

0001

1 FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

2

3

ALL COUNCIL MEETING

4

5

6

7

DENA'INA CIVIC AND CONVENTION CENTER

8

Anchorage, Alaska

9

March 5, 2024

10

11

12

13

14

15 FSB MEMBERS PRESENT:

16

17 Anthony Christianson, Chairman

18 Charles Brower, Public Member

19 Rhonda Pitka, Public Member

20 Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

21 Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service

22 Steve Cohn, Bureau of Land Management

23 Jolene John, Bureau of Indian Affairs

24 Greg Risdahl, U.S. Forest Service

25

26 Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

27

28 REGION 1 - Southeast

29 REGION 2 - Southcentral

30 REGION 3 - Kodiak/Aleutians

31 REGION 4 - Bristol Bay

32 REGION 5 - Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta

33 REGION 6 - Western Interior

34 REGION 7 - Seward Peninsula

35 REGION 8 - Northwest Arctic

36 REGION 9 - Eastern Interior

37 REGION 10- North Slope

38

39 Co-Chairs - Nanci Morris Lyon, Bristol Bay

40 Thomas Baker, Northwest Arctic

41

42

43

44 Recorded and transcribed by:

45 Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC

46 329 F Street, Suite 222

47 Anchorage, AK 99501

48 907-227-5312; sahile@gci.net

49

50

0002

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 3/5/2024)

(On record)

MR. LIND: Good morning everybody. So it's great to see everyone here and the room is filling up, thank you for being here. We're going to start off with a prayer and my good friend is going to do that and also acknowledgement of the lands we are in.

MR. WILSON: Thank you. You don't have to stand but if you feel the need to, that's fine. Before I do the invocation -- after the invocation I'm going to do a land acknowledgement but before the land acknowledgement I'm going to ask for a moment of silence and I'll be asking for that shortly after the prayer. I'm going to do the prayer in a way that's been taught to most of us. There are some variations that are utilized on a traditional basis particularly if you're in Dena'ina country which is primarily Russian Orthodox, but I'll talk a bit about that a little later. Right now I'm just going to offer a prayer on our behalf in more a way that we are most familiar with so we'll bow our heads.

(Prayer)

MR. WILSON: Thank you. The issue and question of a moment of silence has always come up in terms of my generation more and more because of, not only, the attrition rate, the number of family and friends that naturally pass on and recently there has been, as you well know, the Covid19 issue, and even more so the question of a lot of unnecessary passings from alcohol and drugs and those kind of issues that have afflicted not only my generation but the generation after. So I'm going to rise myself for a moment of silence and then I'm going to speak to the issue of the question of recognizing who we are and why we are.

(Moment of silence)

MR. WILSON: Thank you. Tsin'aen. I'm going to take a few minutes here to speak on the question of acknowledgement and recognition. There are several different thoughts and opinions in a wide

0003

1 variety of places, particularly within the realm of the
2 traditional societies that I come out of. The idea of
3 land acknowledgement, which is relatively recently, has
4 very good motives, has a very good purpose and has a
5 very good sense of connectivity to it. However, in the
6 older ways of acknowledgement that was practiced in the
7 time before contact and shortly thereafter land was not
8 utilized on the basis of property or personal rights,
9 there was no way for anybody, any indigenous societies
10 to look at land as something that was owned. There was
11 no way for someone to speak to land in terms of
12 personal, what we would refer to as a component, it was
13 not a part of our life. We shared resources on the
14 basis of our old storytelling cycles which gave us a
15 way to connect with, not only land, but life on a more
16 general basis than just acknowledgement.

17
18 The traditional societies have a little
19 bit of an issue with the question of acknowledgement,
20 not because it's wrong or they have -- are critical,
21 but the issue that you'll come up with in a very
22 traditional society is pretty basic. It's very
23 difficult for a traditional person to rise to an
24 occasion on a personal basis and an individual basis
25 and speak to these types of activities on a personal
26 basis without crossing what we would refer to as an
27 invisible sacred line, which is pretty basic in my
28 background and that is rise, bringing yourself to the
29 level of the creator, speaking to land in terms of how
30 the creator would -- the issue of land, entitlement,
31 land privileges, land use is entirely a creator's realm
32 in our old ways of spirituality and it does not fit the
33 idea of acknowledgement, however, the idea of
34 acknowledgement in a modern sense is necessary even if
35 we can't replicate what it was that we once had. And I
36 will give you a little bit of an example of what we
37 once had in terms of the issue of land acknowledgement.

38
39 I am Ahtna (In Native), I'm from the
40 Copper River region. And my mother's clan is Tsaht'ana
41 and my father's people were called Nelchin, Nelchin is
42 not a clan, it's reference to the way the -- it's
43 reference to the medicine people. There are eight
44 clans in the Ahtna region originally, 11 total, and
45 those three extra clans also included over this area,
46 interaction with the Denatnea, which is Dena'ina, and
47 also towards Salcha and the Twaney*Lake. In this vast
48 territory the Ahtna people had a way of greeting each
49 other at places that were called crossover places in
50

0004

1 English. And crossover places in English, they know
2 it's the place where one language shifts to another.
3 Often times it's easy to assume that crossover places
4 means a place where you observe the passing of somebody
5 from one realm to another, but it's not. The original
6 idea behind the idea of crossover places is where your
7 clan's designated language or dialect ends and the next
8 one begins. So these are boundaries in terms of
9 languages and boundaries in terms of not only the
10 language but also the traditional potlatch laws that we
11 utilize for the way we speak to each other. At these
12 crossover places the older, what we would refer to as
13 beliefs, spirituality way of doing things with the
14 medicine people, when they came to these places they
15 would leave a bit of something in a tree nearby to
16 denote the fact that they are coming through. And
17 sometimes they would chant. Sometimes they would sing.
18 There is no specific rule for a medicine person to move
19 along the trail and move into another tribal domain.
20 But each tribal organization, each tribal clan, each
21 tribe had a specific way of acknowledging those kinds
22 of places where you crossover in language from one
23 place to another. I don't know all of them. I know a
24 little bit the Dena'ina and I know a lot about the
25 medicine people way and I know (In Native) complete,
26 that's my mother's clan. I am supposed to know that.
27 But there are many others who have variations.

28
29 Part of the way that you would come
30 into somebody's domain is, like I said, you would chant
31 or you would sing. You would give a way to
32 acknowledge, not the supremacy, but you would give a
33 way to acknowledge the fact that you are now under
34 somebody else's language. There are certain different
35 kinds of chants and songs that were used by the
36 medicine people to denote that and there are certain
37 clan songs that were absolutely a must to use when you
38 move into another person's domain. There are also
39 various kinds of what we would refer to as
40 acknowledgement that is outside of the discussion now,
41 but there are always a specific way for a clan to
42 introduce theirselves and themselves to another clan's
43 domain, another tribe's domain in another place.

44
45 Since I was asked here, to do the
46 acknowledgement, as a traditional clan ceremonial type
47 of a leader, it's very difficult to do this for me on
48 behalf of Ahtna in another domain. It's
49 extraordinarily difficult in terms of traditions to do
50

0005

1 acknowledgement in a way that fits our traditions,
2 acknowledges our past and utilizes the old ceremonial
3 process which doesn't exist anymore. On the other
4 hand, the idea that the Federal government, and all of
5 the people here, are willing to stand up to the idea of
6 a land acknowledgement to the people who were here
7 originally is extraordinary, therefore, I would not be
8 able to refuse.

9

10 So I'm going to do two things.

11

12 First, I want to do a little note to
13 the ancestors of the Dena'ina people that were here
14 before contact. There are two ways of doing that and
15 I'm going to do one of them. So bear with me for a few
16 minutes, just a short version.

17

18 (Singing)

19

20 (Applause)

21

22 MR. WILSON: And that is a song that
23 has been utilized over a long period of time by a wide
24 variety of clans and tribes. It's not a grieving song,
25 it's not a goodbye song but it's acknowledgement of the
26 people who were here and have been passed, it's
27 recognition of the people who are no longer here but
28 were once a part of the part.

29

30 There is another song that I will not
31 do, which is what we would refer to as the all clan
32 song. It's a song we use in our potlatches when we
33 start the potlatch. That is a pretty -- it's a pretty
34 -- that one you would expect to be dancing to and I'm
35 not going to expect you to join me in dance so we'll
36 leave that to be.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MR. WILSON: But it was important to
41 look at the question of acknowledgement in terms of a
42 ceremony or a song that would directly be related to
43 the idea of Dene or Dena'ina having precedence here
44 prior to contact and after contact.

45

46 With that being said there is another
47 side issue in terms of the acknowledgement that needs
48 to be spoken to. The acknowledgement itself, which has
49 been in place for quite some time as I've said has a
50

50

0006

1 dual connotation. And the issue that I wanted to speak
2 to you directly is that there are changes, our world is
3 moving through change, there's nothing we can do about
4 that. In 10,000 to 20,000 years that's all we have
5 ever seen as indigenous people.

6
7 So what I brought to your attention
8 this morning in terms of ceremonial aspect is not
9 expected to last any length of time. I brought it to
10 your attention because I was brought up in a tradition
11 way and I could not accept the idea of doing an
12 acknowledgement on behalf of my friends here, the U.S.
13 Fish and Wildlife without moving through some of the
14 more ceremonial aspects. In the future you should not
15 expect this kind of a ceremonial acknowledgement. As
16 I've said we are going through change. In the future
17 it would be a lot easier for yourself as a group, or
18 participants to look at the question of reading an
19 acknowledgement perhaps in the original language from
20 the nearby tribal governments and there are several.
21 There are Chickaloon, Knik, Kenaitze, Tyonek and there
22 are others that are even further north up into our
23 country up to the Susitna.

24
25 So that's just a suggestion and it
26 doesn't really have to be something that is done
27 completely. It's just something that I wanted to
28 remind you that things are changing and a traditional
29 acknowledgement in the way I put it here this morning
30 is not something you should expect on a long-term
31 basis.

32
33 First of all these acknowledgements in
34 the old days have to be done via what we would call a
35 storyteller. Storytellers were a component of the
36 medicine man family. And they were in many ways
37 licensed. They could not move into the arena that
38 they're in without having a name, a blessing and also
39 being accepted into the medicine world. The
40 storytelling -- the storytellers were expected to be
41 honest to the past, honest to the people and honest to
42 the tribe that they are part of and that's what I tried
43 to do.

44
45 Finally, essential question to how
46 these things work, just for your thinking -- think it
47 over -- I said I was from Ahtna, which I am, I'm from
48 the old country of Nabesna, Chisana, White River,
49 medicine people country, but I also have a daughter
50

0007

1 who's mother is from Nondalton. My daughter has access
2 to both worlds. The Western part of the Dena'ina
3 people's land and also to my home country in the old
4 ways. In our tradition, in the way that we were before
5 contact and afterwards up until about World War II, in
6 our old ways, which the older people expected me to
7 observe and understand and deal with I would be in my
8 daughter's mother's homeland. In other words the
9 arranged marriage worked in a way of matriarchy so I
10 would be in Nondalton and living that kind of a life if
11 this was 200 years ago. And I say this to you because
12 I grew up with this in place. And as a matter of fact
13 there is not a single Ahtna marriage in my mother's
14 time that was not arranged. And I wanted to tell you
15 this because when you do your subsistence activities
16 you're working with laws that came into being from
17 1959, 1971 and 1980, totally devoid of acknowledgement
18 or recognition of the ceremonial aspects of our
19 original subsistence ways. It was bound by marriage.

20
21 When you think about which -- I'm not
22 telling you to change your laws, I'm not telling you to
23 be somebody else, I'm saying when you do your work
24 always remember people like me still live and according
25 to the way we were raised. I cannot step away from my
26 duties and my responsibilities. That does not hold for
27 my daughter. My daughter is free to be as she wishes
28 to be. I am not. And there are a few of us left. And
29 I came here with a good heart knowing that you have a
30 good heart as I do and that as you do your work, just
31 remember, that in every step, every chance that you
32 have to do anything that up until the year that
33 statehood came into being, in 1959, we had complete in
34 our own way, we had a complete system of not only food
35 and security of food but also sharing and gifting and
36 moving into each others territory on behalf of food.
37 It's not the way it is today but I am the way I am.

38
39 Tsin'aen, thank you.

40
41 (Applause)

42
43 MS. WESSELS: Thank you so much. I
44 would like now the Chair of the Federal Subsistence
45 Board, Anthony Christianson, to give a welcome to this
46 gathering.

47
48 MR. CHRISTIANSON: So I'd like to --
49 I'm Anthony -- oh, nice, it sounds like I've got
50

0008

1 authority this way -- is there a problem. How about
2 now, is this better.

3

4

5 Hey, I'm Anthony Christianson. First
6 I'd like to say thank you for the wise words from our
7 elder and the invitation here to the land and the
8 respect that he gave, recognized the hardship he had in
9 it but also the respect of the layout for the
10 traditions of our lands and how we respect everybody's
11 language and barriers of the old traditional ways. I
12 was fortunate to be raised by my grandfather in a
13 similar manner so everything he spoke was from the
14 generation that I was raised with and so I truly
15 appreciate that he brings that to this arena to give us
16 context to who we represent on the landscape. I
17 couldn't be more fortunate to be here with my employer,
18 which is you guys. I'm thankful that I can see who it
19 is I represent on this Board. As the Federal Board
20 Chair that's a pride I have in giving deference to you
21 guys because you do all the hard work, represent the
22 eyes and the ears of the people who live off the land
23 and have a system of, like he said, of respect,
24 reciprocity and love for not only our people, but what
25 our people live off of and that's the land, the
26 relationship, the thousands of years of holding that
27 relationship and bringing into balance as the Creator
28 did, he gave us domain over this. We are the
29 caretakers in this room as the managers that he left in
30 charge to make sure that we can continue our
31 relationship with the land, the food and the sea that
32 continues to nourish our bodies both physically and
33 spiritually and so it's really good to have that lesson
34 here in our traditions. I hope that that is a way for
35 us to take and hear from it and continue to recognize,
36 involve and keep those part of what it is that we do
37 here when we forward as a business and as the
38 caretakers of the land.

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So I really honor that blessing. I'm
glad that we're able to have prayer over our meetings
here and invite the Creator in as the cloud of
witnesses that created this opportunity for us, our
ancestors, the people before us so the ones stepping
and guiding us are the ones that I feel that we work
for, the generations yet to come, the people looking at
us, the optics out there of changing environment,
climate change, all of the hardships, lack of
resources, puts us in a really unique position to fight
a hard fight, you know, try to ask for change and to

0009

1 put ourselves in the driver's seat and resource
2 management and caring for the land and the people. The
3 dynamic is changing out there. What is going extinct
4 is rural subsistence hunters and it's happening faster
5 and faster and faster. In my time, in my community
6 I've watched dozens of myself disappear and in the
7 lifestyle, uncles are disappearing aunties aren't
8 filling smokehouses and education isn't being handed
9 down in the traditional manner.

10

11 So I thank him for those words. I task
12 us here as the Federal Board to continue to maintain
13 that lifestyle, to fight for those inherent rights we
14 have on the land and to continue to be that voice of
15 the resources and to exact change where we see it needs
16 to happen. And the best word I know is deference to
17 Regional Advisory Councils, which means you guys set
18 the stage for. The taking of fish and wildlife, that's
19 your job to tell us what it is we need to do for you.
20 And so I honor you guys, I'm here to just take my hat
21 off for all the good work you guys have done all these
22 years, what a blessing to come together to an All
23 Council meeting, to be able to share a time to look at
24 these big issues and obstacles we face as people and to
25 find solutions on how to get along as a group and to
26 attack the system with everything we have because our
27 life depends on it.

28

29 And so I thank you all for all your
30 hard work and dedication, putting your time out there,
31 of getting the equity, the sweat equity it takes to
32 save our resource for the next generations and to
33 continue to serve our people and to continue to have
34 this relationship with the land that sustains us on way
35 more levels than just food for our bodies. So thank
36 you guys for your hard work. It's an honor to work for
37 you and I look forward to a productive meeting, just
38 touching base and getting to know maybe a few of you
39 more on a personal level so thank you for the
40 opportunity to be your Chair.

41

42 Have a good morning.

43

44 (Applause)

45

46 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Chair
47 Christianson. And now we're going to hear a welcome
48 from Senator Murkowski.

49

50

0010

1 (Video Welcome Played)

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. WESSELS: Okay, so we are going to have a few meeting announcements now and then jump right into the meeting.

Good morning everyone and welcome to the All Council meeting. My name is Katya Wessels and I'm Council Coordination Division Supervisor with the Office of Subsistence Management, and for the purposes of today's meeting I'm also the Designated Federal Officer.

A short overview of this four day meeting.

Today we're going to have a joint session of all Councils. Tomorrow, in this same room we'll have all day mandatory training for Council members. Then on Thursday and Friday we will have parallel sessions and your Council's individual meetings. Please get familiar with the daily schedule and choose other sessions to attend when you don't have your own individual Council meetings. If you need clarification, please ask your Council Coordinator to help you locate a session, a room or anything else. Also on Thursday afternoon and all day Friday we are providing a space that we call conversation hall, it will be in this room. Conversation Hall will be set for you to grab tea or coffee, sit down with other Council members from your region, from other regions, with agency people, with anyone else, with public, have some informal discussions and network. Federal agencies representing the Board are also going to have display tables in this room with information on public lands and their programs. Additionally, the conversation hall is going to have poster displays with projects funded through FRMP and the Partners Program.

There will be several opportunities for the Councils to discuss cross regional issues. Very short opportunity today during the regional reports. Second, a longer opportunity for the Councils to discuss cross regional issues will be later in the afternoon, around 4:45 p.m., during the Council joint discussion. And then on Day 3 and 4 there will specific opportunities to discuss caribou, sheep, salmon, food security, youth engagement, co-management at the designated sessions. Today we will need to

0011

1 follow the timeline as close as possible, although,
2 it's a Council meeting and we know how it can go.

3

4

5 As a reminder to all, this meeting is
6 conducted by Robert's Rules of Order, which helps us to
7 provide structure and maintain order. All meeting
8 participants are expected to be courteous and
9 respectful in all interactions. The nature of some of
10 the issues discussed at these meetings can be heated
11 and controversial although some comments shared through
12 this meeting may be passionate, no insults or foul
13 language will be tolerated in the public meeting.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

And the last announcement, this is not an action meeting. Today is not an action meeting. There will be no public comments. Period. For any agenda items during the joint session today, March 5th. Please join the Councils at their individual meetings scheduled on March 7th and 8th as noted in the overall meeting schedule to provide public comments on their agenda items. The public testimony will also be invited during the outbreak sessions on salmon, caribou, sheep, food security, climate change, young leaders engagement and co-stewardship talking circles. If you cannot comment in person you can send your public comment to subsistence@fws.gov. In today's meeting, only comments from the Council members, either in the room or online and the Federal Subsistence Board members are invited.

Thank you all. I'm looking forward to a very engaging and productive meeting.

And now I'm going to pass the mic to our Co-Chairs, Chair Baker and Chair Morris Lyon.

Thank you.

(Applause)

CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you for that Katya. Good morning, everyone. (In Native). My name is Thomas Baker from Kotzebue. Very honored to be one of the Co-Chairs this morning and at this time it is 8:40 and I will now call to order this joint Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. At this time I'd like to ask my Co-Chair to introduce herself before we get rolling.

0012

1 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Yes, thank you.
2 I'd like to welcome everybody too. It is a great honor
3 to be asked to be amongst the people in the regions who
4 are so respected and bring so much to the table and I
5 welcome all of your comments and look forward to
6 meeting all of you here today. I am Nanci Morris Lyon
7 and I am from King Salmon in Bristol Bay.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Madame Co-
12 Chair. So just a little housekeeping. If you're going
13 to speak at some point today, stand up, jump, wave your
14 arms, we got a big room here, a lot of people and just
15 make sure to state your name for the record so we know
16 who's making a motion, who's making a second. At this
17 time we will review and adopt the agenda.

18
19 So would anyone like to make a motion
20 to adopt the agenda for today.

21
22 MS. ROGERS: Motion. Alissa Rogers.

23
24 CO-CHAIR BAKER: A motion, do we have a
25 second.

26
27 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Second.

28
29 CO-CHAIR BAKER: And with that I would
30 like to ask everyone to just say aye if you'd like to
31 adopt the agenda.

32
33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34
35 CO-CHAIR BAKER: And those opposed,
36 same sign.

37
38 (No opposing votes)

39
40 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Didn't think so. With
41 that we will go ahead and adopt our agenda and I will
42 turn it over to my Co-Chair.

43
44 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
45 Thomas. Okay, first on our agenda is going to be the
46 Federal Subsistence Board panel and we're going to have
47 Ameer Howard as the moderator.

48
49 MS. HOWARD: Good morning and welcome
50

0013

1 everyone. Thank you Chair Baker and Chair Morris Lyon.
2 My name is Amee Howard. I am the Acting Assistant
3 Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence
4 Management. I am the daughter of Guy Puckett from the
5 Mojave Desert, the granddaughter of Don Puckett and
6 Irene Ludvick Puckett from Sand Point. It is a great
7 honor to be here and it's a great honor to work for the
8 Federal Subsistence Management Program. I thank you all
9 for traveling so far and being here, spending your time
10 with us. I look forward to talking with you all more
11 but first we're going to jump in and welcome the
12 Federal Subsistence Board. Thank you all for coming
13 down this morning and being here bright and early, the
14 first day of the meeting, it is a -- it is my pleasure
15 to moderate this session.

16

17 We're going to go through and have each
18 Board member introduce themselves, talk about the role
19 their agency plays, if they are an agency Board member
20 and then also talk about the importance of local
21 knowledge holders and rural users and the information
22 and care that comes from the stewardship you all
23 provide.

24

25 So I'm going to jump in and I think
26 I'll start with Public Member Charles Brower.

27

28 MR. BROWER: (In Native) So in other
29 words I just said my name is Charlie Brower. My Inupiat
30 name was given to me was (In Native) but I was born and
31 raised in Browerville, we call (In Native) and it's a
32 Big House, when we were growing so Barrow is over here
33 and Browerville is over here and so I'm from
34 Browerville.

35

36 Thank you everyone for being here, it's
37 good to see everyone. My life started as a -- for the
38 Subsistence Board, is I'm a retired wildlife director
39 for the North Slope Borough for 20 years. I intervened
40 with a couple of committees. I was one of the co-
41 finders for the Polar Bear Treaty between Canada, the
42 United States and it's called the Inupiat Agreement for
43 management between the two countries and also one of
44 the co-finders for the Polar Bear Treaty with Russia
45 and also one of the founders for the Ice Seal
46 Committee. I've been with the Walrus Commission for 35
47 years.

48

49 And also as I grew up, I learned my

50

0014

1 trade as a hunter, not from my parents, but we were
2 told when we were growing up that you have to go with
3 your (In Native) to learn their skills. And I always
4 wondered why, I said but you're my dad, he said that
5 doesn't matter, our tradition is you are going to learn
6 how to hunt and you go out with your (In Native) and
7 that's what happened. I learned the hunting skills
8 from all my uncles and great uncles and I use it as my
9 subsistence way of livelihood.

10

11 Anyways I'm still out there sharing my
12 -- when I got married and had kids, I told my boys when
13 they were about four or five years old, you guys want
14 to sit in the front, I'll give you three bullets, you
15 miss, you're going to learn how to steer the boat, you
16 know, after 45 years I'm still steering the boat.

17

18 (Laughter)

19

20 They never miss. I'm just -- I told my
21 boys, I said, you guys miss you guys are going to learn
22 how to steer the boat and every year -- my kids are all
23 grown up but now I have grandkids that are doing the
24 same thing, sitting in the front learning how to shoot
25 and live off the land.

26

27 But I have a lot of interest in
28 wildlife. I did a lot of committee work for the North
29 Slope Borough, for the state of Alaska, and continue
30 right now. So I appreciate everyone for being here.

31

32 (In Native)

33

34 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Member Brower.
35 Let's move to Chief Rhonda Pitka.

36

37 MS. PITKA: I thought you were going to
38 go down the line. Good morning. I'm Rhonda Pitka, I'm
39 Chief of the Village of Beaver. And I've been a public
40 member since 2017.

41

42 I live in the village of Beaver in the
43 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Is this thing --
44 it doesn't seem as loud as theirs -- okay, good. I am
45 of Koyukon and Inupiaq decent and I also sit on the
46 Yukon River Panel. One of my mentors told me growing
47 up in the Refuge and living with a new system and
48 having old management of subsistence resources in the
49 state of Alaska.....

50

0015

1 (House Technical Shutdown - No Audio)

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

(House Technical Shutdown - No Audio)

MS. PITKA: I'd like to thank all of you for your time. A lot of you volunteer hundreds of hours every year to do the work of the government and subsistence resources and I thank you very much for that.

(House Technical Shutdown - No Audio)

MR. COHN:D(A) public land orders. And then third, also in the Interior, working to complete a decision on the proposed Ambler Access Road in partnership with the National Park Service.

On the North Slope, we are working on two major efforts. One is -- really the Department of Interior is working towards a proposed update to the regulations for the management of surface values, oil and gas activities and co-management of resources, or co-stewardship of resources in the National Petroleum Reserve. And also working to update the leasing plan for the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in partnership with Fish and Wildlife Service.

And outside of those large decisions that we're working towards, we're very excited to be partnered with National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and many tribal partners throughout the state, we were lucky enough to be nominated for one of the Department's Keystone Initiatives called the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative. I'll let my colleagues also speak to that so I won't give a lot of detail but we're very excited about how we can work together towards -- with a focus on the critical issue of the loss of salmon in Arctic, Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers and beginning to do more work together on the ground.

And, lastly, we're very actively involved -- engaged with the Alaska Native Lands Conveyance Program, particular we're working now on the Alaska Native Vietnam-era Allotment Program which impacts around 1,900 individuals who either served in Vietnam or their heirs and working to work towards the conveyance of allotments to those individuals throughout the state.

Sorry, one last item, we've been getting a lot of letters and interest from some of the

0016

1 Councils on subsistence use cabins on public lands and
2 that's something that we'd like to engage with our
3 partners, other Federal partners to think about how we
4 might approach that in a more collaborative fashion.

5

6 Thank you, again, for the chance to say
7 a few words this morning and really appreciate everyone
8 being here and I'm looking forward to the dialogue.

9

10 (Applause)

11

12 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Member Cohn.
13 Let's move down to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Member
14 Jolene John.

15

16 MS. JOHN: Camai. Quyana.

17

18 (In Native)

19

20 MS. JOHN: I want to say greetings. My
21 name is (In Yup'ik) in Yup'ik. I am a tribal member of
22 the Nunakauyarmiut Tribe based in Toksook Bay. Jolene
23 John. My late father is the Traditional Chief Paul
24 John from the Nelson Island area and my mother is (In
25 Native) Martina John. My late grandparents are (In
26 Native) on paternal side, and my maternal side was (In
27 Native).

28

29 I grew up in Galuiat, Nelson Island,
30 where our family harvested and subsisted. I am the
31 youngest of the 10 that my parents had.

32

33 And for the Bureau of Indian Affairs,
34 of course, we represent all of the Federally-recognized
35 tribes within the state and have a trust responsibility
36 over many of the lands that our tribal member retain.
37 And many of them are Native allotments, which have been
38 selected mainly because of their use of the subsistence
39 that is available there, whether it is fish or the
40 berries, and so it is our responsibility to help those,
41 protect those for the families across Alaska.

42

43 We definitely support the efforts to
44 harvest subsistence foods within the region, especially
45 given in this day and age how expensive it is to try
46 and sustain a lifestyle with the high cost of living.
47 Most importantly we recognize and respect traditional
48 knowledge that our rural residents and tribal members
49 retain and we want to make sure that we acknowledge all

50

0017

1 the local information that you members of the Regional
2 Advisory Councils bring to the table and we, at the
3 Bureau, try to respect what those recommendations are
4 and support them.

5

6 At the Bureau we also have technical
7 assistance and support provided by way of funding
8 whether it's tribal priority allocation or unique
9 funding that is brought forth to the organizations
10 especially as they focus on subsistence management and,
11 of course, we respect that every region comes with
12 their unique differences, not everyone is designed the
13 same. And so we look to your regions to identify what
14 those priorities are at this time.

15

16 Harvesting is certainly a very
17 important thing, even for myself personally and as
18 tribal communities we definitely share what we receive
19 and are able to gain, especially because in our
20 communities we have the elderly that are frail, those
21 that have been widowed and young children that may have
22 been orphaned. It's a time honored tradition that we
23 continue this lifestyle.

24

25 So aside from food security, of course,
26 we honor the traditions that come with caring for the
27 fish, whether it's the men or the women. It is our
28 culture. It is a way of life that we choose to
29 continue and help us to sustain our people.

30

31 So during this week for those on the
32 RAC I look forward to meeting you, getting to know and
33 understand the regions that you represent and we really
34 appreciate the dedication and commitment that you have
35 provided through your service so, Quyana, (In Native)
36 for that.

37

38 I just want to say that related to the
39 land acknowledgement that we heard earlier, I just want
40 to share a story. When my late father was at his death
41 bed in 2015, even then for an elder in a hospital, when
42 he started to speak to the elders that came to him
43 spiritually, he said, Quyana (In Native), he even
44 acknowledged the (In Native) and he saw their elders at
45 his death bed, which reminds me that in his teaching he
46 always said (In Native) there is really no other
47 different kind of people on this Earth, we are all the
48 same. We all have the same needs. So (In Native)

49

50

0018

1 Quyana.

2

3 (Applause)

4

5 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Member John.

6 Now, we'll move to National Park Service with Member
7 Creachbaum.

8

9 MS. CREACHBAUM: Alrighty, how's that,
10 it's okay, I don't want to blow your ears away. Hey,
11 good morning everyone. My name is Sarah Creachbaum and
12 I'm the Regional Director for the National Park
13 Service, Alaska Region. We manage, with all of you,
14 about 54 million acres of National Parks and Preserves.
15 The Parks that were established before ANILCA, most
16 don't have subsistence hunting but all the other units
17 do and, indeed, four of our units that's one of the
18 purposes they were created, which is very unique in the
19 National Park Service, it may seem like that would be a
20 no-brainer to all of you, of course, in this room and I
21 apologize for that, but for the National Park Service
22 it's really kind of something.

23

24 In the Alaska region we have
25 prioritized food security and subsistence work with our
26 Regional Councils and our Subsistence Resource Councils
27 as our Number 1 priority in the region and recently we
28 have acquired a whopping \$6.2 million that will be
29 passed through from the Park Service into communities
30 specifically to work on issues of food security and
31 climate change. So I urge all of you to work with our
32 Park Superintendents and subsistence managers at the
33 local level and submit requests for funding that might
34 fit that criteria.

35

36 I think that one of the most important
37 things that Chair Christianson, if I talk too long
38 he'll start sighing, I've noticed that's what he does,
39 so I'll make it quick Chairman, that the key word here
40 is one that he used and that is deference. I work for
41 you. I believe strongly in your right and ability to
42 make recommendations to this Board for how subsistence
43 resources should be managed and my job is to listen and
44 to understand and that's what I have directed the
45 employees of the National Park Service to do and that's
46 what I will do myself.

47

48 I will be here at the conversation
49 corners. If any of you would like to speak with me one
50

0019

1 on one personally, I think there's one Thursday morning
2 and one on Friday afternoon -- I think I have it right
3 -- anyway, I'll be here along with Park Service Staff
4 to have conversations individually with any of you that
5 you would like to.

6
7 And if I might, just in closing, I'm a
8 storyteller, and I get nervous sitting up here with all
9 of my colleagues because they are -- most of them have
10 a long history in Alaska and I do not and it's kind of
11 a push-pull for me because part of me gets embarrassed
12 because I can't say that I've lived in Alaska my life,
13 I can't say that Alaska has always been my home, and
14 then that makes me feel a little bad because I don't
15 want to -- I feel proud of where I came from. And
16 where I came from was a farming family in Ohio where
17 subsistence was a very much a part of our life, very
18 different from the way it's practiced here in Alaska
19 but our hardships were also real and when I think of
20 the battles that we fought against those who were
21 trying to take away our lifestyle, I feel a deep sense
22 of anger and bitterness and hurt and if any of that is
23 just a tiny bit of what I feel from folks who are
24 fighting the struggle to maintain a subsistence
25 lifestyle, from all of you, then I want to say from me,
26 just personally, I'm sorry and will dedicate my time
27 here in Alaska to serving you.

28
29 Thank you.

30
31 (Applause)

32
33 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Member
34 Creachbaum. So now we'll move to the U.S. Forest
35 Service, Acting Member Greg Risdahl.

36
37 MR. RISDAHL: Thank you, A mee. Good
38 morning to everyone, Council Chairs, all Council Chairs
39 and all Council members as well and the public for
40 attending today. I really appreciate the opportunity
41 to be here. My name is Greg Risdahl, I'm the
42 Subsistence Program Leader for the Forest Service and
43 the InterAgency Staff Committee member and the acting
44 Regional Forester Janelle Crocker has asked me to sit
45 in today and speak, as well as the Deputy Regional
46 Forester Chad VanOrmer, who will be taking over that
47 position on the 10th of this month. So it's really an
48 honor to be here and a great pleasure as well.

49
50

0020

1 Both Janelle and Chad have expressed
2 their sincerest and deepest thanks for the important
3 work you guys do here to preserve the subsistence way
4 of life here in Alaska, and I want to express my
5 appreciation as well.

6
7 I'll say a little bit about myself,
8 which I hadn't planned to do, but I will. I was raised
9 in Montana in a rural part of the state. Both my paren
10 -- by my grandparents, both my grandparents were
11 farmers. I grew up hunting, fishing and trapping and
12 we lived a very rural subsistence way of life and
13 naturally ended me up here in Alaska. I first worked
14 up here in 1984 as a grizzly bear biologist and have
15 moved around a little bit but I have many years of
16 hunting, fishing and trapping under my belt and have
17 done some stints over seas with the Peace Corps as a
18 Foreign Exchange Student in High School. So I've had
19 an interesting background, but this is home. I have a
20 cabin up north of the Tanana River and we go up there
21 and we hunt there every year and I plan to be up there
22 next week as a matter of fact.

23
24 Anyway it's a great pleasure to be
25 here.

26
27 As Dave Schmid said -- he was the
28 Regional Forester prior to Janelle acting -- he used to
29 say it at virtually every Council meeting and every
30 Board meeting that he attended, that subsistence is the
31 most important thing that the Forest Service does here
32 in Alaska and I agree with him entirely.

33
34 I'll just mention a few things that I
35 know Chad and Janelle would share with you if they
36 could be here today.

37
38 First, we sincerely emphasize with each
39 and every one of you over the hardships that you and
40 your communities have experienced since prior to the
41 Covid pandemic but it's become much more prevalent and
42 relevant to our lifestyles up here in Alaska now. Like
43 many of you, the Forest Service is particularly
44 concerned about food and security, both from the
45 inability to obtain life giving wild food resources and
46 because the inability for rural subsistence users to be
47 able to practice their traditional subsistence
48 activities and lifestyle.

49
50

0021

1 As you're all aware climate change has
2 impacted salmon populations across the state. In
3 Southeast and Southcentral Alaska, specifically, the
4 Forest Service, where we reside, chinook, chum and coho
5 populations have been hit particularly hard, eulachon
6 have been declining significantly over the last couple
7 of decades. Statewide, caribou herds have seen severe
8 declines in recent years; the Western Arctic, Nushagak
9 and Nelchina, and I work across the state so I can't
10 help but mention some of those as well. Dall sheep
11 populations in general have dropped precipitously
12 because of severe winters and deep snow and ice on snow
13 events. In addition, problems associated with
14 transporting food and supplies by ferry, barge and air
15 to remote villages has affected many areas of the state
16 as well and we commiserate with the difficulties that
17 has caused throughout the state of Alaska.

18
19 I just have a couple of updates from
20 Staffing that I'll mention. First, was that Janelle
21 Crocker has -- she's been in the role as the Acting
22 Regional Forester for about three or four months now
23 and her last day is this Friday and Chad VanOrmer, the
24 Permanent Deputy Regional Forester will be taking over
25 that acting position until a permanent Regional
26 Forester is hired. More than likely Chad will be
27 representing the Federal Subsistence Board during the
28 April Wildlife Regulatory Meeting coming up as well.

29
30 One high point that I wanted to mention
31 regarding the Forest Service is that last year was
32 actually a boon year for us here in Alaska. We hired a
33 total of 176 new employees. We went from 479 in 2022
34 to 2023 and much of these -- many of these hires were
35 made possible because of the ANILCA hiring authority,
36 meaning that we were able to hire local people with
37 specific Alaska experience so that's really been a
38 great asset for us.

39
40 Looking ahead there's a few things that
41 I would mention regarding the priorities for the Alaska
42 Forest Service in 2024. One is to -- we are providing
43 for our new and growing Staff with resources and
44 support with a focus on retention. There is a lot of
45 turnover in the Federal government and the Forest
46 Service is no exception, so we're going to be focusing
47 on retention as well now. Since we're pretty well
48 staffed up to nearly the highest level we've been in a
49 very long time, ensuring the physical and psychological
50

0022

1 safety and wellness of all employees so we can do our
2 best for the people that we serve. Working effectively
3 with tribal partners to reach mutually beneficial
4 results through tribal engagement and co-stewardship.
5 When I started with the Forest Service three years ago
6 we didn't do much of that. We had some projects with
7 the FRMP Program, for instance, but we are-- we didn't
8 have it -- it wasn't even part of the Program with the
9 Forest Service but that has all changed. We are really
10 focusing to improve our tribal engagement and co-
11 stewardship with the tribes in our area.

12

13 Identifying challenges, building
14 community and maximizing leadership team strengths.
15 And we're also in the process of revising the Tongass
16 National Forest Management Plan and for the first time
17 subsistence is going to be part of that, it hasn't been
18 a part of that in the past, and I have already been
19 rolled into doing more NEPA than I wanted to do,
20 National Environmental Policy Act stuff. I thought I
21 got away from that years ago in my career but we're
22 back at it.

23

24 In closing, I look forward to spending
25 the week here with all of you. I will be here every
26 day after I drop my little boy off in the morning at
27 the neighbor's so that he can get to school on time,
28 and I look forward to discussing subsistence topics of
29 concerns with everybody and planning for the future
30 together. Again, Janelle and Chad also thank you for
31 your time and important work you do. Feel free to
32 contact us at any time, any place, questions, concerns,
33 anything.

34

35 Thank you, very much.

36

37 (Applause)

38

39 MS. HOWARD: Thank you. So now we're
40 going to move to Member Boario.

41

42 MS. BOARIO: Tony and I have -- can you
43 hear me okay -- all right. Good morning everyone.
44 Thank you for being here. My name is Sara Boario, I'm
45 the Regional Director for the Fish and Wildlife Service
46 here in Alaska. It's a position I've been in for two
47 years almost precisely this week, but I have spent a
48 lifetime in Alaska growing up, living, working with
49 people across the state, villages and small town Alaska
50

0023

1 thanks to my parents, Liz and Tony Boario. I'm really
2 grateful for the opportunity to continue to work and
3 serve you here as I now live in Anchorage, Alaska,
4 Dena'ina country.

5

6 Thank you all for being here. And I'm
7 so excited that this All RAC Meeting could come
8 together, I think probably the first time since before
9 the pandemic, many years. Thank you to Anee and our
10 Staff at the Office of Subsistence Management, our Co-
11 Chairs, thank you so much, and especially Tsin'aen,
12 Wilson, I don't know if Wilson is still here -- there
13 he is Tsin'aen Wilson, Wilson for grounding us this
14 morning for the prayer. Wilson has been an incredible
15 mentor, guide, instructor for employees across the
16 state in the Fish and Wildlife Service and, now, other
17 Department of Interior Bureaus, as an instructor in our
18 Alaska Native Affairs -- Alaska Native Relations
19 Training for a decade, and our more recent Indigenous
20 Stewardship Course, and we're just so grateful and
21 lucky to have him continuing to guide us and teach us
22 in our work here.

23

24

25 As you all know I'm a member, with all
26 of these wonderful folks on the Federal Subsistence
27 Board, but there are so many other people who are here
28 to support the Program and support all of you. I want
29 to recognize Jill Klein from -- who supports us as an
30 InterAgency Staff Committee member and Jill is here too
31 -- Jill. And Staff across the state on our -- on the
32 16 National Wildlife Refuges we share stewardship of
33 with all of you indigenous people across the state.
34 Thank you to our Refuge managers out there who might be
35 tuning in today. We do have new leadership --
36 statewide leadership for the National Wildlife Refuge
37 Program and I know they're potentially not with us know
38 but they will be in and out throughout the week, Karlin
39 Itchoak, and Stephanie Brady -- I thought I saw
40 Stephanie earlier, but I know Karlin had -- is still
41 betting his PIV card set up so he's that new but we're
42 excited for the new leadership for the Refuge Program
43 here. Our Refuge managers right now, I think have
44 about 20 delegation of authority letters for wildlife
45 and that work to support out on the land, we have five
46 in-season fisheries subsistence -- subsistence
47 fisheries managers across the state and we recognize
48 how important all our work with all of you and tribes
49 and people across rural Alaska as we face multi-species
50 salmon declines in many areas of the state right now,

50

1 and Steve alluded to these changes and what they
2 require of us. One of those is strengthening our co-
3 stewardship co-management relationships, healing those
4 relationships across the state and recognizing in this
5 time of change how critical it is for us to continue to
6 strengthen the integration of indigenous knowledge into
7 our research, our monitoring, our work and our
8 decisionmaking and we're working really hard to do that
9 right now. The example that Steve spoke to earlier,
10 Secretary Haaland, and the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative
11 in the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Norton Sound Rivers and
12 watersheds is just -- it's at it's very beginning
13 stages really and we're hopeful that we're going to,
14 together, be able to grow a co-stewardship model out in
15 that region for food security reasons and also for
16 cultural continuity. All of those things are strained
17 right now.

18
19 As part of strengthening our co-
20 stewardship work I know several of our Staff will be
21 helping today to guide the co-stewardship -- across the
22 week, actually, the co-stewardship talking circles.
23 Boyd Blihovde, who is our Gravel-to-Gravel coordinator
24 and also the former manager at Yukon Delta Refuge and
25 Crystal Leonetti, our Alaska Native Relations
26 Specialist, who I know will be here later today as
27 well, and I look forward to sitting in and listening
28 across the week where I can and learning more from all
29 of you.

30
31 We, this past year, were also able to
32 work with the tribes and indigenous people across
33 Southeast Alaska, Tlingit/Haida country for the first
34 time to integrate indigenous knowledge into a species
35 status assessment which is part of when we're
36 petitioned to list a species under the Endangered
37 Species Act, and in this case it was the Alexander
38 Archipelago wolf throughout Southeast Alaska. We had
39 significant -- it's a huge territory and land to cover,
40 and we had significant data gaps and knowledge that we
41 needed indigenous knowledge holders across that region
42 who contributed such important information and
43 partnership with Sealaska Heritage Institute and as
44 many people refer to him as Uncle Steve, Steve Langdon,
45 and that indigenous knowledge was just really essential
46 for us in that work this year. It was the first of its
47 kind and we really hope to continue to build on that
48 and learn.

49
50

0025

1 I'm really excited later today to be
2 able to resign an MOU with the Ninilchik Traditional
3 Council and I see some folks from down that way here
4 today with us and to celebrate the healing and the work
5 we've done together down there and continue that
6 important work.

7
8 So thank you all so much. It's great
9 to see so many familiar faces and I'm looking forward
10 to meeting more of you across this week and appreciate
11 being here with all of you. Thank you.

12
13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14
15 (Applause)

16
17 MS. HOWARD: Thank you. Thank you
18 Member Boario. Chairman Christianson, save the best.

19
20 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Do we have a magic
21 mic, it turns itself off, I like that.

22
23 MS. HOWARD: Slide that back -- I got
24 control, now you can get con.....

25
26 (Gavel sound)

27
28 MR. CHRISTIANSON: You think you're in
29 control but you're not.

30
31 (Laughter)

32
33 MR. CHRISTIANSON: That's why the good
34 man knows when he comes from the matriarch clans,
35 right, that we follow -- we follow rules really well.

36
37 Anthony Christianson, (In Haida) is my
38 Haida name. (In Haida). Sylvester Peel, Frieda Peel
39 (In Haida), Cris Poulson is my mother, I come from the
40 Killer Whale Clan. (In Haida)

41
42 It's a good day to be here.

43
44 I'm a Raven, Brown Bear, Killer Whale
45 from the Haida Clan. I come from Hydaburg. I was born
46 in Seattle, but I grew 47 years of my life living off
47 the land in Hydaburg, a traditional lifestyle, hunt and
48 fish for a living, continue to do that to this day. I
49 have about 25 years in tribal natural resource work. I
50

1 ended up in a Board Chair seat because I couldn't shut
2 my mouth, you know, fighting for this, the very thing
3 that you sit here and represent, that relationship
4 that's inherent, the ways that we were taught, and what
5 it means to our families to have that relationship with
6 our food and the areas, like our elder spoke to, how
7 important those place names are, the sacred walk that
8 happens when we engage in hunting and fishing to the
9 final sit down and bless your food before it nourishes
10 your body. That's the pathway that got me to this
11 seat. It's the pathway that raises my family, it feeds
12 my grandchild. It's the reason I think most of us sit
13 here, is that, we want to preserve something for our
14 children. And so I take that passion seriously and as
15 I watch my granddaughter grow on deer meat and fish and
16 other things I could feel the sigh, sometimes like
17 Sarah said here, it's not a sigh of you're talking too
18 long Sarah, it's that you're hitting those notes just
19 right and the core of our heart and how it feels
20 inside, that we have a real job ahead of us.

21
22 The guilt comes from, you know, being a
23 successful hunter in our region and having a lot of
24 resource. You know the hardship is sitting here
25 amongst people who are struggling to help their people.
26 And it's not a hardship that I feel that is un -- we
27 can't get over the hump that we're facing, we are going
28 to get over the hump and we are going to find the
29 answers and solutions to the problems that we're facing
30 with lack of fish and resources, competition and
31 changing environment and voices that have lots of money
32 that sound better than ours, you know, we don't need
33 money to survive, we need access to resources, a
34 continued relationship with the land and a voice that
35 continues to be heard.

36
37 And so I fight for the voices that come
38 out of your Board Chairs, the voices that come out of
39 your Regional Advisory Councils, the people who know
40 what's happening on the landscape. I don't know what
41 happens in a caribou hunt, I've never even seen a
42 caribou. I've never physically seen a caribou but I
43 know what it means to hunt for a deer. I know what it
44 means to catch a salmon. I know what it means to my
45 family.

46
47 So the fight that comes to us is based
48 off your observation, your interest, your passion, your
49 community and the people you represent, the traditions
50

0027

1 you have. I value those as much as I value mine. Our
2 elder said it here, we come across, I thank the
3 Dena'ina people for the ability to come here and speak,
4 you know, on their land, welcome the opportunity to
5 represent everything that you fight for. I've been on
6 this Board, I think, since 2012 as a rural Board
7 member. Again, I think it was happenstance that I got
8 the position but I've been reveling in it ever since
9 because it has given me an opportunity, not only, 1, to
10 expand my vision of what subsistence means in Alaska to
11 all rural indigenous people, indigenous and rural, mind
12 you, it's a heart and a mind set of our people that
13 choose a lifestyle that we defend here. That you put
14 yourself out there and you create the hardships that it
15 takes to become a rural resident and you learn the ways
16 and the customs of the people, you find that balance
17 and respect and for that you're rewarded, and that
18 reward is usually the sustenance from the land that
19 continues to perpetuate and propel us forward. Every
20 year the clock ticks and we feel it inside of
21 ourselves, here in Alaska when the season starts. Like
22 now, the herring are coming, you know, the herring are
23 coming, coming with them are the king salmon and the
24 halibut. I feel that. I know that. Just as we all do
25 in our own areas and our own, we anticipate and then we
26 do the best we can and then we give what we can and
27 share where we can.

28
29 And so that's the backbone of this
30 Federal Board Chair seat that I've been in for me, is
31 that, we provide a priority use for the rural resident
32 and priority and preference means you're first. We're
33 Number 1 at the table and if we ain't eating, somebody
34 needs to go home. That's how serious I take this job.
35 I take what you guys say seriously, I don't take it
36 lightly. I didn't mean to sigh at Sarah. You know,
37 sometimes if the (sighs), you know I forgot about not
38 drinking three cups of coffee before we start
39 introducing so she misread that one.

40
41 (Laughter)

42
43 MR. CHRISTIANSON: But I thank you guys
44 again for coming here. The Board is a pleasure to work
45 with, it's always changing. We get new people. We
46 welcome Jolene here, you know, we get a different look
47 every year from the Federal Board Chairs to the people
48 who represent the Federal land managers and I'm just
49 glad that they all come in and get their cultural
50

0028

1 training. They find themselves in these seats because
2 they have passion for resource management, and in
3 between, our traditional ecological knowledge that we
4 bring and the Western Science that they have we find
5 solutions to find a path forward to get everybody what
6 we need, and it's access to resource with good sound
7 principles and some conservation in mind. And, you
8 know, sometimes that's what has to have us say no is
9 when resource isn't abound.

10

11 We thank you for your patience, as
12 Regional Advisory Councils, the work force behind this
13 Board, all the work, the dedication and the lack of
14 pay, a lot of those things you guys forwarded us in
15 letters this year, you know, we took that to heart and
16 we had an audience with the Secretary of Interior this
17 year and we got to have a face to face and express to
18 her and hat's off to the Board member here, Rhonda and
19 Charlie and us getting to just have some heartfelt talk
20 with her and I think we did a good job in impressing
21 upon her the importance of this to our State and to our
22 people and where we are as just resource managers.
23 We're in a hard spot with the Yukon, Kusko, herds of
24 caribou, competition across the state increasing. Come
25 down to Southeast, there's a lot of resource but
26 everybody knows about it, you know, so it's not about
27 so much if there's an abundance it's about access, it's
28 about success, and ultimately it's about are you
29 getting your needs met, and if you're not getting your
30 needs met let us know so we can fight for that.

31

32 And so I thank you for this audience
33 today.

34

35 Again, thank you for the opportunity to
36 speak this morning. I thank the Staff for the forum
37 they set up to have us be able to look at who we do
38 work for, to have a conversation, to express our
39 positions and why we do what we do. I do it because I
40 need to eat and I want to feed my kids. There's no
41 other reason why I would be involved in this other than
42 to protect the last fish and to stand there and protect
43 the last deer and then make sure they don't endanger
44 wolves while we're not looking.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Oh, I mean I didn't
49 (laughter) I mean just -- because those little things,

50

0029

1 third-parties come in and they don't know what they
2 know, they can create hardships and they did that in
3 Southeast before. A few years back they listed, or
4 potentially listed it as endangered, they lowered our
5 cap to 11 wolves to 15 wolves to 20 wolves and they
6 unleashed a predator on the landscape that starved our
7 people for the last five years. You know, just this
8 last two or three years we're starting to see a return
9 because guys like Mike over there taught guys how to do
10 wolf, they work with a network, that network expands
11 out to where they're at and it takes the people on the
12 landscape to manage what's out there to continue what
13 it is that we do and it isn't money, it isn't anything
14 other than the effort it takes to manage what it is
15 that belongs to us, that's the food source that we need
16 to sustain ourselves. And so I take my hat off to
17 those guys who see the problem and take action on the
18 landscape to resolve it and make sure that we continue
19 to eat. I'm not a wolf trapper but this year I
20 benefitted and we had a lot of success in hunting so I
21 take my hat off to that. I'm really scared when these
22 third-parties come in and start looking at resources
23 they have no idea about and start telling us how to
24 manage our lands. That's when I'll sigh real big.

25

26 (Sigh)

27

28 MR. CHRISTIANSON: So I thank you guys
29 for your work. I thank these Board members for looking
30 at inside the box to what we work with in trying to fit
31 their box inside our box where it belongs in ANILCA, so
32 thank you guys.

33

34 (Applause)

35

36 MS. HOWARD: Thank you, Chairman
37 Christianson. Thank you Board members. I'm going to
38 pass our mic to our Co-Chairs, Co-Chair Baker and Co-
39 Chair Morris Lyon, and let you take it away in terms of
40 questions, let you address the Board, give this time to
41 you to round out the panel.

42

43 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Anee,
44 I appreciate that very much. And I really appreciate
45 you guys being here, especially our Public Members
46 Brower, Pitka, and of course Anthony.

47

48 I personally have really, really
49 appreciated the way that you have represented us out in
50

50

0030

1 Bristol Bay throughout the years. You've heard us.
2 You've heard our needs and you've respected them and
3 backed them up and I just deeply thank you for having
4 been there for us and hope that you continue to be.

5
6 At this time we are running somewhat
7 behind schedule and so we're going to try and keep this
8 brief but I would welcome questions if anybody has
9 them, but I ask you to keep them brief. Public
10 members, I appreciate you very much for being here, we
11 want to hear from you, we want to hear your opinions,
12 and we value them but at this point we're just looking
13 for Council members that might have some questions in
14 order to keep things brief and we will look forward to
15 hearing from you later. So is there anybody that has
16 any questions from our Councils.

17
18 Yes, go ahead.

19
20 MR. GREEN: Thank you. My name is
21 Louis Green from the Seward Peninsula RAC. There's
22 been a question that's been brought up to me many times
23 and there's been discussions about it and I'll pose
24 that question at this time. The question is when will
25 we see the Department of Commerce at this table? They
26 manage -- they're over NOAA. The Bering Sea and
27 Federal fisheries are under this Department.

28
29 So thank you for allowing me to ask.

30
31 Thanks.

32
33 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you for
34 the question. Who would care to address that?

35
36 (Pause)

37
38 MS. BOARIO: Thank you for the
39 question. I know all of the Board members, we've
40 worked together to elevate a number of issues and
41 intersections with the Department of Commerce to both
42 the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of Commerce
43 and we'll continue to do that. I think later today --
44 I don't have much more of an answer than that but I
45 know later today we will have Bob Anderson and Raina
46 Thiele from the Secretary's Office join us, right, is
47 that correct, Ameer, and they might have more insight in
48 how those conversations have gone at that level. But
49 we certainly will continue to elevate your voices on
50

0031

1 that matter and I thank you for the question.

2

3 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Sara.
4 Any follow up?

5

6 MR. GREEN: No, Ma'am. Thank you very
7 much for the answer and the opportunity.

8

9 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Any other
10 questions.

11

12 MR. NUKWAK: Yes, Kenneth Nukwak, Sr.,
13 Manokotak, Bristol Bay Rural Advisory Council. I have
14 a question on the roles and responsibilities of the
15 Federal agents in the fields, the hunting grounds, are
16 there any rule books on those and then the reason I ask
17 is because our people are being cited and there was a
18 young man hunting for his family about two or three
19 years ago and he did not have a hunting license and
20 he's from a poverty level family, and three daughters,
21 anyway because he did not have a hunting license a
22 ptarmigan was taken away, I think, 12 ptarmigan, and
23 his rifle or shotgun. And I don't know if I should
24 bring it up on this table right now, maybe make a
25 wildlife proposal changing that State hunting license
26 to maybe a tribal card or something like that for low
27 income people.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Council members.

32

33 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that's a, you
34 know, the State issue with permitting and the Federal
35 Program with permitting. I'm there with you, Kenneth,
36 I think if you're out there in the field and you're
37 providing for your family it's an inherent right but
38 the rules and regulations are requiring permitting and
39 stuff both for State and Federal managers for access,
40 but I think that would be a good proposal to put in
41 there, actually, that we can do something whether it's
42 income based or, you know, hardship base that we reduce
43 that for some people or take it away and we see that
44 permits in some areas aren't required and some areas
45 they are. So I think it's within our purview that we
46 can entertain proposals of such and then start that
47 ball rolling.

48

49 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Go

50

0032

1 ahead.

2

3

4 MR. VENT: Darrell Vent. Western
5 region, Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. My
6 question is when we had first back in the '70s made a
7 decision about ANILCA and ANCSA, our loss of aboriginal
8 rights because there was going to be management by the
9 State and Federal government on our food sources, our
10 subsistence, our rural preference. We wanted only to
11 eat what we had in our areas.

11

12

Let me explain a little bit.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

It just hurts to see our people suffer like this. Our kids, what are we doing for our kids, we're not really preparing them for anything. We have one major food source in our area, you know, which is moose. But, you know, the way the State has the management on it, it's taking all the breed bulls and using the horns to put on their wall, same thing happened to our caribou, and when you commercial fish, the same thing happened to the fish, you take the big fish. Those are breeders. Those are the ones that carry the breed up and down the river or up all over around your areas. When they kill those off it's for money, it is not for our people.

I have more but thank you.

0033

1 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

2

3

4 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Well, I appreciate
5 the question to the Board here. That's a hard one we
6 continue to hear across the region from different
7 places, you know, loss of fish, loss of caribou. You
8 know, fortunately you have a single -- another species,
9 moose, and that's where we would entertain proposals,
10 you know, based off of access and down to your last
11 resource, where we could say, hey, that's what they
12 have left in the region so we need to start supporting
13 proposals from that area to limit the hunt for access
14 to rural subsistence users. I mean that would be a
15 path forward, you know, knowing that we have hardships,
16 lack of salmon, lack of caribou, that we start looking
17 at what primary resource is left, who needs it the
18 best, or most, and get that preference and priority out
19 to you guys so I would really encourage getting into
20 the proposal process and let's get that in writing so
21 we can support gaining you guys the access you need to
22 those moose.

22

23 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you very
24 much. Go ahead.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Yeah, my name's Michael
27 Kramer, I'm with Northwest Arctic RAC. I come from one
28 of the most controversial regions in the state. We
29 have more user conflicts than any other place in the
30 state. Last year we submitted a special action request
31 to protect the cows of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd
32 and you, as the Federal Subsistence Board, denied that.
33 Yes, there's a harvestable amount. You know, our sheep
34 are gone. Our caribou is declining. What are you
35 Federal agencies going to do for us when all these
36 subsistence resources are gone? We're going to depend
37 on beef and in our region they do not recognize cost of
38 living. We have to pay -- for a dozen of eggs it's
39 \$14. Gas is \$8. So everybody, our region is
40 considered the caribou people. They also harvest
41 moose.

42

43 You know my question is, is what are
44 you, as the Federal agencies and the Federal
45 Subsistence Board are going to do for our people when
46 it comes down to, like the gentleman said, people are
47 dying of cancer for eating things that they buy from
48 the store. There's all kinds of other add-in things to
49 causing cancer but a lot of people within our region
50

0034

1 depend on Native resources and taking us seriously
2 needs to start occurring. We are protecting our
3 subsistence resources for our future. I want my kids,
4 my grandkids to go hunt caribou, but if we have
5 entities such as the Federal Subsistence Board and the
6 Board of Game deciding not to help us, we want action,
7 we don't want it delayed because when those resources
8 are gone what are you guys going to do for us? What?

9

10 What are you guys going to do for us?

11

12 Our shelves in our grocery stores,
13 regionwide, are empty. And they work hard to try and
14 keep them filled so they could feed the people.

15

16 So from now on we need to start all
17 considering a bowl of caribou soup over the mighty
18 dollar.

19

20 Commercial services needs to stop
21 within these regions that are critically low in
22 subsistence resources or else we're losing everything.

23

24 Our culture is going right out the
25 front door.

26

27 That's all I have for right now and
28 thank you.

29

30 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. I
31 appreciate everybody's desire to ask questions but I am
32 going to call this to a halt, only because we are time
33 constrained and I encourage you to approach everybody
34 at the table who's going to be here all week long and
35 have your answers met at that time, again, that
36 includes public members who are here that we're not
37 inviting to ask questions right now so thank you all
38 for participating. Thank you Council members,
39 especially for being here, and I'll turn the mic over
40 to my Co-Chair.

41

42 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Madame Co-
43 Chair. So with that, it's now 9:43 and we are behind
44 schedule so what we're going to do is I'm going to
45 allow three minutes for each Council to give their
46 report and then time for two two minute questions. If
47 someone from the Staff could keep an eye on time, I
48 will go ahead and start with Region 1.

49

50

0035

1 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Co-Chair.

2

3 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Yes.

4

5 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

6 I believe that our regional reports should stay at
7 eight minutes as they were provided before, regardless
8 of the time constraint, because we are the ones that
9 are bringing forth the information to the Board and to
10 this meeting, so our voices need to be heard, our
11 regions need to be heard and it should not be cut off,
12 Mr. Chair and Mrs. Chair. I request that we retain the
13 eight minute reports instead of reducing them to three
14 just to stay on time.

15

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17

18 CO-CHAIR BAKER: I can't see your name
19 plate but thank you for that. It was a recommendation
20 from Staff that we do that to keep on, so with that we
21 will keep with eight minutes, so do we have a
22 representative from Region 1, Southeast Alaska RAC
23 that's able to provide a report.

24

25 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, this is Southeast
26 over here. It's a pleasure to lead off the Council
27 reports. I appreciate the request from my colleague
28 over there. We did, you know, prepare our reports and
29 took effort to keep them at a time limit that was
30 recommended and it would be pretty hard to redo that at
31 this point. But I will keep the comments as brief as
32 possible. I believe they're not too lengthy for our
33 region even though we have a lot going on down here.

34

35 So with that I'll say good morning
36 everyone. My name is Don Hernandez and I am speaking
37 to you on behalf of the Southeast Alaska Council and I
38 would like to provide a snapshot of some of our
39 regional issues.

40

41 Our region extends from Ketchikan all
42 the way up to Yakutat and our communities are all
43 coastal in nature and we have 28 communities in our
44 region, 26 of those are currently considered rural. We
45 have 19 Federally-recognized tribes and one major land
46 manager which is the U.S. Forest Service, due to the
47 fact that 90 percent of our land in the region is part
48 of the Tongass National Forest.

49

50

0036

1 I've been on this Council for over 20
2 years and have served as Chair of this Council since
3 2019 and I'm happy to share with you the work that this
4 Council has done in recent years and highlight how this
5 Council often thinks outside the box to explore
6 solutions to issues that subsistence users face
7 throughout the state.

8
9 As an example. The Council recently
10 put together some position statements. One of them
11 supported the efforts from groups and tribes that
12 pursue indigenous management, or co-management or
13 resources in the region. And our most recent position
14 statement explains our interpretation of the terms,
15 meaningful priority, and the continuation of
16 subsistence uses. Our Council has reviewed legal
17 history of ANILCA and Congressional Intent, and then
18 reviewed how those two phrases are considered in
19 decisions for regulations, policies and procedures
20 relating to subsistence uses. The Council has
21 suggested reasons for the Board to support more
22 proposals in the future by basing decisions on
23 justifications of providing meaningful priority and
24 ensuring that continuation of subsistence uses, instead
25 of just dismissing proposals based solely on
26 conservation concerns or a lack thereof.

27
28 I believe all RACs have received a copy
29 of both of these position statements.

30
31 A few years ago this Council spent a
32 significant amount of time reviewing the Alaska
33 Roadless Proposed Rule for the Tongass National Forest.
34 We reviewed the proposed alternatives and developed a
35 26 page comment letter. In addition, Council members
36 attended a subsistence public hearing and myself and
37 the Vice Chair and another Council member virtually
38 participated in a formal Office of Management and
39 Budget meeting with Washington D.C., personnel related
40 to that subsistence rule, or the Roadless Rule --
41 excuse me.

42
43 The Council has engaged in the Board of
44 Fish and Board of Game processes for the State in
45 recent years by submitting proposals, submitting formal
46 comments on proposals and by sending Council members to
47 physically attend the meetings. Many of the State fish
48 proposals that we have submitted were an attempt to
49 address the issue of unguided, non-resident
50

1 sportsfishing in Southeast Alaska. Based on
2 observations and public testimony the Council believes
3 that unguided non-resident sportfishermen are taking
4 multiple daily harvest limits and those limits for
5 unguided non-residents are poorly enforced or accounted
6 for. Non-resident unguided fishermen do not have to
7 record their harvest before leaving a fishing site
8 except for species with an annual limit unlike
9 subsistence fishermen. Our attempts to try to remedy
10 this loophole have so far been unsuccessful but the
11 Council will keep trying.

12
13 The Council also worked with the State
14 to develop a new wolf management plan while the
15 Alexander Archipelago wolf was under consideration for
16 an Endangered Species listing. We advocated that
17 wolves be managed by a population estimate instead of
18 the previous management strategy of setting a wolf
19 harvest quota in Game Management Unit 2. This included
20 providing specific traditional ecological knowledge and
21 local observations to the State. We also sent one of
22 our Council members to the Board of Game to deliver the
23 Council's comprehensive comments and support of such a
24 management plan. The Council spent several years
25 working with the Department of Fish and Game towards
26 what we believe, in time, will prove to be a more
27 successful management strategy for wolves in Game
28 Management Unit 2 Prince of Wales Island.

29
30 Regional priorities for our Council
31 included voicing its concerns regarding local food
32 security and sovereignty. With the high cost of living
33 in many of the Southeast remote communities along with
34 increased competition from non-rural users the Council
35 has heard a lot of testimony regarding the difficulty
36 of subsistence users to harvest certain resources in
37 specific areas of our region.

38
39 Another regional priority has been
40 large scale mining development in British Columbia,
41 Canada and the impact that these may have on our
42 TransBoundary watersheds. The Mt. Polley mine tailing
43 dam failure, the biggest mining pollution in Canada's
44 history has brought needed attention to the threats
45 posed by such mining activities. This Council has
46 written letters outlining detailed concerns with this
47 practice and the devastating effects it could have on
48 Southeast Alaska fish and wildlife should a breach
49 occur in any of those mine tailings dams, and the
50

0038

1 Council has also asked that these concerns be elevated
2 to people in a position to communicate directly with
3 Canada such as the State Department.

4
5 This Council has heard and observed
6 themselves many indications of changing climate in
7 Southeast Alaska. The impacts on fish and wildlife
8 habitat are far reaching and steadily increasing and
9 subsistence users are concerned region-wide.

10
11 The Council enjoys supporting
12 opportunities for youth engagement with the Council,
13 the Board and the overall Federal Subsistence
14 Management Program. Our Council has had the pleasure
15 of interacting with students from the University of
16 Alaska Southeast Procedures and Practicum Class over
17 the last several years. I know there will be a video
18 session later today and on Thursday that will highlight
19 this group. The students attend and observe RAC and
20 Board regulatory meetings and have a variety of
21 assignments. The students are tasked with networking
22 while at the meetings and Council members are always
23 impressed by the interest and level of participation by
24 these youth and learning about participating in the
25 public process. We are excited to see that a youth
26 seat has been added to the Regional Advisory Council
27 charters and we look forward to passing down our
28 knowledge and experience as Council members to the next
29 group of folks who will be sitting here in our seats in
30 the future.

31
32 Looking ahead.

33
34 Expected future work for the Council
35 includes providing a recommendation for a pending
36 proposal to rescind the non-rural designation of
37 Ketchikan. The Council has heard a lot of public
38 testimony around this issue from three public meetings
39 and several RAC meetings. A unique aspect of this
40 request is the effect it may have on neighboring
41 communities namely potential user conflicts and the
42 eventual need of an .804 determination due to the way
43 our customary and traditional use of resources are
44 determined in Southeast. The Council will be presented
45 with the analysis and be expected to give its
46 recommendation to the Board at the upcoming fall
47 meeting cycle.

48
49 Additional expected work by the Council
50

0039

1 may be providing comments on proposed revisions to the
2 Tongass National Forest Plan. From our experience and
3 previously reviewing the plan when we were working
4 through the Alaska Roadless Proposed Rule Process, we
5 recognized that very little attention was given to
6 subsistence in the plan to manage the Forest. An
7 ecologically diverse and healthy Forest is extremely
8 important to our rural communities and we are the
9 stewards of the Tongass Forest. Our Council sees this
10 planning process as an opportunity for the Forest
11 Service to engage with the tribes, and other regional
12 groups to draw upon the vast storehouse of traditional
13 ecological knowledge available to them, which will be
14 very valuable throughout their planning process. I
15 believe the Council will also provide formal public
16 comments and participate in other engagement
17 opportunities to encourage the Forest Service to
18 adequately consider subsistence uses and potential
19 impact to subsistence uses in its proposed revisions.

20
21 I'll close by saying how much, we, as a
22 Council, appreciate this All-Council meeting especially
23 coming just a few years after a period of time where we
24 had to conduct our meetings virtually. I'm sure I
25 speak on behalf of all Southeast Council members when I
26 say, we are glad to be here to learn new things and to
27 refresh our memories on many important topics being
28 offered this week. And, most importantly, to have the
29 opportunity to build or rekindle relationships with
30 other Regional Council members.

31
32 Thank you. That concludes our report.

33
34 (Applause)

35
36 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Mr.
37 Hernandez. Are there any questions for Region 1,
38 Southeast Alaska RAC.

39
40 (No comments)

41
42 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing none, we will
43 move on to Region 2, Southcentral Alaska. Region 2.

44
45 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Region 2, that would
46 be me. Greetings everyone. I'm going to sit down and
47 read a brief thing here first, but my name is Greg
48 Encelewski and I'm from Ninilchik. This is our awesome
49 Council here, you'll get to meet them all and it's such
50

0040

1 a pleasure to be able to interact.

2

3

4 We have a tumultuous situation before
5 us, we continue to lose our fish, our game, our clams,
6 everything has been in decline. People keep coming
7 here with much passion and much concern and we have a
8 serious problem and hopefully we could overcome it.

8

9

10 I'm going to read you -- this is to the
11 Board here. This is fresh. This is not something you
12 read or came up with before so you get new material and
13 I'll keep it brief.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

But, anyway, the Southcentral region is bound by the Alaska Range, it's north of the Canadian Border and it encompasses all of the Kenai Peninsula, south it runs through Lake Clark, Denali Park Preserve, west, the region also contains waters of Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound and a good chunk of the Copper River included in the Delta. Contained within these boundaries are 45 rural communities which also contain several non-subsistence areas with large urban communities. Aside from the already mentioned Federal lands of Southcentral region it contains the Chugach National Forest, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge range in its entirety and a large portion of the Wrangell-St. Elias Park, Park and Preserve and some BLM land. I bring that to you just to show how encompassed -- everyone's encompassed with lots of responsibilities.

Some of the concerns of our Council. They include, the threat of climate change, what we're doing with the wildlife population, freshwater salmon, marine resources, that includes increased parasites loads on moose and caribou, the changing distribution in the timing of PSPs on the shellfish. Also our Council boundary contains the highest population in the state and a good percentage of these individuals live in urban centers and are not Federally-qualified subsistence users. There are miles of roads and many freshwater marine boat launches, communities that allow easy access to resources, both subsistence -- while some of them are not Federally-qualified, this brings a unique concern and challenge on several levels.

As availability of subsistence resource is decreasing, the pressure on those resources is not decreasing as we all know. How should these be

0041

1 resources be distributed to include and how should
2 these resources be distributed amongst rural users is a
3 topic that seems to be coming before the Council more
4 regularly. We have passionate statements of
5 livelihood.

6
7 I just want to comment in here, every
8 one of us in here, our foods are our soul and our
9 spirit and we need those. We can't live off the store
10 food as was mentioned.

11
12 When I grew up we walked across the
13 rivers with plentiful fish and moose and we've all had
14 that and we've seen major declines.

15
16 How to appropriate and mitigate
17 conflict between Federally-qualified users and
18 sportfishermen and hunters is a patchwork of land
19 ownership of marine waters and that depends on
20 subsistence needs to be managed by the State.

21
22 Another concern that our Council has is
23 how the Board's non-rural policy is implemented and
24 what communities outside these urban centers should be
25 given customary and traditional findings on dwellings
26 and resources. As people move out of the urban centers
27 they establish rural subdivisions, they would like to
28 gain access to the Federal resources. Establishing
29 what makes a group of people a community and at what
30 point is that community eligible to access Federal
31 resources. We say this because we've had new
32 communities develop, and come to us wanting Federal
33 subsistence.

34
35 The Council has frequently discussed
36 delegation of authority letters, specifically how
37 they're created, how they should be enacted and what's
38 the effect of the Council's responsibility and the
39 rural users they have.

40
41 Regional priorities for our Council is
42 encouraging further research on climate change and how
43 it affects our resources, how we might mitigate it and
44 affect the subsistence needs, advocating for our region
45 and our fisheries resource management programs, while
46 the availability of the resource, especially the Copper
47 River drainage as well as the Kenai Peninsula and
48 advocate of getting youth involved in the Councils.

49
50

0042

1 In closing, these days may be long but
2 the gathering together of all our Councils is very
3 important. I really enjoyed the All-Council that we
4 had before, we hear new ideas and things. Like I
5 mentioned when I started, I'm the 1948 model, I've been
6 around for quite awhile. I've been on the Council
7 about 20 years and I have a deep passion for getting
8 the resource to our people. I've served as Chair here
9 since 2015.

10

11 That said, you know, camai, thank you,
12 spasibo, and I hope we have a good session.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 (Applause)

17

18 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, sir. Any
19 questions for the Region 2 RAC report.

20

21 (No comments)

22

23 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing none, we'll
24 move on to Region 3, Kodiak/Aleutians. You have the
25 floor.

26

27 MS. HAYDEN: Good morning. My name is
28 Natasha Hayden, I'm a member of the Kodiak/Aleutians
29 RAC. Reading our Chair, Della Trumble's report on
30 behalf of our RAC, she's not able to be here in person
31 this morning.

32

33 First and foremost, I would like to say
34 that the last time the assembly of all the RACs was
35 well appreciated and the ability to meet face to face
36 with other Regional Council members was highly
37 beneficial and welcomed by our Council. With that I'm
38 saddened that I cannot attend in person today due to
39 health issues but hopefully I can stop in later this
40 week.

41

42 As our Councils move forward in a time
43 of changing and challenging environment due to climate
44 change, the effects that it has on our subsistence and
45 means to survive is a detrimental concern for all of us
46 in our communities. The weather also being a major
47 factor with more frequent big storms.

48

49 Other issues are as follows:

50

0043

1 Our Council has deep concerns regarding
2 the alarming decline of the sockeye salmon run in the
3 Buskin River, Kodiak, especially since 2020. The
4 Buskin River was closed to fishing for sockeye salmon
5 in 2020 through 2023 due to insufficient escapement
6 returns and more recently due to premature death of
7 salmon before spawning. The Buskin River sockeye is a
8 main subsistence staple for reds in the community of
9 Kodiak.

10

11 Another major concern is the escalating
12 presence of invasive species notably the signal
13 crayfish which are non-Native to Kodiak Island. These
14 species, present in Buskin Lake, have been identified
15 as a potential threat to salmon habitat in the Buskin
16 River and various parts of Kodiak Island and are
17 competing against Native species. Additionally, the
18 multitude of other invasive species have established
19 themselves on Kodiak Island and across the
20 Kodiak/Aleutians region.

21

22 This past spring and summer we had a
23 lot of rain and cold weather. The delayed berry
24 production and late arrival of salmonberries and
25 blueberries were attributed to unusual weather
26 conditions. We appreciate the efforts that the Federal
27 Board's approval to collaborate various agency efforts
28 in regard to Lake Andrew outlet in Adak. Lake Andrew
29 was opened by the U.S. Navy this summer but this is not
30 a permanent solution as the outlet will close again
31 with rocks and other debris deposited by future ocean
32 storms. Subsistence fishing at Red Salmon Bay faced
33 challenges with lake water levels low impacting salmon
34 runs also in Adak. Unalaska reported a successful
35 subsistence fishing season with favorable weather
36 breaks and subsistence opportunities remain strong.
37 This was an effort working with the Qawalqangin Tribe,
38 Federal Subsistence and ADF&G over a period of a couple
39 of years rebuilding the salmon in McLees Lake.

40

41 Another issue of concern with our
42 Council was the lack of enforcement in a couple of our
43 communities in regard to subsistence. Trooper Walsh
44 with the State of Alaska, Division of Public Safety
45 reported on law enforcement activities in Unalaska and
46 Cold Bay. He highlighted the Divisions commitment to
47 address various law enforcement issues in the region
48 with an emphasis on proactive measures in collaboration
49 with other agencies.

50

0044

1 The Council sent a letter to the Board
2 expressing disappointment and concern over their
3 exclusion from the DOI consultations about the
4 potential OSM move and the Kodiak and Aleutian region
5 exclusion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
6 sponsored Alaska Co-Stewardship Talking Circles. The
7 Council's lands and waters encompass thousands of miles
8 of coastal waters and communities, we appreciate that
9 this is being further addressed in this session.

10

11 The Council identified four topics of
12 concern for the FY2023 annual report to the Board.

13

14 1. Support funding for the research on
15 the Buskin River to determine cause for the collapse of
16 the sockeye salmon run.

17

18 2. The Council's concern regarding
19 being excluded from critical Federal information
20 sessions such as the statewide consultations about
21 moving OSM from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to
22 the Office of Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and
23 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored
24 Alaska Co-Stewardship Talking Circles.

25

26 3. Full support of the land exchange
27 for the road access for King Cove residents to access
28 Cold Bay airport for safety and access to subsistence
29 resources.

30

31 4. Concern for increasing amounts and
32 types of invasive species and affects on subsistence
33 resources and need for grants to fund projects for
34 research on eradicating these species.

35

36 Proposed topics for winter All-Council
37 meeting, the Council provided three suggested topics.

38

39 We strongly believe and hope that all
40 Councils consider improving understanding and work
41 toward collaboration across Councils that share
42 resources such as migratory birds or caribou ranges.

43

44 Climate change trends. Changing
45 temperature. And need to share what is happening
46 across regions and how to adapt.

47

48 And Federal barriers that -- Federal
49 barriers and the ability to get permits online access

50

0045

1 -- I believe that that is related to the somewhat
2 onerous process and not clear on how to obtain Federal
3 subsistence permits for various species across regions.

4
5 The need to work together on issues
6 that overlap. The ability to understand each other
7 regions considering the many impacts we face today. It
8 is going to be a long road moving ahead.

9
10 We would also like to thank,
11 wholeheartedly, the support of the Federal Board and
12 Staff that help us collaborate between various agencies
13 when needed.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 That was on behalf of Chair Della
18 Trumble.

19
20 (Applause)

21
22 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any
23 questions for Kodiak/Aleutians.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing none we'll
28 move to Region 4, Bristol Bay. Representative from
29 Bristol Bay RAC.

30
31 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Dan Dunaway will
32 do ours.

33
34 MR. DUNAWAY: Yeah, Dan Dunaway here,
35 Vice Chair of Bristol Bay RAC. Thank you for this
36 opportunity to talk.

37
38 Our area spans Bristol Bay from Togiak
39 on down to Port Heiden and then we jump across the
40 Peninsula to include the Chigniks as well. In general,
41 sockeye salmon runs are good throughout the region,
42 though Chignik River early sockeye run has been listed
43 as a stock of concern in 2022. On a good note, both
44 early and late Chignik runs in '23 exceeded the optimal
45 escapement goal. Chum runs are a concern across the
46 region. The Board of Fish has actually been eyeing the
47 Nushagak chum run as a possible stock of concern
48 because it's the only one where we have an enumeration
49 program. Silver salmon and pink salmon runs seem to
50

0046

1 have declined and silver salmon have been reportedly
2 small in many of the rivers around our area. Just
3 small in size. And then a very high concern is the
4 number of king salmon. We have had really severely
5 limited numbers of kings in the Nushagak. I heard that
6 Togiak was okay, but overall they're just not doing
7 real great.

8

9 Wildlife. Game. Ptarmigan populations
10 seem to have rebounded in some places, dramatically
11 rebounded I'm hearing down towards Port Heiden, amazing
12 numbers. Rabbits seem to be abundant across the
13 region, and maybe at a high right now. Moose hunting
14 opportunities have been generally good throughout the
15 region and especially in my area, Dillingham, and west
16 there's some really liberal hunting harvest limits, due
17 to the concerns of almost too many moose on the Togiak
18 Refuge. Now that doesn't hold for over around the Lake
19 Iliamna where moose aren't as abundant and have not
20 been abundant for a long time and it's a long going
21 frustration. But getting back to the Togiak Area, the
22 Unit 17, fall moose season was extended. Weather had
23 hampered some hunting and harvest was not real strong.
24 I think in the end we ended up with a better harvest.
25 Then they just recently extended the moose season for
26 the winter hunt on the Togiak, 17A area. Again, we had
27 some major thaws that opened up rivers and made access
28 very difficult and we had not harvested at more
29 historic levels.

30

31 Caribou are an ongoing concern. We
32 have very, very low numbers in the Mulchatna, somewhere
33 around 12,000 scattered very widely. Brucellosis has
34 popped up as a concern, it hurts the reproductive
35 capacity and so it's been closed throughout much of the
36 area and we coordinate with the folks north of us on
37 that and there's even been a major bear removal program
38 first initiated by the State last spring where they
39 took a lot of brown bears north of Dillingham, and
40 interestingly enough some of the guides were upset but
41 they apparently had no trouble finding enough bears for
42 their clients and some flights in the fall seemed to
43 show still pretty strong numbers of brown bears. So
44 that program plans to continue and I believe the RAC
45 has been strongly supportive of it and many of the
46 villages that weren't part of that area keep asking us
47 why don't we have it over in our area. Our huge, huge
48 red runs throughout Bristol Bay, unprecedented, seem to
49 be feeding an awful lot of brown bear cubs and having
50

0047

1 them show up the next spring and there's real concern
2 about them being predators on bears and caribou.

3

4 One special resident caribou herd near
5 Kokhanok is viewed as a fragment of the Mulchatna by
6 the biologists and we're hoping that added information
7 -- we've been pushing for more information on this
8 because I think the villages nearby, Igiugig and
9 Kokhanok could probably take some harvest and it would
10 be very valuable to an area that doesn't have a lot of
11 moose and with the cost of food these days, even a few
12 caribou to each village would make a huge difference.

13

14 And let's see, going on annual report
15 topics.

16

17 Fish and Game was planning a major
18 management change in the Chignik area that really was
19 concerning to everybody. They wanted to roll the early
20 and late run into a single run for management. The
21 last Board of Fish cycle, I think a lot of the outcry
22 from the Advisory Committees and the RACs convinced
23 them to keep it more in a two run management and they
24 went to an optimal escapement goal. And as I said
25 earlier it appears that they exceeded both the early
26 and late run goal for the first time because there were
27 some alarming, deeply alarming full closures of sockeye
28 salmon in the Chignik, which in my history in both the
29 South Alaska Peninsula and Bristol Bay was -- that used
30 to be the golden fishery of all in the state. So I
31 hope the recovery continues.

32

33 And let's see, we've also asked the
34 Solicitor -- request that Staff analysis on proposals
35 gets a review from the Solicitors. We've had some
36 proposals that we push along quite a ways into the
37 process only to be told that the Solicitor says it
38 won't fly and that can be a source of frustration when
39 you're fairly down the process thinking you're going to
40 make some changes and kind of get dead-ended. So it's
41 been asked that that be reviewed much earlier.

42

43 We're supportive of the added tribal
44 seats on the Federal Subsistence Board that has been
45 recently announced.

46

47 We've asked that the process for
48 getting Council appointments be accelerated. We have
49 people that apply and it's over a year before they find
50

50

0048

1 out whether they're on or not and we suffer vacancies
2 and some people lose track of the process. It would be
3 nice if that was quicker.

4
5 We've had some of our Council members
6 that are not well off and in very remote locations and
7 even being asked to attend a meeting by remote internet
8 is a financial burden for them. It's not always easy
9 to have even workable access to internet and so some of
10 these folks say it's too expensive and it discourages
11 them from becoming a RAC member or attending the
12 meetings and we're wondering if there's a way to be
13 compensated for that burden.

14
15 Correspondence. We support the letter
16 for Fish and Game. We wrote a letter supporting the
17 intensive predator management control program in major
18 caribou -- Mulchatna Caribou calving grounds north of
19 Dillingham. It seems to be helping. Getting better
20 cow/calf ratio and bull/cow ratio.

21
22 We're supportive of keeping the BLM
23 lands the same in the D(1) issue that's floating
24 around. The BLM lands in our region, they're either
25 really tiny postage stamps here and there and there's
26 one small chunk that adjoins some of these possible
27 mining development areas that would be of great concern
28 on what would happen to our caribou habitat.

29
30 We've also come out in support of
31 completion of the King Cove road. This was a topic of
32 extensive discussion in our fall meeting. Apparently
33 our Bristol Bay RAC had authority to also weigh in on
34 this and some of us, personally, have a lot of
35 experience in that area and so it was a long talk.

36
37 And then we have a letter of concern
38 out regarding the Fish and Game, proposing to combine
39 the escapement goals on Chignik as I had mentioned
40 before.

41
42 Really like the opportunity to have
43 this joint meeting. The last one was really useful and
44 it's good to have another one and we echo Mr.
45 Hernandez' comment from Southeast on this opportunity.

46
47 Thank you very much.

48
49 (Applause)

50

0049

1 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any
2 questions for Bristol Bay RAC.

3
4 MR. DUNAWAY: Mr. Chair, could I add
5 one thing?

6
7 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Yes, please.

8
9 MR. DUNAWAY: We're also in a little
10 bit of a unique situation in that when it comes to
11 funding projects, Federal funding subsistence projects,
12 we are rolled into the same funding as the
13 Kodiak/Aleutians and that's a little bit different but
14 we work pretty hard to coordinate together on that. In
15 recent times we've seen some of the Kodiak/Aleutian RAC
16 concerns, McLees Lake, and some of the areas adjoining
17 the Chigniks as really high priorities so we keep that
18 as a real friendly coordination.

19
20 Thank you.

21
22 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any
23 questions, follow up for Bristol Bay.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing and seeing
28 none we'll move on to Region 5, the Yukon-Kuskokwim
29 Delta.

30
31 MR. ONEY: Yes, good morning. Good
32 morning. I want to thank you for allowing our YKRAC to
33 come before you to address our unmet needs in our back
34 door.

35
36 For the record my name is Raymond Oney,
37 I come from the Yukon River of Alakanuk on the mouth of
38 the Yukon River.

39
40 First of all I'd like to address the
41 AYK salmon crises. As you know we haven't been fishing
42 on the Yukon for a number of years, four years to be
43 exact.

44
45 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Mr. Oney, could you
46 move your mic closer.

47
48 MR. ONEY: How's that? Better?

49
50

0050

1 REPORTER: It's fine, Ray.

2

3 MR. ONEY: Okay, thank you, Tina.

4 Subsistence needs for salmon by residents of the AYK
5 areas have not been met for years. And other areas
6 across the state are having similar issues. Salmon is
7 not only important for food, it is vital for our
8 culture. One of the most important aspects of
9 subsistence is the harvesting, processing and sharing
10 of resources with family and friends as well as passing
11 cultural, traditional ways to our younger generation as
12 it's a huge part of our identity and well-being.

13

14 Federal and State managed commercial
15 fisheries that bycatch and intercept AYK bound salmon
16 continues to operate while subsistence fishing is
17 closed or heavily restricted. The subsistence priority
18 is ANILCA and the State Constitution are not being
19 upheld. This is unjust and we need the Solicitor to
20 review this.

21

22 Salmon not being managed
23 collaboratively across jurisdictional boundaries
24 ecosystem based management and long-term conservation
25 planning is not happening. The Departments of
26 Interior, Agriculture and Commercial and State of
27 Alaska must develop a collaborative ecosystem based
28 management plan for Alaska salmon in the Bering Sea and
29 Gulf of Alaska. Our Council has written countless
30 letters on this issue, some of which have been
31 forwarded to Secretaries but still we have seen no
32 action to address the salmon crises in a holistic
33 manner or to ensure that subsistence priorities are
34 being upheld. We would like to see the Federal
35 Subsistence Board take a stronger stance to protect our
36 subsistence rights.

37

38 The YKDelta Council would also like to
39 request joint Council's action to send a letter to the
40 Federal Subsistence Board requesting they once, again,
41 elevate issues surrounding the salmon crises to the
42 Secretaries and ask for meaningful action to be taken.
43 Perhaps the voices of all 10 Councils would make a
44 louder impact. As you know we've been providing over
45 20 years of public testimony on this issue without
46 getting anywhere and we still are facing it today, as
47 you see our resources dwindle in front of our eyes so
48 we need your help.

49

50

0051

1 Additionally, our Council would like
2 joint Council action to write a letter to the North
3 Pacific Fisheries Management Council to reduce chinook,
4 chum and halibut bycatch, reduce bottom dragging and to
5 request two voting subsistence representatives be added
6 to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.
7

8 As you heard from our neighbor from the
9 Bristol Bay area that the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has
10 been dwindling and they continue to dwindle today. We
11 have supported the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
12 for intensive management of the herd because a
13 reduction in predators may help the herd recover and be
14 reopened to subsistence harvest sooner.
15

16 Food security tends to be our priority
17 in our area. As you know we've been hit hard
18 especially with the salmon. The salmon that we rely on
19 for many years, not only in our area but throughout the
20 length of the Yukon River and also the Kuskokwim and
21 coastal villages. Restrictions on these resources has
22 put hardship on our people. As we now rely a lot on
23 the stores to substitute for putting food on the table,
24 but due to the climate change we are experiencing more
25 storms that are delaying a lot of the planes that bring
26 in resources to our stores, so we're being hit hard,
27 twice as hard from relying on resources that are in our
28 back door and also less food that comes into stores
29 that people rely on.
30

31 Council member compensation. Our
32 Council has previously requested that the compensation
33 policy for Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
34 members be reviewed and revised. We request that
35 Council members be paid a fairly daily rate of
36 compensation when attending Council meetings or other
37 meetings as Council representatives. The Board
38 forwarded our request for fair compensation to the
39 Secretaries who have the authority to revise the
40 compensation policy, we have not received a response.
41 The local and indigenous knowledge provided by Council
42 members is fundamental to the Federal Subsistence
43 Management Program and needed by the Board to make
44 informed decisions about resource management issues
45 across Alaska. Federal Staff are paid for attending
46 Council meetings but Council members are not
47 compensated in the same manner. We feel that this is
48 unfair. We would like to ask the other Councils if
49 they would like to join together to make this request
50

0052

1 stronger.

2

3

4 Climate change. As we heard earlier,
5 there's nothing we could do about the climate change
6 but it's happening right before our eyes as we
7 experienced a few years ago, about the typhoon that hit
8 our area, the coastal areas and throughout Norton
9 Sound, that devastated a lot of our fish camps, a lot
10 of our places where we go and harvest our resources to
11 prepare for the cold winters. We are seeing many
12 impacts of climate change in our region. This is
13 affecting our communities, some which are having to
14 relocate and also our subsistence resources.

14

15

16 Competition for moose with non-local
17 hunters. Back in the early '90s the people in our area
18 came up with a moratorium on moose. We gave five years
19 of no hunting moose in our area and the result of that
20 we seen the increase of moose population in our area.
21 And as a result of that the people in our area added
22 two more years so as a result of that we seen the moose
23 population explode and we're seeing the moose travel to
24 different areas where people are saying they haven't
25 seen moose before so we are thankful that we can do
26 something like this, not only with the moose, but also
27 with the fishing resources that we rely on heavily. So
28 we need your help in all that, especially listening to
29 our concerns so that we could be able to, like we've
30 already heard, provide for our children for the future.

30

31

32 Competition for moose with non-local
33 hunters. Although portions of the moose population in
34 Unit 18 are presently at their highest recorded levels,
35 the growing presence of non-local hunters is
36 increasing, competition with rural subsistence users
37 for this resource. Furthermore, an increase of non-
38 local hunters has resulted in additional problems for
39 subsistence users. More non-local hunters result in
40 Federally-qualified subsistence users spending more
41 time and money to successfully harvest moose. It is
42 also leading to conflicts between user groups,
43 complaints of trespassing on Native allotments have
44 increased and so have reports of wanton waste. When
45 regional residents see non-local hunters traveling with
46 only antlers we request whether the meat was harvested
47 and if the animal was given the proper respect it
48 deserves.

48

49

50 Donlin Gold. The Council is extremely

50

0053

1 concerned with the outdated information used in the
2 Donlin Gold EIS and the lack of meaningful tribal
3 consultation during the NEPA process. The Donlin Gold
4 EIS is outdated and does not significantly consider
5 climate change impacts or severe declines to Western
6 Alaska salmon and Mulchatna Caribou Herd that have
7 occurred since it's release. It also does not
8 accurately represent the significant negative impacts
9 that the project will have to subsistence and
10 traditional cultural practices. We have requested that
11 a new supplemental environmental impact statement be
12 initiated to address the inadequacies of the first EIS.

13

14 Items YKDelta proposes to include in
15 joint letter to the Board. Example. Salmon crises
16 asking the Board to elevate to the Secretaries.

17

18 Request the Solicitor the current
19 management -- current salmon management situation
20 across all jurisdiction for compliance with the
21 subsistence priority in Title VIII of ANILCA and the
22 State of Alaska Constitution. Councils need to be
23 briefed about whether or not the Secretaries of the
24 Interior and Agriculture have liaised with the
25 Secretary of Commerce about salmon bycatch and salmon
26 management as requested by four Yukon drainage Councils
27 in 2022. So far we have received no response.

28

29 Ask for guidance from the Secretaries
30 on how to initiate collaborative ecosystem based salmon
31 management across the jurisdictions, both in-river and
32 the marine environments. We ask that the Board request
33 the Secretaries ensure that the Pacific Salmon Treaty
34 is being applied fairly to all users and that they
35 liaise with the Department of State, Department of
36 Commerce and State of Alaska to do so. We ask the
37 Federal Subsistence Board and Office of Subsistence
38 Management to take position in support of reduced
39 bycatch and interception of AYK salmon. And we ask
40 that in the future the Board and OSM submit comments in
41 support of North Pacific Fishery Management Council and
42 Alaska Board of Fisheries proposals that seek to reduce
43 bycatch and interception of AYK salmon in commercial
44 fisheries.

45

46 That concludes my report, thank you.

47

48 (Applause)

49

50

0054

1 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any
2 questions, comments for Yukon Kuskokwim. Yes, please.

3

4

5 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. That was an
6 excellent report. I'm Patricia Phillips from the
7 Southeast Council. One of the things you requested was
8 joint Council action letter and can that come out of
9 this joint meeting and how do we make that happen, a
10 letter that is reviewed by the Solicitor at the request
11 of YK?

11

12

Thank you.

13

14

15 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. I will
16 defer that question to Staff.

16

17

18 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, thank you. Dorothy
19 Shockley with the Eastern Interior RAC. Great report.
20 Appreciate that. I guess can I ask a question to the
21 Regional Board, or the Federal Subsistence Board?

21

22

CO-CHAIR BAKER: Yes.

23

24

25 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. So he mentioned
26 20 years of testimony in regards to our salmon. Can
27 you tell me what you're doing or the process of that?
28 And how you are working with the State in regards to
29 those regulations and downfall or the decline of our
30 salmon?

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Well, the Federal
Board Chair, that's a good question. Well, the first
thing is what the user has done and they have taken a
step back so we'll take our hats off to the rural
subsistence user who has increased the moose population
and have been the first ones to sit back on the river
to conserve the stocks. So what we've done is been a
listening post for those concerns for the 10 years that
I've been here watching the decline, ultimately to
butting heads with the State about it right down to
legal action. But I would clip my tongue there because
I would probably step over myself. But I could
probably ask a Staff member if there was an actual list
of maybe ongoing litigation or things that we're caught
up in with the State to elevate these concerns to that
level, to make sure they know that we're trying to
build teeth into this program for the people and how
we're trying to exercise it.

0055

1 So as I'm taking notes here, I'm also a
2 rural user, right, like I'm trying to find the tools
3 that are necessary for us to push the envelope because
4 if it's the law, then a way to change the law. Like
5 I'm always hearing about too much work, well, that's
6 why we have bureaucracy so they can work for us so I'm
7 hoping that's what ends up happening but as far as the
8 bells and whistles, we've got some Staff here that
9 might be able to articulate clearly what process we're
10 in. Where's my ARD?

11

12 MS. CREACHBAUM: Where's Ken?

13

14 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, where's Ken?
15 Hey, Ken. He's walking up. Oh, Ken heard that one
16 coming so -- yeah, I'm just kidding, but we do take it
17 seriously, we do elevate it. The first thing we've
18 been doing is going into conservation measures with the
19 people that we can on the lands that we can and in
20 partnership with the land owners, the Federal ones and
21 in that we find conflict with what the State's position
22 is and we're willing to fight for the people. So
23 that's been the position with the Board.

24

25 CO-CHAIR BAKER: One last question,
26 Wilbur.

27

28 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, Mr. Chair, and
29 thank you. Salmon is a real big topic in the Northwest
30 and the Yukon, what I would prefer -- from the guy that
31 just spoke from the Bristol Bay or that Yukon area, is
32 the Fish and Game and the Park Service that does
33 studies, like they do up in Northwest, up in the
34 Selawik on fish and we have a fish hatchery in the
35 Noatak area does studies on salmon and we also have a
36 young man that worked with the University of Fairbanks
37 that do a lot of studies on fish and mammals and stuff
38 sitting on the same RAC as I am. They need to get a
39 hold of Fish and Game and Park Service to put up a fish
40 hatchery in the Yukon. I would like to see that.
41 Because it's been asked for for years and years and
42 what we know about salmon, the dying off of salmon
43 because of the climate change is the warm weather,
44 we've seen a lot of salmon just belly up because of the
45 climate change. We see other fish going into our lakes
46 and rivers that bellies up because they just go into
47 shock and they're floating all over on the beaches and
48 stuff. But I would like to see most of all salmon that
49 come in the regions that live on salmon get together at
50

0056

1 a roundtable with Fish and Game, I would like to see
2 the Bering Sea reps there and we should discuss this.

3

4 I think this is going to be a good
5 meeting, thank you, Mr. Chair.

6

7 CO-CHAIR BAKER: I know I said one
8 final question, but one final question and then Katya
9 will speak to the motion -- to the request for a
10 letter.

11

12 MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chair, were you
13 going to respond to my question?

14

15 CO-CHAIR BAKER: She will after this
16 question and then we'll get to your question.

17

18 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay.

19

20 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you.

21

22 MS. BURK: Hi, Eva Dawn Burk with the
23 Eastern Interior RAC. This is more of a comment than a
24 question but as of right now the Yukon River
25 InterTribal Fish Commission does not support a hatchery
26 on the Yukon River. We are having multiple discussions
27 in our tribal meetings about hatcheries and we do not
28 support that at this time. So I just wanted that to be
29 on record.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you for that.

34 Katya.

35

36 MS. WESSELS: Okay, thank you. For the
37 record, Katya Wessels. So I first would like to
38 address the question that was brought up by Patricia
39 Phillips of Southeast Council in regards to the joint
40 Council letter. There will be -- at the end of today
41 there will be additional opportunities for Councils to
42 discuss together what this letter might look like, what
43 you would like to include in it together as, you know,
44 all the Councils. Then I would suggest, since it's
45 kind of hard to vote on something like that in a larger
46 group, I would suggest that each Council takes the idea
47 of the joint letter into their individual meeting and
48 votes on it. You know, we can try, by, before the
49 individual meetings, since they're on Thursday and
50

0057

1 Friday, the Coordinators can try to maybe draft a rough
2 outline for that so you will have something to look at
3 in your individual Council meetings but I think it
4 would be better if you look at it, you know, in your
5 individual Council meetings but discuss the essence of
6 the letter, the meat of the letter, later today when we
7 have the joint discussion.

8

9 So -- and also I wanted to address the
10 other question in regards to the litigations. There's
11 an update on the litigation update on Page 91 of your
12 joint Council meeting book, All-Council meeting book,
13 it's in there, there's like a two page update. If
14 there are any additional questions regarding that, that
15 will need to be addressed to our Solicitor, Ken Lord,
16 who is -- I don't think he's still out of the room --
17 but when he's back we can ask him to speak to that.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CO-CHAIR BAKER: So with that, it is
22 now 10:41 and if it's the will of the body we'll go
23 ahead and take a 10 minute break, if there's no
24 objection we'll come back at 10:51.

25

26 (Off record)

27

28 (On record)

29

30 CO-CHAIR BAKER: All right, can
31 everybody come back to their seats so we can get back
32 on with the show.

33

34 (Pause)

35

36 CO-CHAIR BAKER: All right, so now it
37 is 11:02 and I will turn it over to my Co-Chair. We're
38 going to take a -- we're right in the middle of the
39 regional reports, and since we finished Region 5, at
40 this time I'll turn it over to Madame Co-Chair to
41 introduce our next portion of the agenda.

42

43 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Yeah, thank you,
44 Thomas. Thank you everybody. And we're very honored
45 here today to have Raina Thiele who is a Senior Advisor
46 for the Alaska Affairs and Strategic Priority and her
47 office is here to speak with us and we're very honored
48 that you took the time out of your day to do this and
49 we're very anxious to hear from you so please proceed.

50

0058

1 MS. THIELE: Great, thank you so much.
2 My name is Raina Thiele, and I serve as Senior Advisor
3 to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and I am based
4 -- headquartered in Washington, D.C., but I am from
5 Bristol Bay Alaska. I am Dena'ina, Athabascan and
6 Yup'ik and I have the proud honor of being the first
7 Alaska Native to hold this position but I know I will
8 not be the last to hold this position. I'm also joined
9 by a colleague of mine, who I want to ensure has an
10 opportunity to introduce himself, he is our fearless
11 Solicitor at the Department of the Interior. Bob, I'll
12 let you introduce yourself.

13
14 MR. ANDERSON: Thank you. Hi, thanks
15 Raina. It's nice to be here. I'm Bob Anderson. I
16 think I know probably a bunch of you, I lived up here
17 for quite awhile in the early '80s and I think I
18 presented the first petition to the Federal Subsistence
19 Board back in about 1992 or so and on behalf of my
20 client at the time, Katie John, when I was a lawyer for
21 the Native American Rights Fund, but for the last three
22 years I've been the Solicitor for the Department of the
23 Interior so I'm based in Washington, D.C., and, you
24 know, run a large office across the country but have a
25 small, but mighty office up here in Alaska, the
26 Regional Solicitor's Office headed by Seth Dean, who is
27 here, and, you know, we basically advise the
28 Department, including the -- all of the Bureaus in
29 Alaska through our various components and my office was
30 integral in developing the draft proposed subsistence
31 rule that has just come out that I'm here to talk a
32 little bit about today but I'll turn it back to Raina
33 and she can open it up.

34
35 MS. THIELE: Thank you all so much and
36 it's so great to see so many familiar faces across the
37 room and so many new faces as well. As I mentioned my
38 family is from the Bristol Bay region of Alaska from
39 Lake Iliamna. My family is from Alexander Creek and
40 Pedro Bay village. So the way that I grew up, we were
41 always practicing our subsistence life ways with
42 fishing, hunting, you know, was a huge part of our
43 life, our people are salmon people where I come from.
44 And so I was able to catch a good portion of the read
45 outs from the RACs, each individual RAC this morning
46 and it was, you know, just the issues that are raised
47 at all of these meetings are very near and dear to my
48 heart as somebody who grew up, you know, fishing for
49 sockeye salmon, king salmon, eating moose meat pretty
50

0059

1 much every day, we had moose meat I think every day of
2 the week when I was growing up, I don't think I tasted
3 beef until I was like in my teenage years. So we
4 certainly take everything that is said in these
5 meetings to heart and we will share those with the
6 Secretary of the Interior.

7
8 And it's just wonderful to be here with
9 all of you because I know how much time and effort it
10 takes for you to travel out here. I know that there
11 are resource constraints in our Federal Subsistence
12 Management Program. We've had an opportunity to talk
13 to the Federal Subsistence Board with the Secretary
14 about these issues and are certainly working on how we
15 can help to alleviate some of those stresses because we
16 do understand how difficult it can be to have the
17 proper support to participate in either the Federal
18 Subsistence Board or in the RAC process. And also to
19 ensure that, you know, folks are fully compensated for
20 that time because the knowledge that each of you brings
21 is so important and it's not something that really has
22 a value placed on it but at least people's time should
23 certainly be accounted for.

24
25 So what I'm here to talk about, along
26 with Bob, is a recent proposal for the Department of
27 the Interior and the Department of Agriculture put
28 forward. This proposal is based on extensive feedback
29 we received during tribal consultation and the policy
30 priorities put forth by both President Biden as well as
31 Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, and the
32 Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

33
34 The Departments announced new proposed
35 steps to strengthen subsistence user representation on
36 the Federal Subsistence Board which manages subsistence
37 use on Federal lands and waters in Alaska. The
38 Department is proposing to add three additional public
39 members to the Board who will be nominated by
40 Federally-recognized tribal governments in Alaska.
41 Like the other public members they will possess
42 personal knowledge of and direct experience with
43 subsistence uses in rural Alaska, including Alaska
44 Native subsistence uses and will be appointed by the
45 Secretaries of the Interior with the concurrence of the
46 Secretary of Agriculture. In addition, the Chair will
47 be required to have personal knowledge of and
48 experience with rural subsistence uses.

49
50

0060

1 The Federal Subsistence Board will
2 continue to implement the Federal Subsistence
3 Management Program for the benefit of all rural users
4 consistent with the requirements of Title VIII of
5 ANILCA. The Department believes the move will
6 strengthen the Program and all users will benefit.

7
8 Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland,
9 stated that by strengthening indigenous representation
10 on the Federal Subsistence Board we seek to not only
11 preserve these important traditions but to fully
12 recognize tribal sovereignty and ensure the inclusion
13 of indigenous knowledge for future subsistence related
14 planning. When indigenous communities are at the table
15 everyone who enjoys a subsistence lifestyle has more
16 opportunities to thrive.

17
18 Secretary Vilsack stated, honoring our
19 general trust responsibility and fostering greater
20 collaboration with our indigenous partners is a key
21 goal for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
22 Incorporating indigenous knowledge that has been gained
23 over millennia into our Federal subsistence
24 decisionmaking is an important step in that effort.

25
26 This draft proposal also responds to a
27 number of key policies of President Biden and Secretary
28 Haaland. I'll just mention a couple for folks to
29 consider.

30
31 The first is Secretarial Order 3403 on
32 tribal co-stewardship. This Secretarial Order seeks to
33 ensure that the Department of Agriculture, Department
34 of the Interior and NOAA are managing Federal lands and
35 waters in a manner that seeks to protect the treaty,
36 religious, subsistence and cultural interests of
37 Federally-recognized Indian Tribes. That such
38 management is consistent with the nation to nation
39 relationship between the United States and Federally-
40 recognized Indian Tribes and that such management
41 fulfills the United States unique trust obligation to
42 Federally-recognized Indian Tribes and their citizens.
43 President Biden's 2022 government-wide guidance on
44 indigenous knowledge, which was the document that
45 directed the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in
46 Federal research, policy and decisionmaking, of course
47 that includes the decisionmaking of the Federal
48 Subsistence Board.

49
50

0061

1 As we all are aware, subsistence
2 practices hold immense cultural and historical
3 importance for Alaska Native communities and for rural
4 communities and have supported life ways, food
5 security, indigenous practices and cultures for
6 thousands of years. The Departments of Interior,
7 Agriculture and Commerce hosted a series of tribal
8 consultations back in 2022. These consultations were
9 hosted remotely so it was during kind of Covid times
10 and so most of those were hosted remotely, a whole
11 series of them, but those were open to folks statewide.
12 We did not intend to exclude any regions, it was really
13 a statewide process, so we do apologize -- I heard
14 someone say that we skipped them, I think in the
15 Aleutian region, and that certainly was not
16 intentional, those were statewide sessions and I think
17 the issue was probably one of not getting the
18 information out to everybody through our typical
19 methods of communications so we apologize for that.
20 Consultation comments pointed to the adverse impacts
21 the changing climate is having on Alaska Native
22 subsistence practices and Alaska Native communities.
23 These impacts affect all rural subsistence users.

24
25 Comments from the consultations also
26 highlighted, the need to expand tribal partnerships and
27 improve the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into
28 subsistence management.

29
30 The draft FSB rule was published in the
31 Federal Registry on February 26th and has an open
32 comment period until April 26th. We encourage folks to
33 take a close look at the rule and to provide any
34 relevant feedback to us.

35
36 We have a lot of other updates to offer
37 but this was the primary reason that Bob and I wanted
38 to travel up here to Anchorage to participate in this
39 particular session. And so I will -- before we kind of
40 go on to a question and answer session I want to give
41 it over to Bob to go a little bit more in-depth into
42 some of the legal considerations that we covered.

43
44 Thank you very much.

45
46 MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Raina. So
47 I'm just going to make a few points about some of the
48 more difficult, or complicated parts of the rule and
49 explain why they are proposed as they are. And that,
50

1 you know, of course as Raina pointed out, we've got the
2 comment period open until April 26th so we look forward
3 to thoughts about it and, of course, Raina and I are
4 always open to answer questions today or at any point
5 as you work through the process and have questions, as
6 is my regional office here to provide information to
7 the public as well as to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

8
9 The rule, you know, is designed to
10 increase the size of the Board and I mean that was the
11 primary impetus was to get three more members on the
12 Board and I think through the consultation process, you
13 know, the public testimony made it clear that the
14 Native voice and tribal issues were very important and
15 while the rule requires the appointments to the Board
16 to be made by the Secretary of the Interior with the
17 concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture it doesn't
18 speak to where the nominations come from. And so in
19 conformity with the consultations that took place, that
20 Raina referred to earlier, the Secretary decided that
21 it was appropriate to propose that nominations for the
22 three new seats on the Board, the three new public
23 seats, be gathered from nominations by tribal
24 governments, and so the Federally-recognized tribes
25 will have the ability to nominate folks to the Federal
26 Subsistence Board. They don't have to be tribal
27 members, they can be anyone the tribal government
28 chooses and, of course, there's no requirement that any
29 particular group or tribe needs to nominate somebody
30 but it's an opportunity that would be out there should
31 folks select to do that. And there are qualifications
32 for the Board members that are laid out in the proposed
33 rule, chiefly, the personal knowledge of use and
34 practice of subsistence resources and subsistence uses.

35
36 And so it's open for comment so tell
37 the Secretary and all of us what you think of that
38 proposal.

39
40 The rulemaking process was complicated
41 to some extent by the fact that we've got this piece of
42 litigation going on out in the Kuskokwim area. This is
43 the lawsuit that the United States filed at the request
44 of Secretary Haaland and the Federal Subsistence Board
45 against the State of Alaska over the controversy in the
46 Wildlife Refuge regarding the State's refusal to abide
47 by Federal regulations that limited fishing in that
48 Refuge during the season two years ago and three years
49 ago to rural residents. The State adopted contrary
50

1 regulations that would have allowed anyone, rural or
2 non-rural, to fish within the Refuge and we had a lot
3 of outcry from tribes and local residents as well as
4 the Federal Subsistence Board and the Fish and Wildlife
5 Service that the State was acting illegally. And Raina
6 and I had some conversations with the folks in the
7 Governor's office, with ADF&G about whether they would
8 stop interfering with Federal implementation of the
9 subsistence priority for fishing, the refused to do
10 that and so we filed the lawsuit against them. Judge
11 Gleason, Federal judge here in Anchorage, issued an
12 injunction against the State telling them that they had
13 to follow the Federal rules, that was about a year and
14 a half ago and since then we've had more legal
15 proceedings and we expect a decision from the judge any
16 time now, it's been fully papered over with briefs and
17 all the things that we lawyers do to get the case ripe.
18 We think that we've got a very strong case and it will
19 prevail and then the case will likely go on to the
20 appellate branches. But one of the claims that the
21 State made that resulted in certain parts of the rule
22 that I want to mention was that they claim that the
23 actions of the Federal Subsistence Board violate the
24 U.S. Constitution and they claim that based on a part
25 of the Constitution called the Appointments Clause,
26 which is sort of an obscure part of the Constitution
27 but it's become very important in recent years, and
28 their argument is that the manner in which the
29 Secretaries appoint members to the Board violates the
30 Constitution. And basically what it boils down to is
31 they claim that the Secretaries of Interior and
32 Agriculture don't have enough supervisory control over
33 the Board to pass the legal test that the courts have
34 developed for this part of the Constitution. We think
35 that's wrong. But as we talk to the Justice Department
36 and the counterpart lawyers at the Department of
37 Agriculture about the rule we determined to put some
38 things in the rule that were assumed but were not
39 mentioned in the earlier versions of the rule.

40
41 So Number 1, we clarified that the
42 Secretaries got the authority to appoint members but
43 also to remove members from the Board, if she should
44 choose to do so. And the rule lays out the process for
45 the Secretaries to do that and this helps our case
46 because it shows that we have -- the Secretaries have
47 more control and that's what the Constitution requires,
48 is the Secretary control the process.
49
50

1 Secondly. The rule lays out an
2 affective date provision for temporary and emergency
3 rules that a, could be a -- cause a 10 day waiting
4 period for any rule, temporary or emergency rule,
5 adopted by the Board and the Secretaries would have
6 that 10 day period to modify or reverse that rule and
7 if they don't do anything it just goes into effect
8 after the 10 day waiting period. It's -- we had a lot
9 of internal discussions about that and, again, because
10 of the litigation we decided to propose as a 10 day
11 waiting period with a provision for emergency rules
12 that would allow them to go into effect in 24 hours if
13 the Board decides that it needs to do that, that it
14 needs to go into effect right away. And, you know, as
15 a matter of practice I just really doubt that this is a
16 -- this authority to modify or reverse a rule would be
17 exercised much, if at all, by the Secretaries, reaching
18 in to these very, you know, important but really local
19 decisions that are, you know, informed by the Board's
20 -- the Federal Subsistence Board's deliberations and by
21 the RACs input into particular rules. So I think that
22 it doesn't have the potential for much mischief at all
23 but it's out there in proposed form and so we look
24 forward to hearing comments back on that proposal.

25
26 And, again, as I said at the outset
27 these -- this particular change was designed to
28 strengthen our hand as we continue to litigate this
29 case against the State of Alaska over the Federal
30 Subsistence Board's rules and the State's unlawfulness
31 in violating and ignoring the Federal Subsistence
32 Board's rules.

33
34 So that's what I've got on the legal
35 aspects of the rule and look forward to any comments
36 that you submit but also to any questions that you have
37 today and I'll kick it back to Raina.

38
39 MS. THIELE: Yeah, thank you so much
40 Bob. And I think I will hand it over to the
41 moderators, if there is time for Q and A.

42
43 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Yes, we can do
44 that briefly. Yes, Katya.

45
46 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, I just want to
47 point out to the Council members that in your joint
48 Council meeting book, that proposed rule that was
49 published in the Federal Register can be found on Page
50

0065

1 32. And there's also a news release from the
2 Secretary's Office on Page 29 if you would like to read
3 the proposed rule or news release.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you for
8 that. Do we have -- yes, go ahead, Jack.

9

10 MR. REAKOFF: I think it's a great idea
11 to add additional members to the Federal Subsistence
12 Board. But I do feel that each new member should be
13 representing two regions, or regional representation.
14 We don't want all the Board members not knowing --
15 knowing a lot about Southeast but nothing about
16 caribou. So I do feel that the new regional -- or
17 correction -- the Federal Subsistence Board members
18 that will be seated have regional representation,
19 coming from various regions so the Board is more
20 informed over a wider range. The current seating, at
21 large seats, that's fine, but the new Board members, I
22 feel should have regional representation.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Jack.
27 Yes, go ahead.

28

29 MS. HAYDEN: Good morning. Natasha
30 Hayden from the Kodiak/Aleutians region. I am just
31 really excited to hear about this new proposed rule,
32 looking forward to having more representation on the
33 Federal Subsistence Board by -- that would be coming
34 from nominations from tribes, and, in addition, to
35 representatives who are intimately know -- have
36 knowledge of and experience with the Federal
37 Subsistence resources, or subsistence resources across
38 the state. So I'm just really excited to have seen
39 this come out and I look forward to the implementation
40 as we go forward.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
45 Natasha.

46

47 CO-CHAIR BAKER: There's one in the
48 corner.

49

50

0066

1 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

2

3 MR. VENT: Yes, good morning. Darrell
4 Vent, Huslia, on the Western Interior. I just have a
5 comment about, you know, this management structure,
6 it's kind of infragmented by the State. We're really
7 working hard trying to get our voice across to the
8 Federal side but with the State, with the way the
9 appointment system is set up, it's really hurting our
10 management on our food sources. And I know we have
11 rural preference through the Federal but on the State
12 side we're really hurting with the type of management
13 that's going on. Is there any way that you guys can
14 make them help us, the people in the villages, to
15 support our food, because, you know, right now we have
16 a loss. We lost our caribou. We lost our fish. We're,
17 you know, just hanging on a thread with our moose it
18 seems like because it's getting tougher and tougher
19 with this global warming. You know we need some kind
20 of way to address this management for maximum yield to
21 sustained yield. It's not working with the State right
22 now. And that's why we're really complaining to, you
23 know, the Federal side, to make sure that we -- you
24 know our voices are heard.

25

26 I know a lot of villages along these
27 Councils here that are having the same issues.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 MR. ANDERSON: Happy to -- I mean I
32 think this is a problem with the State falling out of
33 compliance when it lost the ability to have a rural
34 preference way back in 1989 with the McDowell Decision
35 and, you know, there were many attempts to change the
36 State Constitution, Federal Legislation was introduced
37 and even passed when Senator Stevens was in Congress
38 but, you know, Congress set up a regime that has really
39 not worked because of the State's inability and refusal
40 to adopt a rural priority. And so we're doing all that
41 we can with our limited authority over Federal lands
42 and waters but, you know, we have -- as an
43 Administration we've got pretty limited tools and, you
44 know, we have sued the State over this, you know,
45 failure to follow our rules out in the Kuskokwim area
46 in the Refuge but there's no doubt about it, it's
47 complicated legally and it's tough and it's not an
48 awesome management regime at all so I hear you.

49

50

0067

1 MS. THIELE: And we also do have a
2 couple of initiatives especially focused on wild salmon
3 in the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. Gravel to Gravel is
4 one of those initiatives and it really seeks to empower
5 folks on the local level through co-stewardship and co-
6 management, focus on ecosystem restoration, habitat,
7 fish and wildlife, so there are ways that we, as the
8 Department of the Interior, are trying to work locally
9 to address the issues that we're seeing, especially
10 with the salmon crash. I know folks had mentioned NOAA
11 before as well, we are working closely with NOAA and
12 with USDA and other agency partners to, at least, stay
13 coordinated because our management, even on the Federal
14 side is extremely complicated and it's across multiple
15 agencies and, you know, different bureaus of those
16 agencies so we're trying to ensure that at least on the
17 Federal side we are staying in lock step in trying to
18 understand what the other side is doing. And so we
19 will continue to do that.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Over
24 here.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Hi. Mike Kramer, Northwest
27 Arctic RAC. I spoke at a little session we had the
28 other week, there's 228 tribes, registered Federal
29 tribes in the state of Alaska. That's a lot of peoples
30 to go through a lot of applications and nominations.
31 As I had spoke a little bit on the topic, we as
32 Chairman, you know, there's -- each Council has three
33 Chairman, maybe an alternate also, so that's four, four
34 times 10, that's 40 people. What you do is you create
35 a working group with all these Chairs -- officers, and
36 we choose out of those three, we choose those three
37 positions on the Board, tribal seats, and it eliminates
38 a lot of this, you know, paperwork and a lot of other
39 things. Trying to select and trying to find and see
40 who -- as you know it's pretty difficult to get some
41 people on these Councils because it takes quite a bit
42 of time for the Secretary of Interior to approve these
43 applications. With well over 200 or 300 years of
44 knowledge with all these officers and Chair officers on
45 the Boards, our RAC Councils, that's a lot of
46 knowledge, why don't we keep it within that group but
47 we split the state of Alaska half and half, north and
48 south, that way it's split -- different representations
49 throughout the state will be recognized on those three
50

0068

1 seats. One of them will be a two year term, the other
2 two will be a three year term, that way it overlaps.

3

4

5 So what you do is you create a working
6 group with all the officers or the Chairs and the
7 officers within those RACs and they nominate and they
8 vote for these three seats. They're still getting
9 tribal representation. These people that -- I'm the
10 Vice Chair of Northwest Arctic, I have a lot of
11 knowledge, I've been on this Council for well over --
12 almost 20 years, that's a lot of knowledge, and with
13 all these officers within this building -- this room
14 right here, that's a lot of knowledge so if you want to
15 cut back on some of the Secretary of Interior having to
16 make so many choices with 228 tribes you would narrow
17 it down to this specific group of officers on each RAC
18 and they'll be represented as those three seats, tribal
19 seats, on the Federal Subsistence Board.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

50

I haven't seen anybody within the northern region areas that hasn't been on the RAC, other than Mr. Towarak, it would be nice to have other people represented, other RACs representing those three seats on the Federal Subsistence Board.

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Would you care to respond?

MS. THIELE: We really appreciate the comment, thank you so much. And we may just want to talk a little bit more in-depth about it maybe after the session. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Question, back over here.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Don Hernandez from the Southeast RAC. What are the implications to your proposed rule should we be looking at a new Administration a year from now? I hate to bring politics into this but it does seem like it might be a factor, I don't know.

MR. ANDERSON: Well, I think -- , you know, like everything we do we're trying to finish off our work in this final year of what we hope is the first term of two but if not, you know, we'll have, you

0069

1 know, this rule completed and we hope to have the
2 ability to make these appointments by the Secretaries
3 and, of course, as you know a new Secretary can come in
4 and change things and so we're, you know, this rule
5 would be final and it would be in place until it was --
6 it took a long -- it took us three years to do this and
7 it'll take three years to undo, we see this as not
8 really a political, you know, motivation behind this,
9 but really to get more representation by people
10 affected by the Board's decisions and, you know, don't
11 -- and would hope that any new Administration would
12 treat it with respect and think it's a good thing but
13 obviously that would be up to them and we'll have no
14 control over that.

15

16 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. This
17 gentleman here.

18

19 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Madame Chair.
20 For the record Andy Bassich from the Eastern Interior.
21 Raina you brought up that there are initiatives being
22 done locally through Gravel to Gravel and that sort of
23 thing but one of the things I want to point out that I
24 think, and many of the people in this room probably
25 feel is vitally important to solving some of our salmon
26 issues is, is that salmon are not a local fish, they
27 migrate long distances, they're out in the marine
28 environment for the majority of their life stage so
29 they're subject to other impacts and many of those
30 impacts are coming from other nations. And so the
31 question I'd like to ask, it doesn't need to be
32 answered here, but I think it's going to be very
33 important for us to be successful in a long-term
34 rebuilding plan for salmon throughout the entire state
35 to address some of the actions of all of the nations
36 along the Pacific Rim. So I guess what I would be
37 requesting come back to the Federal Subsistence Board
38 and OSM is a roadmap of how we might be able to engage
39 in international discussions in regards to fish and
40 hatchery productions within the Bering Sea and the
41 North Pacific because I think that that is absolutely
42 crucial given the paradigm shift we have in the marine
43 environment now for the future, and for the success.

44

45 So if that could come through -- I've
46 asked that question many times and I get many answers
47 on how we can address that but I haven't gotten any
48 kind of a definitive road map on what we need to do,
49 how we can engage with the State Department at that

50

0070

1 level, to make sure that we can get all parties who are
2 contributing, the human aspect of this decline, to
3 maybe modify their behaviors.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much for that
8 comment. We work closely with the State Department. W
9 e certainly have State Department based conversations
10 with folks who -- from other countries who have some of
11 these practices but I completely agree that there is
12 not enough interaction with folks here in Alaska,
13 especially on the local and the rural level. Would
14 love to have that conversation and talk more about how
15 we, at the Department of the Interior, can be helpful
16 to try to push that conversation along.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you very
21 much for that. And, I, being from Bristol Bay, our
22 sockeye runs may be long and strong and have been for
23 the last few years but we also have species out there
24 that are struggling very, very hard and I've had those
25 same thoughts. So, again, another good reason to have
26 this meeting so those of us that are showing the
27 concerns can maybe come up with shared solutions as
28 well.

29

30 There was a young lady over here.

31

32 MS. CAMINER: Thank you. And thank you
33 -- this is Judy Caminer from Southcentral. Thank you
34 both for being here and for taking the time to put
35 these regulations together. I certainly appreciate you
36 putting in an exception to the 10 days for emergency
37 actions. And this is more of a process question which
38 perhaps OSM or others could address later, but how are
39 you going to be able to have the Board approve this
40 within a time period that's less than 10 days?

41

42 MR. ANDERSON: Well, I think -- I mean
43 if this rule were to go into effect, if the Board
44 thought it needed to put a new rule in place within 24
45 hours, they'll have the ability to do that by simple
46 vote of the Board and then there'd be the 24 hour
47 waiting period. But I think -- I mean I think, you
48 know, for maybe -- for many management decisions, like
49 in-season management and so on, those take place

50

0071

1 pursuant to delegations, to folks out in the field and
2 this rule wouldn't change that at all. You know you
3 have your normal, you know, you set your seasons and
4 bag limits and so on, and, you know, with respect to
5 fishing there's in-season management decisions that get
6 made by the local managers from the agencies and so on,
7 in consultation, and so this wouldn't change any of
8 that sort of stuff. It would be just for new emergency
9 rules.

10

11 So, again, I think it's not likely to
12 be something that's used very often but it would be a
13 tool.

14

15 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Okay, thank you.
16 There was a gentleman over here and perhaps his
17 question was answered -- okay, very good.

18

19 Go ahead, Kenneth.

20

21 MR. NUKWAK: Yes, Kenneth Nukwak, Sr.,
22 Manokotak.

23

24 (In Native)

25

26 MR. NUKWAK: My vocabulary and my
27 English isn't very good, but I'll do the best I can.
28 If I was able to speak Yup'ik, my first language and
29 send my point across.

30

31 Going back to that adding on three more
32 members to the Federal Subsistence Board, I like that
33 idea. But the -- if there were more from a smaller
34 village, like Manokotak or Togiak, Twin Hills,
35 Napaskiak, or (In Native), they need more
36 representation now because when there's members that
37 are picked from the hub areas like Dillingham, Bethel,
38 Nome, Kotzebue, they're mainly halfbreeds -- what I'm
39 trying to point out is remember to pick out people that
40 are out on the field, echoing the voice of a few of the
41 elders that we have in Manokotak, echoing his words.
42 When the hub villages make the decisions they are not
43 making decisions for the people that are actually out
44 in the field, I think that's why we're getting cited a
45 lot for being out in the field, having no hunting
46 license. We try to follow all the rules and
47 regulations but there are other rules that are always
48 thrown out in front of us. They have ideas out there
49 but there's just a little sigh in their vocabularies

50

0072

1 and their English, not -- it's not quite there.

2

3 But I hope I'm getting my point across.

4 I like the idea of that three more on the Federal
5 Subsistence Board, I can use my example from back in
6 2018.

7

8 There was a wildlife proposal for
9 positioning of the caribou and it almost passed, it
10 failed because there was a tie of 4/4. Four in favor
11 and four that were against. And if the Federal
12 Subsistence Board had one or two or three more members
13 on there, either it would have passed or it would have
14 failed. But the following year -- I'm thankful it
15 passed the following year under the representation of
16 the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council.

17

18 (In Native)

19

20 MR. NUKWAK: I'm thanking you guys for
21 that. Thank you.

22

23 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
24 Kenneth.

25

26 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much for that
27 comment. We will take that back, appreciate it.

28

29 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Gentleman over
30 here.

31

32 MR. SCHAEFFER: I wanted to voice my
33 support for the expansion, you know, it's very
34 difficult, you know, we've been batting zero with the
35 Federal Subsistence Board for awhile and it's kind of
36 pissing us off up there. I'm sorry to use that word
37 but it has.

38

39 I think it levels the playing field.
40 Because right now you have five non-subsistence users
41 Federalies on the Board and then the three subsistence
42 users, it's not specified how they're selected, and
43 we've always been concerned about that because we
44 always try to get on there simply because we want to
45 represent the north and try to be a participant within
46 that system but it has been very difficult. But we
47 talked about the reorganization of it and it's real
48 difficult to try to get Alaska represented as a whole,
49 you know, we got -- like you said we got 223 [sic]

50

0073

1 tribes and if you do this I think it's really important
2 to place it in regulations and redistricting --
3 redistrict -- or redistricting of some sort, you know,
4 to make it so that everybody is represented in some way
5 or form. It would make it a lot easier and a lot more
6 practical for us, you know, rather than trying to go
7 through, you know, what we've got today. I think it
8 would be a real healthy thing.

9

10 So that's our comments from Kotzebue in
11 the north.

12

13 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. And
14 can you please give us your name for the record.

15

16 REPORTER: I got it, Nanci, it's Bobby
17 Schaeffer. Bobby, give your name to them.

18

19 MR. SCHAEFFER: Robert -- well, Bobby
20 Schaeffer. My Eskimo name is (In Native)

21

22 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
23 Bobby. Go ahead.

24

25 MR. GREEN: Thank you. Louis Green
26 from Seward Peninsula RAC. I had a question, I'm happy
27 to see these three seats being looked into. I would
28 like to agree with what the young man over here was
29 talking, next to Bobby, about, this -- the pool where
30 you would look for these nominations. Mr. Kramer,
31 thank you. The one question I have is there's a
32 mandate for consultation with tribes and ANCSA
33 Corporations throughout this body here and one of the
34 questions -- I guess my question would be, does the
35 Department of Commerce have any ties to this process
36 and if they did, why wouldn't they take part in this
37 process now?

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 MS. THIELE: Thank you so much for that
42 question. So for the Federal Subsistence Board, it
43 does not have a NOAA seat and so they were not a part
44 of this particular process, it was the Department of
45 the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, but we
46 certainly do interact with and collaborate with NOAA on
47 some different initiatives and programs but not in this
48 particular one.

49

50

0074

1 Thank you.

2

3

4 MR. GREEN: Thank you for your answer.
5 Then I guess that makes me want to ask the question why
6 they don't have a seat at the table here, like the BIA
7 or the National Park Service or any of these other
8 agencies from the Federal government. I think since
9 they're managing and dictating how the Federal
10 subsistence fisheries are conducted in the Bering Sea
11 and the Gulf of Alaska I think it's important that they
12 sit at this table because the issue here is subsistence
13 and it's not being -- it's not being upheld. We're all
14 waiting for our next salmon, which is a keystone
15 species of the Pacific Rim. Five million years and all
16 of a sudden 50 years later we're talking complete
17 decimation of our runs.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
21 Louis. Go ahead.

22

23

24 MR. ROHRER: Good morning. Thanks for
25 the opportunity to ask a question. My name's Sam
26 Rohrer, I'm from the Kodiak and Aleutians RAC. Earlier
27 this morning we heard testimony from different RAC
28 Chairs talking about the importance of predator control
29 to food security in Alaska. I can attest to that
30 personally from my experience when the State removed
31 some wolves from calving grounds and brought the
32 Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd back, that's
33 been important to our region. Interestingly, back in
34 2016 when we last had the All-Council meeting the Fish
35 and Wildlife Service was working on a proposed rule
36 that would prohibit predator control on Fish and
37 Wildlife Service lands. Many of the RACs in this room
38 wrote letters in opposition to that rule, ultimately
39 our Congressional Delegation came together and defeated
40 that rule through a Congressional Review Act. That was
41 a big win for rural Alaska.

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So, I guess, could you speak to that
proposed rule, it was just released within the last

0075

1 month or so, and what you see how that rule would
2 affect Alaska and then how it gets by the CRA as well?

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 MR. ANDERSON: You know, I don't -- I'm
7 not familiar with that specific nationwide rule but I
8 mean those rules -- I mean to the extent that it is a
9 national Fish and Wildlife Service rule, it generally
10 wouldn't apply to Alaska because we are, you know,
11 governed by the ANILCA regime up here and, you know, of
12 course we do have the CRA that precludes, you know,
13 adopting a substantially similar rule to the one that
14 Congress overturned. So I can talk to my regional
15 office and get you some more information from them, or
16 through the Fish and Wildlife Service folks who are
17 maybe more aware of it than I am, but I'm not
18 intimately familiar with that. Sorry.

19

20 MR. ROHRER: I appreciate that. Can I
21 just follow up just real briefly. It's the BIDEH
22 proposed policy update in new regulation. I can't
23 remember what the acronym stands for but -- but, yeah,
24 that's a new rule. It's comment period was just --
25 thanks to Representative Peltola, she requested an
26 extension on the comment period so it's been extended
27 through May -- for another 60 days I think. But
28 comments were due originally, I think, today.

29

30 So thank you, I'd really appreciate if
31 you could provide us more info on it.

32

33 MS. BOARIO: Through the Chair. Fish
34 and Wildlife Service. And, Bob, I can work with you on
35 that, it's referring to the biological integrity policy
36 that's part of -- reference in the National Wildlife
37 Refuge Improvement Act. So there are some exceptions
38 built in for Alaska and in recognition of ANILCA, but
39 it's something very different than what was considered
40 in 2016.

41

42 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Sara.

43 Go ahead.

44

45 MR. HOWARD: Thank you. Albert Howard
46 from Angoon on the Southeast RAC. I'm sure the members
47 sitting around me are probably are going, here we go.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

0076

1 MR. HOWARD: Usually they bring me
2 snacks so I don't talk so much but I can't sit and not
3 say anything about this.

4
5 (Laughter)

6
7 MR. HOWARD: I have a hard time with --
8 I'm an Army Veteran as a lot of people are in my
9 family. I have a hard time, and I have friends from
10 Arkansas so don't take this the wrong way -- I have a
11 hard time with someone in Arkansas telling me how to
12 live my life in Angoon. And the point I'm getting to
13 is everyone sitting here representing their communities
14 has a good grasp on what's happening in the environment
15 around them. I'll give you an example, this RAC
16 supported me trying to exercise Section .804, it made
17 it past the RAC in Southeast but it didn't make it past
18 the Federal Board. What is happening in Southeast
19 Alaska, and my home town of 340 people with 80 percent
20 unemployment and the price of gas \$5 a gallon, is we
21 have people that have more money than we can imagine in
22 our home town. I used to work as a sportfishing guide
23 and one of my clients, we were watching a yacht go by,
24 they laughed and said if I had that guys money I'd
25 throw mine away. If I had the State's money to manage
26 our resources I'd throw mine away.

27
28 I guess my point is, as a RAC, we don't
29 have the resources to build a case so the Federal
30 Subsistence Board can understand what we're trying to
31 say and what we're trying to accomplish. We don't have
32 the money or the resources the State has to make a
33 video that says Admiralty Island has the highest
34 population of deer in Southeast Alaska. So the
35 unintended consequence of my proposal to close three
36 bays south of Angoon for -- through the Section .804
37 process, the unintended consequence was the fact that
38 the State made a YouTube video saying Admiralty Island
39 has the highest population of deer. So the unintended
40 consequence was non-resident hunters moved into the
41 area because they were so excited about the State
42 coming out with a YouTube video saying that Admiralty
43 Island had the highest population of deer. And my
44 community suffered. Because 80 percent unemployment
45 and we live on a National Monument, the land is locked
46 up. We just want to the intent of ANILCA, that's all
47 we want. We don't want handouts, we want the intent of
48 this. This document doesn't divide the user groups.
49 You can be Native or non-Native and you're still
50

0077

1 considered in this document because you live in a rural
2 community.

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Now, I'm talking to adding three more to the Federal Board. It's hard for me to explain to some of the people on the Board what's happening in Angoon and for them to understand, you know, it's like me trying to explain to someone who lives in Stockton, California, the impact their Legislators or Congressmen are having in Angoon by making certain rules that affect us and I don't think that's fair. So I think if we're going to put anyone up here on the Federal Board it needs to come from this organization, because we all understand but it's hard to get the Federal Board to understand. I know the Chair understands. I know the two ladies on the end on this side understand. And the gentleman on the other end understands. So I think if we're going to do anything let's put something together off of this Board on to the Federal Subsistence Board, through the same guidelines. The thing that concerns me on this is my Federally-recognized tribe could appoint anybody. There's nothing I read in here that says, oh, geez, we could appoint an attorney from San Francisco on to this RAC for us. There's nothing preventing that. You need to hold them to the same standards you hold the rest of us to. You need to live in a rural community. You need to live the lifestyle like the Chair does. I know -- I see him out there doing things I'm doing, sometimes, you know, we cross paths unintentionally because we're doing the same thing. He lives way down south of me, but our lifestyle brings us together, like today, everyone in this room, our lifestyle brought us here. I think it's important that we -- I'm not a big fan of the reality shows that talk about subsistence. It's become a word that everyone wants to use but they don't understand what it means to us in the rural communities, it means our ability to continue as we always have.

When I first got on the RAC I mentioned to the Board that try to imagine your grandfather standing on the river taking care of his family and somebody coming and telling him he couldn't do it anymore. Because somebody created a law that he wasn't a part of and now it's a crime for him to provide for his family like he always has. I can't imagine what that was like.

I would like to encourage that the same

0078

1 process you put us here with you put three more on the
2 RAC with.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. And
7 thank you for your service.

8

9 MR. ANDERSON: Thanks for the comment.
10 I'll just point out that, you know, the rule, and this
11 is just a draft, it says that -- provides that they
12 appoint anybody who's nominated can only be appointed
13 if they've got personal knowledge and direct experience
14 with subsistence uses in rural Alaska and for the three
15 nominated by tribes they also have to possess knowledge
16 of Alaska Native subsistence uses, so it's geared that
17 way so I just wanted to point that out in the draft
18 rule here. But it's out for comment so look forward to
19 hearing more.

20

21 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Bob.

22

23 Go ahead.

24

25 MS. BURK: Hi, Eva Dawn Burk with the
26 Eastern Interior RAC. I do agree with these comments
27 about somebody being in -- a nominee being from this
28 room and a nominee being held to the same criteria that
29 we are when we submit our letters of interest to be on
30 a RAC. And I also don't see the language in here that
31 -- I do believe these people need to have knowledge of
32 all decisionmaking processes, including the Federal
33 Subsistence Board, State of Alaska, and North Pacific
34 Fisheries Management Council. Because, you know, right
35 now the corporations are co-stewarding our lands in
36 those decisionmaking spaces. The decisions that are
37 made at the Board of Fish and North Pacific are driving
38 the continued decline. And I think this is something
39 that we're recommending in our RAC meeting but how are
40 we creating the space to have these huge discussions,
41 and I'm talking kind of specifically about salmon
42 because of the migratory nature in that we need to have
43 cooperation amongst Federal, State and tribal people.
44 Because these lawsuits are bringing out -- when we're
45 in these spaces like at North Pacific they'll bring up
46 the lawsuit, and -- but at some point we have to stop
47 placing the blame and come together and work together,
48 all user groups and all management bodies and so I just
49 agree that the people that are being nominated need to

50

0079

1 have knowledge of all these spaces and that we need a
2 bigger discussion to get outside of these normal
3 meeting spaces and create a space for a bigger
4 discussion about how we're going to effectively
5 actually co-stewardship when decisions are being made
6 by corporations and industry.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Go
11 ahead.

12

13 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. For the record
14 Alissa Nadine Rogers YK RAC. So I actually have three
15 points I would like to come across but if it's okay
16 with you, Madame and Mr. Co-Chair, I can do them
17 individually and then get a response and then move on
18 to the next one, would that be okay?

19

20 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: I'll allow that.

21

22 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. Through the
23 Chair. The first one that I have on here topic of item
24 is your authority to add and remove membership as the
25 Department of Secretary sees fit. That type of
26 language is a little scary when you say, as see fit.
27 So the question about having that authority, what's to
28 say that the next person coming in who's not very well
29 versed with the current regulations or going to be the
30 new policy, what's to say that they can't come in and
31 just wipe all of our seats?

32

33 MR. ANDERSON: I mean the draft
34 regulation does say that, as now, the Board members
35 serve at the will of the Secretary so if you want to
36 propose comments about some substantive standard for,
37 you know, removal for misconduct or something, you
38 know, you should send that comment in. I'm not aware
39 that there have been, you know, sort of arbitrary
40 removals of Board members in the past but I don't know
41 about every seat that's ever been appointed so your
42 information on that would be helpful to the Department.

43

44 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. May I move on
45 to the second one?

46

47 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Please.

48

49 MS. ROGERS: The second item is the

50

0080

1 emergency authority use in excess. On the Kuskokwim
2 River, we definitely do it yearly, ever since prior
3 because of the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish
4 Commission, before then, we were already using the
5 emergency authority in excess. It's not lightly to be
6 determined or termed by your language that you had
7 used, but on the Kuskokwim I know and on the Yukon,
8 which is now just starting this past prior years, is
9 that, we will be using the emergency authority and it
10 is not something lightly. So the emergency authority,
11 is there around -- a different version of what or a way
12 that we could go about taking care of our subsistence
13 needs being met through the Federal government without
14 having to use an emergency authority?

15

16 MR. ANDERSON: Well, I'm not exactly
17 sure of the -- exactly what you're putting your finger
18 on but I -- you know, the way the -- the way I
19 understand the emergency authority and the opening and
20 closure authority on the Kuskokwim and now you say on
21 the Yukon, would be that that's pursuant to a rule that
22 gets adopted and then it's in-season decisions made
23 based on the conditions. And, I mean I think you
24 should write your concern up into the Board and we'll
25 -- the Fish and Wildlife Service and the lawyers from
26 my office will respond to that and, you know, can make
27 changes or adjustments or clarifications as necessary
28 to make sure that it's not doing something that's
29 against the interests of what makes sense.

30

31 MS. ROGERS: Thank you. And taking
32 that emergency authority -- on to my final discussion
33 is the D(1) lands. The 50.1 million acres that is up
34 to be transferred or what is currently going on, that's
35 going to remove the Federal emergency authority that is
36 delegated if those lands are up for grabs. If those
37 lands are going to be removed out from under the
38 Federal government, then that's going to reduce the
39 Federal authority of emergency authority or any type of
40 Federal subsistence protection of those lands. And I
41 am -- I have a lot to say and I'm very passionate about
42 it, but to make -- it's not something to take lightly.
43 That -- I'm sure everyone is burning in their minds,
44 the same exacting that I'm thinking, so what's to say
45 with this current, new information policy or whatever
46 can be written and then those lands get removed, what's
47 to say that you're going to be able to protect us or
48 protect our subsistence or the resources if the lands
49 get transferred because emergency authority is just
50

0081

1 pretty much being thrown out the door.

2

3

4 MR. ANDERSON: Well, I'd just say on
5 the D(1) land, you know, I mean I think the Department
6 is really well aware, we've had a lot of comments
7 through that separate process about the D(1) lands and
8 their importance for subsistence uses and part of the
9 environmental analysis for that decision that will be
10 made, you know, requires that you consider the effects
11 of any action by the Secretary on subsistence uses. So
12 that -- those issues that you raise are really
13 important and I can tell you the Department is well
14 aware of, you know, the potential impacts and take
15 those into account, the Secretary ultimately decides
16 what she's going to do.

16

17

18 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Okay, thank you.
19 And I'm going to go ahead and ask that we wrap this up
20 in the interest of time here, and I thank you very
21 much. I encourage everybody to speak about this in
22 their RAC meetings here this week and also to write
23 personal comments to support your leadings in this.
24 And thank you very much, both of you, for taking the
25 time to address us.

25

26

MR. CHRISTIANSON: Hey, Board Chair.

27

28

(Laughter)

29

30

31

MR. CHRISTIANSON: I'm sorry to
interject here but I had a quick question.

32

33

34

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Please, go
ahead.

35

36

37

MR. CHRISTIANSON: I mean I don't mean
to override your authority or anything here.

38

39

(Laughter)

40

41

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Override away.

42

43

(Laughter)

44

45

46

MR. CHRISTIANSON: I'm just teasing
you.

47

48

(Laughter)

49

50

0082

1 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Okay. So as the
2 Federal Board, we make a decision, the 10 day grace
3 period goes by, the office rejects the will of the
4 people here, what's that process? Are you guys going
5 to come back here and explain to our constituency? So
6 I would just add to that bucket, if we do get shot down
7 on what it is we do do, what is that action after look
8 like, how do we come back to the table and does it
9 create the next job for us to get back in line with and
10 what the recommendations, how does that look? If we do
11 miss the mark, you know, and whether it's litigation,
12 politics, I would hope we would build in a process so
13 that after the fact, if we do get shot down, how do we
14 go back to the people and help -- because it's an
15 emergency, so that we can address the issue in realtime
16 and get back to trying to provide adequate access to
17 the people? So I would just ask that maybe as a
18 question or a statement, that we build in some process
19 after that.

20
21 Thank you.

22
23 MS. THIELE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
24 I think that's really an important point and one that
25 we've heard raised before and would welcome those in
26 comments, so, thank you.

27
28 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Good
29 question. Katya, should I turn it over to you, do you
30 want to continue, what would you like to do with our
31 time?

32
33 MS. WESSELS: I think we should finish
34 the regional reports for the Councils.

35
36 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Great. Thomas,
37 I'll go ahead and turn it back over to you.

38
39 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. So with
40 that we will continue on with the Region 6, Western
41 Interior RAC report.

42
43 MR. REAKOFF: So Jack Reakoff, Western
44 Interior Regional Advisory Council. I've considered
45 this -- All-RAC meeting, I appreciate the Federal
46 Subsistence Board being here and all 10 Regional
47 Councils. I've considered, what is the cross-regional
48 issues that we all have to deal with.

49
50

1 I've been on the Western Interior
2 Regional Advisory Council since 1993 and I'm the Chair
3 of the Western Council since 2007. We've dealt with a
4 lot of issues over and over and over again and so some
5 of the issues that we all have, in our region, Yukon
6 Kuskokwim salmon returns, climate change, to ensure
7 drainages in warming marine waters have decimated food
8 forages and increased disease and stress for returning
9 salmon. Bycatch in marine waters, after low survival
10 of adult salmon further reduces adult returns.
11 Hatchery releases of 1.2 billion pink salmon smolt and
12 other artificially raised salmon into the ocean at ever
13 increasing numbers is literally taking wild salmon's
14 food out of their mouths. Chinook, chum and coho are
15 the most affected but wild sockeye and wild pinks are
16 also affected. Subsistence users have been taking the
17 brunt of restrictions and burden of conservation. The
18 real numbers of returning salmon are not known until
19 the in-season and State and Federal managers know what
20 they have to work with. We need to let enough salmon
21 spawn. It is not the ins-season drainage manager's
22 fault they have to make restrictions. Hatchery release
23 of massive pink salmon smolts needs to be cut
24 dramatically and especially in warm marine water
25 events. The blob was four to 10 degrees celsius warmer
26 than the average marine temperature decimating
27 phytoplankton, zooplankton, et cetera, all the way
28 down.

29
30 Bycatch needs to be dramatically
31 reduced especially during and after warm water events.
32 Indicators of salmon productivity declines are starved,
33 marine birds, reduce chinook and chum salmon and coho
34 runs and other marine fish declines as well as lower
35 plankton krill and baseline reductions. Management and
36 NOAA, NPFMs, North Pacific Fisheries Management
37 Council, Department of Fish and Game need to closely
38 monitor marine productivity indicators to restrict
39 hatchery and bycatch impacts to wild salmon stocks.

40
41 Caribou and dall sheep are another
42 interregional issue that we have. The declines are
43 driven by snow, rain on snow causing icing on and in
44 the snow, late spring arrival and hot summers all have
45 contributed to these grazer's declines. It is
46 imperative for management, managers to reassess how
47 caribou and sheep are managed. Use of models and
48 speculation that are not quantified with field work
49 regarding the ecology of both species, and this should
50

0084

1 be done independently.

2

3

4 The Western Interior Regional Council
5 deals with the Mulchatna Caribou Herd, the Western
6 Arctic Caribou Herd, Teshekpuk, Central Arctic and
7 Porcupine Caribou Herds. We have members who call
8 themselves the people clans, or the caribou clans. So
9 caribou management needs to take serious -- look
10 seriously. I attended the caribou ungulate meeting
11 over here at the Captain Cook last May, I heard some
12 outlandish stories told by managers regarding caribou
13 management, yet, Scandinavia has 3,000 years of caribou
14 reindeer herding, caribou or reindeer herding, they're
15 all caribou, reindeer, how -- and Scandinavian
16 scientists have quantified what it takes for caribou to
17 survive in deep snow and rain events like we've had
18 now. It takes three to five times more energy for a
19 caribou to dig down through the icy snow than it would
20 on an average dry snow year. Caribou management needs
21 to look seriously at maintaining large -- caribou
22 manager's should be looking at Scandinavia data that
23 shows that six to seven large five year old bulls --
24 caribou are not skeletally mature until they're four
25 and a half years of age, and large bulls are imperative
26 for breeding. Cows reject young bulls just like a
27 13/14 year old junior high school student chasing 35
28 year old human woman, they reject, they're not going to
29 get married and so that's the issue. Cow caribou
30 reject young bulls. Bull/cow ratios need to be a
31 minimum of 35 bulls to 100 cows to have young bulls
32 recruiting. Studies in Scandinavia in Denali Park
33 substantiate that large bulls dominate the breeding
34 structure. I heard statements at the caribou ungulate
35 meeting that large bulls were just kind of kept in
36 populations like Nelchina because the public wants to
37 take pictures of them, it's like, no, you keep large
38 bulls in the population so they can maintain breeding
39 structure. Composition of bulls -- of the small bulls,
40 medium and large bulls needs to be monitored and
41 assured that the caribou herd can support all user
42 groups. Western Arctic does not have composition work.
43 They don't know what the young small bulls, medium
44 bulls, and large bulls components are. So we need
45 science involved in caribou management. Cow caribou
46 harvest cannot be high. Caribou cows only have cows
47 typically after three years of age and only have one
48 calf. In 2016 we had a proposal before the State Board
49 of Game and four Board members of seven told me they
50 didn't even know they didn't have twins. So the

0085

1 reality is the ecology of caribou and how the animals
2 actually work is imperative for managers and the Boards
3 who make the decisions, to understand what the animal's
4 actually -- what it's ecology is.

5
6 Harvest of four to 10 year old cow
7 caribou that's their peak production. In Nelchina they
8 took 60 percent of the harvest in 2021 and they took --
9 the public will take the largest antlered cow. If it's
10 cow -- it doesn't matter what it is, cow or bull,
11 they'll kill the largest antlered bull or cow. They
12 killed the healthiest best producing cow. It's very
13 detrimental to sustain caribou herds when you have high
14 bull harvest taking out all the large bulls and taking
15 all the large cows.

16
17 Caribou are migratory and follow old
18 etched trails in the ground and use vast areas that
19 have not been used of lichen reserves for decades in
20 some places. Wintering ranges are for lichen reserves.
21 Lichens take years to grow and large herds migrate and
22 use vast areas, small herds or depressed herds don't
23 migrate. So Western Arctic Caribou Herd is not
24 migrating nearly as much as it used to because the herd
25 was 490,000 and it's now 152,000.

26
27 We should be encouraging, and I've told
28 Fish and Game, we should be analyzing the etched trails
29 that are in the ground and the oral history that are
30 documented of large herds migrating across the Yukon
31 River at Ruby, steamboats had to tie up in the Goldrush
32 because there were too many caribou in the river that
33 hit them with the blades on the paddleboats. And look
34 up at Eagle. Fortymile had massive migrations and have
35 not used a portion of their historical migration. So
36 we need TEK to be used to analyze the extent of these
37 caribou herds and what they used to live in.

38
39 Caribou eat lichen basically from late
40 August when the willow leaves turn yellow until mid-
41 April, typically when the tundra opens up. Caribou
42 don't eat lichen year-round. Caribou eat lichen for a
43 winter subsistence food but in the springtime they
44 start eating flowering grasses, flowering forbes and
45 the tussocks, wild flowers, willows and shrub leaves in
46 summer and they finish off in the fall. These are high
47 protein foods. Flowers have pollen, pollen is protein.
48 So to raise calves and to have high productivity herds
49 they have to have on time break up timings. In 2013 we
50

0086

1 had a one month break up timing and it wiped out 66
2 percent of the Central Arctic Caribou Herd declined
3 because they basically the gestating cows didn't have
4 any protein to put into the final gestation. The
5 ecology of caribou has to be understood by managers to
6 manage this animal properly. Annual feeds are not
7 depleted. There's certain managers who tell the public
8 continuously and tell the public all the time that
9 caribou eat themselves out of house and home; no, they
10 don't. Annual foods on the winter -- on the summer
11 range are all these forbes and flowers and so forth,
12 those are annual production. Hot summers are really
13 hard on caribou and sheep. That allows the pollinating
14 insects to pollinate all the flowers then they don't
15 have their protein sources. Caribou harvest must take
16 into account adverse weather events that will depress
17 numbers of calves and cohorts and cohorts that go
18 through -- cohorts that are produced after hard winters
19 and during hot summers are weakened cohorts. Their
20 productivity is reduced the rest of their lives. And
21 they're also more susceptible to diseases. Caribou do
22 not just arbitrarily crash, these -- from lack of
23 range, weather events augment the declines and
24 overharvest have subsequently, over the majority of
25 large bulls, or most of the bulls and many of the cows
26 by humans in addition to predators can cause herds to
27 plummet to low numbers with poor biological
28 reproductive capacity.

29
30 Mulchatna Caribou Herd in 2007 was 14
31 bulls per 100 cows with one large bull per 100 cow.
32 That herd went into reproductive failure. That's what
33 happened to Mulchatna. That's the elephant in the room
34 is overharvest of the large bull component and we need
35 to learn from the mistakes that happened in Mulchatna,
36 and we need to learn from the mistakes that happened in
37 Nelchina. We can't keep doing this to these caribou
38 populations.

39
40 There's a proposal for 26B to increase
41 the bag limit to five caribou including cows with road
42 access with thousands of hunters that are displaced
43 from Nelchina will end up on the North Slope, and
44 that's a bad thing that will happen if the Board of
45 Game passes that in mid-March.

46
47 We have FRMP, Fisheries Resource
48 Monitoring Funding to monitor various aspects of
49 fisheries, we need to have funding under the Federal
50

0087

1 program for a wildlife resource monitoring program
2 also. So I would like the Councils to advocate for
3 wildlife, of real science involved monitoring projects,
4 and the Councils can direct those fundings just like we
5 do for fisheries.

6
7 Dall sheep populations have been driven
8 down by deep snow also. Unprecedented rain on snow
9 events for multiple years starting in 2012. Late
10 springs. Do not allow production of high protein
11 flowers, grasses, just like caribou, lambs are small
12 and weak cohorts are produced. They do not survive at
13 high numbers their first winter. We've had very low of
14 lamb recruitments in the Brooks Range and also in the
15 Alaska Range.

16
17 Dall sheep populations need to have
18 mature eight to 12 year old adult rams, just like the
19 caribou. We need to have fully mature rams for
20 breeding. Ewes reject the smaller rams, just like
21 caribou will, and if they do breed with young rams,
22 lambs are born late. Instead of being born in May,
23 they're born in mid-June. I live in sheep country. I
24 watch when they lamb. And the lamb production is
25 mostly happening in June, they're one month late into
26 the summer, they're going to be small in the fall and
27 they don't survive well. And we need to have large
28 rams and we're trying to rebuild these sheep
29 populations.

30
31 And I highly appreciate the Federal
32 Subsistence Board initiating the closure request along
33 the road corridor to reduce the overall harvest.
34 There's lots of illegal harvest from the road.
35 Troopers have busted hunters shooting sheep inside the
36 Dalton Highway Corridor, and most rams, when they got
37 to 3/4 curl were disappearing. They killed them faster
38 than we could grow them and at this population status
39 they can't keep doing that.

40
41 So at this time it's imperative to
42 reduce harvest of large rams to recover the biological
43 productivity of the sheep populations. So we need to
44 rebuild these populations of sheep back to carrying
45 capacity. Managers need to work with the Councils to
46 develop sheep and caribou management strategy. The
47 Western Interior Council has produced a sheep
48 management strategy and I would appreciate it if the
49 other Councils have sheep in their region, that they
50

0088

1 meet with us at this sheep meeting we're going to have
2 we're going to have and go over these management
3 strategies.

4
5 Thank you, Madame Chair.

6
7 (Applause)

8
9 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you for that.
10 Do we have any questions, comments for the Western
11 Interior RAC.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing and seeing
16 none, we'll move on to Region 7, Seward Peninsula.

17
18 MR. GREEN: Thank you. Louis Green.
19 Let me carry on through here a little bit and read from
20 this manual I have here.

21
22 The impact of the marine mammals in the
23 Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands by the trawl fleet
24 fishery. This comes up in conversations because of the
25 Marine Mammal Protection Act and there's questions why
26 is this industry allowed to actually take and kill and
27 throw these animals over the side. And how is it that
28 there's nobody held accountable for that.

29
30 So the Council would like to draw the
31 Board's attention to the incidental take of marine
32 mammals during the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands
33 trawl fleet fishery. The National Oceanic and
34 Atmospheric Administration, fisheries subsite, that in
35 2023 NOAA observers recorded ribbon, ringed and harbor
36 seals, hump back whales, Pacific white-sided dolphins,
37 stellar sea lions all being incidentally killed or
38 injured during this fishery. This is a grave concern
39 to the Council as marine mammals are heavily relied
40 upon as subsistence foods and because the salmon in --
41 we're not getting salmon back, we rely on -- heavily up
42 in the Bering Straits, we rely heavily on marine
43 mammals so the question lies, how do people get to kill
44 and waste them. If that happened on our doorstep we'd
45 be in violation of wanton waste laws.

46
47 The Marine mammals are Federally
48 protected animals under the Marine Mammal Protection
49 Act of 1972 and many culturally important marine mammal
50

0089

1 species are already in population decline in the
2 Arctic. In these times of limited populations of
3 salmon, caribou and even more integral to -- it's more
4 important that this important food source is not
5 squandered. The argument made that in times of
6 shortages that no amount of intercepted or killed
7 marine mammals in these fisheries could be termed as
8 having a negligible impact, which is a terminology that
9 NOAA uses in order to justify this take. The Council
10 would like assurances that NOAA takes into
11 consideration subsistence needs and the availability of
12 other food resources before determining to take these
13 animals to be of negligible impact.

14
15 It's hard for people to understand that
16 kind of waste that goes on with this fishery in the
17 Bering Sea. And there's no justification for it. And
18 people, you know, common sense realizes this stuff and
19 it's hard to understand why the Federal government
20 allows this to take place.

21
22 So another subject here is about
23 salmon.

24
25 Salmon have been around the Pacific Rim
26 for about five million years and in a short period of
27 time where the State and Federal government has been in
28 charge we're looking at the worst depletions of salmon
29 in history. And a food source that comes and swims up
30 to your doorstep being taken away is really a
31 detrimental thing to the people of Western Alaska. One
32 thing about Northern Alaska is the Norton Sound happens
33 to be one of the two production areas within the
34 Pacific Rim that adds to this -- the richness of the
35 Pacific Rim, and the other one is the Bristol Bay. But
36 in Norton Sound it hasn't performed in over four years.
37 So the idea is if subsistence users are sitting on the
38 beach then Federal fisheries such as the trawlers
39 should be sitting also and not be allowed to do it
40 because they can't afford not to be fishing.

41
42 The Council continues to be concerned
43 regarding commercial fisheries occurring in the marine
44 waters off of the West Coast of Alaska such as the
45 Federally-managed Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands fishery
46 and the State managed Peninsula fishery.

47
48 The multiple species salmon stocks in
49 Norton Sound have been depressed for years, yet little
50

0090

1 seems to be done to alleviate the burden of these
2 shortages on subsistence users. Additionally, multi
3 species of salmon in the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers
4 have now collapsed. These lower salmon numbers are not
5 just impacting subsistence users ability to harvest
6 salmon but the lack of salmon traveling in spawning
7 grounds are changing ecosystems in this region. We
8 don't have the fish up the river, you got no range of
9 nutrients up there, the rivers are destined to fail and
10 I've seen that around the Nome area, and the Nome
11 subdistrict since at least the '80s. It's not a good
12 thing.

13
14 The change must be made to the
15 regulations governing the number of salmon intercepted
16 or thrown overboard as unusable bycatch in the Bering
17 Sea, Aleutian Islands fishery by changing when and how
18 these fisheries are conducted and types of fishing gear
19 used. The regulatory bodies that control these
20 fisheries had an opportunity to do so in the preceding
21 year and both chose not to take action that would
22 result in actual assistance to the recovery of the
23 Western salmon stocks. More pressure must be put on
24 the regulatory bodies to do so. The Federal and State
25 agencies need to manage commercial fishing differently.
26 Recovering these salmon stocks are a priority.

27
28 They should be priority No. 1 because
29 without your salmon you're depleting your systems of
30 all nutrients and all benefits.

31
32 And the seeming thing is that the
33 escapement in all drainages must be met, of course,
34 seconded by subsistence needs and then commercial
35 fishing operations. What we see currently is this
36 formula seems to be flipped upside down. So we need to
37 find some way to get there to having that reversed
38 where the State and Federal starts co-managing together
39 and make some serious efforts on how to recover our
40 runs.

41
42 We stand with the Eastern, Western, and
43 the Yukon and Yukon Delta group, Councils, on the
44 impacts of the Federal trawl fishery and we are added
45 to the letter that we have since forwarded to the
46 Secretary of the Interior.

47
48 Now days we are lucky, fortunate to
49 have our beluga herd. We've got seals and we've got
50

0091

1 walrus but how long will those be sustained with the
2 removal of the salmon.

3

4 I heard somebody talk about an
5 international salmon commission type comment and I'd
6 like to support something like that.

7

8 With that, I yield my time, thank you.

9

10 (Applause)

11

12 CO-CHAIR BAKER: With that, any
13 questions, comments for Seward Peninsula RAC. Yes,
14 please in the corner.

15

16 MR. GERVAIS: Tim Gervais from Western
17 Interior Council. I would like to ask the Chair of the
18 Norton Sound RAC if he had any suggestions on how we
19 could take advantage of the All-Council structure of
20 this meeting to put together some kind of action that
21 takes the issue on the scarcity of salmon beyond just
22 bringing it up to Secretary of the Interior and
23 Secretary of Commerce and enforces, or reestablishes a
24 subsistence right and burden of conservation to the
25 commercial fleets. I know people in the Western
26 Interior are not understanding how the burden of
27 conservation is on subsistence users and actual salmon
28 population itself and not on the commercial trawl
29 fleets.

30

31 MR. GREEN: Thank the gentleman for the
32 question. I come from a community that was thrust
33 into a Tier II salmon fishery. We're the only ones in
34 the state of Alaska in history that's ever had that
35 happen and it was almost 20 years ago, didn't do
36 anything conservative. So I know the pain of what's
37 going on for everybody on these other systems. I was
38 in a little bit of a discussion earlier and was
39 enlightened that through the -- I want to say through
40 the Magnuson-Stevens Act, when it was put into place,
41 these were the people that were listed, that we see in
42 front of us on this Board, there was nothing to do with
43 the Department of Commerce. I made the comment -- or
44 the suggestion that maybe there should be -- at least
45 at this point there should be an advisory seat and then
46 we need to talk to our Congressional people to maybe
47 introduce something in there to amend that MSA to
48 include the Department of Commerce at this table.

49

50

0092

1 The letters that the four of us, the
2 four RACs have written, would be -- I heard there was
3 other Council members that would like to see something
4 from All RACs, combined. I don't know what that would
5 look like, we may have a chance to look into that while
6 we're here but that's the level that we get to do this
7 at. We get to get so far and then we -- the Federal
8 Subsistence Board kind of takes over and deals with the
9 Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Agriculture, and
10 may cross over to having conversations with the
11 Department of Commerce through those Secretaries. But
12 at this point my thoughts are maybe it would be a good
13 idea to sit at the table here, while we're here, sir,
14 and try to formulate some kind of -- I don't know if
15 it's in the form of a motion to move forward, or what,
16 but I think we need to sit at the table.

17
18 Thank you for your question. I know
19 that was kind of a long drawn out answer.

20
21 Thanks.

22
23 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Any further questions
24 for the Seward Penn RAC.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing none, thank
29 you for that. Moving on to Region 8. I will actually
30 be giving the Northwest Arctic RAC report.

31
32 Thank you everyone for joining us here.
33 It's really encouraging to see, as was stated earlier,
34 you know, just a couple years ago all of our RAC
35 meetings, everything was done telephonically and then
36 eventually we got on Teams and Zoom, so thanks everyone
37 for making the effort to come down and making this a
38 really great experience with lots of knowledge in the
39 room.

40
41 A lot of the things that I had prepared
42 to speak on, coming from our recent RAC meetings in the
43 last year, really we've touched on. We've touched on
44 how the caribou are late, they're scarce, we've touched
45 on the rising cost of fuel that makes subsistence
46 increasingly harder. We've talked about the salmon not
47 being there, the fish not being as accessible.

48
49 And so one of the biggest in Northwest
50

0093

1 Arctic Alaska that we have seen is every time there is
2 a closure, and my greatest thanks to the Federal
3 Subsistence Board for always hearing us out as the RACs
4 and the RACs across the state and understanding where
5 we're coming from, but one of our biggest issues
6 continues to be non-local hunters being brought closer
7 and closer to the calving grounds of the Western Arctic
8 Caribou Herd. And so with that, as was mentioned by a
9 member of my Council, continuing user conflicts, user
10 frustrations, and so with that I'd like to take off my
11 hat as Chair of the Northwest Arctic RAC and put on my
12 other hat as the House Representative for District 40,
13 I have introduced legislation to basically do a
14 Constitutional Amendment to the Alaska State
15 Constitution which would establish subsistence priority
16 for rural users. So this is one of the things, that,
17 from my experience on the RAC and from hearing what the
18 people at these tables, the people in this room, the
19 people back home, are really wanting is for exactly as
20 the gentleman from Huslia had mentioned, having the
21 State be able to provide a rural subsistence priority.
22 So I really would like to urge everyone, as we're going
23 through this process and when we go back to our
24 communities, we go back to our people, really push
25 that, that this is a system where the caribou don't
26 know which line they're stepping over, they don't know
27 if they're on Federal land, if they're on State land,
28 and as we've seen in the Northwest, every time we have
29 a closure people move a little further away on the
30 different State land to basically find the loophole in
31 that.

32
33 So with that, I'm going to keep it
34 fairly brief, and just say thank you to the members of
35 my Council for coming down. I look forward to the
36 discussions over the next couple days, and really
37 appreciate everyone being here. So if there's any
38 questions, I will yield my time.

39
40 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chair.

41
42 CO-CHAIR BAKER: To the member from the
43 North Slope.

44
45 MR. WILLIAMS: Peter Williams from the
46 North Slope RAC. I wanted to ask you a question but
47 you guys had a Northwest meeting with Anaktuvuk Pass
48 about caribou and that was -- I wasn't at that meeting
49 -- thank you?

50

0094

1 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Are you referring to
2 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting?

3
4 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

5
6 CO-CHAIR BAKER: I unfortunately was
7 unable to attend that. Do any of my RAC members, was
8 anybody there and able to speak on it? Or any other
9 members of the All-Council meeting that may have
10 attended the Western Arctic Caribou Herd?

11
12 Wilbur.

13
14 MR. HOWARTH: Mr. Chair. I was called
15 down to meet with the Fish and Game Board after they
16 had the meeting with the North Slope on the caribou, so
17 I don't think none of us got to that meeting they had
18 in Kotzebue. Is that the one you're talking about,
19 sir?

20
21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

22
23 CO-CHAIR BAKER: I'm sorry, I
24 misunderstood the question. That meeting was cancelled
25 due to weather, to my knowledge, the one that was
26 supposed to happen in January.

27
28 MR. HOWARTH: Yeah, that's right, it
29 was cancelled. But I flew down after the meeting was
30 and only North Slope was there, so, yeah, we didn't
31 have that meeting at all.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chair.

36
37 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Yes, go ahead.

38
39 MR. WILLIAMS: (Indiscernible)
40 Anaktuvuk is (indiscernible) with caribou and sheep and
41 I would really appreciate if we have another meeting
42 about this caribou. It's our Number 1 priority in our
43 region to be addressed. Thank you.

44
45 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. And I do
46 believe there will be, later in the week, an
47 opportunity for several of the RACs to come together on
48 issues such as caribou management. Any other questions
49 for me?

50

0095

1 MR. WILLIAMS: No.

2

3 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Mr. Chair.

4

5 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Mr. Chair.

6

7 MR. CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'd just like
8 to wish you good luck with the bill you're supporting
9 there, we'll spread the word.

10

11 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any
12 further questions, comments.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CO-CHAIR BAKER: If there are none we
17 will move on to Region 9, the Eastern Interior RAC.

18

19 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you very much. My
20 name is Charlie Wright. I'm the Vice Chair of the
21 Eastern Interior RAC. I grew up on the Yukon River
22 between Rampart and Tanana living the traditional
23 lifestyle. Growing up I seen the river was so full of
24 salmon we could see them coming and animals were thick,
25 you see them all winter long, moose, and now I have to
26 drive all day to see one moose track, sometimes none.
27 So I just wanted to add that little bit to the
28 beginning.

29

30 The people of the Yukon River are
31 facing unprecedented times. For many years now our
32 subsistence needs have not been met. This is the
33 fourth year of no subsistence fishing. We've lost 40
34 percent of our moose in the Minto Flats, which is a
35 long-time stronghold for the Interior people. A lot of
36 the people went there to hunt. The caribou herds and
37 the sheep populations have drastically declined all
38 over the state.

39

40 These times are something our elders
41 have warned us about for years. We've been warned the
42 Fish and Wildlife managers for years with no or little
43 action in return. Our people cannot wait any longer.

44

45 We need to work together for the
46 migratory species like salmon, we need all management
47 bodies to come together and work across jurisdictional
48 boundaries. We need to account for uncertainty and put
49 forth regulatory proposals that are precautionary,

50

1 responsive to climate change and climate change
2 impacts, and most importantly the work of protecting
3 and rebuilding the salmon populations. It must be led
4 by tribes through co-stewardship and co-management.

5
6 There are a number of actions we
7 support including conducting a legal review of how
8 subsistence needs are being met in Alaska as mandated
9 by the State Constitution and ANILCA Title VIII. A
10 statewide meeting of all State and Federal fishery
11 managers and other users to develop an ecosystem based
12 salmon rebuilding plan including strategies for
13 hatchery reduction and establishing a working group to
14 build the framework and operating structure for tribal
15 co-stewardship, which is key to sustainable fish and
16 wildlife management.

17
18 There are ongoing efforts that we
19 support including the proposal to establish three
20 tribal seats on the Federal Subsistence Board. The
21 special action request for the Yukon River which aims
22 to establish tribal co-stewardship. The various North
23 Pacific Fisheries Management Council actions and Board
24 of Fisheries proposals that seek to limit salmon
25 bycatch in intercept fisheries. In order for the
26 subsistence priority to be upheld it is imperative that
27 OSM and FSB review the Yukon River agreement proposed
28 by the Yukon River Panel at its post-season meeting in
29 January. This agreement is ineffective without a clear
30 strategy to improve the marine environment including
31 limiting bycatch, intercept fisheries and hatchery
32 production. Agreement is also incomplete without a
33 salmon rebuilding plan that brings together all users,
34 user groups and fishery managers. The support of OSM
35 and the FSB in these efforts is crucial. We need OSM
36 to report the true position of our RACs at the Board of
37 Fisheries and North Pacific Fishery Management Council
38 meetings and support our specific asks to reduce salmon
39 bycatch in intercept fisheries.

40
41 We need a reply when letters are
42 written explaining our positions and need support. We
43 need effective, responsive communication and timely
44 action.

45
46 We would like to reiterate these are
47 not new asks of the EIRAC and Yukon River RACs. We've
48 been requesting action and support for the salmon
49 crises for a number of years.

0097

1 We share that we are in a time of dire
2 crises. That we ask for action and support from the
3 Federal Subsistence Management Program as the salmon
4 crash takes hold and impacts on our way of life and
5 ecosystem are catastrophic. Salmon are a keystone
6 species of the Yukon River watershed, we're not the
7 only ones starving in Alaska, all species are impacted
8 from the bees to the eagles to the bears to the wolves,
9 we must continue to provide ourselves increasing our
10 reliance on migratory birds, whitefish, caribou and
11 moose; these resources are also facing unprecedented
12 challenges and the impacts on their health and
13 population as resources continue to shrink, competition
14 increases. And we are currently fighting on all fronts
15 to ensure the Eastern Interior can even meet its own
16 subsistence needs.

17
18 Let us be clear.

19
20 Currently our region is not meeting our
21 subsistence needs.

22
23 We continue to ask that the Federal
24 Subsistence Management Program uphold a trust
25 responsibilities and the government to government
26 relationship uphold an executive and Secretarial orders
27 and tribal consultation, co-management, and co-
28 stewardship.

29
30 Another point is why isn't NOAA and
31 NMF's present here at the Federal Subsistence Board.

32
33 Madame Chair, at this time I wanted to
34 add a little bit about hatcheries and I want to hand it
35 over to my Councilman Andy Bassich, if you will allow
36 that for one or two minutes of time.

37
38 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Madame Chair said
39 she's fine with that.

40
41 MR. WRIGHT: Okay, thank you.

42
43 (Laughter)

44
45 MR. WRIGHT: Excuse me. Go ahead.
46 Thank you.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
49 the record, Andy Bassich with the Eastern Interior RAC.
50

0098

1 I wanted to give a little bit on our Vice Chair's
2 comments in regards to hatchery production and I
3 alluded to that a little bit earlier in some of our
4 questions with some of our previous presentations here.

5
6 I think something that everybody knows
7 is that salmon is the blood in the artery in all the
8 people of Alaska. We have a hard time throughout the
9 entire state living without salmon, and salmon is in
10 crises in almost the entire state with most species,
11 maybe one sockeye is doing fairly well right now.
12 There's a great deal of effort, research that is
13 showing that hatchery production is very likely causing
14 food competition to the extent that salmon species,
15 many salmon species returning smaller and younger in
16 age and less fecund, less ability to reproduce. This
17 is a man-made event. This is being exacerbated by
18 climate change, but we are all beginning to recognize
19 that the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska and North
20 Pacific is in a paradigm shift and we don't know what's
21 happening and we need to be cautious. So what I would
22 like -- what our RAC would like to do is ask all of the
23 Federal Subsistence Board members to please go back to
24 the Washington, D.C., go to the State Department and we
25 realize that the burden of rebuilding salmon cannot be
26 done locally, it has to be done statewide and it has to
27 be done internationally. There is no way we are
28 succeed at saving salmon within Alaska for subsistence
29 and/or commercial use unless we begin having
30 discussions and making adjustments to hatchery
31 production throughout the Pacific Rim nations. This is
32 going to be really vital to our success so we need to
33 get that going because that takes a long time to
34 happen, and we all recognize how slowly the Federal
35 systems, national systems work.

36
37 I just wanted to share, briefly, a lot
38 of people don't understand what's happening on the
39 Yukon River. This year we had at Eagle Sonar, which is
40 the last counting station before you get to Canada, we
41 had 14,500 chinook salmon make it to that point. Over
42 one-third of the fish never made it from Pilot Station
43 to Eagle. One-third of the fish. The fish still have
44 another 750 miles to go to spawn. How many more
45 dropped out from that 14,500 fish. We also recorded
46 the lowest percent of females ever mixed in the run,
47 those are our producers. It was down to 30 percent.
48 Right now we don't have the time to spend four or five
49 years trying to figure this out, we need action now or
50

0099

1 we're going to lose chinook salmon, the Canadian
2 component of chinook salmon. And I'll also add that
3 the two large -- next largest contributors on the
4 Yukon River, the Chena and the Salcha are down to 10 to
5 15 percent of their normal production so they are in
6 threat of being extirpated as well.

7

8 The point I'm trying to make is that we
9 don't have time, we need to take action and we need the
10 help of the Federal Subsistence Board to help push at
11 the State Department level. Negotiations with
12 international nations and also to put the pressure on
13 the State of Alaska to manage the fisheries in a
14 sustainable way, a long-term sustainable way.

15

16 And I'd just like to echo the words of
17 our -- Charlie Wright here -- the Eastern RAC feels
18 that the biggest solution to this is everyone in the
19 state of Alaska coming together and having a discussion
20 on how we can restructure fishing for salmon in the
21 state of Alaska for the benefit of all users,
22 subsistence, commercial, everyone. We need to have
23 that discussion because everyone's impacted by it.

24

25 And I'll just close with that.

26

27 Thank you for allowing me to speak.

28

29 (Applause)

30

31 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Mr. Chair, from the
32 Seward Penn.

33

34 MR. GREEN: Thank you, Co-Chair Baker.
35 And I'm just going to follow up on that young man that
36 just spoke. Mr. Baker is from an area and so are these
37 fellows up here from Northwest, are very familiar with
38 the hatchery process above the Arctic Circle. It was a
39 success story, it was 14 years in operation and then
40 after that, when those salmon returned, they didn't
41 just roll over and belly up, they went and found and
42 pioneered new spawning areas, actual hatchery born fish
43 created more run. And I have a very good friend that
44 lives there at that old hatchery site, and he was a
45 young kid that actually saw that happen. So I'm trying
46 to dispel the fear of hatcheries. There may be
47 something going on in Prince William Sound, or the Gulf
48 of Alaska, but I don't know how much that affects us
49 over here in the Bering Sea.

50

0100

1 So it's not something that we shouldn't
2 look at. I go along with this fellow here that's from
3 the Yukon and I think it's something that we need to
4 look at. Man's messed it all up and man needs to do
5 something about helping. They did it in California,
6 Oregon, Washington, it was very effective to get their
7 salmon runs back, the tribes and the government worked
8 together.

9

10 So that's just my two cents.

11

12 Thank you for the time.

13

14 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Any other questions.

15 The gentleman from Anaktuvuk Pass.

16

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Peter Williams North
18 Slope RAC. Make comment to Eastern. I come from the
19 coast that, you know, like Nuiqsut and Atqasuk and
20 Kaktovik, (indiscernible) or what because they've been
21 moving up north so I just wanted to make a comment on
22 that.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any other
27 questions, comments for Eastern Interior.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Hearing none, we'll
32 move on to our last region, which is Region 10, North
33 Slope.

34

35 MR. FRANTZ: Good afternoon everybody.
36 Brower Frantz from the North Slope Regional Advisory
37 Council here in place of Mr. Oomittuk who couldn't make
38 it. He did want to share a few words before I get
39 started on the.....

40

41 CO-CHAIR BAKER: If you could speak
42 into the mic a little closer please.

43

44 MR. FRANTZ: Sure. Yeah, normally it's
45 the opposite.

46

47 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, sir.

48

49 MR. FRANTZ: But just a few words from

50

0101

1 Mr. Oomittuk. He wishes he could be here in person.
2 Subsistence is our way of life, our identity as people
3 connected with the animals that fed us, clothed us,
4 sheltered us since time immemorial, for without the
5 animals we would not be in existence. We have a
6 special bond and we are as one. It's our turn to
7 ensure that the animals that migrate north that gave us
8 our identity as people are protected and ensure that
9 the next generation continues, this connection and
10 identity as one, for without either we would not be in
11 existence. Our region covers 90,000 square miles, 600
12 miles long, 300 miles wide north of the Brooks Range
13 from the Canadian Border all the way to Point Hope,
14 farthest north community in North America. Local
15 knowledge should be priority and the Federal
16 Subsistence Board proposals that are submitted by the
17 Advisory Councils should be taken seriously for we are
18 concerned with migration of the Western Arctic Caribou
19 Herd decline and want to reduce local hunters harvest
20 but still want -- non-residents and sporthunters to
21 continue harvesting our food source, especially in hard
22 times, low economy and high cost of living and
23 transportation for the local communities that depend on
24 our subsistence lifestyle to put food on our table.

25
26 So those are some words from Mr.
27 Oomittuk before I get started on our regional report so
28 it seems like he had some discussions there of some of
29 the actions that are being proposed for the Western
30 Arctic Caribou Herd so it seems that the numbers kind
31 of don't match with the science behind it and the rest
32 of the North Slope having different herds that are
33 there, it doesn't make sense for half of the North
34 Slope to have different populations, such as the
35 Teshekpuk Herd that are thriving, and aren't in a real
36 decline but, yet, you still want us to lessen the
37 numbers for that region, for those units just for the
38 Western Arctic Caribou Herd, which is only in the North
39 Slope for a select amount of time during the year and
40 during the times of the normal female take of the
41 caribou, that's in a timeline to where generally
42 females are taken up north according to the GPS data
43 for the Western Arctic Caribou, I mean it's all there,
44 the GPS data for that herd, by the time they're in the
45 winter cycle to where they're only taking females at a
46 certain time, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is
47 already well south of the Brooks Range. So the science
48 behind it doesn't match but -- all right, I just wanted
49 to point that out before I get into the actual report.
50

0102

1 So in 2023 the North Slope region had a
2 particularly good year. Whaling was successful.
3 Caribou were in abundance. Fish were plentiful.
4 Waterfowl was active. Shorebirds were actually on the
5 rise and muskox were actually taken for the first time
6 in a long time.

7
8 Aside from a good year of great hunts,
9 climate change has been an issue. Murres in Point Hope
10 are laying eggs earlier in the season, mid-June and no
11 longer in the fall. Climate change has also changed
12 our ice cellar usage. Our (In Native), the underground
13 cellars are no longer staying frozen consistently.
14 Warmer conditions keep us from freezing fish naturally
15 and permafrost has been thawing, spoiling our whale
16 meats and caribou meats and fish in the cellars.
17 Council members have voiced concerns of not being able
18 to harvest fish in large quantities because they will
19 no longer freeze thoroughly underground. Because of
20 this there is less food available to the community
21 members for sharing and consumption, contributing to
22 higher levels of food security.

23
24 Climate change has also created more
25 hazardous traveling conditions in all seasons on the
26 North Slope. Less stable ice for whaling, inconsistent
27 freeze cause thinner ice that is unpredictable. High
28 waters and rough seas create unpredictable patterns
29 forcing us to end harvest seasons earlier than usual.

30
31 And also in 2023 the North Slope was
32 cued for decisions for the Western Arctic Caribou
33 changes. The North Slope RAC collected data and
34 resources from other North Slope groups such as the
35 Fish and Game management committee to ensure that we
36 were consistent in our efforts to the best interest of
37 subsistence. Being that the Western Arctic Caribou
38 Herd is not our main population, the recommendations
39 were not a fair assessment for the users on the North
40 Slope, so we'll be looking at other -- I guess other
41 options for what's being proposed for our units on the
42 North Slope.

43
44 Guided hunts. In 2023 the North Slope
45 brought to attention that a large influx of fly-in
46 hunters in Unit 26A created an event that required
47 nearly 15 distressed hunters to be rescued and flown
48 out of their locations north of the Brooks Range
49 utilizing emergency resources. When this happened,
50

0103

1 some of the hunters fly-in services didn't even answer
2 their phone calls for days, leaving them in some of the
3 most remote wilderness in the world north of the Brooks
4 Range and like they're -- you get dropped off, you get
5 -- so they're not real guided, they're fly-in hunters.
6 They dropped them off, they ran into some issues even
7 running out of food and they tried for days to call
8 their fly-in hunter -- or their fly-in services and
9 they didn't answer so they ended up contacting rescue
10 services. And, you know, up north it's not like in the
11 cities where they have helicopters just available 24
12 hours a day all the time, you're asking for resources
13 at that point in some of the most desolate conditions.
14 And it's something that should be looked at at a higher
15 level because allowing folks to go up north and do
16 that, they should have some kind of back up service
17 other than relying on small village rescue services.
18 It's something the State should look at. It's
19 something the Federal side should look at. Especially
20 if they're allowing permitted people to be up there
21 doing that in these locations. It's very serious. We
22 put maybe 20 hours of flying just to pick up these
23 individuals and it wasn't just one instance. So ever
24 since they closed down Unit 23 for certain caribou
25 hunts they started flying north, north of the Brooks
26 Range into 26A and you can see it, it's reflecting now
27 and it's bringing more issues than it is good. But I
28 would like to urge this body to take a good look into
29 solutions for that, or even more restrictions on what
30 they should be able to like do up north because it's
31 getting dangerous out there. You know these are near
32 misses so at some point, you know, if our aircraft was
33 down for that particular time, the next option is
34 flying in a helicopter from Kodiak all the way north of
35 the Brooks Range just to go pick them up. So take a
36 look at those. And the resources available are thin up
37 there so that was a big eye opener for us. And it's
38 not, you know, folks from our own region that we're
39 rescuing it's elsewhere, so they're -- and the other
40 thing is they're all fly-in hunters so when they pull
41 that PLB or In-Reach, or whatever it is, they're not
42 able to bring their meat back with them at that point
43 legally so when they do that, not only are they just
44 being rescued and brought somewhere else, but they have
45 to leave all their game there too. So it wasn't a good
46 situation.

47

48 All right. So Anaktuvuk Pass and
49 Nuiqsut and Point Hope have documented sporthunting

50

0104

1 fly-ins, going to locations that are known migration
2 routes as well. Those routes have been disrupted due
3 to hunters strategically placing their fly-in hunters
4 on both sides of valleys not allowing caribou to go
5 through their normal paths by staging hunters in these
6 valleys and, you know, they sit one on each side
7 waiting for them to come through and it's a strategic
8 hunt. So we've seen that, it's documented, so that --
9 I think the State should evaluate, especially around
10 Anaktuvuk Pass, what they're allowing, where they're
11 allowing these fly-in hunters to go and offering them
12 permits. So it's something that should be looked at,
13 especially along with like the GPS data to reflect
14 what's happening because it should be there.

15

16 Muskox. So in 2023 the North Slope RAC
17 requested that the numbers of muskox be honored more
18 closely to reflect the newly regulated hunts the State
19 and Federal entities have on the North Slope. We would
20 like to maximize the resources put in front of us so
21 basically we think there's more than enough muskox just
22 to have maybe one or two hunts. I think there's more so
23 I would like for them to look into the population
24 counts a little more thoroughly so that we can maximize
25 our usage of the resource.

26

27 With that, I think that's all we had
28 for the North Slope for now.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 (Applause)

33

34 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Mr. Frantz.
35 Any questions, comments for the North Slope RAC.

36

37 Yes, in the corner.

38

39 MR. VENT: Yeah, I appreciate the
40 report. I know we had a meeting with the Northwest
41 Arctic working group and things that were discussed in
42 there was there was a certain amount of animals being
43 taken, and overabundance of the male, the older males
44 and also the leaders, which are the females. We had to
45 be careful because we always used to let those leaders
46 go through but these hunters are not allowing the
47 caribou, to let those females go through to make sure
48 that all the animals go through. We had to, you know,
49 look at how these hunters are strategizing about how
50

0105

1 they kill off these females and let those males stand
2 around there so they can have a better hunting success.
3 There's a lot of things that we know that, you know,
4 that these animals they have the female leaders that go
5 through then you -- then they have the males pushing
6 the whole herd through. The problem that I see is
7 they're getting rid of all these old bulls because they
8 want that horn, we need to stop that, we need to let
9 them replenish. If we don't let them replenish then
10 we're going to lose that species. That's what happened
11 with the fish. All the old fish, the big ones, they're
12 not there no more. Those were, you know, basically the
13 8 to 12 year olds. But with the bull caribou, it's the
14 same thing, you kill off the big species and then you
15 kill off the whole herd. So, you know, we have to
16 understand that we could take caribou but make sure
17 that we take the right caribou, which are the young
18 male, young female. Even so that, you know, the
19 typical ones we want we have to replenish that herd, we
20 got to work with what we got.

21

22 That's all I got to say, thank you.

23

24 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any -- Mr.
25 Kramer.

26

27 MR. KRAMER: Council Member Kramer with
28 Northwest Arctic. I did listen in to the Board of Game
29 meeting, I didn't have a chance to comment because I
30 had my three year old boy running in circles around me,
31 but they did not close caribou hunting to non-residents
32 in Northwest Alaska. They thought that 300 to 350
33 caribou bulls wasn't enough to affect the herd. It's
34 not the fact that they're getting these caribou, it's
35 the air traffic. Just this year, this last year, I was
36 notified sometime in the middle of July that there was
37 guides and transporters starting to show up and fly
38 people out, come to find out, they were flying hunters
39 in to the Southwest lower corner of North Slope Borough
40 to get these caribou. You know in the past I've seen
41 the devastation, you know, the effect of these non-
42 resident hunters hunting within our region. I've seen
43 them -- their transporters and their guides going out
44 late at night dumping caribou meat in dumpsters
45 throughout the city of Kotzebue. Even out at the
46 airport at the last minute. They always complain that
47 there is not enough law enforcement around to enforce
48 and to see these problems that we're having in
49 Northwest Alaska, you know, caribou is the Number 1
50

0106

1 source -- subsistence resource within Northwest Alaska
2 and North Slope, Seward Penn, sometimes maybe lower
3 eastern Alaska, Yukon, Koyukuk, you know, that area.

4

5 We not only have these problems coming
6 within our region, we have the Ambler Road project
7 knocking at our door.

8

9 The other thing we have currently right
10 now in process is the deep water port in Kotzebue.

11

12 We have a lot of things going against
13 us within the next several years and it's going to be
14 pretty hard on our people. I seen the devestational
15 effect of the road going to Tanana. I've seen it and
16 I've talked to people from there, that it's beginning
17 to affect their way of life all for the mighty dollar
18 and the State to make income off of our lands is
19 beginning to really affect the people within our
20 region. We already have a lot of other issues going on
21 within our region, drugs, alcohol, crime, but a lot of
22 the people within the communities are surviving on
23 these caribou. Just the other year a guy got busted
24 for feeding caribou to his dogs. When they went up and
25 cited him he said oh there's thousands of caribou
26 passing, there's lots, no, you're one of only two or
27 three villages that got caribou this year in Northwest
28 Alaska. Really. So he accepted the fine and accepted
29 the citation because he did not realize he was doing
30 something wrong. He thought that every community
31 within Northwest Alaska was harvesting caribou like we
32 used to. This year alone was the first time caribou
33 passed through Kotzebue. The Fish and Wildlife Officer
34 was going out and stepping on a lot of feet during that
35 whole situation with the caribou passing through. And
36 one thing I did notice is that these caribou that
37 passed through Kotzebue went down to their wintering
38 range within three days, man they were hard marching
39 it. They were moving down there to the Buckland,
40 Selawik area to their wintering grounds. They did not
41 stick around, they ran out of the area of Kotzebue.

42

43 But it's a big concern and we need to
44 start taking these issues of subsistence resource
45 decline very, very seriously because like some of these
46 gentlemen said and ladies, that what are you -- what
47 are we going to do without them, what are you going to
48 do for us, it's all about mismanagement within
49 agencies. Mismanagement. We are your advisors. You

50

0107

1 should be taking advice from us. We live there, you
2 don't, and you make decisions to benefit either us or
3 someone else. That stuff needs to stop. It's time to
4 start thinking about the people, the people who subsist
5 on these resources and base their lives and their
6 culture on these resources, it's time we start stepping
7 ahead and taking these things very, very seriously.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you. Any final
12 questions. Kenneth.

13

14 MR. NUKWAK: Yes, Kenneth Nukwak,
15 Bristol Bay RAC. Thanks for the report and thanks for
16 recognizing me. The report, I didn't hear any calf
17 survival rate. Is there any calf survival rate surveys
18 out there because it also depends on the calf survival
19 rate, how many percent of the calves are eaten by
20 bears, wolves, coyotes, whatever can feast on these
21 newborns within their first to second weeks.

22

23 I can use an example in the Nushagak
24 River there was a biologist, he retired and went
25 somewhere else but he told me that the moose calf
26 survival rate was at 12 percent low, that was five to
27 eight years ago, I don't know how it is now, on the
28 moose population.

29

30 And then another thing on the calf
31 survival rate, wherever there's calf -- or wherever
32 there's a caribou population that's declining, the
33 calving grounds need to be surveyed or watched or
34 monitored or observed to make sure that it's not the
35 calf survival rate that's having the declination happen
36 on what we eat -- what all of Alaska eats on --
37 especially the Natives.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Kenneth.
42 In the interest of time I'd like to state that on
43 Thursday we will have an afternoon session about
44 caribou status, statewide, and opportunities to talk
45 about caribou management and caribou populations and
46 survival rates and what not so with that, that will
47 conclude our regional reports and we will break for
48 lunch and we'd like to ask that everybody come back at
49 2:30 at which point we will start up with the service

50

0108

1 awards and recognition. So, again, lunch until 2:30.

2

3 Thank you, everyone.

4

5 (Off record)

6

7 (On record)

8

9 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Welcome back
10 from lunch, everybody. Hopefully everybody is feeling
11 a little bit more awake and alive after having a chance
12 to refresh yourself. I'm going to go ahead and call
13 the meeting back to order at 2:39. Katya, I'll turn
14 the mic over to you.

15

16 MS. WESSELS: Hello, everyone. I just
17 want to make one quick announcement. So the Native
18 people's action they are having a potluck for any
19 interested Council members tomorrow from 6:00 to 8:00
20 p.m. There's a flyer that I think was distributed
21 among the Council members. You're all free to go. It's
22 just at your discretion and the Native Peoples Action
23 is putting it on. So it's tomorrow, March 6th.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you for
28 that, Katya. We're going to go ahead and move on to
29 our service awards and recognition. Scott Ayers and
30 Robbin Lavine, I believe you guys are going to lead
31 that off for us. So I'll turn the mic over to you.

32

33 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Chairs, of this
34 amazing All Council Meeting. Before we begin our
35 service awards for our Regional Advisory Council
36 members, Chairs and all of our valuable volunteers, we
37 do want to note and give a kind of a token first
38 service award to someone very special here today. It
39 happens to be her birthday. So knowing what a
40 dedicated public servant our amazing Amy Howard is, can
41 I ask us all to do a quick little happy birthday to her
42 before we proceed? Yes? All right.

43

44 (Everybody singing Happy Birthday)

45

46 MR. AYERS: Madame Chair, Mr. Co-Chair,
47 my name is Scott Ayers. I'm the Acting Deputy
48 Assistant Regional Director for Subsistence and Robbin
49 Lavine, who is policy coordinator here at the Office of

50

0109

1 Subsistence Management, and I are here to recognize
2 Council members for their faithful service on the
3 Councils. Their individual and collective knowledge,
4 wisdom, passion, contribution and dedication on behalf
5 of the rural subsistence users never stops to amaze us
6 and we are grateful for it.

7

8 MS. LAVINE: The first award we want to
9 give out today is a five-year award. We would like to
10 present a five-year service award to Thomas Baker. Mr.
11 Baker, can you please come down.

12

13 Thomas Baker, a life-long resident of
14 Kotzebue, was appointed to the Northwest Arctic Council
15 in 2019 and served as Chair since 2021. Chair Baker is
16 Inupiaq, an active subsistence hunter and strong
17 advocate for protecting subsistence opportunities for
18 the Northwest Arctic Region residents. He was a vice
19 mayor of the city of Kotzebue and served on the Native
20 Village of Kotzebue Tribal Council and on the Northwest
21 Arctic Borough Village Improvement Commission.

22

23 Currently Thomas Baker is a member of
24 the Kotzebue Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee.
25 Most recently he was appointed to the Alaska House of
26 Representatives as the District 40 representative
27 covering the Northwest Arctic and North Slope.

28

29 Thank you, Thomas.

30

31 (Applause)

32

33 MR. AYERS: Also we'd like to recognize
34 the following Council members who have served on their
35 Councils for over five years and previously received a
36 five-year service award. If the following Council
37 members could please stand up.

38

39 Natasha Hayden, Coral Chernoff, Rebecca
40 Skinner and Christopher Price with Kodiak/Aleutians
41 Council. Richard Slats, Phillip Peter, Sr., Alissa
42 Nadine Rogers with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council.
43 Charlie Wright and Charlie Jagow with Eastern Interior
44 Council. William Trefon, Jr. with the Bristol Bay
45 Council. Wanda Kippi and Steve Oomittuk with the North
46 Slope Council.

47

48 (Applause)

49

50

0110

1 MS. LAVINE: We have a 10-year service
2 award we would like to present to Vern Cleveland, Sr.
3 and Albert Howard. Vern Cleveland, Sr. Oh, Vern's not
4 here today. I'm sorry. Albert Howard is. Albert.

5
6 (Applause)

7
8 MS. LAVINE: Albert Howard, lifelong
9 resident of Angoon, has been on the Southeast Alaska
10 Council since 2014. He is passionate about the
11 protection of subsistence resources and a strong
12 advocate for passing down traditional hunting and
13 fishing customs, traditions and ways for future
14 generations.

15
16 Member Howard is an active leader in
17 his community and has been tribal president of Angoon
18 Community Association, board member of the Native
19 American Fish and Wildlife Society, member of the
20 Angoon City Council, Mayor of Angoon and he served on
21 the local school board.

22
23 Thank you.

24
25 (Applause)

26
27 MR. AYERS: Also we'd like to recognize
28 the following Council members who have served on their
29 Councils for over 10 years and previously received a
30 10-year service award. If member Michael Kramer with
31 the Northwest Arctic Council could please stand up.

32
33 (Applause)

34
35 MS. LAVINE: Fifteen year awards. We
36 would like to present a 15 year service award to
37 Council members Richard Wilson and Cathy Needham.

38
39 (Applause)

40
41 MS. LAVINE: Richard Wilson has been on
42 the Bristol Bay Council since 2009 serving as Vice
43 Chair for the vast majority of his time. He was raised
44 to protect and preserve the traditional way of life and
45 feels it is a privilege and an honor to pass down this
46 knowledge to the future generations.

47
48 Member Wilson is a member of Naknek
49 Village Council and a member of the Naknek/Kvichak Fish
50

0111

1 and Game Advisory Council. He previously served as
2 director on the Paug-Vik Village Corporation Board.
3 Member Wilson's knowledge about the resources and
4 subsistence uses make him an invaluable member of the
5 Council.

6

7

Thank you, Richard.

8

9

(Applause)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

MS. LAVINE: Cathy Needham of Juneau
has been on the Southeast Advisory Council since 2010
serving as vice-chair for almost five years. As an
Alaska Native she learned the intricacies of the
customary and traditional uses of wild resources while
growing up in Ketchikan.

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

She brings her Master of Science degree
in zoology with an emphasis of marine ecology and over
24 years of experience in working with Federally
recognized tribes to the Council's diverse discussions
about subsistence resource management. She's been an
active participant and chair on the Juneau Watershed
Partnership Board of Directors, chair of Duck Creek
Advisory Group and the Klawock Watershed Council.

27

28

29

30

Member Needham is also on the Board of
Directors for SEADOGS or the Southeast Alaska Dogs
Organized for Ground Search. Thank you so much, Cathy.

31

32

(Applause)

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

MR. AYERS: Also we'd like to recognize
the following Council members who have served on their
Councils for over 15 years and previously received a
15-year service award. If the following members could
please stand up. Tim Gervais with Western Interior
Council. John Andrew with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
Council.

41

42

(Applause)

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. LAVINE: All right, everyone. Hang
on. Take a deep breath. This is going to actually
take a long time. So we're going to do this one by
one. We have a number of amazing Council members who
have served us for 20 years and served the Federal
Subsistence Board and the Federal Subsistence
Management Program.

0112

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

I'm going to say them really quick so you all can be prepared. We're going to be presenting service awards to Don Woodruff, Nanci Morris Lyon, Dan Dunaway, Sam Rohrer, Greg Encelewski, Andy Bassich, Don Hernandez, Harvey Kitka and Mike Douville.

I want to start with Don, Don Woodruff. Don Woodruff of Eagle has been on the Eastern Interior Council since 2004 and currently serves as Secretary. He's an experienced subsistence hunter and fisherman, although for the last several years, like many others, he has been restricted from fishing for Yukon subsistence salmon due to low returns.

Member Woodruff is a staunch advocate for sustainable natural resource management and continuation of subsistence uses. Member Woodruff is also active with the Eagle Fish and Game Advisory Committee, the 40-Mile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition and the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Subsistence Working Group.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Nanci Morris Lyon of King Salmon. Come on. Nanci has been on the Bristol Bay Council since 2003. She's served as the Vice-Chair for over a decade and the Chair since 2020. Chair Lyon is passionate about youth engagement and sharing knowledge to younger generations. She is a strong supporter of youth involvement in the Board and Council process and sharing her knowledge and experience with the younger generation on subsistence resources in the region.

Chair Lyon is a co-founder and lead instructor of the Bristol Bay Fly Fishing and Guide Academy established in 2008. In the past she's served on the Bristol Bay Chamber of Commerce. Chair Lyon's knowledge and leadership ability are truly an asset to the Council.

Thank you, Nanci.

(Applause)

Dan Dunaway of Dillingham. Dan has

0113

1 served on the Bristol Bay Council since 2003. He's
2 lived in the Bristol Bay region for more than 30 years
3 and served as Vice Chair since 2020. Member Dunaway is
4 an active participant in subsistence fisheries and
5 hunting and has a breadth of experience. His passion
6 for subsistence resource management and his knowledge
7 of the resource makes him invaluable to the Council.

8

9 Member Dunaway serves on the Nushagak
10 Fish and Game Advisory Committee. He also has worked
11 as a fisheries biologist and a hunter education
12 instructor for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
13 and has extensive knowledge of fish and wildlife
14 biology and management practices for the whole Bristol
15 Bay Region.

16

17 Thank you, Dan.

18

19 (Applause)

20

21 Sam Rohrer. Sam is a lifelong resident
22 of Kodiak and has been on the Kodiak/Aleutians Council
23 since 2004. Known locally for his integrity and
24 diligence. He represents both sport and commercial
25 users of fish and wildlife resources. With over three
26 decades of expertise as a licensed guide on Kodiak
27 Island, Member Rohrer offers unparalleled services to
28 hunters, fishermen and wildlife enthusiasts.

29

30 His leadership shines through his
31 current role as the president of the Alaska
32 Professional Hunters Association. Member Rohrer also
33 is a subsistence user and supports sustainable
34 subsistence practices and advocates for regulations
35 that provide opportunities for users of wild resources
36 on Kodiak Island. Member Rohrer's contributions to the
37 Council have been indispensable, marking him as an
38 advocate for responsible resource management.

39

40 Thank you, Sam.

41

42 (Applause)

43

44 MR. AYERS: Greg Encelewski of
45 Ninilchik. Greg has been on the Southcentral Council
46 since 2003 and has been the Chairman since 2015. He's
47 a heavily respected Ninilchik elder and has been active
48 in tribal governance and issues for more than 40 years
49 where he had to fight for subsistence rights in many

50

0114

1 arenas and was instrumental in Ninilchik's land
2 selections under ANCSA.

3

4

5 Chair Encelewski is the president and
6 chairman of Ninilchik Traditional Council and president
7 and CEO of Ninilchik Native Association Incorporated
8 and is also a member of the Central Peninsula Fish and
9 Game Advisory Committee.

9

10 Thank you, Greg.

11

12

(Applause)

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Member Bassich has been involved in
numerous natural resource management groups over the
years and sears on the Yukon River Panel and has been
active with the Eagle Fish and Game Advisory Committee,
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission and Forty-Mile
Caribou Harvest Management Coalition, to name a few.

Thank you, Andy.

(Applause)

Don Hernandez of Point Baker. Don has
been on the Southeast Council since 2003 serving as
Vice Chair for several years before assuming the Chair
position in 2018. His subsistence harvesting
activities coupled with his experience in commercial
fisheries for the last four decades has provided him
with a broad perspective on resource management.

Chair Hernandez has been active in a
variety of councils and committees such as Prince of
Wales Unit 2 Deer Steering Committee, Sumner Strait
Fish and Game Advisory Committee, serving a stint as
Chair in each.

Thank you, Don.

(Applause)

0115

1 Harvey Kitka. Harvey has been on the
2 Southeast Council for over 20 years and is the second
3 generation in his family to serve on the Council. He
4 is a champion of preserving the traditional way of life
5 in a modern world and it is largely through his efforts
6 that a large portion of Sitka Sound is now refuge for
7 herring. Member Kitka has held numerous leadership
8 roles within the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, including
9 serving as chairman of the Sitka Tribe Herring Advisory
10 Committee.

11

12 Thank you, Harvey.

13

14 MS. LAVINE: Mike Douville. Mike
15 Douville of Craig has been on the Southeast Council
16 since 2000. His extensive traditional ecological
17 knowledge and experience with the fish and wildlife
18 resources on Prince of Wales Island, an area which has
19 endured many environmental changes, is greatly valued
20 by the Council.

21

22 Member Douville has served as a council
23 member since 1998 for the City of Craig, as director of
24 the Board of Directors for the Prince of Wales Hatchery
25 Association and is a long-time member of the Craig Fish
26 and Game Advisory Committee.

27

28 Thank you so much.

29

30 (Applause)

31

32 MR. AYERS: Also we'd like to recognize
33 the following Council members who have served on their
34 councils for over 20 years and previously received the
35 20-year service award. If the following members could
36 please stand up.

37

38 Pat Holmes with Kodiak/Aleutians
39 Council. (Applause)

40

41 Enoch Shiedt with the Northwest Arctic
42 Council. (Applause)

43

44 And Raymond Oney with the
45 Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council. (Applause)

46

47 There are no 25-year awards, so we move
48 to the recognition of 25 years of service. We'd like
49 to recognize the following Council member who has

50

0116

1 served on their Council for over 25 years and
2 previously received a 25-year service award and that's
3 Della Trumble with Kodiak/Aleutians, although I don't
4 believe she's here with us today.

5

6 (Applause)

7

8 MS. LAVINE: Thirty-year awards. We
9 would like to present a 30-year service award to
10 Patricia Phillips and Elmer Seetot, Jr.

11

12 (Applause)

13

14 Patricia Phillips of Pelican has been
15 on the Southeast Alaska Council for over 30 years,
16 having started her service at the Councils inception in
17 1993. Her experience and knowledge
18 regarding subsistence and commercial uses of local
19 natural resources, along with her in-depth
20 understanding of ANILCA, has made her a dedicated
21 member of the Council.

22

23 Member Phillips has held positions such
24 as mayor of the city of Pelican, chairperson on the
25 Pelican Fish and Game Advisory Committee and has served
26 as president and board member of the Southeast
27 Conference.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 (Applause)

32

33 Elmer Seetot, Jr. of Brevig Mission has
34 been on the Seward Peninsula Council since 1994 and has
35 been the Council Secretary for many years. He truly
36 embodies the spirit of a subsistence user and when the
37 weather allows it is difficult to catch him at home as
38 he is off filling his woodshed or is up the river to
39 put away fish for his family.

40

41 Member Seetot also serves on the Eskimo
42 Walrus Commission as the vice-chair and is a highly
43 respected elder in his community and region. Thank you
44 so much for your service.

45

46 (Applause)

47

48 MR. AYERS: We have one final award to
49 hand out today. Jack Reakoff of Western Interior, 31

50

0117

1 years.

2

3

(Applause)

4

5

6 Jack Reakoff of Wiseman has been on the
7 Western Interior Council since its inception in 1993
8 and has been the Chairman for the last 20 years. He is
9 passionate about preserving subsistence resources in
10 his region as well as across the state and has spent
11 countless hours not only engaging in subsistence
12 activities but also participating in both Federal and
13 State regulatory processes and working groups to ensure
14 he, the people of his region, and those of the next
15 generation have access to these resources.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Chair Reakoff also serves as Chair of
the Koyukuk River Fish and Game Advisory Committee, the
Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission as
well as the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group
and has previously served on numerous regional wildlife
working groups such as the Kuskokwim River Moose
Working Group.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, everyone.
Congratulations. Again, thanks everybody for the time
that you devote to making sure that our people are able
to have access to subsistence and subsistence
activities. Moving on, we will be going to item number
9 on the agenda, which is youth leaders and subsistence
management.

Katya, I will turn it over to you.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.
At this point I would like to ask all the participants
of the youth engagement session, the first part of the
youth engagement session, please come over to the
testifier table and take your seats. For the record,
my name is Katya Wessels, Council Coordinator Division
Supervisor with OSM. I would like to start the session
with a very good announcement. Very pleasant news for
everyone.

So many Councils have been voicing for
several years that there's a need to involve younger

0118

1 generation in subsistence management so the knowledge
2 of the Council members and their experience with the
3 Federal Subsistence Management System can be passed
4 along.

5
6 Last year the Councils reviewed the
7 charters and several Councils made a suggestion that a
8 youth seat should be added to the Councils. A
9 non-voting youth seat. Sort of like a trainee seat.
10 When these requests were passed to the Federal
11 Subsistence Board, the Board thought it was a great
12 idea to have that. So the Federal Subsistence Board
13 decided that they would recommend to the Secretaries of
14 the Interior and Agriculture to add the youth
15 non-voting seat to all Councils.

16
17 The recommendation from the Board went
18 to the Secretaries and the Secretaries approved that
19 addition to all 10 Council Charters. This is great
20 news. As you can see in your new Charter when you get
21 a chance to look at it, it has a new language edit.
22 It's in the section on the 12 membership and
23 designations.

24
25 It says now the Council is composed of
26 -- you have 10 members or 13. We'll say 10 or 13. So
27 the Council is composed of 10 representative members
28 and one non-voting young leader member. All
29 representative members must be residents of the region
30 represented by the Council, must be knowledgeable and
31 experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of
32 fish and wildlife.

33
34 In addition to being a resident of the
35 region represented by the Council, the one non-voting
36 young leader must be between the age of 18 and 25 and
37 must participate in subsistence activities, be
38 otherwise knowledgeable in matters related to
39 subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and be engaged in
40 resource management related field of study.

41
42 So congratulation, Council Members.
43 You achieved a great thing.

44
45 (Applause)

46
47 So to that I shall add you might ask
48 yourself how we shall proceed from here. Because of
49 the Charters we're not approved until the end of
50

0119

1 January, unfortunately, of this year. There was not
2 enough time for us to develop the procedure and process
3 how to select the young leader member seats. How they
4 will be advertised, how they will be selected and what
5 the term might be.

6
7 We are working now with the Department
8 on these details and we will let you know when we work
9 out these details as soon as possible. That's one of
10 our priorities. But for sure is one thing that the
11 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture will need to
12 appoint these members. Other details of the process
13 again ironed out.

14
15 That said, the Federal agencies, like
16 U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Forest Service, already have
17 some wonderful programs that they have and they're
18 going to share with you these wonderful programs how
19 they already involve the younger generation in
20 subsistence management and in other activities related
21 to Alaska and Arctic.

22
23 So now I'm going to pass the microphone
24 to Tobi Slaughter.

25
26 MS. SLAUGHTER: Thank you. I've been
27 working with the Arctic Youth Ambassadors Program for a
28 little over a year now and I can not be more humbled
29 and proud to work with this group. Since its launch in
30 2015 over 80 Alaska youth ages 18 to 22 have offered
31 invaluable expertise to address challenges impacting
32 the Arctic. We are currently in the fourth cohort with
33 15 ambassadors, but since the start there have been 65
34 youth representing 40 communities. Eighty-two percent
35 of that rural representation.

36
37 During their 18-month ambassadorships
38 these wise youth share their experiences in meetings
39 around Alaska, the United States and abroad. Most
40 recently in Norway participating in arctic frontiers
41 and in February testifying at the United Nations. In
42 fact, they've elevated indigenous knowledge and rural
43 representation in over 14 international exchanges and
44 counting.

45
46 They forge new paths for youth
47 involvement by leading collaborative projects,
48 presenting at intergovernmental conventions and
49 organizing international exchanges with other youth.

50

0120

1 Our Arctic Youth Ambassadors have also produced
2 documentaries and 50-plus media projects, articles and
3 participated in interviews on community issues around
4 the Arctic.

5

6 Today we have with us Gabe Canfield,
7 Tatiana Korthis and Macy Kenworthy. Gabe is
8 passionate about traditional ecological knowledge and
9 working on environmental issues. She cares deeply
10 about subsistence fisheries and was a member of the
11 Arctic Youth Ambassadors cohort three.

12

13 Tatiana is an ANSEP student. She will
14 be helping us with the Gravel-to-Gravel Initiative and
15 she is passionate about protecting salmon, climate and
16 the value of Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

17

18 Macy Kenworthy helps us to implement
19 the Arctic Youth Ambassador's Program and is an alumni
20 from the first cohort. She is deeply passionate about
21 subsistence, climate and education.

22

23 So, with that, I'll start with you,
24 Macy. What role does subsistence play in your life?

25

26 MS. KENWORTHY: Thank you. I'm going
27 to start by introducing myself. (In Inupiaq). I am
28 from Kotzebue, Alaska and currently living in Anchorage
29 where I go back and forth a lot. I live here in
30 Anchorage now. My parents are Clare Henry and Otto
31 Kenworthy, Sr. My grandparents are Frank and May
32 Kenworthy and the late Ron Brown and Helen Brown.

33

34 I, as Tobi mentioned, was in the first
35 cohort of Arctic Youth Ambassadors and now a
36 coordinator for the program working for the Alaska
37 Conservation Foundation. I first heard this question
38 and I had some qualms with it. The question, what role
39 does subsistence play in your life. I wouldn't
40 necessarily say it plays a role. It's our way of life.

41

42

43 It's not just part of my -- I don't go
44 to Sisualik and put on my Sisualik hat and say, oh, I'm
45 going to go catch a beluga. I'm going to go help my
46 family process a beluga just because I'm in Sisualik.
47 It's something that is part of my life even here in
48 Anchorage. It's something I talk about often. It's
49 growing up spending the summers and winters away from
50

0121

1 school in Sisualik where both sides of my family come
2 from.

3

4

5 I don't come to Anchorage and -- I
6 still bring my niqipiag, my soul food, my beluga, my
7 fish, my seal oil. Can't leave home without it. Every
8 time my parents come down they bring more. So it's not
9 just a role in my life. It essentially is a big part
10 of who we are as Native people and Native youth.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So I just wanted to answer by saying
that. Tatiana, do you want to.....

(Applause)

MS. KORTHUIS: Okay, I'll start by
introducing myself. Waqaa. My name is Tatiana Danka
Korthuis. I'm named after my great-great grandmother
Tatiana Danka Kozhevnikov from Old Hamilton, Alaska on
the Yukon River. My grandparents are Eunice and Jacob
Johnson of Emmonak. My other grandma is Virginia
Korthuis of Bethel. My parents are Darrell and Vivian
Korthuis and my younger sister's name is Charlie. I am
Yup'ik and was raised in Bethel, Alaska on the
Kuskokwim River. My family comes from Emmonak, Alaska
on the mouth of the Lower Yukon River.

A little bit of background of my
academic journey. I went to Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, which
is a kindergarten through sixth grade Yup'ik immersion
school in Bethel. Then I attended Mt. Edgecumbe High
School and graduated in 2019. I'm currently an
undergraduate student at the University of Alaska
Anchorage studying natural sciences with a
concentration in environmental science. I'm also a
university Success student with the Alaska Native
Science and Engineering Program.

I have had the opportunity to complete
multiple internships with the ANSEP program including
with United States Geological Survey, Senator Lisa
Murkowski, Calista Corporation, Inuit Circumpolar
Council Alaska and the National Fish and Wildlife
Foundation. Lastly, I'm currently a part of the fourth
cohort of the Arctic Youth Ambassador Program. Thank
you for inviting me to speak on this panel today.

So when I also got the question what
role does subsistence play in your life, I was kind of

0122

1 -- I paused and I was like, you know, it's not really a
2 role. Subsistence is our way of life. It is the base
3 of our livelihood. It's not just about survival. It's
4 a connection to our lands and waters, our community and
5 the wisdom of our elders. Our elders pass down
6 knowledge and stories of relying on our lands and
7 waters in order to survive. Fish, moose, seals,
8 whales, birds and plants that sustain our communities.
9 These aren't just resources. They're part of our
10 culture identity.

11

12 I spent my summers growing up in
13 Emmonak, Alaska helping my family gather and put away
14 berries and fish for the winter. I look forward to
15 spending my summers with my family, my cousins and any
16 new tasks for my gram and for my aunties as I grow
17 older. From being told not to eat the berries while
18 picking to learning how to make brine for the salmon
19 strips, putting away seals, whales and moose, I cherish
20 all the knowledge I learned from spending my summers
21 with my cousins and family.

22

23 As Alaskan youth we carry the
24 responsibility of preserving and carrying on these
25 traditions. It's about actively participating in
26 subsistence practices, learning from my elders and
27 working towards sustainability. Our role as youth
28 extends beyond individual actions. We must advocate to
29 protect subsistence in our communities, region, state
30 and country. The State and Federal governments need to
31 have strong policies in place to protect our
32 subsistence rights. For example, protecting our salmon
33 on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

34

35 Subsistence isn't just part of our
36 history. It's crucial to our present and future. As
37 Alaska Native Youth we actively engage in our
38 subsistence, learning from our elders and advocate for
39 protecting our culture and our way of life. I know
40 that our villages, our people will always be here. I
41 know that there are many State and Federal governments
42 and agencies that want to contribute to finding
43 solutions to the different subsistence challenges we
44 face here in Alaska.

45

46 The one common denominator in every
47 discussion on subsistence in Alaska is us indigenous
48 people. The one thing that remains constant and that
49 will never disappear is our subsistence way of life.

50

0123

1 Thank you.

2

3 (Applause)

4

5 MS. CANFIELD: Quyanaqpak. My name is
6 Gabe Canfield. Thank you both for sharing as well. My
7 Inupiaq name is Kungunna. I was a part of the third
8 cohort of the Arctic Youth Ambassadors Program. You may
9 also know me in my role that I play now for the Yukon
10 River Drainage Fisheries Association. I've been to the
11 RAC meetings before and given our regional RAC reports.
12 So glad to be in front of you all here today and thank
13 you for having me in a different role as a former youth
14 ambassador.

15

16 My parents are Leo Weyapuk of Wales and
17 Perry Canfield of Ketchikan and my grandparents are
18 Florence and Walter Weyapuk of Wales and Pamela and
19 Perry Canfield of Ketchikan. I grew up in Ketchikan in
20 Southeast Alaska, but have frequented all areas of the
21 state. I have spent many a time up in Nome and Wales
22 area where much of my family lives now.

23

24 I have spent the last couple of summers
25 working on the Yukon River for the Yukon River Drainage
26 Fisheries Association as my role as the policy
27 coordinator. I also live in Anchorage on Dena'ina
28 homelands now here in the city and was born in
29 Fairbanks, so I like to say that I have a whole spread
30 and wealth of knowledge all the way across the state.
31 I really do appreciate that.

32

33 I have been practicing subsistence and
34 fishing specifically my entire life. I grew up within
35 a fifth generation commercial fishing family in
36 Southeast Alaska and also as a subsistence family in
37 Wales and Nome in the region for king salmon and
38 whitefish and halibut and all sorts of fisheries in the
39 region. So fisheries is in my blood and I would like
40 to say. I continue that in my personal and
41 professional work. I'm glad to be able to do that
42 here.

43

44 Subsistence as a way of life,
45 especially as a youth in this day and age of climate
46 change is really important because we do know that our
47 fisheries are changing and youth are getting involved
48 because we can see the direction of where it's going
49 and we want to be able to keep our ways of life.

50

0124

1 Something that is deep in our blood and
2 our bones I would say is things that have been passed
3 down from our ancestors and our families, our
4 traditions, being able to eat with our cousins and our
5 siblings and our elders, aunties, uncles. Being able
6 to keep that tradition alive is one of the main reasons
7 that I do it and so many other youth do it.

8

9 I agree with what Tatiana and Macy have
10 both said, that it's not just a role, it is our way of
11 life. It is the way that we practice things. It is
12 the way that we move forward. Subsistence in that way
13 is the reason that so many of us are here, I believe,
14 is being able to be on these boards and advocate for
15 our resources and our foods and continuing things with
16 our families.

17

18 So, with that being said, I want to be
19 able to advocate for youth to be able to keep doing
20 that and to be able to be in these seats and see these
21 faces. I can say that I have advocated for other
22 Arctic Youth Ambassadors and other youth that I know to
23 not only be in the youth positions, but to take voting
24 seats in the Regional Advisory Council and to be on the
25 Board of Fish.

26

27 I believe that youth voices and
28 subsistence have space to make real change because many
29 of us who are subsistence users and have practiced
30 subsistence have been doing this since we were babies,
31 literally. So that is 18, 19, 20 years of experience
32 already. That's more than a full-time job. That is
33 our subsistence lifestyle. Because of that I believe
34 that there is room for youth and all these faces and
35 for them to be able to advocate their voices and their
36 knowledge, that they have been raised by their cultures
37 and their communities.

38

39 Thank you. Quyana.

40

41 (Applause)

42

43 MS. SLAUGHTER: Thank you, ladies.
44 Thank you for that. We want to leave some time for
45 questions and answers, so I'll just ask you all one
46 more question and that is how do you see your
47 involvement or youth involvement in the future of
48 subsistence management.

49

50

0125

1 MS. KENWORTHY: I'll just keep the
2 order easy. We don't have to sit here and wonder who's
3 going to talk. These two incredible people were
4 talking -- and I keep looking over here because those
5 are my people. I don't mean to ignore this half. I
6 just know lots of faces over there. So like I said, I
7 grew up in Kotzebue and Sisualik and my family -- if
8 you ask anyone over there, they know my family. They
9 know that we grew up hunting. They know my dad. He'd
10 spend all the time out on the land or at Sisualik if he
11 could.

12
13 I didn't know about RAC boards or
14 subsistence, what are the SRCs, the NPS version of RAC
15 until I was maybe 20. Very late teens. I grew up
16 doing all these things that you guys talk about day in
17 and day out. I didn't know about the Federal process.
18 I knew that there was many different bodies that create
19 laws and governance for what we're able and allowed to
20 do, but I didn't know at a local level how we can be
21 involved. I didn't know who I could talk to. I didn't
22 know about the people day in and day out having these
23 conversations that we have all the time at Sisualik,
24 that me and my dad talk about all the time.

25
26 So I think that's one really important
27 aspect of when we're talking about youth involvement,
28 how to get youth engaged into Regional Advisory
29 Councils. You have to go and meet youth where they're
30 at. I never heard about it in schools. We were never
31 taught about regulations or hunting laws in school. I
32 always learned it from my parents and from my
33 grandparents at Sisualik.

34
35 I had a Park Service internship in 2015
36 when I was in Kotzebue and part of my job was to listen
37 to all the recordings of all the RAC meetings and SRC
38 meetings and those meetings are incredibly powerful and
39 they're so cool because I got to hear hunting stories,
40 I got to hear people talk about caribou. Attamuk and
41 Mike were on the Councils back then.

42
43 I vividly remember, Attamuk, you
44 talking about how caribou were when you were younger
45 and the massive herds. We don't see that. My family
46 hasn't had caribou in (tearing up) -- yeah, my family
47 hasn't had caribou in a long time because we have to go
48 so far to get it now.

49
50

0126

1 I left because growing up in Kotzebue
2 there's not a lot of space for young people to go out
3 and get their own homes and houses. When I go back,
4 I'm still at my parents' house, which is a small
5 two-bedroom house filled with, now, multiple adults.

6
7 My brother, who is like a real hunter
8 kind of person, he would spend all the time out in
9 Sisualik and on the land if he could, but he has to
10 work. So he doesn't get to spend as much time out as
11 he used to when he was younger.

12
13 He finds it hard to talk to people
14 about Sisualik or Beluga or the things that he's
15 learned growing up, going out with my dad, because he
16 doesn't want to go and sit in meetings. He is happy to
17 talk to anybody if they come to him, if they come to
18 our house, if they come to our town. We have lots of
19 people who stop at our camp in Sisualik and we invite
20 them in, have coffee, share some snacks and we talk
21 about what we're seeing at Sisualik.

22
23 So, yeah, that's I think one of the
24 most important things is you have to meet people where
25 they're at and youth especially. I was in school for a
26 long time. I was working full time to support myself.
27 Tatiana is working. She's a part of multiple programs,
28 but she also had to leave Bethel in order to do that.
29 She can't just go home and go talk to her RAC Council
30 any time there's a meeting. So, yeah, I think that's
31 one of the most important things is you have to go and
32 meet people where they're at.

33
34 (Applause)

35
36 MS. KORTHUIS: I'm going to restate the
37 question. How do you see your involvement or youth
38 involvement in the future of subsistence management?
39 Okay. As we envision the future of subsistence
40 management in Alaska, I see a pivotal role for our
41 youth. Our involvement is not just a choice. It's a
42 responsibility to protect our way of life. I envision
43 a future where more youth actively engage and
44 participate in challenging conversations.

45
46 For example, I attended the 2023 Alaska
47 Board of Fish meeting here in Anchorage. I was one of
48 the only few youth that attended. I learned that
49 tribes and Alaska Native entities are united to protect
50

1 subsistence. All the Alaska Native organizations work
2 together. The over 400 testimonies I heard all
3 testified to the importance of salmon.

4
5 I also heard testimonies from
6 individuals to protect Area M fisheries. In the end, I
7 learned that the decision came down to the vote of the
8 Board of Fish. Therefore, I learned that the
9 importance of appointing Alaska Native people to top
10 subsistence management roles and State and Federal
11 government agencies and boards.

12
13 In addition, Alaska Native youth are
14 eager to learn the wisdom and contribute fresh
15 perspectives. Our involvement extends beyond
16 participation. It's about informed decision-making.
17 We must actively understand the complexities of
18 subsistence. Advocating for policies that bands
19 community needs with sustainable resource use.

20
21 Youth involvement is also about
22 adaptability. As we face environmental changes our
23 role ensures that subsistence practices evolve,
24 maintaining relevant and true to our cultural
25 practices. The future of subsistence management in
26 Alaska rests on the active engagement of its youth. By
27 learning, advocating and adapting we safeguard the
28 traditions that define us.

29
30 The Alaska public media published an
31 interview with Don Reardon, a University of Alaska
32 professor. This interview was about artificial
33 intelligence and about a poem called The Last Salmon.
34 In the article the AI wrote a poem in the voice of Don
35 Reardon. In addition, the entirety of the interview
36 was written by AI. So I'm going to read this poem that
37 was written by AI. It's called The Last Salmon.

38
39 The Last Salmon. I remember the last
40 salmon I caught with my grandfather on the Kuskokwim
41 River before he passed away. He taught me how to gut
42 it with a sharp knife and steady hand, how to smoke it
43 over alder wood and store it for the winter. He told
44 me stories of his youth when the fish were plentiful
45 and fat, when the river was clean and clear and the
46 people were happy and healthy. He warned me of the
47 changes that were coming fast and hard. The dams, the
48 mines, the pipelines, the diseases, the drugs, the
49 violence. He said we had to fight for our land, our
50

0128

1 culture, our language, our way of life. He said we
2 have to respect the salmon. They are our brothers and
3 sisters. He said we had to remember who we are, where
4 we come from and what we stand for. He said we have to
5 stick together. We are stronger as one. I remember his
6 last words to me as he handed me his knife and smiled,
7 take good care of the salmon, son. It might be your
8 last one.

9

10 This poem that AI wrote in the voice of
11 Don Reardon is true as you think about our current
12 salmon crash on the Yukon River and Kuskokwim River.
13 After reading the article and poem I realized that AI
14 knows more about our current subsistence challenges
15 than I thought. The big question is what are we all
16 going to do about it together.

17

18 Quyana. Thank you.

19

20 (Applause)

21

22 MS. CANFIELD: Quyana. As I think
23 about this, it makes me think of some early experiences
24 that I had when I was young. I mean if you grew up in
25 the village, if you grew up around your family, you
26 know that kids are always in the room and we always
27 keep our youth with us and we keep -- even the littlest
28 of little ones are always running around at all the
29 events and all the meetings.

30

31 I appreciate that we have that in our
32 communities and I feel like we need those in this basis
33 too because how many youth are in this room right now,
34 you know. We should be bringing our youth into these
35 spaces so they can be comfortable when they come here
36 and when they start speaking.

37

38 I just turned 25 this past weekend and
39 it is just now the space and time where I feel
40 comfortable being up here and speaking in front of
41 everybody at 25, when we could be bringing our youth
42 into these spaces to advocate for their subsistence and
43 their ways of life from young ages because they've
44 already practiced their subsistence in that way.
45 That's why I'm always trying to advocate for our youth
46 to come in and take the seats as soon as they can
47 because their voices matter. I believe that there is a
48 lot of mentors out there who have helped me get to that
49 spot.

50

0129

1 In the same way there are so many
2 people who don't believe that youth belong in these
3 spaces, especially in areas such as the Board of Fish
4 that Tatiana was mentioning and the North Pacific
5 Fishery Management Council and all of the hurdles and
6 bureaucracy that so many people have to get through
7 that we go through in our organizations already.

8
9 That is adding the barrier of being a
10 youth in that space because you don't have the language
11 and the knowledge of those spaces. It makes a huge
12 difference. So being able to equip the youth with not
13 only the knowledge to be able to handle those spaces,
14 but the care of being able to invite them and make room
15 for them in these rooms is something that we need to be
16 doing at every level I think.

17
18 Again, bringing our youth and bringing
19 our nieces and our nephews and our siblings and our
20 kids into these spaces is one of the things that I've
21 been thinking about for a really long time just because
22 they have been practicing subsistence their entire
23 lives too.

24
25 Yeah, I don't have too much else to
26 share about that, but I am a staunch advocate for youth
27 as a former Arctic Youth Ambassador and I always want
28 to see more youth in every space that I'm in.
29 Quyanaqpak.

30
31 (Applause)

32
33 MS. SLAUGHTER: Okay. We're going to,
34 I think -- Katya, are we opening up for questions or is
35 Forest Service?

36
37 MS. WESSELS: First of all I would like
38 to thank all of you for coming here and thank you for
39 your heartfelt sharing with the group. I really
40 appreciate it. You grew up doing subsistence so you
41 have a lot to share.

42
43 Just before opening for questioning I
44 wanted to remind everyone that the Councils -- really,
45 you know, we have these now, the youth seats, and they
46 will be non-voting, but in a way anyone can become a
47 Council member after their 18. Anyone can apply and
48 become a full-fledged Council member.

49
50

0130

1 So we are, you know -- and sometimes
2 there's this reservation; well, if we apply, are we
3 going to get accepted because we did not have
4 experience, you know, being in a leadership position,
5 we did not have experience in communication. But I
6 think a lot of the youth leaders already have that
7 experience. If they grew up doing subsistence, they
8 have those years of knowledge of subsistence lifestyle
9 and the uses in the region.

10

11 So I totally encourage any young member
12 of the public to apply for these positions on the
13 Councils, not just for the youth non-voting seats. I
14 would like at this point to maybe spend just a few
15 minutes, maybe two or three questions from the Council
16 members to the Arctic Youth Ambassadors representatives
17 or any comments in regards to what has been shared with
18 us.

19

20 I see a hand there in the back. Please
21 say your name.

22

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Peter Williams,
24 Anaktuvuk Pass. I just wanted to say something nice to
25 these young folks. In Anaktuvuk young kids sure want
26 to go hunting, but they can't because elders always
27 push them away from their guns or, you know, using
28 machines. But me, I bought a 20 gallon barrel of gas
29 and left it behind the house.

30

31 These young boys came around one time.
32 They said, Grandpa, Grandpa, we sure want to hunt, but
33 we've got nothing to use. So I went down to the store
34 and bought them some shells and I had the gas and
35 stuff. We went out hunting and my grandson, 11 years
36 old, he shot his first caribou. He was so proud. I
37 showed him how to skin it, you know. He just cut it
38 up. Use your hands. You don't use knife. You just
39 cut where you can skin it.

40

41 Anyway, you've got to encourage your
42 kids in the village to go hunting and stuff. Like I
43 said, I grew up that way, you know. My grandpa gave me
44 a little .22. I use that as an example. But, you
45 know, these kids, they won't do nothing if you don't
46 tell them to do anything. You've got to encourage
47 them. You've got to take them out and do it. They're
48 not going to -- they're going to sit at the TV until
49 you poke them.

50

0131

1 I just want to address this right to
2 you all. You know we've got to encourage the young
3 kids because now that these kids in the village in
4 Anaktuvuk go hunting for elders that don't got no
5 supplement of people that's helping them. They're just
6 living on canned goods and store bought food. You
7 know, I hate to see that, but, you know, I just try to
8 encourage these young kids to go hunting. They're so
9 proud of Grandpa Earl they say.

10

11 Thank you very much.

12

13 MS. WESSELS: Okay, I don't know which
14 one of you raised your hand first, but maybe you, yeah,
15 go ahead first.

16

17 MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you. Dan Dunaway,
18 Bristol Bay RAC. Something I wanted to point out. I
19 enjoyed the panel here. We in Bristol Bay have
20 specifically tried to hold a number of our RAC meetings
21 in schools to encourage and be available for students
22 to observe and testify. Covid kind of put a monkey
23 wrench in that, but we still often have the meetings
24 pretty close to schools and youth come as a way to get
25 familiar and encourage them to participate in the
26 future. So that's an idea that maybe other RACs could
27 use as well.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Dan. I think
32 Darrell had his hand up too.

33

34 MR. VENT: Darrell Vent, Huslia.
35 WIRAC. I just wanted to give you guys a little bit of
36 information. You know, we have all kinds of
37 regulations, whether State or Federal, and when we look
38 at the Federal, we look at rural preference. When you
39 look at State, you look at State preference. The
40 difference is if you're a resident of Alaska, that's
41 State preference. So we have a tough time determining,
42 you know. When it comes to rural, that means that
43 that's our area. But when it comes down to hunting, a
44 State preference, anybody can come into your area and
45 hunt.

46

47 Those are things that you have to
48 consider going on down the road because when it comes
49 to a traditional and cultural use, it's going to be a
50

0132

1 real key thing to you guys. You have to talk with your
2 elders. Get as much information as you could because
3 you're going to be what you call a rural -- you're
4 going to be an elder advisor or, you know, an advisor
5 to your subsistence use I guess they call it, but we
6 don't call it subsistence use. It's cultural and
7 traditional.

8

9 That's like being a biologist. You're
10 learning right from the land. You're not learning from
11 school. You're learning from people that live on that
12 land. You've got to have that for your heart because
13 that's where the intent is for your kids, for the
14 future generations. Those are things that I considered
15 when I was first coming in trying to advocate for our
16 people. It was because I had it in the heart.

17

18 Our people were suffering. We weren't
19 getting our caribou needs met. Weren't getting our
20 fish needs met. We wanted to protect what we got.
21 We've got to have something for our kids. I'm learning
22 the hard way because it's a fast track. We're losing a
23 lot of stuff right now.

24

25 So any information you get whether it's
26 how to process a fish, how to process caribou, anything
27 like that, whatever you guys utilize in your areas,
28 make sure you get all the information you need because
29 one of these days they're going to ask you how do you
30 know about this or that. That's what my elders taught
31 me. They said you've got to treat them a certain way.
32 The fish had a spirit.

33

34 So when they're talking about king
35 salmon, that was a big spirit. That's like a grizzly
36 bear. If you treat it wrong, that spirit won't come
37 back to your area. So how do we know that? We're
38 watching people fish. They're cutting them open,
39 grabbing the eggs out and throwing the rest of the fish
40 away. That's not respect. They were getting fish, a
41 certain type, chum, and probably 60 percent were chum,
42 but the rest were being chucked back into the waters.
43 That's not respect.

44

45 You talk about caribou. If you're not
46 protecting a certain species, it's not going to come
47 back. Always remember those words because that's what
48 they're going to tell you about. That's the way we
49 treat our animals. We treat them in a certain way.

50

0133

1 Thank you.

2

3 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Darrell.

4

5 (Applause)

6

7 MS. KENWORTHY: I just want to add on
8 one more thing that I didn't add to how -- when we were
9 talking about youth involvement in subsistence
10 management. I've heard of presumption so many times
11 over my life that youth don't want to get involved
12 because we're anxious or worried that we're not going
13 to get accepted or we're worried about coming into
14 spaces where people have more knowledge than us and
15 that's not always the case. That might be part of it.

16

17

18 But as young people, especially when we
19 talk about these youth seats, the under 18, presumably
20 high-schoolers in these roles, I think it's going to be
21 less about whether they're anxious about applying but
22 more about whether doing something like this and
23 joining these RAC Councils is something worth putting
24 their energy and investing into. You have to make it
25 something that's worth it because I love what
26 generations today we're seeing.

27

28 I think with my great-grandparents they
29 kind of did things
30 when they wanted to, the way they wanted to. I mean
31 obviously with the seasons and hunting and stuff, but
32 like it was -- oh, I need to go to the store. It's
33 like we don't need those things right now. We can do
34 that later or I'd rather sew right now.

35

36 With my grandparents, especially with
37 my Aana Mae, she worked a lot, but it was always things
38 that she interested in and that she wanted to spend her
39 time towards and that she wanted to invest her time in.
40 Then with my parents, their generation, it's kind of
41 like, well, we have to go work, we have to go do this
42 thing right now. I see that a lot with especially my
43 mom who has been working her whole life. My dad I see
44 a little bit less because he has worked on and on, but
45 mostly just like spends time outdoors and doing stuff
46 for our family.

47

48 As young people, we're realizing that
49 we get to pick and choose what we invest our time in

50

0134

1 and our energy. We're realizing that within all these
2 things that Native people have gone through through
3 generations and the healing that we need within our
4 families and within ourselves is that it's also picking
5 and choosing and protecting ourselves.

6
7 So if you want people to invest their
8 time and energy into things like joining a RAC Council
9 on a youth seat, that is a non-voting seat. You have
10 to make it something that's worthwhile and what they'll
11 listen to and where they're assured before they go in
12 that they're going to be listened to.

13
14 Like I go in and I talk and I say the
15 things I want to, like I am pretty shameless, like my
16 family has known this. My mom has always said that I'm
17 like the person that goes and talks for them because
18 they don't talk to people. But, yeah, it's like you
19 have to make it something that's worthwhile for people
20 to invest their time and energy into.

21
22 MS. SLAUGHTER: I just wanted to say on
23 the 7th at 3:00 o'clock p.m. we will have a separate
24 break-out session with USDA Forest Service Federal
25 Subsistence Practicum Course with their folks and with
26 the Arctic Youth Ambassador Team, including both youth
27 and Fish and Wildlife Service leadership, to further
28 examine your questions and ideas around youth
29 engagement. So I don't know where we are on time, but
30 I just wanted to let you know there will be more
31 opportunity to continue the discussion later on in the
32 week.

33
34 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Tobi. That's
35 exactly right. There's going to be another session on
36 the youth engagement. So I feel like we need to -- oh,
37 one more question?

38
39 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you.

40
41 MS. WESSELS: Can you hear me now?

42
43 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. Barely.

44
45 MS. WESSELS: Okay. Sorry about it. I
46 was probably far away from the mic. If we can hold the
47 questions to the next engagement session with Arctic
48 Youth Ambassadors and with the Forest Service Program,
49 let's do that because we have the second part of this
50

0135

1 session where the Forest Service is going to present
2 their program to all the Councils. I would like to
3 thank Arctic Youth Ambassadors for coming here and
4 sharing with us. We'll talk with you more on Thursday.

5

6

7

Thank you very much.

8

9

(Applause)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. I think that's a wonderful program and I look forward to speaking with you more about engaging youth in each and every one of our RAC Councils. I think the value of the voice of the youth cannot be overstated. With that we're going to move on to our co-stewardship.....

18

19

MS. WESSELS: No, no. Not yet. This is still youth.

20

21

22

23

24

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Oh, okay. I didn't know there was still some more. Very good. I didn't understand that. So please go ahead.

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you so much. What a tough act to follow that is, but look how amazing young people we have in these spaces that are ready to get involved. Honestly, there isn't a better way to set the stage for what we're about to share than what was just shared with us. So extra gratitude to all of them for that.

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

My name is Heather Bauscher. I'm the Fisheries Community Engagement Specialist in a shared role between the Sitka Conservation Society and Salmon State, but I also wear another hat as an adjunct professor with the University of Alaska Southeast teaching this policy and procedures practicum course and how to navigate the Federal Subsistence Board process.

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. BOLWERK: My name is Ashley Bulwerk. I work for the Forest Service. I'm a fish biologist, but I work really heavily with the Subsistence Program. So we're based out on the Tongass where this program is currently housed. We do have some slides. I don't know if the -- those will be coming up here in a second. We wanted to share a little bit about our program.

0136

1 This session is titled Future Leaders
2 and we actually have two current and ongoing efforts
3 that are looking at how we really raise up future
4 leaders in the Subsistence Program. So if you want to
5 advance to the next slide. Awesome. The program that
6 we're not going to speak as much about today but are
7 happy to talk more about on Thursday is our Community
8 Engagement Workshop. So I just wanted to throw a slide
9 up here to emphasize that that is a program we're
10 working on to bring more public participation into
11 these arenas, both at the RAC meeting and the Federal
12 Subsistence Board because we look at future leaders at
13 all ages. So that's one of our programs.

14
15 MS. BAUSCHER: Next slide. This is a
16 short film that was made by one of our amazing folks
17 that helped chaperon some students to a Southeast RAC
18 meeting about a year ago, so we're going to share that.

19
20 (Playing video)

21
22 MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you. I should
23 make a correction on that. The footage was originally
24 captured by one of our chaperones and then it's been
25 worked on with Lee House from Sitka Conservation
26 Society and the Forest Service to create this Forest
27 Service official video on the program. So just wanted
28 to share that so you get a sense of what we're doing
29 with these students when we're taking them to these
30 meetings and what that experience is like for them.

31
32 MS. BOLWERK: So as we've heard
33 multiple times already today, Heather and I also get a
34 lot of folks coming up to us and asking about the
35 program and wanting to learn more about how they might
36 do something like this in their community. So we
37 thought we'd take the opportunity today that we were
38 given to join you all to share a little bit about how
39 we think you all could start programs like this or some
40 tips that we have about how this program works. So
41 we're going to spend the rest of our time sort of
42 sharing some of those pointers as we see them about how
43 this program works for us.

44
45 Next slide. So kind of the first
46 pointer that we wanted to share with you all is if you
47 want to sort of operate a similar program, it really
48 takes a lot of partners to do this kind of work and
49 those partners take on very different roles. Sometimes
50

0137

1 it's an organization or an individual within an
2 organization that can fill each of these roles and
3 we're going to go through each of them here in a
4 second.

5

6 For our program we really think of it
7 as having a facilitator or multiple facilitators for
8 the program, your instructors for the course, funders
9 of course, and educational institution or more than one
10 and many, many community champions.

11

12

Next.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. BAUSCHER: Okay. In this case I
guess facilitator -- Sitka Conservation Society stepped
in and I work with the Sitka Conservation Society.
They kind of helped step in to help with some funding
support when one of the previous funding sources went
away. Through the Memorandum of Understanding between
Sitka Conservation Society and the Forest Service we've
been able to build this out and continue this.

Sitka Conservation Society and some of
my coworkers there have been really helpful in dealing
with the funding and administering the funds and
handling some of the travel logistics and helping to
connect the dots between all the partners.

MS. BOLWERK: This takes at least one,
but often multiple instructors. Heather and I both
fill this role right now. We sort of co-teach the
current course. These folks definitely are content
experts both in the Federal Subsistence Management
Program. Looking around this room we have lots of
those here, so you all already have that that you can
check off your list if you wanted to start a program.

It also is helpful if folks know more
about some of the other regulatory processes too. We
definitely talk about that in our course as well as our
workshop. Recognizing that this system is very similar
to many of the other regulatory systems.

In addition to just providing
information about how the regulatory process works,
it's really critical for the instructors to help the
students get prepared for the meeting. You know, we
heard earlier with some of the Arctic Youth Ambassadors
there are many youth out there who are really excited

0138

1 to engage in this base. What we found with some of our
2 students is sometimes they just need a little bit of
3 help getting them set up to be successful in that
4 space.

5

6 So what we really view our role as is
7 just helping them navigate the space and feel confident
8 and comfortable walking in, but they already have so
9 many brilliant ideas and are excited to share those,
10 but it can be a really intimidating space. I'm sure
11 many of you experienced that before you got on the
12 Council. So we want to help break down some of those
13 barriers so that the students walk in the room and feel
14 like they're welcome there and know what they're
15 getting into.

16

17 We also spend a lot of time at the
18 meetings, as you saw in the video, setting up
19 opportunities for the students to meet with RAC members
20 and agency folks and a variety of other folks in the
21 room so they can do some networking, but also get a
22 much deeper experience while they're there.

23

24 So a lot of our time at the meetings
25 with the students is spent helping guide them through
26 that process and sitting in the audience, answering
27 their questions as things are coming up. So it takes a
28 lot of reacting to what's happening in the room as
29 well.

30

31 MS. BAUSCHER: So finding sources.
32 We're in an amazing place with this program now, but it
33 wasn't an easy journey to get here. I would say when I
34 first started coming to these meetings about 10 years
35 ago I originally did it as a student trying to get
36 biology credits and was inspired by what I saw
37 happening in the space and because I was working under
38 Jan Straley at the time at UAS and she knew I had a
39 teaching background, she was like you should help
40 instruct the course.

41

42 Well, originally all of that had been
43 USDA Drumbeats funds and then when those went away was
44 shortly around the time I started working with Sitka
45 Conservation Society. So they jumped in to fill that
46 gap and then even Alaska Conservation Foundation helped
47 out once or twice before we were able to build more
48 relationships within the Forest Service. It really has
49 been because of champions that have been part of this
50

0139

1 over the years.

2

3

4 Like people that I think of that have
5 been part of this from the beginning are folks like
6 Terry Suminski and Justin Koller in the room here and
7 Beth Pendleton and then Wayne Owen and then Dave
8 Schmid. If it wasn't for those folks and leadership
9 that really saw the value in this and really advocated
10 for those funds, we wouldn't have been able to get to
11 this place where we now have multi-year funding for
12 this program.

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So another point to hit home is like
outside of Southeast we're fortunate to have Forest
Service management, but for this to happen in other
parts of the state it's going to require the same sort
of investment from one of the other land management
agencies under the Department of Interior to have
similar sort of offerings available to the other
regions.

MS. BOLWERK: We currently partner with
the University of Alaska Southeast in teaching this
course. What this allows is the students both get
college and high school credit when they take our
course, so they walk away with two college credits
after a course that takes about four weeks to conclude.
So it's a pretty intensive class, but they do walk away
with credits, which we think is really important for
the students to be able to take that and sort of earn
something that they can apply moving forward if they
continue on that track to college.

So UAS is our current institution for
that. They also help us do some of the recruiting of
students, which is really wonderful, and they provide
sort of those instructional tools, a classroom space,
and they have a blackboard where students can do things
online. All that kind of stuff that they really bring
to the table and help with this program a lot.

MS. BAUSCHER: I feel grateful to be
able to move from the place of a student to become an
adjunct professor in this role, but I'll also add if
you're going to find somebody to be an instructor, it's
hard to quantify the sort of experience. You can't
really get a degree in navigating regulatory spaces.
So it did take some work to be able to be qualified to
be able to be an adjunct professor in that way to help

0140

1 instruct this class.

2

3 MS. BOLWERK: (Indiscernible) partner
4 is really many, many partners. You probably noticed
5 many of these slides we had a logo for the organization
6 that took this role on. I didn't put any logos on this
7 slide because really the whole slide would be full.
8 You know, in the years of this program, and especially
9 if we include our workshop series we do in communities,
10 we have so many community champions who help this work
11 happen.

12

13 Tribes, corporations, non-profits,
14 different agency folks. Many of the folks who sit on
15 our RAC in Southeast Alaska have helped through the
16 years. Folks who sit on the State AC committees, all
17 of those types of folks have stepped in to either sit
18 down with our students during lunch or on breaks to
19 talk through issues with them. We have invited many of
20 them to come in our classroom sessions before we go to
21 the meetings to again make sure that the students feel
22 comfortable and have some good information and know
23 some folks before they get there.

24

25 Then when we're talking about traveling
26 with remote cohorts, which we did our very first one
27 last spring where we had remote students who weren't
28 based in Sitka where we are. It really takes local
29 champions to help the students through those things in
30 the classroom setting and make sure that they're
31 getting the same experience that the students in Sitka
32 are.

33

34 So it really does take a whole bunch of
35 different partners to make a program like this happen
36 and we're really grateful for the ones we've had so
37 far. But I just wanted to highlight that as well. It
38 does take a lot of different help. That's where many
39 of you all -- if folks in your area are looking to
40 start youth programs, it definitely requires lots of
41 folks to step up and help out with those things even in
42 small roles. It really does make a big difference.

43

44 MS. BAUSCHER: A big thank you to all
45 the people that are in this room that have helped in
46 various ways, either presenting during the classes,
47 leading up to going to the meetings. You know, it
48 really is all the community relationships that help
49 make all of this possible and we wouldn't be able to do

50

0141

1 it without all of you. So thank you for that.

2

3

4 Also with the community and school
5 promotion it takes a lot of time to find these
6 students. Not only are we advertising these things
7 we're also like going into the different high schools.
8 So in Sitka where this started we have Mt. Edgcumbe
9 High School, Sitka High School and then the alternative
10 high school Pacific High. So Ashley and I are both
11 spending like more than a week or two visiting
12 different classrooms and speaking to five to ten
13 classes each to try and recruit students and let folks
14 know that these processes exist and that this
15 opportunity is possible.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. WESSELS: Thank you very much,
Ashley and Heather for presenting about your wonderful
program. So that's the.....

MS. BAUSCHER: I guess just one more
thing to add. I just wanted a big thank you to the
Southeast RAC because they have also continued to
support this the whole time and that wouldn't have been
possible without you all and that is what led to the
community workshop series.

We took what was a class in four weeks
to build the skills to navigate these spaces and turn
it into a four-hour workshop so that other folks in
different communities could experience that at all ages
and that will also be stuff that we'll cover on
Thursday. So thanks for letting us take a little extra
time to tack that onto the end there.

(Applause)

MS. WESSELS: Thank you very much for
your presentation. So that's just an example of one of
the programs that is possible to build the education
for the younger generation about the subsistence
management in your region. So I think we have maybe a
couple of minutes to take a couple of questions from
the Council members or any comments in regards to the
efforts of Forest Service in the Southeast and teaching
the younger generation about subsistence management.
Do we have any kind of questions or comments?

Yes, Andy.

0142

1 MR. BASSICH: For the record, Andy
2 Bassich, Eastern RAC. I was just wondering -- first of
3 all I wanted to say thank you for your commitment. I
4 know a lot of the RACs have been talking about this for
5 a long time and it really makes me feel good to see it
6 come to fruition now. It's building the future and
7 it's fresh eyes on a system and that's what we need.

8
9 I'm just very curious. When you go
10 into the schools to help promote this or identify, can
11 you give us some insight as to what criteria or what
12 you're looking for to help identify students that might
13 be either interested or maybe excel in these programs.

14
15 MS. BAUSCHER: Sure. We often actually
16 go to social studies type classes, which I think then
17 helps us identify students in those spaces who are
18 really thinking about policy. We so far have been lucky
19 in that we have been able to take all of the students
20 so far who have showed interest and haven't had to sort
21 of do an application process. We have started
22 requesting that students write a couple of sentences
23 about why they are interested in being involved, but we
24 don't want to exclude students based on that. We've
25 been lucky to not have to do that thus far.

26
27 MS. BOLWERK: I will say one year it
28 got pretty close. I ended up with 10 kids and then I
29 didn't want to limit them and it almost broke the bank
30 that round. They all really got something out of it.
31 That's the ones that were featured in that video.
32 Outside of going to social studies classes we also go
33 to Alaska Studies classes, biology classes. Actually
34 one of the teachers that was super helpful to me
35 through Mt. Edgecumbe finding students was Chohla Moll
36 and she was the biology teacher.

37
38 So I think there's such an
39 interdisciplinary nature of this work that it makes
40 sense to go to multiple different subject areas. Even
41 with the dual enrollment aspect, working with Pacific
42 High, we've been able to be creative in how those
43 credits worked out to try and fit whatever area the
44 specific student needed credits in if it made sense in
45 context to this process.

46
47 MS. WESSELS: Thank you. Any kind of
48 other questions or comments.

49
50

0143

1 Pat, I see your hand up.

2

3

4 MR. HOLMES: Yes, ma'am. I'd like to
5 compliment you, ladies. It's a really good program.
6 We used to many years ago have a similar program in
7 fisheries and we had a very dynamic lady that did that.
8 She'd bring kids to the Fish and Game Advisory
9 Councils. It's kind of before our RAC really got
10 rolling. Unfortunately when she retired it just all
11 disappeared. So I'm glad to see you making steps
12 within different groups in your community and in the
13 school so you can keep that program going. So my hat
14 literally is off to you.

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Thank you.

MS. BAUSCHER: I also want to add all
the stuff we teach the kids or like the different
exercises are all based in like experiential learning
and it was because when I first showed up to my first
meeting I was like a deer in headlights. I didn't want
any of the other students to experience that, but I
felt like all the assignments that we have are about
building skills you need to navigate these spaces,
whether it's the Federal Subsistence Board, the Board
of Fish, the North Pacific Council, and those things
basically come down to like giving testimony.

We make them practice that as you saw.
We have testimony writing templates, we have proposal
writing templates. We make them go do networking to
force them to talk to people and that has always
resulted in them either getting opportunities of
internships or having contacts for jobs in the future.
All of these materials that we've created we also want
to be completely open source.

I don't know that we've found a way to
like put that on the website or turn it into a canned
curriculum or whatever, but that is a dream and very
willing to share any of those materials with anybody
else that would like to get it going in their region.

MS. WESSELS: Thank you. Again, thank
you very much, Heather and Ashley. I think at this
point I'm just going to turn it over to the co-Chairs
because we're kind of running late on our schedule. I
would like to encourage Council members to come and
talk with Heather and Ashley on Thursday during the

0144

1 second youth engagement session and you can have more
2 informal discussions and share your thoughts and ideas
3 and learn more.

4
5 Thank you very much.

6
7 MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you so much for
8 the opportunity to present to you all today.

9
10 MS. BOLWERK: Thank you.

11
12 (Applause)

13
14 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you very
15 much. I'm told that a break would be appreciated, so
16 we're going to take 10 minutes again and let's try to
17 stick to our 10 minutes so we can continue on. Thank
18 you.

19
20 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Before we do break it
21 was brought to my attention we need to re-announce the
22 potluck tomorrow night. It will be the Protecting Our
23 Ways Of Life Potluck from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Co-work
24 by RSD. If you have any questions, ask Staff or
25 somebody at the front table for tomorrow night's
26 potluck.

27
28 (Off record)

29
30 (On record)

31
32 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you,
33 everybody. Most of our Council members are seated and
34 I appreciate that very much. If everybody else can
35 take their conversations out into the hallway, that
36 would be appreciated as well. We're going to move on
37 to co-stewardship.

38
39 Just as a reminder, there is also going
40 to be an additional opportunity to engage and discuss
41 this topic and ask questions on Thursday, March 7th, in
42 the afternoon. We'll announce that session again. We
43 will go ahead and proceed with this initial
44 introduction to co-stewardship and I'll turn this over
45 to Crystal Leonetti and Boyd Blihovde. Hopefully I
46 didn't butcher that too bad. Go ahead.

47
48 MS. LEONETTI: My Yup'ik name is
49 Ciisquq. I also go by Crystal Leonetti. My mom and
50

0145

1 dad are Al and Grace Poindexter from Anchor Point,
2 Alaska and my grandparents are the late Chuck and
3 Beulah Poindexter from Anchor Point. And the late
4 Harry and Daisy Barnes from Dillingham. I am the
5 Alaska Native Affairs Specialist for the U.S. Fish and
6 Wildlife Service.

7

8 I'm joined today by my colleagues from
9 Park Service, Forest Service, BLM and we're also going
10 to do a short introduction to Gravel to Gravel. Then
11 we have a really good case study or co-stewardship and
12 a signing ceremony that we're going to do at the end.
13 So we're going to speed through co-stewardship because,
14 as you mentioned, we have a longer session on Thursday
15 and Friday. So Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

16

17 We're going to pull up some slides. If
18 we can go to the next one. It's hard to read. I'll
19 read it for you. This is the timeline of how
20 co-stewardship the term came about. It's been
21 mentioned today November 2021 Joint Secretarial Order
22 34-03 was signed by Secretary of Interior and Secretary
23 of Agriculture fulfilling the trust responsibility to
24 Indian tribes in the stewardship of Federal lands and
25 waters. Kicking off a new era and a new term where
26 Federal agencies are working more effectively with
27 tribes.

28

29 In December of 2021 was the White House
30 Tribal Nations Summit and a request for agencies to
31 speak with tribes in Alaska and youth specifically
32 requested more trust responsibility to tribes. That
33 kicked off a series of talking circles across Alaska.

34

35 So 2022 and 2023 these four agencies
36 joined together and held talking circles across Alaska
37 on the topic of co-stewardship. In November of 2023
38 the culmination of the talking circles resulted in a
39 report and some recommendations, which we'll go through
40 in a minute. Then just a month ago, January, we held
41 the co-stewardship symposium in Fairbanks. I see a lot
42 of familiar faces here from that symposium.

43

44 We'll go to the next slide. The map
45 shows the Federal land in Alaska covers 63 percent of
46 Alaska. These are indigenous homelands. You can see
47 there that the purple is Forest Service, green is
48 National Park Service, brown is Bureau of Land
49 Management, yellow is Fish and Wildlife Service or the
50

0146

1 Wildlife Refuges.

2

3

4 If you go to the next slide, please.
5 Before we get into co-stewardship it's important to
6 know and recognize and acknowledge and respect that
7 indigenous peoples have been stewarding the lands and
8 animals for a very long time. There's a tremendous
9 depth of knowledge and relationship or kinship to our
10 homelands.

11

12

13 It's a much shorter amount of time in
14 which the newer governments, our agencies, of this
15 place of taking on a different kind of relationship to
16 the land known as land ownership and management.
17 Somewhere between these two system is a system that
18 works together and that's where we look towards
19 co-stewarding together.

20

21

22 Next one. So the difference.
23 Co-stewardship and co-management because all of us have
24 heard the term co-management. Examples of
25 co-management. So co-management is on the right side
26 there and it narrowly refers to collaborative or
27 cooperative stewardship arrangements that are
28 undertaken pursuant to Federal authority. It requires
29 the delegation of some aspect of Federal
30 decision-making or that co-management is otherwise
31 legally necessary.

32

33

34 Some examples of that in Alaska include
35 Section 119 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the
36 1994 amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which
37 legalized the spring and summer hunting of migratory
38 birds in rural Alaska and set up the structure for the
39 Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council.

40

41

42 Co-stewardship is on the left side and
43 from the Joint Secretarial Order you'll see the words
44 on the screen. It is managing Federal lands and waters
45 in a manner that seeks to protect the treaty,
46 religious, subsistence and cultural interests of
47 federally recognized Indian Tribes such that that
48 management is consistent with the nation-to-nation
49 relationship between the United States and federally
50 recognized Indian Tribes; and, that such management
51 fulfills the United States' unique trust obligation to
52 federally recognized Indian Tribes and their citizens.
53 So it is centered on tribal sovereignty and tribal
54 stewardship.

55

0147

1 However, because there are many tribes
2 across the United States, each potentially with their
3 own legal term of art around co-management and
4 co-stewardship, there are also many Alaska Native
5 organizations interested in co-management or
6 co-stewardship we must pay attention to other
7 definitions and pay them our respect. Each tribe may
8 have their own definition of co-stewardship, but that's
9 where we come together and design it together.

10

11 MS. LUKIN: For the record (in
12 Inupiaq). My name is Maija Katak Lukin. I'm from both
13 Kotzebue and Sisualik. I work for the National Park
14 Service. Quyana to Mr. and Mrs. Chair and the
15 respective Council members.

16

17 So here's some agency terms and
18 definitions of the policies. The Fish and Wildlife
19 Service has the co-management and collaborative
20 management. The Native American Policy 510-FW1. The
21 BLM, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest
22 Service also have our own terms, definitions and
23 policies. This slide is just here to show you that we
24 have them. They're named different things, but they're
25 very, very similar. They're similar policies that
26 cover 3403.

27

28 In a nutshell, here's the slide.
29 Earlier today we heard Raina talk about the Secretarial
30 Order 3403 and then Crystal covered it a little bit,
31 but it's an inclusive term covering a wide scope of
32 cooperative and collaborative relationships and models
33 of shared decision-making and I think that's the
34 important thing to remember. It can arise from and
35 complement Tribal consultation, but consultation does
36 not constitute co-stewardship.

37

38 One tool and approach using order to
39 achieve the nation's treaty and trust obligations to
40 tribes, safeguard their tribal interests and to
41 integrate those responsibilities with the laws
42 governing public lands.

43

44 It's a platform to build more
45 meaningful relationships and models of shared
46 decision-making amongst tribes and federal public land
47 agencies. It's applied across a broad spectrum of
48 decision and management actions. It's from a higher
49 level of land planning to lower level projects and
50

0148

1 management actions and it covers all of that.

2

3

4 So Crystal said earlier we hosted in
5 2022 and 2023 a series of seven talking circles across
6 Alaska after the Tribal Nations Summit where Secretary
7 Holland announced the co-stewardship talking circles.
8 They were held in -- at AFN was the original one and
9 then we had one in Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Glennallen,
10 Fairbanks, Juneau and virtually. There was one
11 scheduled in Utqiagvik, but it was cancelled because it
12 was scheduled at the same time as whaling and we
13 understood how important subsistence activities were.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

63

The circles were facilitated by Agnew Beck and they produced a final report. The final report we can email to you. We can provide it to Katya. We can provide it to all the Council members. It has a breakdown. Donna is going to tell you more about the recommendations that came out of the talking circles. There's very regional-specific takeaways.

All right, Donna.

MS. BACH: Good afternoon. My name is Donna Bach. I serve as the State Native Liaison for the Bureau of Land Management. My office is just down the street in the Federal Building. It's an honor to present to you today. I'm the granddaughter of the late Willy Pete and Cecilia Vaska of the Middle Kuskokwim and the late Donald and Evelyn Elliott of Bethel.

What we learned from these talking circles was to -- what I think is significant is that we're really -- as we sit here, we're supported by our agency to really engage in these conversations. What we learned from the report out is to continue to promote regular and transparent engagement information sharing as we all know occurs through RAC deliberations and making sound decisions. And the obligation of Federal agencies to continue to establish effective mechanisms for inclusive communication, representation and meaningful participation regarding and honoring the diverse voices in land management planning initiatives and practices.

In addition to that regarding further capacity building and education on initiatives to support and enhance knowledge and skills of partners

0149

1 involved in co-stewardship efforts.

2

3

4 I know what Crystal mentioned about the
5 co-stewardship symposium that was held earlier this
6 year in Fairbanks. It was really a wonderful segment
7 of elders, biologists and the emerging leaders of
8 tomorrow, as we've heard today, with Arctic Youth
9 Ambassadors, participants in the Tamamta Program and
10 the ANSEP wildlife and biology workshops.

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So we want to continue to promote understanding of these land management principles to continue with indigenous rights and really to peel open the ANCSA and the ISDA or the Indian Self-Determination Act exploring 638 contracts, compacting, sustainable practices and the value of collaborative approaches.

We want to also continue supporting community-led initiatives that empower local communities and tribes to actively participate in land management practices and activities, including data sharing and local hiring.

Another takeaway in the recommendation of the report and what we learned is to continue to involve all Federal/State land and resource managers to ensure that we're listening to high level dialogues for these partnerships and the co-stewardship of public lands. The lands, the waters and the wildlife we understand do not recognize the boundaries, especially in the scarcity and concerns of the ungulates and the salmon, as a lot of dialogue has taken place today and will continue through this week.

We also learned that we need to continue to involve all Tribal, Federal and State partners to ensure that these robust dialogues continue across administrative, political and traditional boundaries.

One of the missing take-aways, I guess, from the dialogue was that even though the Department of Commerce also signed the Joint Secretarial Order 3403 we seek to continue to engage with the NOAA agency and the State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game. We're really hoping at least within BLM with the Gravel to Gravel Keystone Initiative that this will be the nexus of really partnering the habitats with the waters and with the overall concern of these precious species

0150

1 that all of us rely on as Alaskans.

2

3

4 We understand that these regulatory
5 bodies have key roles in salmon management even though
6 NOAA and ADF&G were not at the table. We want to
7 continue to commit to co-stewardship of salmon, one of
8 the most significant economic and cultural resources
9 impacted through Federal land management agencies.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Almost like the NEPA process, we are going to continue to monitor, evaluate and share progress. In that mechanism we hope that establishing, monitoring and evaluating mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of co-stewardship activities.

I think there's a lot of nuance between the Federal agencies that are serving here have in regards to the regulations, but we want to continue to keep an open door and have those dialogues regularly, as well as to review and adopt management strategies based on scientific data and what that informs us on, as well as incorporating and further understanding the importance of indigenous knowledge, community feedback and lessons learned, as well as factor the culture of learning and adaptive management align for continuous improvement in the incorporation of new knowledge and approaches over time.

Also similar to NEPA and the importance of making durable, long-term important decisions, we need to emphasize the long-term sustainability of sort of the marriage of western science principles with indigenous practice. In order to do that we must prioritize sustainable land management practices to maintain the ecological integrity and resilience of Alaska's public lands. We need to implement continued conservation strategies to address the impacts of climate change to protect critical habitats, restore ecosystems and promote biodiversity.

We need to also encourage sustainable resource use such as subsistence practices, fishing, hunting, while considering the long-term health of these ecosystems and the needs of future generations. I know that Rebecca Shaftel is here. She is our BLM representative that is really kind of swimming in the nexus of habitat and ecosystem restoration opportunities.

0151

1 So with that I'll pass it to Boyd and
2 Becky. Thank you. Quyana.

3
4 MR. BLIHOVDE: Hi, I'm Boyd Blihovde.
5 I'm the Gravel-to-Gravel coordinator for the U.S. Fish
6 and Wildlife Service. Becky and I are here to talk to
7 you about Gravel-to-Gravel just very briefly.

8
9 All these meetings and the talking
10 circles and RAC meetings that you go to, you know, what
11 are they good for. We hear all the time that there's
12 just meeting after meeting, but I hope the
13 Gravel-to-Gravel shows you the importance of all these
14 meetings and the talking circles and everything that
15 you all do.

16
17 It is very important because things
18 like Gravel-to-Gravel come from that. Gravel-to-Gravel
19 came directly from you all and tribal leaders. It's
20 what we heard at these different meetings and talking
21 circles, is that you wanted the agencies to focus on
22 the whole life cycle of salmon conservation, not just
23 inland and not just on Bering Sea, but the whole cycle
24 from gravel to gravel.

25
26 So with that our leaders and especially
27 Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM asked for and we
28 were successful in establishing this keystone
29 initiative called Gravel-to-Gravel.
30 We've developed a vision which is on the screen. It's
31 together with tribes centered we unite to care for
32 salmon from gravel to gravel. That was co-developed
33 with the tribes at the center.

34
35 MS. SHAFTEL: Hi, everyone. Thank you
36 for having us here today. My name is Becky Shaftel.
37 I'm the Gravel-to-Gravel coordinator for BLM. I want
38 to share with you this map which shows our gravel to
39 gravel boundary here in Alaska. It's one of several
40 keystone initiatives across the country.

41
42 There are seven that are focused on
43 landscape scale efforts to address a specific
44 conservation challenge. Like Boyd said,
45 Gravel-to-Gravel was proposed for the Norton Sound,
46 Yukon and Kuskokwim regions to specifically address the
47 salmon crisis and work alongside tribes to come up with
48 solutions.

49
50

0152

1 There is significant investment in
2 these different keystone initiatives across the country
3 from the Department of Interior and through both the
4 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation
5 Reduction Act. They're providing funding. Significant
6 funding we'll cover in a bit for both ecosystem
7 restoration and resilience so that Department of
8 Interior bureaus can be working together across these
9 land management boundaries.

10

11 MR. BLIHOVDE: So there's not enough
12 time to go through all that slide and it's probably too
13 small to read, so I'll just summarize. What is the
14 focus of Gravel-to-Gravel. What are we trying to do.
15 I'll just summarize it with kind of the three main
16 goals that the BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service
17 leadership in Alaska developed as they were
18 establishing this keystone initiative.

19

20 In this effort we hope and we're going
21 to partner with tribes through co-stewardship in an
22 effort to restore and enhance the resilience in the
23 region's ecosystems. Some have also summarized it or
24 expressed it as a focus on friendship, fish and food
25 security. That's written up there on the slide, but
26 it's difficult to read.

27

28 So I just wanted to reiterate that
29 there is a focus -- even though the Gravel-to-Gravel
30 region is huge and it's a huge undertaking there is a
31 primary focus on salmon, but it's not just about
32 salmon. It's about all those other things around the
33 subsistence needs that the folks in that region have.

34

35 MS. SHAFTEL: This is our final slide.
36 It's showing you how much funding we've received
37 through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It's broken
38 out a little bit. On the left we have some funding
39 that was received over the past couple of years. These
40 are projects that are occurring on the ground and
41 partnerships that are established.

42

43 We have exciting news. We just
44 received an additional \$18 million in funding through
45 Phase III. I just want to tell you a little bit about
46 how this investment is being spent on the ground.
47 Stream restoration activities are occurring both in the
48 Upper Yukon and also in the Kuskokwim region and these
49 are places where legacy impacts have showed minimal
50

0153

1 natural recovery and where we can conduct stream
2 restoration to make these systems support fish habitat
3 and more equality.

4
5 We're also working to collect data
6 across the region to understand the condition of our
7 stream habitats and to fill important data gaps so that
8 we can restore these streams back to their reference
9 condition. With the Phase III funding we are -- both
10 Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM has a lot of exciting
11 opportunity and partnerships to be working alongside
12 tribes to be collecting more data to support the goals
13 of Gravel-to-Gravel.

14
15 MS. KALALO: Good afternoon, everyone.
16 My name is Zayleen Kalalo. I am non-Native, but grew
17 up in Utqiagvik and Anchorage. I'm currently the
18 Tribal Relation Specialist supporting the Chugach
19 National Forest.

20
21 Now earlier Crystal mentioned the
22 Co-Stewardship Symposium that took place in February.
23 The Co-Stewardship Symposium was sponsored and
24 organized by multiple partners that included the U.S.
25 Fish and Wildlife Service, tribes, UAF, the Alaska
26 Conservation Foundation, the Wilderness Society and the
27 Tyonek Tribal Conservation District.

28
29 Now this was planned as an effort to
30 combine knowledges and experiences to inspire an
31 Alaskan path forward that centers on tribal sovereignty
32 and encourage bigger and better partnerships.

33
34 Now nearly 200 people attended the
35 gathering in Fairbanks and this gathering followed many
36 of the themes that you see on the screen. One very
37 well done portion of the symposium was the inclusion of
38 youth voices via Keynotes as there were several UAF
39 fellows and Arctic Youth Ambassadors who gave pointed
40 and passionate speeches that inspired a very bright
41 future.

42
43 It's clear that partners from
44 non-profits, academia, tribes and tribal organizations
45 are preparing scientists to work on restoration,
46 fisheries, habitat and wildlife activities across the
47 complex landscape and resources. The symposium brought
48 an immersive experience and provided an opportunity for
49 information exchange for participants ranging from
50

0154

1 Federal and Tribal communities.

2

3

4 At the end of the week there were
5 agency-specific dialogues in which agencies and tribes
6 walked away with action items to follow up on. So
7 we've given pretty much an overview of co-stewardship
8 and we kind of gave an example with the
9 Gravel-to-Gravel work that we're doing here at these
10 agencies.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Now you're probably asking yourself how do we actually conduct co-stewardship. Now that's really up to each partnership on how we combine tools and expertises, but here's a start. Some of the primary tools for supporting co-stewardship include PL 93-638, Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act, which is a funding mechanism through which tribes and tribal organizations can contract and compact with the Department of Interior bureaus for services that are normally provided by Interior agencies.

The compacted program, services, functions and activities of the federal agency must have special geographic, historical and/or cultural significance to the tribe.

Our next one is ANILCA Section 809 agreements which helped establish local participation, research and cooperation.

Lastly, we have FLPMA 307(b) which allows BLM to enter into agreements with Federally recognized tribes for the management of natural resources on public lands that are of traditional or cultural importance of those tribes.

Now we talked about some of the initial tools to support co-steward and here we've listed other types of co-stewardship. I won't go through all of them in the interest of time, but one of the big ones that I want to highlight is workforce development and youth engagement and how important it is to empower our youth to engage and just move forward and continue the mission.

Next slide, please. On this slide we've included contacts for each of our four agencies from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park

0155

1 Service, BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

2

3

4 We also mentioned later this week we're
5 going to be hosting some talking circles. Thursday
6 afternoon is going to be a fisheries-focused talking
7 circle and Friday morning is going to be
8 wildlife-focused. The goal with these talking circles
9 is to create dialogue on what does co-stewardship mean
10 for Regional Advisory Councils and how can RACs
11 actually engage.

11

12

Thank you very much.

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. BOARIO: I was reflecting on the
comments of the team before us and thinking about what
co-stewardship is and how to show up in co-stewardship.
Some of the things that have been on my mind since the
co-stewardship symposium that I think I require of
myself and are required for us to really be present and
engaged in co-stewardship is, one, to really understand
the history of the people in place in which we work.
Especially obviously here the indigenous people across

0156

1 Alaska and their homelands.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

It requires us to seek relationship and reconciliation. It requires us to ask ourselves what kind of transformation are we capable of. One of the things I really remember from the symposium, are tribes encouraging us to really have an abundance mindset as we approach this work.

So I'm really full of gratitude to be renewing an MOU with the Ninilchik Traditional Council today that really recognizes a transformation in our relationship. It's an agreement that facilitates a cooperative relationship, meaningful consultation and recognizes the importance of providing NTC's continued access and use of fish resources in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for subsistence purposes.

It marks a continuation of a strong and productive relationship with NTC to steward the salmon on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. It also recognizes the government-to-government relationship between the Service and the NTC and the need to work closely together and coordinating and implementing rural subsistence fisheries and related actions for the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers.

The truth of it is is everyone at this table knows our relationship always wasn't so great. Greg can speak to that. But despite our differences we kept talking and a lot of predecessors to this table deserve credit for that and I'm really grateful to step into their shoes and be in this work with you all now.

While the time in our relationship was difficult, in the end we are stronger because of the challenges and importantly that we eventually overcame them together. To overcome them we recognized the shared values we have around conservation, collaboration, subsistence and sustainable salmon.

Ninilchik elders and knowledge-bearers were steadfast in their and your pursuit of what was right. NTC's continued access to and use of fish resources within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for subsistence purposes is consistent with conservation.

While the sustainable harvest of sockeye salmon from the Kenai River is for the purpose

0157

1 of sustenance and food, it is so much more than that.
2 It's about community, sharing, gathering, celebration
3 and a continuation of a millennia-long tradition.

4
5 We intend for this MOU to memorialize
6 our fellowship with NTC and to further subsistence
7 salmon conservation and continuation of the value of
8 community, of sharing, and of kinship with Kenai River
9 salmon.

10
11 Thank you both so much.

12
13 MR. G. ENCELEWSKI: I've always wanted
14 to sit at this table and say a few words, so thank you,
15 Sarah. It's really kind of cool. I just want to tell
16 you just briefly. I know we're all -- it's been a
17 long, long day. But, you know, we've had some
18 tumultuous but not that bad.

19
20 We fought for many years -- I'll let
21 Ivan talk to you about that -- in lawsuits and stuff
22 with the Federal government, but actually they're our
23 friends now. We've worked with them. They've come
24 through the RAC process and we fought so hard for
25 proposals and we were belittled, we were sent to deal
26 with 400 guides on the Kenai, just Ivan and I, the two
27 of us. We held our ground pretty good.

28
29 My upbringing, I probably would have
30 been -- the Feds were looking for me because I kind of
31 had to be an outlaw, you know, to get our fish at
32 times. Anyway, we are better, we are stronger, this
33 unity between us. I will tell you in all honesty I
34 never thought I'd ever see the day that the Feds met me
35 on the Kenai, took me up on a boat, went up to our fish
36 site with our net in the Kenai River and I signed a
37 management agreement with them of understanding. We
38 now provide fish to the rural residents of Ninilchik in
39 excess of 4,000 reds and give it to the community each
40 year.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 (Applause)

45
46 MR. I. ENCELEWSKI: Just to say a few
47 words. This is a truly historic moment. It's been a
48 long journey and relationships take time to develop.
49 They have some sordid histories as we know. I started
50

0158

1 -- 27 years I've worked for the tribe, spent on our
2 subsistence issues. You know, we started out in 1995
3 asking for a bull moose and in 2001 we started for our
4 fish in the Kenai. Took us 16 years through the
5 Federal subsistence process.

6
7 As we know, we know a lot of lawsuits
8 in Ninilchik. I know the Federal Subsistence Board and
9 NTC is kind of synonymous. Like eww. There almost
10 would be another Regional Advisory Council here today
11 based on our history called the Kenai RAC, which didn't
12 happen because we were able to finally come to a
13 resolution of some of our issues. It truly is historic
14 to see where we've come and where we're going.

15
16 We developed this Memorandum of
17 Agreement that was a culmination of -- and I've got to
18 give a quick shout out to a former Regional Director,
19 Greg Siekaniec, who came to our village, met us where
20 we are, listened to us and tried to determine how we
21 could get to yes after 16 years of fighting and
22 multiple lawsuits. Trust me. I felt like I spent my
23 life at some of these meetings.

24
25 I felt like -- it's almost a little
26 like post-traumatic stress disorder because, you know,
27 whoo. We'd go to those meetings. Well, maybe the
28 bears will eat them, you know. It was really -- they
29 talked about blowing up the bridge to Ninilchik, you
30 know, to boycott us. We were literally made to be
31 outlaws and horrible, terrible people for taking just a
32 few fish for our customary and traditional way of life.
33 So to see where we've come is just amazing.

34
35 I just can't give enough shout-out to
36 the relationship and co-stewardship is an amazing
37 opportunity. While the tangible nature of it may never
38 be exactly what we want, that what we have here today
39 through this memorandum, through this partnership, we
40 can memorialize these things in writing.

41
42 But what we have with our relationship
43 with Ken Gates, Andy Loranger, Kenai wildlife manager,
44 the Regional Director, it means more to us because it's
45 intrinsic in what we do now. We talk together, we
46 communicate. We feel like we're listened to, we're
47 validated, we're heard.

48
49 This MOU that we're renewing talks
50

0159

1 about traditional knowledge many, many times. This is
2 many, many years. Now we're talking about traditional
3 indigenous knowledge as kind of a co-production process
4 with western science. So we were very early on in the
5 development of this Memorandum of Agreement.

6
7 For those who -- you know, there's
8 probably a few people at this table that still
9 remember, you know, when we were in the early '90s
10 fighting at the Federal Subsistence Board thinking,
11 man, these guys are sitting at the table talking about
12 working together, talking about this amazing
13 partnership. It's literally -- you can't even fathom
14 how far we've come.

15
16 Lastly, I'll just say I want to give a
17 shout-out to the proponents of the forum, the
18 Co-Stewardship Forum in Fairbanks. I was able to
19 attend. I've spent my life fighting for our people and
20 for our traditional, cultural, indigenous rights to
21 hunt, fish, gather, food security.

22
23 That was one of the most
24 transformational meetings that I've attended in my 27
25 years of working for the tribe in this field. Feeling
26 like, you know, we were at the table as partners and
27 that we could continue to work together to find a
28 solution because, you know, we are -- as indigenous
29 people, we are connected.

30
31 This is not a management perspective.
32 We're all part of the process, the ecological process.
33 We're connected to the fish, to the land, to the
34 resource. We have a spiritual connection. We're not
35 on top of anything. So we just steward the resources.
36 We borrow the land from our children.

37
38 So what we want is to be able to
39 practice our customary and traditional way of life as
40 the youth have talked about here today. So this will
41 help ensure that this goes on in the future and that we
42 can continue to work together in partnership and strive
43 to build better relationships and show that it works
44 and it can be emulated across the communities, across
45 the state and the nation.

46
47 So thank you.

48
49 (Applause)

50

0160

1 CHAIRMAN GATES: I just want to take a
2 quick opportunity to thank Sarah and Greg and Ivan for
3 being here today to memorialize this. Sarah summarized
4 it very well. I just want to leave everyone with a
5 quick thought. You know, aside from signing this
6 today, you know, we've been operating on trust and
7 through conversations. That's where it all starts.

8
9 I wasn't involved in this when it first
10 got signed the way I am right now, but I just want to
11 say that going down to Ninilchik, speaking to Ivan and
12 Greg in person, building that relationship with them
13 has come a long ways. Without this agreement we'd be
14 operating the same. I just want to leave you guys with
15 conversation and trust. That's where it starts.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 (Applause)

20
21 MR. G. ENCELEWSKI: One last comment.
22 You say we've got to pass on our knowledge to the
23 young. Did I do a good job? Thank you.

24
25 REPORTER: Yes, you did.

26
27 (Applause)

28
29 CO-CHAIR BAKER: All right. Thank you,
30 everyone. We'll move on to our last item of the day.
31 That will be the Council joint discussion and closing
32 comments. So what we're going to do is we're going to
33 take some of our notes from today and we're going to
34 get them up on the screens, I believe, and use these as
35 a framework for any joint letters, any action that we'd
36 like to take throughout the week once we break out into
37 our individual RACs.

38
39 At this time, Katya, do you have any
40 opening statements for our closing comments?

41
42 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Chair Baker.
43 I think that this is an opportunity for the next about
44 an hour for the Councils to really hash out what kind
45 of letters they would like to put together. Is it
46 going to be one letter on several topics or separate
47 letters for a number of topics. Kind of provide a
48 skeletal outline of what these letters might look like.
49 What are the highlights that you want to have in those
50

0161

1 letters and to whom you would like to address the
2 letters. Then I think when the Councils get in their
3 own meetings, they can discuss that a little bit more.

4

5 So then finally after we're out of this
6 meeting and the Councils will vote to send those
7 letters, then we can put them together in a final
8 format. They can be reviewed by your Chairs and also
9 Council members as well if you would like to review
10 them before they're finalized and sent to whomever you
11 are going to be sending or putting -- of course you
12 need to be within the framework of the Federal
13 Subsistence Board correspondence policy for the
14 Councils. You will need to mind that.

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

You have the new policy. The Board just adopted the new policy. It's in your Council's Operations Manual that you all have. So use this as a reference. I know that several of you earlier on when we were having the Council reports brought up several topics. Some of you expressed a desire to send joint letters or joint statements.

So I'm just going to open the floor and I will ask Brooke if she can bring on the screen like a Word document and we can start, you know, typing the main points, the main ideas that we can use as a skeleton for a future letter or letters from the Councils. If anyone would like to kick this off.

Don, you have the floor.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. I sincerely think that this co-management decision that we just embraced, co-stewardship, and I would like to have a joint letter sent to the Secretary that we embrace co-management and that is the future.

That's all I got.

CO-CHAIR BAKER: Anybody else?

MR. DUNAWAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Dan Dunaway, Bristol Bay RAC. It seems like a broad topic among most of the RACs was some of this bycatch and salmon survival. I wonder if there's something that could come out by the end of this meeting to kind of join forces on it and come up with some sort of a letter or discussion to send up the pipeline.

0162

1 CO-CHAIR BAKER: We may not have it on
2 the screen yet, but somebody is taking notes. It's
3 just a technical difficulty. So we can just keep
4 going. Any continuations?

5

6 MR. VENT: Yeah. I like that
7 co-steward, co-management topic they're talking about.
8 It's dealing with one area and the state of Alaska is a
9 big area. There's many complex areas that, you know,
10 we have to deal with in different ways. The State has
11 overall management in a lot of these areas because it's
12 private, whether it's Federal, whether it's State. You
13 know, the State does the management on there.

14

15 The thing that bothers me is that, you
16 know, when we all sat down -- when our people all sat
17 down at the table when we started discussing ANCSA and
18 ANILCA, there was something that was given up. Not by
19 the State, not by the Federal government, but by the
20 tribes and that was our aboriginal rights so that
21 management could be done.

22

23 It didn't help us. We lost -- we're
24 losing -- you know, the way I look at it is we had
25 caribou in our area and they're extinct now, but how do
26 you determine extinction. There's no way to really
27 explain it. If there's something wrong, there should
28 have been something to correct it. You know, we could
29 complain about it, but I would like to understand how
30 do we explain a few things.

31

32 You know, how do we determine whether
33 we're indigenous or Aboriginal. What did we give up?
34 We gave up a lot and it hasn't helped us over all these
35 years of management. There's got to be a way to try to
36 fix this. You know, the co-stewardship we're talking
37 about -- and I was talking about this over in Fairbanks
38 and I told them about, you know, what we gave us as our
39 rights.

40

41 It's a hard thing to do, but our people
42 didn't understand what was going to come out of this.
43 I mean this was 40, 50 years ago. That's something
44 that, you know, we have to look at later on because
45 right now we're determining what are we leaving for our
46 kids. I just want to make sure that we're going about
47 it the right way. Because, like I said, State of
48 Alaska is a big, complex state. Complex management.
49 State and Federal management. You don't see that down
50

0163

1 in the states. They have their Aboriginal rights. We
2 don't.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 MR. HOLMES: Pat Holmes. I think it
7 would help this discussion to have a list or look at
8 the letters of concern from individual RACs to the
9 Federal Subsistence Board. The co-management thing has
10 some good merits to it, but as was mentioned we were
11 one of the councils that wasn't involved in it.
12 Something got forgot.

13

14 But I think it would help us maybe if
15 there's not a need to have specific things at this
16 point so that the Councils could take a look at what
17 the other Councils have had as problems and what are
18 the things that Councils like to have as solutions. I
19 think that could perhaps help the whole group of us
20 figure out what direction to go.

21

22 I can see the majority does have an
23 opinion, but there are other things involved. Like the
24 harvest of sea otters that are common with Southeast
25 and Kodiak. Caribou in the Central Interior and the
26 West. But then we have some caribou problems down on
27 the Alaska Peninsula.

28

29 So I, myself, it would be handy to see
30 what the concerns have been from the other Councils in
31 their letters to the Board for this year.

32

33 Thank you, Chair.

34

35 CO-CHAIR BAKER: Brooke, if you could
36 read what you have so far in response to that.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
39 we kept some notes from the discussion earlier and we
40 have a list of some joint Council -- potential joint
41 Council actions that were brought up. I apologize that
42 we're having technical difficulties and we are hoping
43 to be able to get this up on the screen for you all.
44 This is something too that we can probably print out
45 and bring to the individual RAC meetings if we're not
46 able to do that today.

47

48 I'll just start and go down the list.
49 The first item was a request for fair daily rate of

50

0164

1 compensation for Council members when attending Council
2 meetings and other meetings as a Council
3 representative.

4
5 I'll look for guidance from you, Mr.
6 Chair, if you'd like to pause for discussion of each
7 item or if I should just move down the list.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CO-CHAIR BAKER: If you could just go
12 through the list, then once you get through that we can
13 do some discussion.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for that. The
16 second item that I have on the list is a request for
17 timely replies or replies at all to Council
18 correspondence from Federal agencies and the
19 secretaries offices.

20
21 The next request I have noted is for
22 Federal Subsistence Board or the Department of Interior
23 Solicitor to review the current subsistence situation
24 across all jurisdictions for compliance with the
25 subsistence priority and Title 8 of ANILCA and the
26 state of Alaska constitution.

27
28 The fourth one. Request for a
29 statewide sustainable salmon management plan. That
30 includes strategies to rebuild salmon statewide for the
31 benefit of all users. This should include all managing
32 agencies regardless of jurisdiction. So Federal,
33 State, in-river and marine and be rooted in
34 ecosystem-based management principles and emphasize
35 co-stewardship.

36
37 Number five. Request guidance through
38 the Board and the Secretaries on how to work with the
39 Department of State to engage on international
40 fisheries issues throughout the Pacific
41 Rim.

42
43 Number six. Request the North Pacific
44 Fisheries Management Council to reduce bycatch of
45 salmon, halibut and marine mammals. There may have
46 been other species. I'm sorry if I missed some.
47 Request them also to reduce bottom dragging and to add
48 subsistence representation on the North Pacific
49 Fisheries Management Council in the form of voting

50

0165

1 seats.

2

3

4 Number seven. Request for the Federal
5 Subsistence Board and OSM to take stronger positions on
6 certain issues related to protecting subsistence,
7 including supporting Council comments to the Alaska
8 Board of Fish or Game and the North Pacific Fishery
9 Management Council.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

The last one that I noted down as we were scrambling to try to get this on the screen was to embrace co-management. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CO-CHAIR BAKER: Thank you, Brooke. Go ahead.

MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Albert Howard. I'm from Angoon. I wanted to ask the question when they were doing a presentation on co-stewardship. If you look at the definition of co-stewardship, it says to take care of something.

As a full-blooded Tlingit from Southeast Alaska my elders have done that forever. They've taken care of the resource and they've also managed it. I had an uncle. He was in Glacier Bay getting seagull eggs and the flies were just terrible. So he says somebody call the Fish and Game and have them manage these flies because they seem to manage everything else out of existence.

So when you look at the definition, the English definition of co-stewardship and co-management, as Tlingits we've been stewards and managers. The history of who we are, we managed our own resources by protecting it from -- with checks and balances.

My father always said don't take more than you need. In this modern society we have commercial interests that come in and take more than they need, leaving the subsistence users with the definition that we've been given to make us a user group. We were never a user group until we were subsistence users. I prefer traditional foods to subsistence users. I don't like the word subsistence. If you look up the definition of it, it's living at a minimum. I don't know anyone in this modern day world that lives at a minimum.

0166

1 I think we should be -- as the original
2 people of Alaska we should be stewards and managers.
3 It concerned me the very first time I heard someone
4 mention it. Co-stewardship. They totally left out
5 management. Management decides the laws that govern
6 our resource. Stewardship is the person that protects
7 it. If all they're going to do is allow us to do
8 something we've always done, that doesn't help us
9 address the current problems we have.

10

11 You heard that I was on the Native
12 American Fish and Wildlife Society. I watched the
13 Natives down in Washington and Oregon take a resource
14 of six sockeyes in a system. It was so
15 depleted that the State of Oregon gave it to the
16 natives and they brought it back to existence.

17

18 So I'm very concerned with them trying
19 to just allow us to be co-stewards. That word seems to
20 be pushed more often than not. When I wanted to ask a
21 question, now they're gone. We have to have both. We
22 have to have it all. I've said this many times. I
23 don't sit here for me. You heard the gentleman say we
24 borrow the land from our grandchildren. Just like we
25 borrowed the fish and all the resources. None of us
26 owned any of it. But we were stewards of the land and
27 the fish for our grandchildren and our children.

28

29 I got a 10-year award and I'm sitting
30 here thinking of all the changes that happened in that
31 10 years. For some people 10 years doesn't seem like a
32 long time, but if you go and look in my backyard,
33 regulations are happening that impact Angoon and we're
34 not at the table to say, no, we don't want that.

35

36 I'll give you an example. My son loves
37 to catch shrimp. Now he's got to fill out a document
38 to let the State of Alaska know how many shrimp he
39 caught and how deep he was fishing and what he was
40 using for bait. He's never had to do that before.

41

42 I don't agree with the co-stewardship.
43 It takes too much away from us. Us meaning the
44 Federally qualified subsistence user, which means
45 Native and non-Native. Southeast Alaska RAC is a good
46 example of Native and non-Native. We don't always
47 agree, but I've learned so much from these guys. I
48 have a 12th grade education by the way and some people
49 really hate that. I can read and comprehend and figure
50

0167

1 out the laws. Just continue what we're doing.

2

3 The Southeast RAC knows I can talk
4 forever. I appreciate your time.

5

6 (Applause)

7

8 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you for
9 sharing your thoughts. Anyone else? Go ahead.

10

11 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
12 It was great this morning. We talked about that the
13 Yakutat subsistence needs have not been met for years.
14 The subsistence harvest of salmon is part of their
15 identity and well-being and that the subsistence
16 harvest is being affected by bycatch from fisheries out
17 in the Bering Sea.

18

19 The villagers, the rural people of the
20 Yukon-Kuskokwim area, have volunteered to close their
21 fisheries or heavily restrict their fisheries in order
22 to save the resource. They've asked for some solicitor
23 review of their correspondence and their correspondence
24 has not been forwarded on to other
25 agencies or, you know, people of departments of
26 concerns.

27

28 Long-term planning is not happening.
29 That motivated me this morning to say we should do a
30 joint Council action letter and a letter to the
31 Secretaries. Then I realized our RAC we tend to talk
32 these issues out a lot so that it's on the record. So
33 that what we say on the record can be included in any
34 correspondence that gets put together. We follow
35 through on our correspondence.

36

37 We put it into our annual report and
38 oftentimes we'll do a separate letter to, you know,
39 various -- either designated person or agency or
40 whatever. But in our annual letter, in our 2023 annual
41 letter -- Mr. Chair, I'm going to go ahead and read it
42 -- bycatch issues remain a concern. The Council
43 previously expressed its concern that the Department of
44 Commerce is not being responsive in addressing bycatch
45 concerns shared by many of the Subsistence Regional
46 Advisory Councils and that there's a lack of rural
47 subsistence user representation on the North Pacific
48 Fisheries Management Council.

49

50

0168

1 It was several of these RACs here that
2 brought this to our attention, so we wrote a letter or
3 put it into our annual report in support. I think we
4 sent a letter in fact. The Board informed the
5 Southeast RAC by way of its 2022 annual report reply
6 that a designated tribal seat had been added to the
7 North Pacific Fishery Management Council advisory panel
8 and it hoped that this will improve representation for
9 subsistence user's concerns with North Pacific Fishery
10 Management Council managed fisheries.

11
12 However, the Council feels it is
13 important to continue advocating for subsistence users
14 on this issue as they are being underserved. The
15 commercial interest drive the management of fisheries,
16 which in turn impacts subsistence resources. The
17 Council desires to continue its engagement and further
18 requests that the following specific concerns be
19 elevated to the Department of Commerce.

20
21 The Council remains concerned about the
22 king salmon bycatch by Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries.
23 The annual bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska trawl
24 fisheries appears to exceed the annual king salmon
25 sportfishing catch in Southeast Alaska. The State of
26 Alaska does not allow subsistence fishing for king
27 salmon in Southeast Alaska and there is very limited
28 Federal fishery for king salmon on the Stikine River,
29 which has been closed preseason by special action for
30 the past several years.

31
32 It seems unfair that subsistence users
33 are prohibited from harvesting this vital resource but
34 other fisheries have abundant opportunity to harvest
35 the same resource. The same thing could be said about
36 the bycatch of salmon in the Bering Sea and I know you
37 have expressed that.

38
39 The Council also understands that
40 there's no limit on herring bycatch. Given the
41 devastating decline of herring in Southeast Alaska, it
42 is unconscionable that this bycatch impact on an
43 important traditional subsistence resource, as well as
44 food for major forage fish, continues to be ignored.
45 Interception must be addressed to ensure that
46 subsistence users can have access and opportunity to
47 harvest herring.

48
49 Request to the Board. Please forward a
50

0169

1 copy of the Council's letter to the Department of
2 Commerce pursuant to the Board's correspondence policy.
3 Please include the Council's previous letter dated
4 February 24, 2023 in support of the efforts of peer
5 Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to address the
6 bycatch issue along with some detailed bycatch concerns
7 for Southeast Alaska harvesters.

8

9 Please instruct Office of Subsistence
10 Management staff to keep this Council informed of any
11 actions taken by the North Pacific Fisheries Management
12 Council to address the bycatch issue especially in
13 Southeast Alaska. The Council does not know if North
14 Pacific Fishery Management Council has responded to any
15 of the other Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils
16 letters regarding the concerns associated with bycatch.

17

18 That's the end of our Annual Report
19 statement to the Secretary. So I mean if we can, you
20 know, have some sort of a joint statement on that, you
21 know, that would be great. Thank you.

22

23 (Applause)

24

25 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

26 Robert.

27

28 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Madame Chair.
29 I just wanted to say a couple more comments to close
30 for myself. I'm so happy to hear about the youth
31 seats. They're our future and that's just a comment on
32 that one.

33

34 I want to start off my comment by
35 saying in the Eastern Interior our subsistence needs
36 are not being met and we support
37 the meeting of all user groups. The letter we hope
38 that it outlines actions needed in marine environment
39 to make Yukon River agreement effective. We need to
40 convene a meeting, like I said, and develop a Yukon
41 River salmon rebuilding plan that works to improve the
42 ecosystem for salmon by reducing production hatchery
43 outputs of pink salmon and seeks to limit bycatch
44 intercept fishery that take from the depressed stocks
45 that need every salmon to spawn.

46

47 I see that there's a conservation
48 corridor near Anchorage that really works and that has
49 leveled off the fisheries every year. They used to go

50

0170

1 up and down like on the Yukon. Now that they have a
2 conservation corridor that graph stays flat now almost.
3 The fishing is really good and stable.

4
5 With that that concludes my comment,
6 Madame Chair.

7
8 Thank you.

9
10 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Go
11 ahead.

12
13 MR. FRANTZ: Brower Frantz with the
14 North Slope Regional Advisory Council. So I just
15 wanted to share I guess some oversight of something
16 similar to what I'm seeing or listening to here. I
17 don't know too much about who's doing what with the
18 trawling, but I can share what we've gone through as
19 the North Slope with commercialization of whaling and
20 what we did to effectively save the whales from
21 extinction.

22
23 I mean it's a very clear analogy that I
24 think you can follow or at least look at what we have
25 done. The rest of the world or at least the U.S.
26 completely banned commercialization of whaling and
27 that's what saved the whale population. In order for
28 us to have subsistence whaling, they banned the
29 commercialization of it.

30
31 You know, it's a pretty clear analogy
32 to where I think if they banned the trawling of this in
33 order to save the subsistence side, you need to take a
34 look at that. It's very clear. It's in the history
35 books. It's hard to watch one thing continue. You
36 know, there's an obvious fix to some of this stuff but
37 not taking on it and just watching history play out all
38 over again but with a different species, it just --
39 come on, you know. It's hard to see that. But for the
40 sake of consistency take a look at history and utilize
41 it.

42
43 Thank you.

44
45 (Applause)

46
47 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.
48 Dorothy.

49
50

0171

1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
2 Shockley, Manley/Fairbanks, Eastern Interior RAC. I'm
3 just kind of discouraged right now. My statement is
4 that we, as all 10 RACs, are here to protect our
5 inherent right to feed ourselves and because of State
6 and Federal regulations and mismanagement we cannot
7 feed ourselves today and it's human-caused for the most
8 part.

9
10 In my family, my grandparents were able
11 to feed themselves and because of regulations my
12 parents had a hard time feeding us. Now I can't go out
13 and fish and hunt when I want to and so cannot feed
14 myself and my children and my grandchildren.

15
16 You know, with some very powerful
17 people in this room with hundreds, thousands of years
18 of knowledge, it's so discouraging to think the only
19 action we can take right now is to write a letter. I
20 mean how effective is that? How many letters have we
21 written over the 30 years? We are worse off than we've
22 ever been. I just don't understand.

23
24 It's important for me to spend my time
25 to make a difference. To sit here and think that, you
26 know, what we do or what I'm going to do is not really
27 going to make a difference for the future. I mean I
28 just think we need to do more. You know, some of the
29 things is a sustainable plan for our fish, our
30 wildlife.

31
32 You know, I worked in Juneau for almost
33 -- well, eight sessions and it was really discouraging
34 to see that, you know, nothing -- they didn't look at
35 anything in a sustainable way. The other thing is
36 using local knowledge and work with our fish and our
37 game. That's what stewardship is.

38
39 You know, the word management is to
40 control. There's no controlling of our fish and our
41 wildlife. There's control of people and I keep saying
42 that. The other thing is, you know, people that are
43 making the regulations they need to adapt to climate
44 change.

45
46 I went to a session in Juneau last
47 spring and we had fishermen from all over the state and
48 the ocean and they were telling Feds and the State, you
49 know, what they were seeing, the changes that they were
50

0172

1 seeing, and, you know, nothing was done. People are
2 begging them, saying this is what we're seeing and
3 still, you know, nothing happens.

4
5 I went to Manley to go moose hunting in
6 the middle of September like we always do and I got
7 down there and the leaves on the trees were still
8 green. Moose were not moving. And, you know, we were
9 there for a week and the day we left the leaves finally
10 started changing. And asking can we change the dates
11 and, you know, nothing.

12
13 I mean we have to do something in order
14 to feed ourselves and to feed -- make sure our children
15 and grandchildren have food. So thank you.

16
17 (Applause)

18
19 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. Go
20 ahead.

21
22 MR. ONEY: Thank you, Madame Chair.
23 For the record my name is Raymond Oney, Chairman for
24 the YKRAC. I'd like to recall a poster that I seen
25 that was distributed all up and down the Yukon titled
26 Salmon Knows No Borders.

27
28 I talked a little bit about the moose
29 moratorium that we did on the Yukon to populate the
30 moose in the area because many of our members had to
31 take long trips further up the Yukon to get a moose.
32 Sometimes they would come home with nothing and that's
33 the reason for us to try and populate the moose in our
34 area so we wouldn't have to take those long trips and
35 to pay a lot of money for gas and oil to take that trip
36 up to Yukon.

37
38 But as far as the poster, in my mind it
39 will take international bodies to come together if we
40 are to repopulate the salmon that's on the Yukon
41 Kuskokwim, Norton Sound or wherever the species are
42 dwindling. And if it means a
43 moratorium on that, then we need to be unified to stop,
44 to
45 stop what's going on out there and commercially. To
46 think about the cycle of life if we're going to see it
47 again for the future of our children.

48
49 That's the support I'd like to see come
50

0173

1 from this body, to actually stop what's going on out
2 there. Like the lady said, we could write letters and,
3 you know, what it's going to take. It's just kicking
4 the can down the road further. But unification here
5 I've seen as a result of the proposal that brought us
6 together to fight for our way of life and we could do
7 the same with the fisheries, on the trawl fishing, and
8 also in area M that are chum chucking our fish back
9 into the river.

10

11 I'd like to see unification from this
12 body to stop for the whole cycle of chinook, chum
13 salmon. That's the only way we could rebound. Try and
14 look at rebound what has been dwindling for the past 20
15 years. So I'd like to see a strong support in this way
16 too.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 (Applause)

21

22 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

23 Natasha.

24

25 MS. HAYDEN: Thank you, Madame Chair.
26 Natasha Hayden from the Kodiak/Aleutians Region.
27 Earlier my colleague Pat brought up, touched on the
28 issues that we've got on the southern coast related to
29 sea otters and sea mammal management. I just wanted to
30 take this opportunity for all of our regions. We're
31 all together in the same room to impress upon everybody
32 how dire our situation is in the southern coast related
33 to sea mammal harvesting eligibility.

34

35 There's this complex system of two
36 different agencies that manage sea mammals with the
37 U.S. Fish and Wildlife managing some. The National
38 Marine Fisheries Service managing others. And then
39 co-management agreements with various entities for
40 various species across the state.

41

42 I just want to implore everybody in the
43 room to take a deep look at the future of Alaska native
44 harvesting eligibility for marine mammals into the
45 future. What we're experiencing now is even more
46 concerning because of population rebounds for some
47 species in some areas are causing impact to
48 State-managed fisheries such as shellfish fisheries,
49 salmon fisheries that the salmon are being preyed upon
50

0174

1 by seals in certain areas.

2

3

4 There's been a resolution that has come
5 through the State of Alaska legislature to request that
6 the State of Alaska take over or assume management of
7 some marine mammal species. That is not in any of our
8 best interest. There's sectors that have got a very
9 strong desire and resources to see that management
10 shift away from the way it is done now that will have a
11 more negative impact on our people in the future.

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

So just respectfully wanting to put
this out there and for everybody across the state of
Alaska to just really think deeply on how we can
approach finding some solutions that will work for all
of our regions. Thank you.

(Applause)

CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. I
had Jim in the back.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
This is Tim Gervais with Western Interior. I want to
talk about the salmon issue. Currently there's already
regulation and standards that are supposed to protect
chinook and chum salmon. We have subsistence priority
for Title VIII of ANILCA.

North Pacific Fishery Management
Council, NOAA, is supposed to manage fisheries
according to national standards. There's at least
three national standards that are violated by
subsistence users not being able to fish and biologic
escapement goals not being met.

The trend -- we have prohibited species
regulation also for chinook salmon and chum salmon and
the prohibited species or that regulation was severely
watered down in 2011 when Amendment 91 was passed,
which basically legalized prohibited
species bycatch even though it was in the guise of a
salmon conservation measure.

So why shouldn't Secretaries of
Commerce, Secretary of the Interior not just stop the
bycatch in the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska? This
model of commercial exploitation taking priority over
meeting biologic escapement goals is not legal. Why

0175

1 can't the secretaries or the solicitor step in right
2 now and say that the trawl fleet has to stop fishing
3 until they can figure out a more -- a different method
4 or gear type of fishing that doesn't take so many
5 prohibited species out of the ecosystem.

6
7 I'm not understanding why, based with
8 existing regulation we have, why can't that detrimental
9 commercial fishing be stopped based on the existing
10 law?

11
12 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

13 Darrell.

14
15 MR. VENT: I just want to explain to
16 you I think where some of our problems lie. You know,
17 like we've heard that how many billions of fish was
18 caught out there. That helps the State with power.
19 They influence the Federal. They influence the State.
20 They have appointments on boards.

21
22 We're fighting a real giant out there.
23 Not only in those areas. There's mining and there's
24 hunting. Say for instance if you sheep hunt. It's
25 128,000 for one sheep hunt. I mean, you know, somebody
26 is making money and that's where we're having problems.
27 It's hard to go against something like that. We're
28 from a tribe. Do we have that kind of money to battle
29 them? Do we have the expertise, the legal? We've got
30 a voice, but we've had a voice for how many years.

31
32 There's problems out there, but we've
33 just got to pinpoint how are we going to deal with
34 those. And there's one of them right there I just
35 explained to you.

36
37 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. In
38 the back.

39
40 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Stewardship.
41 When I went to a meeting in Anaktuvuk Pass, going to a
42 meeting (cut out). He told me that you got a lot of
43 self-determination. You're the guardian and the
44 stewardship of this land. The people are speaking
45 about this land. You were raised on this. You grew up
46 on this and you survived and you're still here today.

47
48 I'd like to explain that to you people
49 that we're still going to fight the State. I don't
50

0176

1 bother with (cut out) because government you can deal
2 with them. But the State, the BLM, they're knocking on
3 our back door. In Anaktuvuk, about 100 miles from our
4 village, there's a plane flying there every day. You
5 see it. Sport hunters. When you go (cut out) 20
6 caribou antlers right there. (Cut out). We use our
7 (cut out). We use our resources and we take care of
8 our land. We take care of the animals because we take
9 so much what we need out of there. We just don't go
10 out there and kill 20 caribous like people say. We get
11 so much so we could use it to survive.

12

13 I grew up in Fort Yukon. Since day one
14 (cut out). I seen a lot of (cut out) fishing there, but
15 now we've got to work together as being the stewardship
16 to this land to keep our people going because (cut out)
17 further down on the line. (Cut out) The same thing
18 we're having right now. We've been speaking for 50
19 years and we're glad that we're still here talking.

20

21 So thank you very much for your
22 patience.

23

24 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.

25

26 MR. KRAMER: Hi. I'm Mike Kramer,
27 Northwest RAC. The future is looking pretty grim. The
28 reason why I say that is because we as advisors advise
29 the Board of Game, Federal Subsistence Board, of what
30 we are seeing, yet they have full authority to make the
31 decision on what happens within our region. That is
32 ridiculous.

33

34 They either need to start paying
35 attention to us or not making decisions on their
36 behalf. They need to understand that people are
37 starving. People are hungry, you know. On the Board
38 of Game they said, well, 300 caribou can be harvested
39 by non-resident hunters. That could feed a village.
40 That could feed a lot of people. But it's not these
41 hunters out there in the field that's doing the harm.
42 It's the aircraft that fly over and over and over and
43 over and over again.

44

45 People that are hunting in the river
46 that are seeing -- even though there's this corridor,
47 this no-fly zone corridor. Five miles on each side of
48 the rivers. All the way up to the Cutler, I believe,
49 or Nimuktuk. People are still flying through these

50

0177

1 areas disturbing the caribou.

2

3 The people are down there paying \$1,000
4 a drum of gas just to go up there and hunt caribou and
5 they go home empty-handed. This has got to stop, man.
6 There's got to be some kind of a balance. Checks and
7 balances where we say, hey, you know, this region is
8 having a very tough time. We wanted it to be four
9 caribou per year with one being a cow to protect that
10 accidentally taking of a cow to protect that person of
11 being a criminal.

12

13 When the caribou came through Kotzebue
14 this last year in about four years, they were hit
15 pretty darn hard and there were people being cited left
16 and right. A 14-year-old boy got his grandmother his
17 first caribou. He got it confiscated because he did
18 not have a permit. That shouldn't be needed. He's
19 providing for his grandmother. His first caribou got
20 taken away, confiscated, because he did not have a
21 permit.

22

23 There is so much uneducated people
24 within our villages on State and Federal regulations.
25 Something needs to change. We do not want our people
26 to become criminals because they are trying to put food
27 on the table. There's people out there that said I
28 could get 15 caribou a year. By all means go for it,
29 but I'm hunting for eight families. Super hunters we
30 call them.

31

32 They said I can't survive off of four
33 caribou a year. Of course you can. You've got seven
34 people in your household. That's a lot of caribou with
35 four per person and one of those could be a cow. We
36 wanted to show the Federal Subsistence Board and the
37 Board of Game that we at Northwest Arctic are willing
38 to take a cut to preserve the herd. With us
39 sacrificing that much in order to preserve the herd,
40 the Board of Game decided upon themselves to say 15 a
41 year.

42

43 The one thing that is not being watched
44 very carefully is the fact that there is studies going
45 on out in the field. Very few. There is a calf study
46 going on. There was a gentleman who took National
47 Geographic up there to go do some filming on the
48 Northwest Arctic Caribou Herd.

49

50

0178

1 One thing that this pilot noticed, he
2 said these caribou would cross the river just like in a
3 rampage with bugs chasing them. About five or six
4 fawns left behind. No mom in sight. These caribou
5 kept going. They go over the hill. Three, four, five
6 hours later a couple of mamas finally come back looking
7 for their calf. Their calf got killed by a wolf.

8
9 So what I'm gathering from this
10 information is that these caribou to this day show very
11 poor motherhood skills compared to when we had 450,000.
12 I can recall a calf being left behind. The mother came
13 back within 20 minutes of them crossing the river and
14 she's out there running along and banks until she finds
15 her baby and keeps going. Sometimes they get separated
16 on opposite sides of the river.

17
18 We in Northwest Alaska we're allowed to
19 hunt caribou from a boat using a rifle. We are the
20 only region that are allowed to do that. That is a
21 blessing because a lot of people -- \$48 for a box of
22 .22 shells. Nine hundred dollars to a thousand dollars
23 for a drum of gas. That's a lot of money. Plus you've
24 got to pay the same amount for heating fuel throughout
25 the winter. A lot of people within our region and a
26 lot of people within the Northwest Arctic Caribou Herd
27 depend on these caribou to feed their families.

28
29 It's going to be tough. Times are
30 going to get even tougher. But the prices of
31 everything going up but our wages. Everything is going
32 up but our wages. So a lot of people are more and more
33 dependant on these subsistence resources to fill their
34 freezers, to feed their families. With these super
35 hunters that we have there is a proxy system where they
36 can hunt for other elders, other family members, to
37 help them go through a tough winter.

38
39 I'm hoping that this will be brought
40 up, you know, and shared with the Federal Subsistence
41 Board. I spoke earlier that those three tribal seats
42 should be held within the Subsistence Council area,
43 regions, because we are such a wealth of knowledge. To
44 pick someone out of 228 tribes and you bring them to
45 serve on a Subsistence Board, they've got so much to
46 catch up on. We are already educated in the process.
47 We are already educated on the do's and don't's of
48 pushing regulations, everything. Regulations.

49
50

0180

1 together and co-manage and just educate ourselves and
2 share our needs because it's not only the fish, the
3 birds, the plants, the moose, the caribou. They're
4 very sensitive. When the numbers go low and we don't
5 have sufficient counts, and I hear my brother from
6 Huslia, Darrell Vent, talk about our caribou needs and
7 the gentleman from up north too, how these numbers
8 don't make a big difference when we catch only what we
9 need and share. Of course we get our hunting license
10 and we do turn in our papers in a timely manner, but I
11 know definitely regulations need to change.

12

13 Thank you very much for my comments.

14

15 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. I am
16 going to call an end. Absolutely, Katya, could you
17 give us some instruction for tomorrow before I close.

18

19 MS. WESSELS: Yeah, it's not really --
20 well, I can give instruction for tomorrow, but I just
21 want to acknowledge that we hear your concerns, but as
22 the Councils, as the Subsistence Regional Advisory
23 Councils, you are advisory councils, and we'll talk
24 more about that tomorrow that you're advisory bodies to
25 the Board.

26

27 So we need to channel all your concerns
28 in the way that will help to make a difference.
29 Honestly, just from what happened last year, it's
30 making at least some difference because the Board, the
31 Federal Subsistence Board, listened to the presentation
32 of your annual reports during their summer session in
33 2023. They were really, you know, paying attention.

34

35 There were several topics, like climate
36 change and caribou and not being reimbursed for
37 traditional ecological knowledge and expertise and
38 traveling to the Council meetings. Other topics, you
39 know, I don't remember all of them off the top of my
40 head, but the Board said if there is an opportunity to
41 meet with the Secretary of the Interior, they will.
42 There was a meeting that took place and there was a
43 follow-up of these concerns forwarded to the Secretary.
44 That was a very good conversation.

45

46 If Chair Christianson would be here, he
47 could share with you more. I think somebody alluded to
48 that meeting before. But I think that if the Councils
49 direct these kind of letters to the Board, the Board is
50

0181

1 now going to listen more to what you have to say and
2 will try to make a difference.

3

4 You know, also I'm just -- you know, in
5 the evening, if you possibly can look at your charters
6 or at ANILCA, it talks about such things that what
7 Councils can do. Like, for example, there is a thing
8 that the Councils can recommend strategy for management
9 of fish and wildlife populations within the region.
10 That had not been done much by the Councils in the
11 past. There's a certain way you need to approach it,
12 but this is something to look at besides just writing
13 the letters to the Board.

14

15 You know, especially if several regions
16 come together and provide a recommended strategy. It
17 still will be in the form of a letter and doesn't need
18 to be anything elaborate, but
19 just kind of a general direction. Then we can do
20 something with it. But we, you know, at the Office of
21 Subsistence Management, really want to make a
22 difference and help you, but we need to operate within
23 the framework that we're allowed to.

24

25 So about the instructions for tomorrow,
26 please be here at 8:00. We're having another busy day
27 tomorrow. There will be lots of interesting and good
28 presentations and more opportunities to talk and
29 interact with each other. I will pass it back to Chair
30 Morris Lyon.

31

32 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you.
33 Thank you everybody for attending. Thank you for
34 sharing your thoughts. I would entertain a motion to
35 adjourn.

36

37 MR. REAKOFF: Motion to adjourn.

38

39 CO-CHAIR MORRIS LYON: Thank you. With
40 that we are adjourned for today. Thank you.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

45

46

47

48

49

50

