

Written Public Comment

(May 21, 2025)

Submission of Public Comment Submission – Lake Minchumina Concerns re: AMHT Land Use and Willow Air Permit

From Krystal Lapp <Krystal.Lapp@tananachiefs.org>

Date Wed 5/21/2025 11:22 AM

To public.comment@mhtrust.org <public.comment@mhtrust.org>

Cc Nathon Blackburn <nunoyuk@gmail.com>

 1 attachment (46 KB)

Nathon Blackburn - Lake Minchumina Traditional Council Objection to AMHT Hunter Transportation Permits.pdf;

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Dear Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees,

On behalf of Nathon Blackburn, a Tribal member of the Lake Minchumina community, I am submitting the attached public comment regarding concerns related to the issuance of hunter transportation permits, specifically involving Willow Air and the use of Trust lands near Lake Minchumina (Unit 20C).

Mr. Blackburn's comment outlines key issues tied to the impacts of commercial hunting activities on traditional subsistence practices, environmental changes affecting moose availability, and the importance of collaborative policy development with local Tribal governments.

Please confirm receipt of this comment, and feel free to reach out should you require additional information or follow-up.



Tsin'ęę,

Krystal Lapp, Natural Resource Policy Analyst
Tribal Resource Stewardship Department

Tanana Chiefs Conference | 2175 S. University Ave Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

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**Lake Minchumina Traditional Council
c/o Tanana Chiefs Conference**

Nathon Blackburn
Cell: 801-888-3697
Phone: 907-376-0600
nunoyuk@gmail.com
Tribal Member
5/20/2025

To:
Board of Trustees
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99508

Subject: Public Comment on Willow Air Permit and the Management of Trust Lands near Lake Minchumina (Unite 20C)

Dear Trustees,

My name is Nathon Blackburn, I am third generation Minchumina, a member of the Lake Minchumina Tribal community and an ardent subsistence hunter gatherer. I would like to address concerns about commercially sponsored moose hunting in Minchumina, especially as it relates to Unit 20C. Residents and those with longstanding ties to the land around Minchumina have a difficult time harvesting moose as the current climate and environment has been changing. People are concerned about commercial influences on an area that has historically been a difficult moose harvest area. I am also concerned with the apparent lack of policy surrounding the grave influences of how Alaska Mental Health Trust uses its lands in commercial pursuits.

From my experience hunting and living in Minchumina the moose season has seen less moose activity due to warming trends. Unseasonably warmer changes to the Minchumina area are responsible for later and later rut seasons. With the advent of a normally delayed moose season due to the lake effect, coupled with climate trends invoking warmer falls, moose are entering rut and migrating in and around Minchumina later every year. It creates a challenge for subsistence hunters to effectively harvest moose. The season where moose are in the region and or migrating across breeding grounds is later and shorter due to constraints of the calendared hunting season. In addition to a shorter season, increased temperatures pose more difficulty in safely processing and preserving moose harvests.

Most, if not all folks who hunt in Minchumina have consistent and responsible means to process a harvest. With generations of knowledge and experience in remote Alaska, our people can respect the natural resource through efficient and responsible preservation, minimizing waste. This is accomplished with prompt processing on site in Minchumina. Those without appropriate access to meat houses, butchering facilities, and freezers will not safely harvest moose, especially with the unseasonably warmer weather. It would be a shame to waste such a valuable resource from which so many depend for sustenance and traditional cultural practices.

Increased commercial access to Minchumina lands will disproportionately affect residents and tribal members. It will put traditional and cultural practices in harm, creating undue strain on families and individuals. While it is not the mission of the Minchumina Traditional Council to inhibit Alaska Mental Health Trust from achieving its goals, it is our responsibility to inform of any potential harm, albeit unintentional, that commercial ventures will influence tribal and residential members of Minchumina.

I implore Alaska Mental Health Trust to work with tribal governments and residents of Minchumina to establish appropriate policies. Permits should not be issued without knowing the land, the community, and the Tribal people. We are neighbors to Trust lands. While I greatly respect the mission of the Trust to protect the disadvantaged and vulnerable of Alaska, there should be an equal emphasis on protecting the rights of the few who have long standing relationships with lands predating Trust land stewardship.

Respectfully,

Nathon Blackburn

On behalf of the Lake Minchumina Native Community

Comment for AMHTA Board

From Rebekah Burket <rebekah@calmkeyconnection.com>

Date Wed 5/21/2025 5:47 PM

To Biastock, Allison E (DOR) <allison.biastock@alaska.gov>; Marvo Reguindin <executivedirector@ak-pa.org>

Cc bod@akpa.groups.io <bod@akpa.groups.io>; janie.ferguson@alaska.gov <janie.ferguson@alaska.gov>; Cochran, Shannon L (DOR) <shannon.cochran@alaska.gov>; Phelps, Heather R (DOR) <heather.phelps@alaska.gov>; Keller, Valette A (DOR) <valette.keller@alaska.gov>; public.comment@mhtrust.org <public.comment@mhtrust.org>

 1 attachment (542 KB)

Enhanced Supervision Support for Pre-licensed Psychologists Kyle_Tarlow_Burket 5_25.pdf;

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Hello Allison,

Thank you very much for the information about the current board meeting and comment channels. Due to obligations that conflict with the AMHTA meeting this week, I will submit comments in writing. I do wish to thank the board for their support for the mobile crisis team initiative in Alaska and especially acknowledge the resources allocated for the Fairbanks mobile crisis team. I also deeply appreciate the board's sponsorship for the continuing education event that I co-hosted in Fairbanks with the AK Eating Disorders Alliance last fall. I would like to commend the board for their support of the educational initiatives that are successfully producing pre-licensed psychologists in our state. These include the Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium, of which I am a grateful graduate.

I wish to bring to the attention of the board the issue of support for supervisors of pre-licensed psychologists. Supporting an Alaska grown mental health work force is key for retaining highly skilled clinicians. As a supervising psychologist, I have gained a new perspective regarding the challenges that pre-licensed psychologists face in Fairbanks and throughout Alaska in the supervision process.

Drs. Kyle, Tarlow, and myself, in collaboration with the AK Psychological Association have developed a preliminary report that we hope will inform the board about the need and initiate a call to action. We welcome feedback about the best channels to pursue the next steps to develop this proposal as well as provide the board with greater information about the need. Please see the attached report. We welcome any opportunity to speak with the board at an upcoming meeting or as requested.

Very Respectfully,

Rebekah Burket, Ph.D.

907-347-4589
Vice President
Alaska Psychological Association
<https://www.ak-pa.org/>

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Rebekah Burket, Ph.D.

Licensed Clinical Psychologist

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Proposal for Enhanced Supervision Support for Pre-licensed Psychologists

By Marjorie Kyle, Psy.D., Kevin Tarlow, Ph.D., and Rebekah Burket, Ph.D.

May 21, 2025



Summary

This report outlines a proposal aimed at developing Alaska's mental health workforce by addressing the shortage of clinical supervision services for postdoctoral, pre-licensed psychologists. The need for supervision support at the postdoctoral training stage reflects the success of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's previous workforce development initiatives to graduate psychologists from Alaskan educational programs and internships. However, licensed psychologists in Alaska are often hesitant or unable to assume the financial costs of supervising pre-licensed clinicians on a pro bono basis. Support is needed to compensate supervisors for their time, training, enhanced liability insurance, and physical office space for in-person supervision. This proposal seeks funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to alleviate these financial barriers, improve the accessibility of clinical supervision, and further develop the state's mental health workforce.

Introduction

The Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA) was recently informed by the Alaska Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners of the pressing shortage of clinical supervisors for postdoctoral supervision. Without enough clinical supervisors, postdoctoral psychologists cannot obtain the supervised experience necessary for licensure and independent practice in the state.

As a recent report commissioned by the Trust pointed out, Alaska has the fewest number of active, licensed psychologists in the U.S.¹ As a result of this provider shortage, Alaska has a number of alarming population health outcomes. For example, Alaska has one of the highest suicide rates per capita when compared with other states. More licensed clinicians, including doctoral-level psychologists, are needed to improve the lives of Alaskans.

Although the mental health workforce development challenges in Alaska are complex, addressing the demand for clinical supervision is one critical step to improving Alaskans' health. However, the reluctance of many licensed psychologists to assume the financial and logistical responsibilities associated with providing clinical supervision is a significant obstacle to mental health workforce development. This proposal presents a rationale for funding to cover liability insurance costs, train and compensate supervising psychologists, and support the use of office space necessary for in-person supervision.

Background and Proposal

To become licensed in the state of Alaska, a pre-licensed psychologist must obtain 1,500 hours of approved supervised post-doctoral clinical experience. This includes a minimum of one hour per week of individual, in-person supervision, provided by a qualified psychologist for at least 80% of the total supervisory time.

¹ *Best Practices and Recommendations for Telesupervision of Doctoral Practitioners Pursuing Psychology Licensure in Alaska* (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, September 2023)

The barriers to obtaining qualified pre- and post-doctoral supervision are substantial in Alaska. If they can find a supervisor at all, supervisees often incur significant costs, including travel and living expenses, while providing mental health services that are either unpaid or minimally compensated. The scarcity of post-doctoral supervision compels many recent graduates to seek career opportunities outside Alaska in order to become licensed. After they are licensed to practice psychology in another state, these psychologists often have little incentive to return to Alaska where their services are most needed.

Licensed psychologist supervisors play a crucial workforce development role in retaining these graduates within Alaska and ensuring they contribute to the provision of mental health services statewide. Despite the importance of their role, many licensed psychologists face prohibitive financial burdens associated with supervision, which include time commitment, training, liability insurance, and access to appropriate office space. Conservative estimates of the annual financial range of costs necessary to provide supervision are \$10,000 to \$15,000.

To address these challenges, this proposal seeks funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to establish a supervision support program to disperse technical and operating grants to licensed psychologists who provide clinical supervision to pre- and postdoctoral clinicians. The goal of this program would be to reduce the financial strain on supervising psychologists, incentivize broader participation in the supervision process, and ultimately grow the Alaska mental health workforce. By providing targeted financial support for liability insurance, supervisor compensation and training, supervisee stipend, and office space access, this initiative will grow the total number of licensed psychologists in Alaska, which will in turn increase the availability of clinical supervision for future clinicians.

Conclusion

The need for workforce development support at the licensure stage reflects the success of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's previous support for mental health workforce development initiatives in our state. The need for licensed psychologists in Alaska to provide supervision for pre-licensed post-doctoral clinicians is critical to the future of psychological services in the state. By securing funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to administer a supervision support grant program for clinical supervisors, we can build the next generation of licensed mental health providers and enhance the overall quality and availability of mental health services for Alaskans.

Call to Action

We urge stakeholders to give this proposal serious consideration and to provide the necessary support for its effective implementation. Together, we can ensure a stronger, more sustainable future for mental health care in Alaska.