDITURES	DNR PAYROLL			DEPT OF LAW	COMMISSIONER TRAVEL			TOTAL EXPENSE	BUDGET REMAINING
		PAY DATE	WAGES & BEN	AIRFARE		LODGING	PER D + MIL	CONF RM		
Personnel* *Incorrectly charged to Executive Director salary line. Request that DNR only charge to "Services" below	(DNR) Ashlee Adoko	2025.10.26	225.04							
		2025.11.23	2,469.92							
		2025.12.07	2,978.85							
		2025.12.21	1,264.22							
		2026.01.18	661.88							
	(DNR) Adoko Total		\$7,599.91						\$7,599.91	
	(DNR)Kayla Wagenfehr	2025.12.07	413.66							
		2026.01.04	252.55							
	(DNR) Wagenfehr Total		\$666.21						\$666.21	
	(DNR) Catherine Heroy	2025.12.07	1,177.01							
	2025.12.21	400.81								
	2026.01.04	63.67								
(DNR) Heroy Total		\$1,641.49						\$1,641.49		
(DNR)Teri Gilpin	2025.12.07	686.67								
	2026.01.04	50.77								
	2026.01.18	228.90								
(DNR) Gilpin Total		\$966.34						\$966.34		
\$145,000	Total DNR Personnel		\$10,873.95					\$10,873.95	\$134,126.05	
Travel** ** Includes estimated costs for in-person meeting Feb 13-14, 2026	Charlie Lean			431.10						
	Frank Woods			356.16						
	David Brown			498.21						
	Nathan Turner			920.10						
	Randall Zarnke			534.24						
	William Koehler			374.60						
	Susan Smith			576.30						
	Senator Cathy Giesel			425.31						
	Representative Andy Josephson									
	Total Travel			\$3,225.62	\$2,136.96	\$1,514.00			\$6,876.58	\$3,123.42
Services	Core service charges									
	RSA Department of Law									
	Total Services									
	Commodities									
\$1,500								\$0.00	\$1,500.00	
\$201,500	TOTAL ALL		\$10,873.95	\$3,225.62	\$2,136.96	\$1,514.00	\$0.00	\$26,433.41	\$175,066.59	