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SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME III

HARRIGAN CENTENNIAL HALL
Sitka, Alaska
March 20, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Donald C. Hernandez, Chair
Frank G. Wright, Jr.
Calvin H. Casipit
Michael A. Douville
Theodore F. Sandhofer
Patricia A. Phillips
John Smith III
Lewis M. Hiatt

Regional Council Coordinator, DeAnna Perry

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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(Sitka, Alaska - 3/20/25)

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5

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Good morning,
6 everybody. It's 9 a.m. and everybody's in the room, it
7 appears so we can begin. We'll start with roll call.
8 Frank, you're going to do that.

9

10

MR. WRIGHT: Lewis Hiatt.

11

12

MR. HIATT: Here.

13

14

MR. WRIGHT: John Smith.

15

16

MR. SMITH: Here.

17

18

MR. WRIGHT: Harvey Kitka is absent.
19 Patricia Phillips.

20

21

MS. PHILLIPS: Here.

22

23

MR. WRIGHT: Donald Hernandez

24

25

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Here.

26

27

MR. WRIGHT: Ted Sandhofer.

28

29

MR. SANDOHFER: Here.

30

31

MR. WRIGHT: Michael Douville

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33

MR. DOUVILLE: Here.

34

35

MR. WRIGHT: Cal Casipit.

36

37

MR. CASIPIT: Here.

38

39

MR. WRIGHT: Me, here. We got a roll,
40 quorum, Mr. Chair.

41

42

43

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
44 Frank. So, as is always the case, once we get started
45 in the meetings, we begin our sessions with public
46 testimony, and we do ask if you could bring up a blue
47 card if you would like to testify, if you're here in the
48 room. And if you're on the telephones, we have a way to
49 get a hold of us using star five on your dial there to
50 -- that will let us know that there's somebody waiting
to testify on the phones. So, we do have a couple blue

1 cards from the room. So, we get started with the George
2 Nix.

3
4 MR. NIX: Good morning. My name is George
5 Nix. Thank you for the opportunity to come up. Just
6 being in food security, as a full-time subsistence user
7 for the Village of Kasaan. I spend an awful lot of time
8 either on the boat or in the woods. The two things that
9 I see more than deer are people and wolves. So and those
10 hair board samples, I've run across a couple of those
11 areas where they're doing that, and the boards are
12 flipped over, and I don't know if they're able to gather
13 samples that way, but they remain that way, the same way
14 for a very, very long time since actually, since I've
15 been here, I haven't seen them actively flip back over
16 or anything like that. So, I kind of question that method
17 of testing. But I do see a lot more signs of wolves
18 (indiscernible) in almost every area that I go in. And
19 it's definitely a problem there on Prince of Wales, I
20 don't spend much time much north of Coffman Cove. It's
21 about as far north as it has been. But I've run into
22 wolf sign from the very tip of Kendall Point to Coffman
23 Cove area. So, I mean, they're prevalent in the area and
24 thriving also is (indiscernible) mild winters and how
25 the deer would populate better after those mild winters.
26 Same thing happens with the predators. They're raising
27 their pups and their cubs easier through those mild
28 winters because it's not as hard for everything. So,
29 that's all I wanted to say. Thank you for the time.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
32 George. Anybody have any questions for George? Maybe
33 just one. I don't know, is there anybody in Kasaan that
34 you know of that's out there actively trapping wolves
35 these days?

36
37 MR. NIX: Not from our area, no. There's
38 people that do, like, you know, small marten boxes and
39 things like that, but no wolf sets. No.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
42 Anybody else?

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Okay. Thank you. Oh, wait a minute.
47 John, go ahead.

48
49 MR. SMITH: Yeah. Thank you for your
50 testimony. Those are things that we really need to hear.

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1 And also even encouraging, maybe even the position in
2 the team that you have in Kasaan of educating our youth
3 and our families to encourage them to you know, harvest,
4 you know, and drop the numbers down. Thank you. Thank
5 you, George.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else?
8 Ted, go ahead.

9

10 MR. SANDHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
11 Hey George. So, I was curious, you know, we saw yesterday
12 that doesn't appear that there's a lot of wolves taken
13 during the hunting. You know, I mean, mostly trapping
14 that. Have you experienced -- I mean, have you shot
15 wolves in the past when you were deer hunting, and just
16 kind of curious?

17

18 MR. NIX: I've seen them three times
19 since I've been out. And every time it's been out of the
20 like, regulatory hunting season for them and the last
21 thing I'm trying to do is get in trouble. So, they --
22 you got to follow the rules and, you know, that's just
23 the way the game is. If they're there, turn around and
24 leave. Go hunt somewhere else.

25

26 MR. SANDHOFER: Thanks so much. Yeah.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And Patti.

29

30 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Thank you for
31 coming forward to testify. Is there a customary use of
32 wolf in your community? You know, for, like, arts and
33 crafts and or customary regalia or the like...?

34

35 MR. NIX: Yeah. We're actively practicing
36 making our own regalia in the village right now and
37 using furbearing animals to do such things. But like I
38 said, we don't have -- we haven't accessed or acquired
39 any of the wolves for that type of customary use.

40

41 MS. PHILLIPS: But would you, if it were
42 available?

43

44 MR. NIX: 100%.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And, John, go
47 ahead.

48

49 MR. SMITH: Yeah, I encourage that when
50 the season does open that, you know, when you get your

1 hunting that you have your trapping and that you're able
2 to harvest. But I also just want to share his perspective
3 too, is like I had a friend that used to do the same
4 thing. Oh, there's wolves on here, let's leave and
5 finally I told him, no, there's a reason why they're
6 here. Let's stay here. You know they're here because the
7 deer are here, and sure enough, we got some deer. So,
8 just encourage you on that point of view. Alright.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And, Frank, go
11 ahead.

12
13 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
14 said you saw three wolves. Was that in one day?

15
16 MR. NIX: No. Multiple times going out
17 hunting and it wasn't just one wolf. It was the -- there
18 was three different sightings that I've had. First
19 sighting was a group of four. The second sighting was
20 two and then the third time was actually just a solo
21 one. But they were all separate hunts.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
24 Anybody else? I got one more question as well. I kind
25 of know that, you know, Kasaan is a fairly traditional
26 Native community, and I know you do a lot of traditional
27 crafts down there. So, if people do want to get a wolf
28 hide to work with or some other wolf part, do they --
29 is there some customary trade that goes on within the
30 communities -- different communities to get wolf parts
31 and stuff to work with?

32
33 MR. NIX: We haven't reached out for
34 anything like that yet. But on the island, the four
35 tribes are very well united and I'm sure if we just
36 reached out and asked it wouldn't be an issue.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Great. Thank
39 you. Anybody else?

40
41 (No response)

42
43 Thank you very much, George. Thanks for
44 answering our questions.

45
46 MR. NIX: Thank you for all your time.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And we also have
49 Mike Jones in the room.

1 (Pause)

2
3 MR. JONES: (In Native). My name is Mike
4 Jones. I'm the tribal president in Kasaan, Alaska and
5 I'm here to represent my village as well as a greater
6 part of the island. I am in contact -- let me just start
7 with my own personal observation. When I was growing up
8 in the 70s, early 80s in the area and hunting, we never
9 got skunked. We never went out and did not get a deer.
10 It just didn't happen. Over the years, there's just been
11 fewer and fewer. And you know, I've just seen that
12 myself. I am in contact with a couple of hunters and
13 trappers on the island. I personally purchased three
14 pelts in the last two years, just as an investment for
15 when the time comes that people want to make some regalia
16 from wolf, that I have 'em [sic] on hand for that. It's
17 also an investment to keep our trappers trapping so that
18 they can afford to keep doing what they're doing. I want
19 to point out that the trapping season right now, I
20 believe, starts the 1st of November, and that is in the
21 heart of deer hunting season. So, while you're out there,
22 the guys are out there trying to trap wolves, they're
23 running into the deer hunters and the duck hunters as
24 well. We would like to see the harvesting of wolves
25 began on December 1st, and a 45-day window would be more
26 appropriate. You also have to consider the elements at
27 that time of the year. If a big storm comes in you know,
28 that could take out 3, 4 or 5 days of your harvest.
29 Deer, deer takes one hunter about 5 days to harvest
30 completely. There are several islands around POW, Prince
31 of Wales, that are not included in the wolf surveys.
32 That is San Fernando, Saint John, Surman's, Dall, Noyes,
33 Lulu, Baker, Ignis and Sagwon Islands. None of those are
34 surveyed for wolf population. I also understand that
35 there is no traditional ecological knowledge that's
36 being used with their -- in their surveys or, you know,
37 the decision making that occurs for the for the wolf
38 opening.

39
40 (Pause)

41
42 Okay, I think that's about the most of
43 what, you know, the gist of what I have is we want a
44 longer season. You know, our deer hunting -- providing
45 for our elders. It's a cultural thing and you know, we
46 -- I want to see the deer population go up and you know,
47 whatever we can do, you know, with the rural status and
48 having more hunters come over that's going to -- that
49 could be really devastating for us. So, we need to find
50 ways to curb that if we can. So, thank you for the

1 opportunity. I really appreciate being here and
2 everybody's hard work that goes into this, Háw'aa.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
5 Are there any questions for Mike? Mike.

6

7 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
8 to clarify a couple of things, the season opens on the
9 15th of November. The rationale for that is you can get
10 in a couple of weeks shopping before you really get snow
11 or freezing weather. It's kind of a -- as a longtime
12 trapper, you know, I always supported the -- but on the
13 other islands, I'm not sure if it includes all those. I
14 think it includes all those you mentioned. Last year
15 they had -- we went through those islands looking for
16 wolf scat and they use a dog that can find these things.
17 It finds all scat, actually, but it's trained to -- if
18 it comes up to an otter scat, it gets a peanut treat and
19 if it gets actually a wolf's got to give it a little
20 better treat, you know. But anyway, so they went through
21 those islands and did that last year and they -- as far
22 as I know, they plan to do it again. I don't know if
23 it'll get -- how much insight that will give them, but
24 that is taking place.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thanks. Any
27 other Council members with a question or comment? Cal

28

29 MR. CASIPIT: Well, I just had a quick
30 question. Is -- and it seems to me, maybe that -- or
31 what do you think of this is, do you think there's enough
32 wolf being taken to satisfy the needs for building of
33 regalia, a handicraft items, all the things that are
34 done traditionally with the wolf hide. Do you think that
35 there's -- you think it would be beneficial to the tribal
36 people to have more of that available for them to use?
37 And do you think there's kind of a shortage out there,
38 or is -- that's kind of what I'm thinking in my head.
39 But curious about what you think.

40

41 MR. JONES: Okay. Yes. I do believe it
42 would be highly beneficial to have more available. One
43 of the reasons that I bought the ones that I did, so
44 that I have them available, is because most of our people
45 are not in a position to pay 7- or \$800 for a wolf hide.
46 So, having those on hand and, you know, I think that
47 people -- fewer people are working with it in a
48 traditional way, just because of the lack of access to
49 it. You know, it's -- you see the more otter have moved
50 in, more people are and, you know, it's more readily

1 available. More people are sewing it, making purses and
2 scarves and able to you know, help supplement their
3 income with that, and I think the same would be for
4 wolf, if there was more wolf available.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
7 Anybody else?

8
9 MR. CASIPIT: Yeah, thanks.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Frank, go ahead.

12
13 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
14 say that there are some islands that haven't been
15 surveyed. So, have you -- your knowledge known, there's
16 a lot of wolves on those islands, or is there a reason
17 why they haven't been surveyed? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18
19 MR. JONES: Yeah, I don't know about
20 that. That was information given to me by another tribal
21 president on the island. So, it sounds like they, you
22 know, they got dogs out there sniffing it out. So, yeah.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
25 Patti.

26
27 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
28 Yeah. Thank you for coming before us. I'm curious, Mr.
29 Nix talks about seeing wolves in the field. I'm wondering
30 if you've had experience of seeing wolves in the field?

31
32 MR. JONES: Yes, I've seen wolves out
33 there. You can hear them sometimes. You know, we --
34 Kasaan is on a peninsula, and you know, sometimes when
35 it's really quiet, you know, how the sound travels and
36 but we -- I hear them more than I see them. But, yes,
37 I've been out and, you know, you see him on the logging
38 roads, logging roads have just become, you know -- some
39 areas you go up and logging road and you just -- you see
40 so much wolf scatt and -- but yes, I see him out there.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And follow up. Go
43 ahead, Patti.

44
45 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. And Mr. Jones,
46 you mentioned you're a tribal leader so, do you work
47 with the other tribal leaders on the island there on
48 wildlife issues? And maybe you could describe that a
49 little.

50

1 MR. JONES: Yes, we do. We -- you know,
2 for the first time in a really long time, the four tribal
3 presidents, we have a Four Tribes meeting, and
4 everybody's been consistently showing up there the last
5 few years. And we talk about this and the wolf population
6 and the deer. We've also started a Southeast Alaska
7 Indigenous Leadership Organization. We call it the SAILO
8 and you know, so we're working together and, you know,
9 if we need to, you know, bring our voices together on
10 an issue for a proposal, I believe I've got good people
11 around me, and there's good leaders on the island that
12 we can work together and, you know, find better ways for
13 you know, for the deer population as well as the wolf
14 population and, you know, doing things for our customary
15 and traditional uses. So.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Go ahead, Patti.
18

19 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
20 Chair. I mean, I'm not saying this to, you know, brag
21 or anything, but having served on this, you know Council
22 well for, what? Two years now, but, you know, overall,
23 30 years, is that learning the language of this federal
24 process was a huge hurdle for us in from the villages
25 to overcome. What do -- how do we have to say it in
26 order to have an effect? And when I, you know -- so when
27 we hear about wolves and then the fish and game
28 management of it and that we can't be managing for
29 predator control, but we can be managed to meet --
30 continue to meet subsistence needs and included in that
31 subsistence as customary and traditional use. So, when
32 I draw that out and ask that kind of question, it's
33 because I hear wolves are a problem on -- well, I don't
34 know if they're a problem. They are a problem because
35 the deer are diminishing. But, you know, how can we
36 address that in ways that are targeted at ANILCA. So,
37 I'm trying to say that so you can go back to your --
38 with your other leadership and you, as a leader, you
39 know, can put more focus on that customary and
40 traditional use and the observations in the field as
41 well. So, thank you.

42
43 MR. JONES: Okay. (In Native).
44

45 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
46 Patti. Anybody else? Frank.
47

48 MR, WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
49 know, I've been involved with the community for quite a
50 while, and one of the things that we had in every meeting

1 I've gone to since I was a kid, we had elders talking
2 about Glacier Bay, and we squeaked enough and then
3 finally the federal government stopped start recognizing
4 us. So, when you meet with other tribal leaders, you
5 know what I'm going to say is that every meeting we've
6 gone to Glacier Bay was there. It was mentioned. So,
7 what I'm asking is, does wolves come up on every meeting
8 of your leadership and on the island?
9

10 MR. JONES: No, I wouldn't say every
11 single meeting. Yeah, and not every meeting, but it comes
12 up, you know, especially when the, you know, deer season
13 is coming up.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I have a question
16 myself, kind of on a different topic. I don't know if
17 there's anything that you could inform the Council about
18 what -- how the people in Kasaan, how do they feel about
19 doe hunting, taking of doe's on Prince of Wales Island?
20 Is there anything you could tell us about that?
21

22 MR. JONES: Well, much like here, there's
23 people on both sides of the fence on that, and some are
24 just on it. But you know, when it comes to food security
25 and you're either going to have a doe or you're going
26 to have nothing, if it comes down to that, then you
27 know, we have elders that you know. The whole purpose
28 of starting our food security program in the village
29 was, you know, starting with the elders and you know,
30 that's a prime focus for us is to make sure that the
31 elders have deer meat and, you know, whether it's a doe
32 or a buck, I don't think makes a lot of difference. You
33 know, if we can't shoot the doe's and all the doe's
34 aren't getting pregnant and they're just going to die
35 of old age eventually. They might as well be harvested
36 and used and have the opportunity for a quick death as
37 well. So, I know, in the old days, my nanny used to have
38 me keep the stomach because she would use it as a facial.
39 I don't know if any of you guys ever remember hearing
40 anything like that, but they said the female stomachs
41 were better. That seems to be a kind of a past tradition,
42 I guess, because I don't hear of anybody doing that
43 anymore. But I remember my aunties always make sure make
44 sure you keep the stomach, and you got to keep it in one
45 piece so it doesn't stink up.
46

47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Thanks for
48 that. That's something I don't think I've ever heard
49 before. Mike, go ahead.
50

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1 MR. DOUVILLE: What he's talking about
2 is not the stomach itself, but the lace that's around
3 it. The fat. It's like a lace. Keep that, and they use
4 that for, like, a face cream and prevent windburn and
5 stuff like that.

6

7 MR. JONES: Thanks for that.

8

9 MR. DOIVILLE: Yeah.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well,
12 yeah. Thanks for answering the question because I know
13 it's a real difficult issue, you know, on Prince of
14 Wales Island and I'm trying to, you know, kind of get
15 some sense. I know I -- you know, during the course of
16 our deliberations here, you know, I talked about what
17 the feelings are in my community. But I'm always
18 interested to hear, you know, from other communities
19 about how they feel about it because it's, you know,
20 it's a significant factor in our customary and
21 traditional uses. So, yeah. Thank you.

22

23 MR. JONES: Yeah. I think in --
24 structured in a way that you know, our people can harvest
25 doe, but it shouldn't be open to, you know, like if
26 they're opening up, you know, if they do get the rural
27 status, which I will be strongly opposing with the other
28 tribes. Yeah. If we could structure it in a way that,
29 that we can still harvest doe, but it shouldn't be opened
30 up to, you know, the entire borough of Ketchikan and,
31 you know, however many hunters they want to bring over.
32 As it is already, you know, you go to the ferry or the
33 airport and it's, you know, it's truckload after
34 truckload of deer coming off our island that are, you
35 know, when they have these deer hunting lodges, you know,
36 and those should be trimmed down, I think. But yeah,
37 there's already a lot of people from Ketchikan that come
38 over to the island and now it's just opened it up even
39 more. So, you know, the wolves are an endangered species,
40 they say, and that's why it's protected, right. You know,
41 our language has been endangered, our customs, our
42 traditions have been endangered for a long time. And you
43 know, we need to have the same kind of consideration as
44 the wolves and if you know, we're harvesting for
45 traditional and customary reasons, then you know, we
46 shouldn't be limited on that when there's so many of
47 them.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, anybody
50 else with a question or comment?

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(No response)

If not, thank you. Thank you for coming before us with your testimony and answering our questions. Really appreciate it.

MR. JONES: All right. (In Native) gunalchéesh (In Native). Appreciate your time.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I don't have any more blue cards but is there anybody that's come into the room since we started, would like to testify? Doesn't appear so, DeAnna, do we have anybody standing by on the phones?

MS. PERRY: For those who are participating on Teams, if you'll use the raise hand feature, that way we know to call on you. If you're joining us by telephone, please press star five and that will also send an indication to us. I believe Mr. Willard from yesterday is on the line. If you would like to go ahead and open your line by either pressing star six on your telephone or if you've joined through the Teams app, just go ahead and unmute your mic and begin to speak, Mr. Chair, if that's okay with you.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes, Mr. Willard, if you're there, go ahead and begin. I'll tell you if we can hear you.

(Pause)

So, I don't know if you can hear us, but if you're trying to get on, I have to press unmute or star six.

MS. PERRY: Mr. Willard, it looks like your microphone is still muted on this end.

(Pause)

Mr. Willard, I know that you've used the chat feature yesterday and today. If you'd like to provide your comment in the chat on Teams. You could also do that as well. I will share with the Council that so far Mr. Willard has mentioned get rid of the elk and give the meat to people who have elk as a diet. And if you'd like to add to that and are unable to meet your phone, Mr. Willard, you can feel free to type in your

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1 comment. In the meantime, I believe we have someone in
2 the room that would like to speak. Mr. Chair, if you
3 want to go ahead and call on that person while Mr.
4 Willard hopefully can get his microphone working, or he
5 can type in his comment. Thank you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, we'll
8 stand by for Mr. Willard. George Nix, you wanna [sic]
9 say you wanna [sic] come back up and maybe add something?
10 So, you're perfectly free to do that. Okay. Thank you.
11 Want to hear what you have to say.

12
13 MR. NIX: I just kind of wanted to echo
14 off of what Mike said. The being able to not restrict
15 it to the residents of Prince of Wales. If you reside
16 on Prince of Wales and you're there and you're federally
17 recognized and you're subsistence and all this other
18 stuff, I feel like you should still be given the
19 opportunity to harvest a doe. With the data that they
20 were showing, very minimal amount of doe's were being
21 harvested or being like recorded as being harvested. So,
22 I don't think that the impact is necessarily -- like
23 we're not worried about the island impact on our doe
24 population. We're worried about the outside influence
25 that's coming in. If there's a way that we could just,
26 you know -- residents of Prince of Wales are the ones
27 that could hunt doe if they so choose, then that would
28 be -- I think it would make it fair, you know, for not
29 only the deer first off, but us as residents of the
30 Prince of Wales. That's all. I just wanted to echo upon
31 that.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Thank you.
34 George. And I mean, just as a comment, I mean, that's -
35 - I think we heard, you know, yesterday that that's --
36 the desire of the Council is to try and get back to a
37 point where we've been, you know, up till this point
38 where, you know, the Ketchikan now being rural that we
39 will have through this process that's available to us
40 in ANILCA that that we can, you know, apportion out the
41 hunting effort on Prince of Wales. It's equitable for
42 everybody and essentially get back to where we've been
43 up to this point. That's our hope. We'll see how it all
44 -- the process plays out. But we'll probably be working
45 with, you know, tribal members through that, quite
46 extensively as we get into that process, which will
47 probably start next fall. So, be prepared.

48
49 MR. NIX: Looking forward to the
50 workshop.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you. Anybody else with a question? John. Thank you, George. Oh, Mr. Willard's on there.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. I would just like to let you know that he is available and he's able to speak right now. His Tlingit name is (In Native). He's (In Native) Kaagwaantaan from Klukwan and Haines area. So, if he's online. Yeah, I think he's available now.

MR. WILLARD: I am, if you can hear me.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Oh, yes, we hear you fine. Go ahead.

MR. WILLARD: Oh, my biggest passion right now is subsistence. Because I think we're getting the short end of the deal. I signed in on a Wrangell AC meeting before, and I listened to some of the concerns of some of the people there, the locals and it kind of seems like the locals and the Natives are getting the short end of the deal, but it kind of seems like the way the system is set up. But anyways, one thing that I brought up at that meeting was, it kind of seems like every time the State wants to try to fix something, whether it's fish, wildlife or whatever, it doesn't seem to work. My grandfather told me years, like 50 years ago that if you want to fix something in the wild or in the ocean, leave it alone and I always will remember that. And I'll never forget it and so now you can see every time they tried to alter something in nature, it makes it worse. And one of the things that I brought up at the meeting at the AC meeting -- I'm also on the Upper Lynn Canal Advisory Committee for Fish and Game. I got one more year there. I've been there for a couple of years. But I'm trying to listen around to all the other people's concerns, because the way this system is designed is we're all separated. We don't have any communication amongst each other and what makes us more powerful is if we all come together and we all hear everyone's concerns because it's like, I brought Sitka herring and into our meeting up Upper Lynn Canal because they were trying to tell us that, oh, the Sitka herring isn't part of our -- isn't in our area. I said, well, hold on a second. I said, the king salmon are diminishing and herring plays a big part in that. So, when you guys are, you know, maximize sustained yield and taking as much as you can, and we're getting as little as we can and there's nothing for sustainability, there isn't enough

1 for sustainability. So, then therefore our oceans are
2 starving because you're taking all the herring away.
3 There's just not enough. I mean, the money and the greed
4 takes over all this. There's no room for it to grow.
5 It's -- so it's diminishing every year. So, I'm asking,
6 why are those numbers acceptable? At this point, why do
7 we have weirs? So, you can go oh, come on, come over
8 this way, come over this way and follow -- find that
9 little hole in the weir. No, get rid of all those weirs.
10 We don't need to count fish. The fish are so low that -
11 - take those weirs out. Don't need them. Because fish
12 have been coming back to their place for millions of
13 years. So, for us to block them partially off and then
14 have them find the hole in the weir so that we can count
15 them, there's no reason to count them. They're so low
16 compared to when I'd gillnet fish in the 60s, 70s and
17 80s. Those numbers are nothing compared to the numbers
18 today. So, why are we wasting our time paying people to
19 count fish that they're partially blocking? How do we
20 know they'll go through? How do we know they don't bump
21 on the rails and turn around and go somewhere else and
22 die or whatever? But anyways, I believe I was getting
23 off subject a little bit, but I believe the elk were put
24 there and, in my opinion, those are an invasive species
25 because they're hoofing all the terrain there. They're
26 ruining all the vegetation for the -- that the deer eat.
27 Plus, logging roads, climate change probably has a
28 little bit to do with it. But now they've gotten off the
29 island that they were first put on, and then they spread
30 around to the surrounding islands because they're good
31 swimmers. So, then they end up down in the Prince of
32 Wales on the north end of it. This is what I hear from
33 my friends and family down in Klawock that they've taken
34 over the northern end of Prince of Wales and shoved all
35 the deer to the north -- south, and now that's pretty
36 much corralling all the deer. They're not spread out and
37 made hard to find now by the wolves. So, now the wolves
38 know that, oh, just come over here, man. They're all
39 right there. So, now the wolves that have populated
40 there. So, what's more easier than that? So, what you
41 got to do is get rid of that invasive species so the
42 deer can spread out and make it harder for the wolves
43 to find them. Then the wolves will go somewhere else.
44 So, it kind of seems like every time we find a vicious
45 predator, all we want to do is kill them. But that's not
46 right, because that's not how nature works. So, what we
47 need to do is get rid of invasive species.

48
49 My other concern is every time there's
50 something scary that comes around, everybody just wants

1 to kill them off. Why? They're there for a reason.
2 They've been around for millions of years. We've only
3 been around for how many? So, it's like my grandfather
4 said, if there's a problem, then leave them alone. But
5 in this case, there was purposely put there, and I
6 believe they're an invasive species, and they're messing
7 up the ecosystem of the wolves, bears and whatever. So,
8 killing off the wolves is going to even further damage
9 that ecosystem. You have to remove those elk in order
10 for those deer to spread out and then some of the deer
11 will go somewhere else cause [sic] it's not easy anymore.
12 The vegetation still has to grow back. It's kind of like
13 when you get a couple of mountain goats in your area. I
14 know it's kind of a risky thing because you got kids,
15 women, children. I mean, you know what I mean? To have
16 mountain goat -- mountain lions running in your area.
17 But see, still, people are scared of mountain lions. But
18 look at how far they've gone to migrate to somewhere
19 else. Who knows that they're just coming here. But they
20 might be here too, just because of all the deer has been
21 corralled. But as soon as something scary comes around,
22 all we want to do is kill them.

23
24 I don't know if you guys at this point
25 have any questions that you can throw at me, because I'd
26 be willing to answer anything that you can see, because
27 I'm just trying to make people see things a different
28 way, because I believe this unbalance [sic] in the
29 ecosystem with the wolves and all that, all is based on
30 that elk. I mean, they're tromping up all the ground.
31 They're eating everything that the deer are supposed to
32 be eating and force them into more or less a pen for a
33 free for all, for the wolves. So, that's my concern
34 about that and the and the mountain lions. I think
35 unfortunately if we kill them then bummer. But on the
36 other hand, if they hurt someone in the village or
37 anywhere, that would be another bummer. But I don't think
38 just because it's scary, we got to kill it. I just leave
39 it alone; let it go on its way because he's going
40 somewhere.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay.

43
44 MR. WILLARD: Yes. Go ahead and thank you
45 for this opportunity to speak.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
48 You said you'd be willing to answer any questions. So,
49 do we have any questions from the Council? Anybody?

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1 MR. WILLARD: I'd appreciate some
2 feedback, because -- yeah, because that's how we learn.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Well, we
5 appreciate your perspective on things. So, now we have
6 a question from John. Go ahead, John.

7
8 MR. SMITH: And you know, some of the
9 other ACs that I was like in Wrangell, you know, the
10 same issue was going on there where elk was introduced
11 to, you know Ellen Island and near Petersburg and also
12 doing the same thing where they're traveling and, you
13 know, changing the environment there in their area, too.
14 So, that was on their table also, just you know, an
15 information. It's good to hear your voice, Marvin.

16
17 MR. WILLARD: Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else?
20 Just for other information you know that elk season is
21 now open for -- to take any elk on Prince of Wales
22 Island. So, and it's in regulation that you can take
23 one. So, if anybody doesn't know, if you're out there
24 hunting and you run into an elk, you can't take it. So,
25 it is -- the season is open. Cal.

26
27 MR. SANDHOFER: Excuse me. As long as you
28 have the federal permit. Yeah?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Right.
31 Permit hunt. But yeah, have one of those in hand, so.

32
33 MR. WILLARD: Do we know what the limit
34 is there on Prince of Wales?

35
36 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Excuse me. Say it
37 again.

38
39 MR. WILLARD: Do we know what the limit
40 is there on Prince of Wales?

41
42 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I don't even know
43 if there is a limit, but maybe Cal knows more about that
44 as well. And we also have somebody looking at the book,
45 so.

46
47 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, I was just looking
48 at the book and it's -- the bag limit is one. But it is
49 a year-round season.

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1 MR. WILLARD: But they're not putting a
2 bounty on them like they are the mountain lions? Like
3 trying to make them extinct?
4

5 MR. SANDHOFER: Through the Chair. I'm
6 not sure I should be getting into this, like this. Quite
7 like this, but.....
8

9 MR. WILLARD: Okay.
10

11 MR. SANDHOFER: We're hunting under
12 federal subsistence regulations, and there are no
13 provisions for bounties or anything like that or it.
14 This is -- our duty is to continue -- is to ensure that
15 the continuation of subsistence uses occur and that at
16 the same time, we're providing for conservation of the
17 resource. So, you know, the regulation is what it is,
18 requires a federal permit, but it's a year-round season,
19 and the limit is one per hunter. So, that's what it is
20 now.
21

22 MR. WILLARD: Okay. Understandable.
23

24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Patti, go
25 ahead.
26

27 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
28 It's not a question for the commenter, but I'm curious.
29 What is -- what has been the harvest of a Unit 2 for
30 elk? I wonder if they -- the staff could include that
31 in their report.
32

33 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I think it
34 was mentioned in the report, and I think it's probably
35 zero reported, but Rob.
36

37 MR. CROSS: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 For the record, Rob cross with the Forest Service. Yeah.
39 So, that permit was put into place a number of years ago
40 by this Regional Advisory Council, and it was with the
41 intention of addressing some anecdotal reports that we
42 had of elk that had spread off of the Etolin Island
43 management area and the Zarembo Island elk management
44 area. I think we've issued somewhere just shy of 50
45 permits, and we've never gotten any harvest reported on
46 that and no further reports of elk outside of the
47 management area.
48

49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.
50 John.

1

2 MR. SMITH: With the hearing that, that
3 would be really, you know, just folks that are online
4 or even put in the records of, you know, educational
5 permits that, you know, we're actually, you know, the
6 tribe, the community, the school, you know, of
7 harvesting that for food. You know, I encourage that,
8 we drop the numbers down and maybe slow down with the
9 issues going on, and in all areas that are struggling,
10 yeah, that have elk that have been transplanted on their
11 islands.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
14 And you know, the Department of Fish and Game kind of
15 acknowledges, and we agree that elk can be detrimental
16 to deer habitat, and they do not want the elk to spread
17 away from the places where they were originally
18 transplanted. They still want to keep the elk on Etolin
19 and Zarembo Islands as a sportsman's species, I guess,
20 but anywhere else they would rather not see those elk
21 spread. So, they actually encourage, you know, with this
22 very liberal season, which is in the federal regulations
23 as well, to be able to take an elk, you know, anywhere
24 off of Etolin or Zarembo Island, and the intent of that
25 is to keep them from spreading and becoming an impact.
26 So, you're right. You're right in all your testimony
27 there, Mr. Willard, that if you want to call them an
28 invasive species, that's probably fairly accurate. And
29 it's not to be encouraged. And the Department of Fish
30 and Game, to my knowledge, has kind of moved away from
31 that practice of transplanting animals particularly here
32 -- to here in Alaska. So, yep. You are right in all of
33 your testimony there. So, thank you very much. Is any
34 other questions or comments? John.

35

36 MR. SMITH: Sorry I'm talking so much,
37 but in history, two of -- even Frank can probably share
38 that, you know, I grew up in Hoonah, and when we were
39 young kids, we used to trap for rabbits, wild rabbits
40 and stuff. Very delicious and their hides were awesome.
41 Then all of a sudden, they put mink and marten and
42 whatnot on the island, and there they disappeared, you
43 know, just a little history about their transplanting
44 and what it does to the environment. It definitely
45 changes it.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
48 Anybody else?

49

50 (No response)

1

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Okay. I think we're done with the questions here. Thank you, Mr. Willard. Did you have something else you wanted to add?

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MR. WILLARD: Yes, I was wanting to say something about the doe hunting. If you look at the does, I know it's a touchy subject because, you know, they're the females or the birth -- the birthers, but they give birth to fawns, like, at the end of spring, so and their gestation period is 200 days, which brings it back into fall time, where you should be able to within those three months, maybe like hunt the ones that you're talking about, the same ones, the wolves go after the weak and old. Those are the ones that we could be harvesting for the elders, you know, for now. Because you don't want to go crazy with this because the deer population is so low. But I think something needs to get done. I mean, if you want the elk to stay on that island but, they're already on other islands, I mean, elk can swim three miles a day, so -- and then you got the northern end of Prince of Wales with elk on them, and they're just destroying all the vegetation and, and now damaging the ecosystem there with the deer. I think you should just eliminate the ones on Prince of Wales and I don't know, give them to the people that use them for a diet.

And my question to the Fish and Game was, if no one -- if people are getting tickets but nothing is turned in, do we know if the population has changed, people are just not turning them in or are people just not using them but got permits? So, that would be kind of good information to use because I believe we need in this particular situation, I think because of the way things are going with the deer, and the wolves and the bears on Prince of Wales, I think we need to get rid of the elk on the island and give that meat to people who use it for a diet. I mean, elk are native to, like -- well, they're native to a bunch of places, but they're more Native to Oregon, Washington around there. So, I mean, those are just my concerns.

I still think that that's what's ruining the ecosystem with the deer and wolves. So, now the wolves will pay the price for the elk, and then the ecosystem is going to get more messed up. Because when you take the predators away like that, then it makes another out of balance. This happened up in Anchorage years ago. Number one, there was too many wolves. So,

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1 they killed the wolves. Too many -- not too many moose
2 that's killed a moose and they just go back and forth.
3 So, they just kind of messing that all up. But that's
4 just my opinion. So, I mean, you could do whatever you
5 want with it, but I believe we need to get rid of -- if
6 they want to isolate for fun, then let's control
7 everything else and let them have that island. That's
8 my opinion. Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
11 Mike, question or comment?

12

13 MR. DOUVILLE: Just some clarification.
14 There was some evidence of elk on Prince of Wales on the
15 north end, or even down farther almost mid island. But
16 we haven't seen that for a really long time. The ones
17 that did get on there, I think that the wolves took care
18 of and they didn't take root. Because, trust me, if one
19 of the hunters on Prince of Wales runs across them, he's
20 certainly going to harvest it. And they're just not
21 there, and there's nothing to show that they have been
22 there in quite a while, but certainly they were, a few,
23 but they did not survive. And as far as to my knowledge,
24 there isn't any there today.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
27 Yeah, I concur with that. I've seen elk sign in the
28 past, but I haven't seen any elk sign in a number of
29 years now. And as you say it, I would have loved to have
30 run across one. I would have taken it and if I could
31 have gotten out. So, okay. I think we'll wrap it up
32 there. Thank you, Mr. Willard. And thank you for your
33 comments. I think -- is there anybody else that come
34 online, DeAnna? Any other hands raised?

35

36 MS. PERRY: And just a reminder, if
37 you're participating by Teams, if you'll click on the
38 raise hand feature at the top bar of Teams, that will
39 let us know you wish to speak. And if you've joined us
40 through that platform by dialing in, just press star
41 five and that will kind of do the same thing. Again,
42 star five if you're on the phone or press the raise hand
43 feature if you're on Teams by computer.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 And Mr. Chair, I do not see any hands
48 raised. Thank you.

49

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1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
2 So, next up on the agenda is, it's time for agency
3 reports. And we'll start with any tribal governments.
4 Are there any tribal governments? I know we had some
5 tribal testimony here this morning in the room, but is
6 there anybody online that would like to give a report
7 or on the phones?

8
9 MS. PERRY: I'm not seeing any
10 indications, Mr. Chair.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Are there
13 any other Native organizations, either in the room or
14 on the phone lines?

15
16 MR. WILLARD: What was what was what was
17 the agenda on this section?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: This is any
20 reports from Native organizations is where we are now.

21
22 MR. WILLARD: Okay. Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
25 else? No? Okay. Well one of the -- I guess under that
26 category is a report from the Metlakatla Indian
27 Community, their Fish and Wildlife department. They're
28 kind of specifically wanted to talk to us about the
29 green crab. Do we have Ian Hudson from Metlakatla Indian
30 Community on the line?

31
32 MR. HUDSON: Yes, I'm on here.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, we'll go
35 ahead with your report, Ian. Go ahead.

36
37 MR. HUDSON: Okay. I'll try to share my
38 screen. Did that work?

39
40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Yes, I
41 believe we're looking at it now on the screen. Very
42 good. Thank you. Go ahead.

43
44 MR. HUDSON: Do you see the presenter
45 mode or is it the full screen?

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I'm told this is
48 a presenter mode.

49
50 MR. HUDSON: How about that?

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I'm getting a nod that this is good.

MR. HUDSON: Okay, well, my name is Ian Hudson. I'm a member of the Metlakatla Indian Community, and I'm currently working as the fisheries biologist and green crab project manager. I work under Dustin Winter, who is our department director, and alongside Genelle Winter, who's our invasive species director. I appreciate the opportunity to present on the European green crab, which we have been dealing with over the last few years, and there's some concerns for Southeast Alaska. I created this presentation for an out of state conference, but given that we're all here in Southeast, I can just kind of skip through this one. We are in the southern portion of Southeast Alaska, just 15 miles south of Ketchikan. So, European green crab originated in the United States in the 1800s on the East Coast, through ballast water. They transported to the West coast of the United States in the late 80s through the seafood trade. And since then, they've been slowly creeping north up the coast following the different currents. They're extremely resilient, invasive species that can tolerate wide ranges of salinity, temperatures. They reproduce rapidly. Each female can produce up to 200,000 eggs per year, and they're highly aggressive, and they occupy the same areas of our culturally important subsistence species, such as Dungeness crabs and a European green crab. A large adult is the same size as a juvenile Dungee, and so they will outcompete that Dungee.

Here's an overview of our monitoring timeline and what we've experienced. In 2020 we received funding from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission through NOAA, and this is when we were able to first gather some supplies to do some monitoring. 2020 also coincides with Haida Gwaii, they identified the first adult male -- or adult green crab in Haida Gwaii in July of 2020. and in 2021 we started monitoring, we did eDNA testing, we did trapping, and that resulted in no crabs. In 2022, this is when the first arrived, almost exactly two years from Haida Gwaii receiving green crab. And since then, we have pretty much been intensively trapping and monitoring Annette Island Reserve for European green crab. And this last summer in 2024, we found new areas on Annette Island and also off Annette Island. And so, it means there's some expansion happening.

1
2 So, our methods, the simplest way to
3 monitor would be to do a molt walk. Crabs molt multiple
4 times per year, and they wash up onto the high tide mark
5 and so just doing short 20-minute surveys can indicate
6 if a species is present or absent in that area. We've
7 also done extensive eDNA sampling around the island to
8 attempt to see if any green crab DNA appears in the
9 water. If we have confirmation through either eDNA or
10 Molt walks, we began prospect trapping where we deploy
11 traps, monitor them every day, record every species
12 that's in the traps to get some baseline data and if a
13 green crab is discovered, we move on to full on removal
14 trapping, where we have traps deployed every day of the
15 week. They're checked every day, rebaited every day, and
16 from that we take the green crabs that we receive. We
17 freeze them, we measure them, and then we dispose of
18 them through composting at the community garden. In
19 2021, these are the sampling locations that were
20 conducted. We also conducted surveying off island south
21 towards Duke, Percy's. Just to see if anything was
22 further south than Annette Island. And Tamgas was the
23 main focus. Tamgas Bay is a huge subsistence area for
24 the Community of Metlakatla. It has extensive eelgrass
25 beds. It's a big Dungeness crab supply. It's got lots
26 of cockles, clams, and so this was the biggest concern
27 for the community of Metlakatla and in 2021 we -- there
28 was no presence found.

29
30 In 2022 almost to the day, two years
31 from when Haida Gwaii, just west of Skidegate identified
32 the first European green crab. We found carapace and
33 immediately set traps within Tamgas Harbor, and this
34 resulted in the first five live green crabs. And what's
35 interesting is the first year that was -- green crabs
36 were identified, the ratio of males to females was
37 actually nearly 1 to 1 which is interesting moving
38 forward because this ratio has fluctuated throughout the
39 years. I forgot to mention, DeAnna said that this
40 presentation is on page 167, in the supplemental
41 materials, and there's actually two slides that are not
42 in there that I've added since that I will mention. In
43 2023, this was the largest single season catch rate.
44 There was over 2,000 crabs caught total. This year there
45 was twice as many males as females, which is interesting
46 and most of this was all still concentrated within Tamgas
47 Harbor. There was a collaborative workshop with a bunch
48 of stakeholders from Southeast Alaska. I think there was
49 33 individuals from 8 different organizations that were
50 able to come to Metlakatla and get some hands-on

1 experience with trapping and what it looks like or what
2 it might look like in their community.

3
4 In 2023, we sent samples of some of the
5 genetics to Carolyn Tepolt, who is a PhD at Woods Hole
6 Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts. And her
7 specialty is doing green crab genetics. And so, the
8 results from this was very interesting. These graphics
9 are kind of a little bit hard to read, but baseline is
10 that the green crabs that are arriving in Alaska have
11 multiple genetic sources, likely both from Washington
12 and British Columbia, which means that we are getting a
13 green crab that is becoming more adaptable to the colder
14 temperature waters in Southeast Alaska, which is a
15 concern moving forward because they might be able to
16 persist further north than they've ever been recorded.

17
18 So, last summer, we started conducting
19 more extensive trapping. We started collecting a lot
20 more data. In a two-month span, we checked nearly 5,000
21 traps, used nearly 3500 pounds of bait. But the good
22 sign is that our eradication efforts have been working.
23 This species has never been successfully eradicated
24 anywhere it's been established, but it has been
25 controlled and in the areas in Tamgas that we trapped
26 in 2023, we saw 75% reduction in population in 2024,
27 which means that the effort and financial funding has
28 been working to control this species and areas where
29 we saw it last year. Looking at this graph, we have an
30 outlier, which is the green spike in September. This was
31 a new area on the southern portion of the island, which
32 is the Point Davidson Salt Chuck and I have a slide that
33 will address that more specifically. But without that,
34 it would have been a huge reduction in numbers.

35
36 In June of last summer, we worked -- our
37 Department of Fish and Wildlife worked in partnership
38 with Alaska Sea Grant. Ginny Eckert, had University of
39 Alaska intern students as well as Metlakatla high school
40 students and we went to Bostwick Inlet, which is just
41 west of Annette Island. Also, a very important
42 subsistence area. And on that day, we found 13 green
43 crab carapaces, which spurred our department to use our
44 aquatic research permit and set traps in Bostwick Inlet.
45 And this resulted in the first two live crabs that were
46 caught off of Annette Island in the State of Alaska,
47 which also resulted in a rapid response by the Alaska
48 Department of Fish and Wildlife and Tammy Davis. She
49 went into Bostwick on two separate occasions for a week

1 each time and was able to remove 34 green crabs from
2 Bostwick.

3
4 This is the Point Davidson Salt Chuck,
5 this is located in the, like I said, the southern part,
6 it has a very narrow entrance. But last summer was an
7 El Niño year, which meant warmer ocean conditions. And
8 so, we believe that they funneled into this salt chuck,
9 which is very protected, calm, perfect conditions, very
10 mucky. And within a week period, we were able to remove
11 nearly a thousand European green crab young of the year
12 by hand removal. So, we found that the most effective
13 way to remove these crabs was actually going out in
14 waders, looking in the water and picking them up by
15 hand. The traps didn't work as well because they were
16 so small. These ranged from anywhere from 8 to 40mm. But
17 since then, we went from over 100 crab per day to less
18 than 20. So, they were becoming harder and harder to
19 find, which means that the effort put forth was working.

20
21 This is a slide that is not in the
22 supplement. I just think it's important to point out
23 that last year we started recording color using these
24 paint swatches, and the name European green crab can be
25 sort of misleading because they're not always green.
26 They can be very orangey and red, and these orange and
27 red ones tend to be the females. And from some research,
28 it appears that females that appear more red or orange
29 are putting more energy into reproducing than molting
30 and growing. And so, most of the gravid females, which
31 have a clutch of eggs, are normally these red orange
32 crabs.

33
34 On July 19th, this was the first day
35 that European green crab were discovered in the State
36 of Alaska. And so, we found an opportunity to create a
37 Green Crab Awareness Day. I know there's several other
38 communities in Southeast Alaska that are making this day
39 a part of their community as well. I know Petersburg did
40 last year just to raise more awareness. In Southeast
41 Alaska a lot of people are out on the beaches either
42 combing or just on a hike, and it's important that
43 everyone has a part in monitoring for the species. So,
44 an all year's recap we've got just under 4400 European
45 Green Crab total since 2022. If it wasn't for the Salt
46 Chuck last year, that which accounted for 75% of the
47 catch, we would have had giantly [sic] reduced numbers.
48 It's just going to take continued persistent effort to
49 manage the species to where it's not damaging
50 communities. On the East coast in Canada, they went a

1 period where they did zero monitoring of green crab, and
2 they saw 90% reductions in eelgrass populations, and
3 once they started managing the species, they started
4 rebounding up to 50%.

5
6 A big component is trying to involve the
7 youth and get them more aware. I spent the last six
8 years teaching high school science at Metlakatla High
9 School, and so student outreach is something that I have
10 passion for. We involved both students from Ketchikan
11 High School and they actually chose to do their Ocean
12 Bowl project on European green crab, and I believe they
13 won state for that, which was super awesome to have them
14 over here getting hands on experience and creating a
15 passion for trying to monitor invasive species. We also
16 worked with the Metlakatla High School woodshop to build
17 these experimental passive traps that were designed by
18 Todd Gray down in Tulalip and students were able to
19 create these in the woodshop class and then go out into
20 the field, deploy them and check them to get them some
21 hands-on experience.

22
23 Some of the concerns if we look at this
24 map that is produced by shorezone.org, they actually
25 have floatplane filming of all these areas, and the green
26 is indicating susceptible habitat for green crab. And
27 if I were to expand this map further north up the
28 panhandle, it looks pretty similar. It's -- Southeast
29 Alaska has a lot of habitat that is conducive to European
30 green crabs, and within a two year period, they traveled
31 130 miles from where they were found in Haida Gwaii to
32 Annette Island. And so now it's already been two years
33 since we've discovered them. So, they potentially could
34 be 130 miles north and creeping as we go. And so, Cordova
35 has very susceptible habitat as well and they could be
36 there within the next 6 to 7 years. We just don't really
37 know. These crabs can travel 80 days in the larval stage
38 and ocean currents and these currents are pushing
39 further north.

40
41 This was another slide that's not in the
42 supplement, but I thought it was important to note that
43 all of these yellow pins are areas where European green
44 crabs have been confirmed by ADF&G. Mostly all of these
45 were by residents that sent in a picture of a carapace
46 that they found, and they were confirmed to be European
47 green crab. And if you look at the susceptible habitat,
48 all of these pins perfectly coincide with one of these
49 green markings. And so, a lot of these areas have been
50 left unmonitored. Southeast Alaska is huge. We have a

1 lot of coastline and so, it's going to be challenging
2 to figure out where these are occupying. Bostwick, as
3 you can see, is a red one and Tamgas Harbor is a red
4 one. These are the only two areas that actually have
5 confirmed European green crab presence that are live.
6

7 So, what's next for Metlakatla
8 Department of Fish and Wildlife? We received some more
9 funding to do some telemetry research, which is
10 basically monitoring the daily movements of the green
11 crab to further understand how they interact with
12 Dungeness and red rocks and other important species that
13 are Native to our communities. We also want to look at
14 the genetic contents of their stomachs and to see what
15 their diets are. There's been studies done in
16 Washington, and these European green crabs are very
17 opportunistic feeders. And so, depending on what's in
18 their area, they have different diets. And so, it's
19 important to know in Southeast Alaska what they're
20 primarily preying on. And thank you for the opportunity
21 to give you guys an update. Just a huge shout out to all
22 of our fish techs that make all this work possible. This
23 is a lot of manual physical labor during the summer and
24 the height of the season. It's nearly five miles hiking
25 on the beaches every day, carrying buckets of bait,
26 checking traps. And so, it's a lot of effort. And so, a
27 huge shout out to our team here at Metlakatla Department
28 of Fish and Wildlife. Thank you.
29

30 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ian.
31 We'll probably have some questions here from the
32 Council. I see some hands going up. Mike and then Ted.
33

34 MR. DOUVILLE: Okay. I was -- my first
35 question is what kind of depth, are you just looking at
36 mudflats and stuff? Have you tried out deeper water to
37 see if they're there in deeper water? You know, we can
38 get Dungeness down to 100 fathoms. So, that's my first
39 question.
40

41 MR. HUDSON: Yeah, that's a great
42 question. When we've set pots deeper, we tend to catch
43 larger, more mature Dungeness and red rock crabs. And
44 it's been shown that red rock crabs will actually prey
45 on the European green crabs. And so, if we're seeing
46 larger crabs in our pots, we know we're too deep because
47 the European green crabs are going to move out of that
48 area into shallower waters where there's more crabs that
49 are similar size to they are.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Follow up.
2 Mike.

3
4 MR. DOUVILLE: Yeah. How many fathoms are
5 you talking about? At your deepest depths for research.

6
7 MR. HUDSON: So, depending on the tides,
8 if we don't get a large -- say, it's greater than six
9 feet, then we'll have to use a skiff to check. But we're
10 typically in areas where the pots are just barely still
11 in the water when we check them on the beach. So, very
12 shallow tidal zones.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: One more follow
15 up.

16
17 MR. DOUVILLE: This is more of a comment.
18 We have medicine out on the West coast that takes care
19 of green crabs. It's called sea otter, so we can't even
20 get Dungeness. So, so at this point, I don't think they'd
21 survive very well, as we do have thousands of otters,
22 and we cannot harvest crab until we get down like past
23 45 fathoms to get at least on the west side of the
24 island. So, I mean, they're just crabs that really don't
25 exist and even subsistence quantities in most of our
26 areas. Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
29 Ted, do you have a question?

30
31 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, questions and
32 comments. Thank you. Ted Sandhofer from Petersburg. Hey,
33 Ian, great presentation. Really enjoyed that. First of
34 all, to thank you and your tribe for doing this work.
35 It's very important. I know the communities north of you
36 are very interested in this issue, and we're pulling for
37 you. You talked about funding, and you had some funding
38 to do some additional work. Do you have enough funding
39 to continue your efforts in future years?

40
41 MR. HUDSON: We have several more years
42 of funding. We're just hoping it doesn't go away. I
43 think the most important part is the initial funding to
44 get all your traps and stuff set up. But, you know,
45 baits a continual expense, having seasonal technicians
46 is a continual expense. And so, moving forward, we hope
47 to keep receiving funding. I think that's a huge aspect
48 for what the state needs is more funding in these
49 communities.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Follow up Ted.

2

3 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Just follow up,
4 Ian. So, so in the future, if you do have issues with
5 funding, make sure you come let us know, because we
6 definitely do what we can to encourage, you know, these
7 efforts to keep going. Thanks, Ian.

8

9 MR. HUDSON: Thank you, I appreciate it.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else for
12 the question, comments?

13

14 (No response)

15

16 Okay, I'm not seeing anybody, so -- oh,
17 Frank. Go ahead, Frank.

18

19 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
20 think I saw one up at Hoonah, but I didn't know what it
21 was. And are there any predators, I mean, that these
22 little things eat and is it edible? Because I -- like
23 the ones that you shown are pretty small, and, you know,
24 so do they have some kind of -- some natural -- someone
25 that likes to eat them?

26

27 MR. HUDSON: It's. Yeah, otters was
28 mentioned, but I think otters start preying on them when
29 everything else has been kind of wiped out. That's kind
30 of been the situation in California. Red rock crabs do
31 prey on them, but I think the European green crabs will
32 move into areas where the red rocks aren't as comfortable
33 going. They are edible. We cooked them up for our Green
34 Crab Day last year. It's just like you said, they're
35 small. It's kind of like a little tapas appetizer. It
36 tastes just fine and good, but you'd have to get into a
37 lot of them to get any sort of sustenance. I think the
38 most efficient way to use them would be to boil them
39 down and make seafood stock.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any other
42 questions? I have one myself. You mentioned that just
43 the green coloration wasn't a good positive
44 identification. What would be the best way to identify
45 a green crab?

46

47 MR. HUDSON: So, I should have put that
48 on my slides. That's my fault. But on their carapace,
49 which is their top shell, in the middle they have these
50 three little round nodes and then on each side of those

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1 nodes there's five distinct spikes. Dungeness have a
2 whole shell that's wrapped in those little spikes. But
3 the green crabs have a very distinct five, three, five
4 pattern.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. That's --
7 that sounds pretty positive. So, thanks. I don't know
8 if there's any other questions around the table,
9 somebody on the phone actually called in with a question.
10 So, I'll ask you that. They ask if there is any green
11 crabs have been found along the Alaska Peninsula yet?

12
13 MR. HUDSON: No, there has not been. The
14 Kachemak Bay Research Reserve has actually been
15 monitoring for the last, I want to say, close to 20
16 years for green crabs. And there's also other areas, I
17 believe, on the Aleutians that have done some
18 monitoring, and they have not found anything yet. So,
19 that's a good sign.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: It's good to hear
22 they're monitoring though. Any other questions around
23 the table?

24
25 (No response)

26
27 Okay. Not seeing any. So, thank you for
28 your presentation, Ian. I appreciate the work you're
29 doing down there in Metlakatla.

30
31 MR. HUDSON: Thank you for the
32 opportunity, I appreciate it.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. It might be
35 a good time to take a short break here. And when we come
36 back, we'll have the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
37 Subsistence Division report. Let's make it a -- let's
38 make it a ten-minute break. Come back at 10:35.

39
40 (Off record)

41
42 (On record)

43
44 MS. PERRY: Good morning, everyone. This
45 is the Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
46 meeting. The Council members are taking their seats to
47 start once more. And I would just remind everyone in the
48 room, if you haven't signed in at the sign-in table,
49 please do so. That helps us keep track of who is
50 attending the meetings and also helps us with correct

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1 spelling in the transcripts. We'll be starting shortly.
2 Thank you.

3

4

(Pause)

5

6

7

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Hey, Council
members, if you want to get back to your seats, get
started here in just a minute. Is everybody ready?

8

9

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14

Okay. Next up in agency reports is
Alaska Department of Fish and Game subsistence Division.
So, looks like you're at the table ready to go. So, go
ahead.

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MS. DOLL: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
Council members. For the record, my name is Emily Doll,
and I work for the Division of Subsistence as the lead
researcher for Southeast. I'm joined by Molly Brown, and
we will offer a brief update on the Division's current
Southeast projects. First, the Klawock In-season
Subsistence Sockeye Harvest monitoring project is
entering its third and final year. This is a
collaborative project between ADF&G, Klawock Cooperative
Association and Kai Environmental. This project aims to
provide subsistence salmon harvest estimates for the
Klawock Lake system and increase participation in the
Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Permit program this summer.
KCA surveyors will complete the final season of data
collection. Once data collection and analysis is
complete, a final report will be produced and available
by February of 2026.

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The Ice Strait Harvest project is also
in its third and final year, and the data collection
phase of this project is complete. This project has three
main objectives. First, to produce reliable estimates
of the harvest and use of wild resources for the 2023
study year by residents of Gustavus, Tenakee Springs and
Pelican. Second, to record the geographic extent of
search and harvest areas for wild resources by residents
of these three communities. And third, to document
observations of subsistence harvesting practices,
harvest trends, and areas used for subsistence
activities over time. For the Icy Strait communities of
Gustavus, Tenakee Springs, and Pelican, household
comprehensive surveys were conducted in the spring of
2024, and key respondent interviews were conducted in
the fall of 2024. Next month, Molly and I will present
preliminary data at community meetings in Gustavus,
Tenakee Springs and Pelican for community review and

1 feedback. Once data analysis is complete, a report will
2 be produced and available by February of 2026. And before
3 I hand it over to Molly, I just wanted to acknowledge
4 Council members Phillips and Casipit. We just wanted to
5 thank you both for your contributions to this project,
6 and we just really appreciate the time you took with us
7 and the knowledge you shared. So, now I'll hand it to
8 Molly.

9
10 MR. BROWN: For the record, my name is
11 Molly Brown, and I also work for the Division of
12 Subsistence. I want to echo Emily's thanks to Council
13 members Casipit and Phillips. We really appreciate all
14 of your help and expertise and thank you so much for
15 your collaboration. The Keex' Kwáan Community Forest
16 Partnership is another project of ours that's in its
17 last year. The goal of the project is to produce reliable
18 estimates of the harvest and use of wild resources by
19 Kake residents and also include a description of roads
20 and lands that are used. Emily and I traveled to Kake
21 in October of 2024, in order to conduct a community data
22 review, and a final report will be available by June of
23 2025. And as most of our projects in Southeast are in
24 their final years we've also been working on proposals
25 for future projects. We submitted a proposal that would
26 focus on fish harvest and use patterns on Prince of
27 Wales Island to the 2024 FRMP call for proposals. And
28 this -- the goal of the proposal and of the project is
29 to gather information about the harvest and use of salmon
30 and non-salmon fish in four different Prince of Wales
31 communities, through surveys, interviews and mapping.
32 Those four communities are Coffman Cove, Naukati Bay,
33 Thorne Bay and Hollis. No new projects were funded during
34 the 2024 call, and the proposal has been submitted for
35 consideration of a possible fiscal year 2025 start. And
36 we're also currently working on two more proposals that
37 we will be able to share more about at future meetings.
38 And lastly, I would like to also mention that the
39 Division maintains a partnership with the Sitka Tribe
40 of Alaska and will work with STA for the 2025 Herring
41 Egg Harvest Surveys this year. Thank you.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
44 both. Do we have questions from the Council on these
45 projects? Yeah. Lewis, go ahead.

46
47 MR. HIATT: Lewis Hiatt, Hollis. So, what
48 would you be looking at? Say that again.

1 MS. BROWN: Yeah. So, we would be
2 examining the harvest and use of salmon and non-salmon
3 fish.

4
5 MR. HIATT: I'm in Hollis. Come find me.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any other. Any
8 other questions? Patti, and then Frank.

9
10 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. I just want to
11 thank the department and especially the subsistence
12 division for their outreach to Pelican. It was really
13 well accepted, for the most part. And really good
14 turnout. And I'm really pleased with that. And we're
15 looking forward to their community outreach with their
16 results. So, thank you for coming to Pelican.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
19 Patti. And Frank, questions or comment?

20
21 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
22 mentioned that you were going to be doing surveys for
23 the herring in Sitka this year. So, what would your
24 survey consist of?

25
26 MS. DOLL: Yeah, this is an ongoing
27 project with STA. The herring survey -- surveys
28 harvesters, and we ask questions about the quality of
29 harvest, the quantity and how available it was to share.
30 And it is a survey -- it's STA survey and we just assist
31 them. So, this year's survey will be the same as years
32 past. I believe that it's been maybe 13 years, a little
33 bit longer since we've been in this survey. And I'd be
34 happy to share some of that data if you're interested.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else
37 with questions, Cal?

38
39 MR. CASIPIT: Not so much a question, but
40 a comment and thanks. It has been -- it had been a long
41 time as far as the household surveys for Gustavus. And
42 I wanted to thank you guys for picking that up and making
43 sure that we got some more recent data for Gustavus and
44 the use of wild, renewable resources. And I do appreciate
45 you guys coming. And hope to see you there again, even
46 if you're not working. So -- and I do appreciate spending
47 time with you guys and talking with you guys and it was
48 great, great having you in town. So, thanks.

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any other
2 Council members with a question or a comment?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Yeah, I don't think so. So, thank you,
7 Emily and Molly.....

8
9 MS. DOLL: Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ:for all
12 that information to us. Thanks for the survey work that
13 you do out there in our communities as well, appreciate
14 it. Okay. Just a second, I'll see if there's somebody
15 on the phone.

16
17 (Pause)

18
19 Yeah. We've got, you know, people on the
20 phones that want to give reports as well. So, I think
21 we're trying to bring somebody up here. There's also a
22 -- some people have appointments and whatnot that they
23 can't be here necessarily when their slot comes up. So,
24 we're just checking to see if somebody is available.
25 Yes. Okay. We have somebody from the National Park
26 Service ready for a report.

27
28 MS. COHEN: Yes. Hello, Mr. Chair, this
29 is Amber Cohen from Wrangell-St. Elias. Can you hear me?

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Yeah. Go
32 ahead, Amber.

33
34 MS. COHEN: Okay, great. I'm happy my
35 Teams is working today. Thanks everyone and thank you
36 to the Council. I'm going to be providing a relatively
37 short report from Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
38 Preserve, and I'm calling in from Copper Center. Wish I
39 was with you all though, in Sitka. And the report starts
40 on page 155 of your meeting books. Our report starts off
41 with an interpretation and education update. We are in
42 the planning phases for this upcoming summer, but our
43 education and interpretation staff are looking forward
44 to going to Yakutat for two youth events, one being
45 Oceans Week and the other being the Tern Festival, and
46 these are really exciting events for our staff up here
47 in Copper Center to be able to go down to Yakutat and
48 make connections with the community and with the local
49 youth, and more information will be coming as we figure
50 out what our summer schedule and season looks like. And

1 I'll also provide an update about how those events went
2 in your fall meeting later on this year.

3
4 The second update that we have is on the
5 Sit' Tlein research. We had scientists from the NPS,
6 University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Arizona,
7 and University of Montana that completed all fieldwork
8 that was associated with a three-year project that
9 studied the recent and ongoing changes in the dynamics
10 of Sit' Tlein, recently known as Malaspina Glacier.
11 Based on field data collected so far, preliminary
12 results and model outputs appear to confirm the
13 project's hypothesis that Tlein is on the cusp of a
14 major retreat. In addition to last year's publication
15 of a surficial geology map, and you can see the link
16 there, the research group also has a new publication in
17 press, which is called The Demise of the World's Largest
18 Piedmont Glacier: A probabilistic Forecast, which used
19 collected data and computer models to predict the pace
20 of retreat for the piedmont lobe of the glacier. And
21 looking at that, it's looking at about 150 years for
22 that retreat. More publications are coming, and the best
23 contact for that information would be our Parks
24 geologist Michael Loso and Martin Truffer, who is at the
25 University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

26
27 Our next update is connected to that
28 project, actually, but on a more anthropology-
29 ethnography lens, and that's our coastal, ethnographic
30 and cultural landscape project. This builds on research
31 that was done by anthropologist Frederica de Laguna and
32 also the National Park Service funded a ethnographic
33 overview and assessment for Yakutat. And from those
34 recommendations and that research, we have secured
35 additional funding for a project that would document the
36 places and resources that connect Eyak and Yakutat-
37 Tlingit people to the Wrangell-St. Elias coastline. And
38 that's about 122 miles of culturally and spiritually
39 significant environment and landscape. Two years ago,
40 we started meeting with the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe to
41 discuss project logistics, and over the past two years,
42 we have continued to meet with both YTT and the Native
43 Village of Eyak, and we're looking forward to getting
44 started on that project. We're just sort of waiting on
45 financial assistance and some funding updates. But once
46 we do get started with that, the main goals of our
47 project is to go out and do site visits, interviews with
48 elders, some talking circles both in Cordova and in
49 Yakutat that would bring elders from both places
50 together to talk about landscape change, and then

1 opportunities for knowledge transfer between elders and
2 youth in both Cordova and in Yakutat. So, we're excited
3 for this project, and it connects with Mike Loso and
4 Martin Truffer first project in that there's a lot of
5 uncertainty on what the coastline is going to look like
6 in the future due to climate warming and glacier melt,
7 and so there are places that are important to be
8 documented that may be lost; Wwe're just really unsure.
9 And the best contact for that project would be myself
10 or my supervisor, Barbara Cellarius, as both of us are
11 anthropologists at Wrangell-St. Elias.
12

13 The next update is on some wildlife work
14 that we're going to hopefully be doing this spring. In
15 early May, NPS staff will look for wolf scat to evaluate
16 diets along remote beaches in the Esker Stream area of
17 the Malaspina Forlands. That would include natural
18 resources staff from Wrangell-St. Elias, but also NPS
19 Ocean Alaska Science and Learning Center staff. And
20 they're going to look at wolf diet along the Malaspina
21 Glacier coastline. This work is part of a larger project
22 that's going on across multiple Park units that we'll
23 look at Katmai, Lake Clark, and Glacier Bay as well.
24 Wolf surveys and wolf scat samples will be collected for
25 genetic analysis to determine the type of species. So,
26 whether it's wolf or coyote, along with primary dietary
27 sources. Genetic analysis can determine dietary sources,
28 such as the species of the large mammal that was
29 consumed. So, like a moose, a species of the small
30 mammals consumed, and then freshwater fish, marine fish
31 and salmon. So, the idea is to get an understanding of
32 what is being consumed by wolves or by coyotes out there
33 on the Forelands. This wildlife work will also focus on
34 conducting a shorebird population survey, because this
35 area is potentially a critical stopover site for spring
36 migration. Shorebirds will also be captured, and body
37 tissues will be collected to evaluate relationships
38 between microplastic presence and quantity on
39 physiological health metrics. And one example would be
40 looking at stress hormone levels of shorebirds along the
41 coastal portions of Wrangell-St. Elias.
42

43 And then finally, our park generally has
44 about 20 to 30 research projects that take place every
45 year. There are 4 projects that are listed here in the
46 report. Three of them I believe I introduced at your
47 fall meeting and we do have one new one, which is the
48 4th, and this is a recent publication that came out
49 that's about the about Sit' Kusá or Turner Glacier. And
50 basically, look at -- looks at a surge glacier surge at

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1 Turner Glacier. So, that is what I have for you and I'm
2 happy to answer any questions you might have.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
5 very much. A lot of research going on there in the
6 Wrangell-St. Elias, do we have any questions, comments
7 from Council members? Yeah, a couple. Cal, then Patti.

8

9 MR. CASIPIT: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 I wanted to say something about your project number three
11 there. The cultural and ethnocultural landscape between
12 Eyak and Yakutat. I've always been fascinated by that.
13 I'm trying to remember when it was, but I remember many,
14 many years ago Bert Adams and Rob Heinrichs was -- and
15 I was in her vehicle and we were going down the Copper
16 River highway, and we were just passing the upper
17 Alaganak, and we were just getting to McKinley Lake. And
18 Rob Heinrich said, pull over here. And we pulled over
19 and he and Burt got out and started talking about this
20 particular location as being a place where the Yakutat-
21 Tlingit and the Eyaks came to some sort of peace treaty,
22 I guess. And they were talking about what happened in
23 this location. It was and it was just fascinating. And
24 it's kind of a bummer, you know, we've lost moose and
25 Rob Heinrichs, and you know, Bert is in the Pioneer Home
26 up north, but yeah, that was a fascinating discussion.
27 And if that can all be documented and stuff that it's
28 awesome. So, I compliment you on taking up that work.

29

30 MS. COHEN: Thank you. Member Casipit,
31 we're really excited to get started with this work and
32 we also think it's really important. And those
33 connections fascinate us and also fascinate the Native
34 Village of Eyak and the Yakutat-Tlingit Tribe. We have
35 a lot of support and yeah, we're just excited to get
36 started.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. And Patti.

39

40 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. I noticed that,
41 well, in like one and three, you show that your research
42 is in working with youth and with the tribal communities
43 in Native Village of Eyak and Yakutat-Tlingit. But I was
44 wondering, like on the two versus Sit' Tlein research
45 and four, which is Coastal Wolf and Shoreline Survey.
46 Are you working -- are you building in tribal capacity
47 into that research?

48

49 MS. COHEN: Through the Chair. Thank you
50 for that question. I think that -- I know I can speak

1 confidently on number two and less confidently on number
2 four. But for number two, I know that particularly Dr.
3 Loso and Dr. Truffer have worked with Yakutat-Tlingit
4 Tribe and have worked with them, particularly on looking
5 at LiDAR and enhancing that with the tribe. So, yes, for
6 the geology work, for the wildlife work, I'm not
7 confident that I can answer that, but I will say that's
8 a really great avenue for us to look into and for our
9 wildlife biologists to work into. So, I will pass that
10 on to him. And I think that's a great thing to point
11 out.

12

13 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
16 Patti. Anybody else? John.

17

18 MR. SMITH: I'd just like to add a little
19 bit to what Calvin was saying about the history of the
20 river and the area Mount St. Elias, and in that peace
21 treaty. I'm Kaagwaantaan, Chookaneidí, Eagle Nest and I
22 know Harvey's not here right now but, I know a lot about
23 that history. Now more through the books. And I really
24 like that book that you were sharing about Mount St.
25 Elias. There's a lot of good history in there that's
26 shared today. And through oral history. You know
27 Harvey's dad -- Kitka's father is a great uncle of mine
28 and used to share a lot of this history. And definitely
29 would like to share some of that oral history to add to
30 maybe it might be a positive connection. And what I'm
31 thinking of is the -- during that time, many generations
32 ago, the ice was pushing a lot of people around in
33 different areas, and there was a lot of wars that were
34 happening. And, and I know our Kaagwaantaan people had
35 to come and secure some of our areas and went and run a
36 lot of the families back to their area, into the Copper
37 River. So, just like in many wars and battles that you
38 take their flag and that's where the crying wolf, that
39 would post that we have is actually not a Tlingit post.
40 It's a different ethnicity to where we actually took
41 their flag and took their land and their -- so, it's a
42 kind of a negative kind of thing, but it's like, it's,
43 you know, our history and definitely would like to share
44 some of that oral with you folks. Happy day. Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
47 Anybody else? Not seeing anybody. Thank you, Amber, for
48 your report. It's all very interesting.

49

50

1 MS. COHEN: All right. Thank you so much,
2 everyone.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Next up, we have
5 the Forest Service. First is special actions report from
6 Rob Cross, and then Rob is also going to stay up for the
7 next one as well, looks like.

8
9 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the
10 record, my name is Rob Cross with the Forest Service.
11 And since the fall meeting when we met last, the Tongass
12 has taken one fisheries emergency special action, three
13 wildlife emergency special actions, and one wildlife
14 temporary special action. And then public hearings and
15 tribal consultations were held prior to the temporary
16 special actions. So, district one, hooligan has been
17 closed again, this year prior to the season due to
18 ongoing conservation concerns, but the Unuk River
19 remains open with limited subsistence harvests, and
20 that's the five-gallon limit per household that we've
21 had for the past couple of years. Unit 4 mountain goats
22 continue to be managed closely on Baranof Island and in
23 partnership with ADF&G through in-season management of
24 small harvest zones. And so, after we met last at the
25 end of the 2024 season, we closed the Upper Blue Lake,
26 Whale Bay and Necker Bay and the Bare Mountain zones
27 after the quotas were met. Additionally, a temporary
28 special action was issued to set a 31-day trapping season
29 for Unit 2 wolves after a consultation was held with
30 ADF&G. And I just want to note that the next presentation
31 is going to be on the subsistence dashboard, but the
32 goat and moose wildlife in-season management actions can
33 all be viewed, on the Tongass subsistence dashboard that
34 can be viewed both the pertinent information as far as
35 season end dates, the closure actions and then there's
36 a map of the in-season management actions with the
37 regulatory boundaries. And that concludes my
38 presentation.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.
41 Questions on the special actions taken this year?

42
43 (No response)

44
45 Okay. Maybe a question on the Unuk.
46 What's happening up there this year as far as monitoring
47 who's doing it this year and what kind of an effort do
48 we have?

49
50

1 MR. CROSS: Mr. Chair. So, it continues
2 to be the Ketchikan Indian Community and the Forest
3 Service. And then we also, we've been working with
4 Meredith Pochardt out of the Chilkoot Indian
5 Association. She's been running the hooligan monitoring
6 using environmental DNA sampling up in the northern
7 Southeast. So, it's a northern Southeast hooligan
8 monitoring project and so we've -- the Forest Service
9 district staff down in Ketchikan and KIC have been
10 working with Meredith to try to expand any possibility
11 of using eDNA versus the sort of river like stream
12 sidewalks that we've been doing in the past, which is
13 really the best effort that we've been able to do, but
14 try to add more of a quantitative measure to the
15 sampling. And so, for this year it was a bit of a rocky
16 start trying to get out there. But we've switched over
17 to doing primarily flight-based surveys. And so, they're
18 flying out taking note of any additional predators that
19 are out there as far as whether the hooligans have shown
20 up or not. They have -- and then landing as close to the
21 river as they can and taking water samples for the eDNA
22 and then continuing to do the site surveys. Because
23 eventually we'd like to index the site surveys to the
24 quantitative eDNA.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
27 Rob. Any other questions? Patti.

28
29 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
30 What is eDNA?

31
32 MR. CROSS: I was really hoping you
33 weren't going to ask me that. So. Okay, you're going to
34 get an elementary school explanation of what it is. So,
35 essentially what they're doing is they're taking water
36 samples and looking for -- well, there's a couple
37 different ways you can do it. You can do presence or
38 absence of a species based off of DNA profiles. And so,
39 they send the water samples in and then, you know, in
40 some of the studies that we do, it's really just a
41 presence absence. Like there are green crab here or there
42 are pink salmon in this system. What they've done for
43 the northern Southeast hooligan project is take it one
44 step further, and you can actually quantify the amount
45 of hooligan DNA that's in that water sample. And so, in
46 that particular case, for the systems that they started
47 working on, they were using mark recapture with fyke
48 nets. And so, they had their own study going on to
49 quantify the amount of eDNA -- or the amount of hooligan
50 that are in the system. And then as a secondary effort,

1 they were looking at the amount of DNA that was in the
2 water through eDNA. And then they were able to match
3 those up and validate, you know, those two types of
4 surveys, obviously the eDNA being the less intensive,
5 better option. And so, in the case of the Unuk, as with
6 all things Unuk, it gets a little bit more complicated
7 because that system is super braided and silted, and so
8 water samples can be a little bit more difficult. And
9 then we don't have the ability or the means at this
10 point to do a mark recapture study. So, that's where
11 bringing Meredith in and the district staff and also our
12 partners at KIC to try to figure out what it means when
13 we get this amount of DNA in the water. And so, it might
14 just turn out to be an index and we can say that this
15 year it seemed to be a better run than last year. And
16 it might be able to go so far as quantifying how many
17 fish we think actually return to the system. And that
18 Meredith might be screaming at me right now somewhere,
19 but that's my best understanding of it.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Rob.
22 Follow up Patti. And then, Frank.

23
24 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
25 So, we hear that hooligan are -- may have some straying
26 not always. They are kind of pretty -- go to the same
27 place like the Unuk, but sometimes they stray to other
28 systems. Is there study for that?

29
30 MR. CROSS: So, as we would
31 overcomplicate it in the science world, we would say
32 that they have low-site fidelity and that's, that's
33 pretty common with hooligan. You know, I don't know how
34 much we really know about how far they're straying from
35 the Unuk River, but it's a bit of a cat and mouse game,
36 as I understand it, with the folks that are on the
37 district and trying to do the observations is sometimes
38 they'll show up to one particular slough, and then other
39 times they're all the way across the flats on another
40 slough. I've also heard speculation, and I can't verify
41 it or not, that some of the Carroll Inlet fish may
42 potentially be part of that group of fish that are coming
43 back to that area. And so that's definitely something
44 that we've been trying to figure out. I'm not sure how
45 close we are to figuring it out, but I know just in
46 talking to the field staff, it really is a cat and mouse
47 game where they're like, oh, they were all in hooligan
48 slough last time, and now they're all the way over here
49 and then now they're up in the landing slough. And so
50 that's an additional confounding factor to trying to

1 take quantitative eDNA or you know, I guess more so to
2 have one of those fyke net, mark recapture studies, we
3 could set it all up on one of the streams or one of the
4 braided sections, and then they could show up to another
5 one, and then we're kind of at a loss.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And, Frank, do
8 you have a question?

9

10 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You
11 said something -- I think I heard you right. That you
12 can -- through the DNA system, you could tell if there
13 was more fish this year than there was last year. Is
14 that what I heard?

15

16 MR. CROSS: Yes, through the Chair,
17 member Wright. So, where it's been used successfully,
18 they're actually able to tell within a pretty fine margin
19 how many fish came back to that system. And again, where
20 it's been used successfully are the places where they
21 already have something like -- we'll use our sockeye
22 systems for an example where we have a weir, we count
23 the number of fish going through, and then we pair that
24 with the eDNA sampling. Because it can be flow dependent.
25 I mean, if the river starts to surge, then there's
26 obviously less DNA per gallon of water in that situation.
27 And so, it takes quite a bit of honing it in to a
28 particular system to be able to say, based off of this
29 much DNA we know that this many fish are in the system,
30 so it might be that we don't get to that point on the
31 Unuk River. It might just be an index to say that we're
32 relatively certain or more certain than we were just
33 doing the visual counts that we know the trend in that
34 system. And so, at this point, we're kind of -- we're
35 pairing the two up. And so, it's not like we're going
36 to stop doing the visual surveys or the flight surveys.
37 But the hope is at some point we'll have some qualitative
38 data to back up our management on that system.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And follow up. Go
41 ahead, Frank.

42

43 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
44 you can tell there's more fish in this this year than
45 next year. But if I'm thinking right so, it rains really
46 hard and then the system is going full speed and then
47 then your DNAs would be different. Would you be able to
48 do this for salmon too?

49

50

1 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair, member
2 Wright. So, it has been done successfully for salmon.
3 We haven't done it on the Tongass yet, or at least the
4 Forest Service has not. It's certainly been something
5 on our radar that we would like to do. And we've worked
6 with the Forest Service genetic lab to I guess -- the
7 word is escaping me, but essentially to get a marker for
8 what our different species would be. And so originally
9 that was done for presence absence. But we are hoping
10 that at some point we can do the quantitative eDNA.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And, Patti, go
13 ahead.

14
15 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Would you say
16 that there is genetic samples and eDNA on all main
17 hooligan populations in southeast?

18
19 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair, member
20 Phillips. I am not the correct person to answer that. I
21 can look that up for you though, so I don't know. I know
22 that Meredith's work is quite -- and Chilkoot Indian
23 Association is quite extensive through northern
24 Southeast Alaska. I think that it's just kind of making
25 its way down to the Tongass or down to the southern
26 Tongass at this point.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Anybody
29 else?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Hey, Rob, if you want to stay up there
34 and tell us about the subsistence dashboard that you
35 mentioned earlier?

36
37 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think
38 it's going to take a little IT work to get me hooked up
39 here. So, it might be just a couple of minutes. And then
40 I also have Ashley Bolwerk printed out some QR codes
41 that if you guys would like to, you can scan it on your
42 phone and it will take you to the website that I'm going
43 to walk through.

44
45 (Pause)

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. So, looks
48 like you're about ready to go there, Rob. Otherwise,
49 I'll go to somebody else. But looks like you're about
50 set right?

1

2 MR. CROSS: Yes, Mr. Chair, that went a
3 lot faster than I thought it would. It was like a NASCAR
4 pit crew up here, so I appreciate that.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah, like a pit
7 crew. Okay we're ready then. Go ahead.

8

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Okay. There we go. Okay. So, if you scan that QR code that was passed out to you guys, then that will take you to this website and it has a really unfortunate web address. It's just a jumble of letters and numbers, and I don't think GIS lets us pick what the web address is. So, I would highly recommend bookmarking this and sharing it as widely with folks that you think would be interested as possible. But if you scan that, it will take you to the home page here and this has four main pages on it. There's the sockeye harvest and

1 escapement, the wildlife special actions page, the deer
2 harvest page, and then the offline maps and I'll go into
3 each one of those later. And then if you scroll down a
4 little bit further, there's just some general
5 information about the Federal Subsistence Program. We
6 have links to the Office of Subsistence Management
7 website, the Tongass website, my contact information is
8 listed on here and then we have the Facebook page for
9 OSM as well. Okay. So, we'll scroll back up and then
10 we'll start with the sockeye harvest and escapement
11 page. So, the first thing that pops up here is just kind
12 of a notification that the sockeye season, the
13 monitoring season is over at this point and so, this is
14 older data and then it will start to be updated in the
15 spring. We'll just acknowledge that. And then in the
16 upper left of the screen here we have the current
17 cumulative escapement for our two Hydaburg projects. And
18 those are staffed weirs with the Hydaburg Cooperative
19 Association. And then in the middle we have our two
20 Pilot projects for daily escapement updates and so,
21 that's the Redoubt Lake and the Klag Bay projects and
22 Ashley Bolwerk with the Forest Service and Kyle
23 Rosendale with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska, have been doing
24 things with coding that I don't understand. So, if you
25 have follow up questions on that, we can bring Ashley
26 up here. But somehow, they've worked their magic and
27 their daily counts for sockeye at Redoubt and Klag are
28 updated automatically every single day. And so, you
29 know, for obvious reasons, this is really great to see
30 and it helps you track the health of the system for that
31 year, but really kind of a fringe benefit that I wasn't
32 expecting with this is that the more that we share this
33 daily update information, we're hearing that folks --
34 subsistence users are using this for, you know, economy
35 of effort, like nobody wants to go out to a system to
36 go harvest sockeye and spend gas money and risk going
37 across Chatham Strait or out onto West Chich, if there's
38 no fish in the system.

39
40 So, you know, for example, here on
41 Redoubt, you can see probably the 16th was a pretty good
42 day, 17th might not have been the best day to show up,
43 and then it starts to pick up again. So, this is a really
44 cool feature that we have just with these two systems
45 at this point. And we're hoping to expand this and work
46 with some of our other partners to get this on the rest
47 of our staffed fisheries resource monitoring projects.
48 So, it -- I guess one other thing I'll point out is if
49 these graphs don't work for you, you can go over to the
50 tabular data and it's basically an Excel spreadsheet.

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1 I'm not going to test the internet at this point, but
2 it'll show it in tabular form for the year. So, if we
3 scroll down, the map is kind of the meat of this
4 particular page. This map shows the Tongass with all of
5 our past and present fisheries resource monitoring
6 projects. The currently funded ones are green and then
7 the past projects are in red. So, if we click on
8 hopefully the internet works for me here, we click on
9 Cisco Lake then it will give all the pertinent
10 information for that project, so we can see the project
11 manager as a partnership between Angoon Community
12 Association and the Forest Service. Project design is a
13 video weir and then we have the federal regulations or
14 the harvest limits, which for this one are the same as
15 the state personal use fishery, which is 50 and 50. And
16 then if we scroll down a little further, we'll see the
17 -- all the escapement data that we have for this system.
18 And if you hover over these bars, this was the -- kind
19 of the best system that we could come up with for showing
20 this data. But if you hover over the bars, it'll show
21 you the escapement wheel to give you the year and then
22 the escapement for that year. And then if you scroll
23 down further, then it will do the same for harvest for
24 that system. And then I will point out we try to keep
25 this as updated as possible as far as the regulations
26 go. But we do have a little disclaimer on there, and
27 then a link to the federal regulations and the state
28 regulations as well. And then we can click on -- I think
29 this is Cook here. Yeah. So, we can click on one of the
30 prior year projects, one of the projects that aren't
31 currently funded. It'll give you the harvest
32 regulations. And then you can see what activities we did
33 for monitoring. So, it looks like we started monitoring
34 in 2001, and then we have data up to 2017. And then our
35 harvest statistics are a lot more comprehensive for that
36 system.

37
38 So, that's the fisheries page and we'll
39 go back home and then over to the Wildlife Special
40 Actions page. And so, we have special actions maps and
41 just the list of special actions for moose and mountain
42 goat. I'm going to click on mountain goat because it's
43 a little bit more exciting. And then same thing,
44 disclaimer just saying that the seasons are closed and
45 it will start to be updated again August 1st. So, up
46 here on the upper left, we have all of the special
47 actions that were taken for goats on the Tongass in 2024
48 listed. It's all -- has all the pertinent information
49 like the special action type. It was a -- for Lisa Creek
50 here, it was a closure. The special action number, which

1 references the special action documents that are issued,
2 the date that it was issued, the date that it started
3 and then the date that it expires. And if you have no
4 idea where Lisa Creek is, you can click on it, and it
5 will zoom right in to Lisa Creek and it gives you a
6 little bit more information here. So, you can see that
7 the harvest quota was two billies, or one nanny and it
8 looks like in 2024 one nanny was harvested, which
9 triggers a closure. And kind of like the daily updates
10 that we have for sockeye, there's some maybe
11 unanticipated benefits from this that we're starting to
12 see and that would be for trip planning. I mean, some
13 of these systems have fairly small harvest limits. Let's
14 see here. So, we have Cold Storage, that's three billies
15 or one nanny. So, it just helps you to understand how
16 many billies are left on the quota. So, it looks like
17 one billy was already harvested for three billy quota.
18 And so that means if you go out with three people, you
19 know, if you harvest your first two billies, then the
20 Unit's going to be closed, or the zone will be closed.
21 So, that that's a benefit as far as being able to just
22 actively see, get active updates as far as how many
23 animals are left in the quota for each one of those
24 zones, because that can be a little complicating and be
25 kind of a burden for subsistence users in Unit 4.

26
27 So, we will go back home and then go to
28 the deer harvest page. And right now, it shows Unit 2
29 deer harvest and the closure area. We're in the process
30 of updating this to have Unit 4 deer closure maps as
31 well. We are slightly reduced in our GIS capacity right
32 now so, for making changes and developments to this to
33 this site. But anyways, this shows Prince of Wales in
34 Unit 2, and the green is the federal land Management
35 area or federal lands, and then the tan is other
36 ownership. And then if you zoom in, it's a little
37 backwards as a former member, Needham pointed out. And
38 we plan on changing that symbology. But the area that's
39 hatched out is actually the area that's not closed to
40 federally qualified harvesters from August 1st to 15th.
41 So, we'll get that changed. But if you look at the
42 legend, there's federal public lands, non-federal lands,
43 and then federal public lands that are open to non-
44 federally qualified deer hunters from August 1st to
45 December 31st. And this is one that we get a lot of
46 requests for every year, in particular -- I don't know
47 if the internet will let me do this. Well, you can change
48 the base map to be imagery and yeah, it doesn't look
49 like we have the bandwidth for that. Anyways, you can
50 turn this map into a satellite imagery and if we were

1 to be able to do that and zoom in, there's a rec cabin
2 right here on Lake Josephine. And so, we get a lot of
3 folks, generally non-federally qualified folks that are
4 planning on renting out that cabin and need to know
5 exactly where that line is. And traditionally we would
6 send them a PDF map, which is, you know, objectively
7 difficult to hold up and see exactly where you are on
8 the landscape. And so that brings us to the next page.

9
10 So, I'll back out and go to offline
11 maps. So, to further ease those regulatory burdens and
12 confusion, we've developed offline maps that are geo
13 referenced. And so, what I -- what that means is that
14 you can download these maps onto your phone, and then
15 there will be a little blue dot that shows you where you
16 are in reference to our regulatory boundaries. And so,
17 I did my due diligence here and downloaded one over the
18 last long while because we have slow internet. And so,
19 this is the Sitka ranger district map and so again, it's
20 geo referenced. It does -- you don't need to be online
21 to use it once you've downloaded it. And so, you can
22 zoom in when you're out in the field and you can tell
23 exactly where you are within the Cold Storage zone. And,
24 you know, generally these are demarcated through ridge
25 lines. But there's a couple areas where you get down
26 closer to the shoreline and you can see there's a kind
27 of a wedge shape here in Cold Storage. And so, if Lisa
28 Creek is closed and you have a PDF map of where these
29 zones are and Cold Storage is where you're trying to
30 hunt it's pretty easy to imagine getting a -- potentially
31 getting a citation for not knowing exactly where those
32 zones are. So, we're pretty excited about that component
33 of it. Right now, we have the Sitka Ranger District map
34 and the Yakutat Ranger District map. Those are our two
35 most heavily managed through in-season management areas.
36 But our overall goal is to have these for all the ranger
37 districts on the Forest.

38
39 So, that is all that I had to show.
40 Again, our plan is to include the Unit 4 deer closure
41 maps to make the symbology on the Unit 2 deer closure
42 map a little less confusing. And then also, we were in
43 the process of creating a page one of these tabs on
44 here, that's for all the federal submerged lands on the
45 Tongass. Because that's another issue where sharing the
46 PDF version of those maps is pretty -- it's kind of a
47 big leap between getting a PDF map and actually being
48 able to figure out where those areas are and use them
49 if there are subsistence resources there. So, again,
50 we'll be working with our GIS staff to update that. But

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1 we're just at a little bit reduced capacity at this
2 point. So, I can take any questions at this point.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. So, quite
5 a tool you've developed there for sure. So, do we have
6 questions, comments from the Council? Ted, go ahead.

7

8 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, thanks. Hey, great,
9 great program. I'm glad you're doing -- I'm glad you're
10 expanding because I think it's really good to have that
11 real time data, especially in the field. Kind of an off-
12 topic question a little bit. But, you know so, you got
13 these special goat areas that are pretty specific. You
14 know, what happens if you're in a one billy area and you
15 have 2 or 3 hunter groups up there and they both happen
16 to get one, what's the procedure? What's -- how -- has
17 that happened? I imagine that has happened in the past.
18 And what happens when that happens? Thanks

19

20 MR. CROSS: Yeah. Through the Chair,
21 member Sandhofer. So, it's not a -- like you pull the
22 trigger and the zone is closed immediately, and then,
23 you know, if there happens to be more harvest, then
24 those people get cited. It's not that situation at all.
25 So, what would happen in effect is when the first person
26 comes in to report their harvest, then that's noted. The
27 quota is then been met and then there's a usually a
28 couple day turnaround for us to implement the in-season
29 management. And so, we generally try not to issue any
30 special actions after, I would say, Wednesday during the
31 week, because we don't want to issue these closures when
32 people are already out hunting in the field. And so, to
33 your question, what happens if there's more than one
34 group out there, if there's more harvest that exceeds
35 the quota, then we just exceed the quota. So, it's
36 generally not -- it doesn't fall on the harvesters at
37 that point.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Follow up.

40

41 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Quick follow up.
42 Does that change your take for next year? Do you guys
43 adjust or -- I mean, it's just -- I'm just kind of
44 curious how that works.

45

46 MR. CROSS: Through the Chair, member
47 Sandhofer. Not generally. We really haven't seen harvest
48 exceed quotas by very much. I mean, it might be one
49 additional goat or you know, we might have two billies
50 and then one nanny gets harvested. And so, they're more

00051

1 based off of the aerial surveys that ADF&G is, is able
2 to do. So, I can't imagine that a couple additional
3 goats that go over the quota are going to change things
4 significantly from one year to another. It would be the
5 long-term overharvest that would be -- that would have
6 a negative impact.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
9 Anybody else, questions?

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Okay. Thank you very much, Rob.

14

15 MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair and I'll
16 just note these QR codes, these business cards with the
17 link to the subsistence use dashboard are on the back
18 table and take a handful if you'd like.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Very good. Thank
21 you. Let's see. Do we have -- sticking with the Forest
22 Service, do we have Greg Risdahl on the phone? He has a
23 general report from the Forest Service.

24

25 MR. RISDAHL: Yes, yes, I am here. Mr.
26 Chairman and members of the Council. I'd be happy to
27 give you a short report here, if you can hear me.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes, I hear you
30 fine, Greg. Go ahead.

31

32 MR. RISDAHL: Okay. Here we go. So, Mr.
33 Chairman, members of the Council. For the record, my
34 name is Greg Risdahl, and I -- like I said, have a short
35 report to share with you today. Essentially, there's two
36 parts to my report. The first is a brief review of some
37 of the accomplishments from 2024 and the second is to
38 look at where we are so far in fiscal year 2025. And you
39 have just seen some of the excellent work done by the
40 Alaska Subsistence Team from Rob. So, the Alaska
41 Subsistence Team, along with other Forest Service staff
42 and our many partners, have accomplished some
43 significant and important work in support of the Tongass
44 Subsistence Program and Alaska subsistence ways of life.
45 The management of national forests for subsistence uses
46 plays a vital role in sustaining the health of rural
47 Alaskan communities, by ensuring that healthy fish and
48 wildlife populations are available to provide a reliable
49 food supply for residents. The federal program plays an
50 important role in maintaining employment in rural

1 Alaska, where opportunities are limited as well. The
2 Forest Service supports the subsistence way of life in
3 rural communities by implementing critical monitoring
4 and management activities using funds specifically
5 allocated toward subsistence uses on national forest
6 lands, and this subsistence is a line item in the
7 congressional budget.

8
9 In partnership with the Department of
10 Interior, the Forest Service continued to contribute to
11 and work cooperatively within the federal program.
12 Activities included annual rulemaking, fish and wildlife
13 monitoring, law enforcement and education, employment
14 and capacity building. The Forest Service regularly
15 consulted with Alaska tribes and Native corporations to
16 comply with presidential and secretarial policy
17 direction, and to be respectful of the current and
18 historical role of Native Alaskans and other federally
19 qualified rural subsistence users while managing for
20 customary and traditional subsistence uses. So, as
21 mentioned already the first part of this is to just go
22 through a few of the accomplishments from 2024. As you
23 saw, the Tongass Subsistence team has developed and
24 implemented this subsistence dashboard, which I think
25 is really cool and I'm sure anybody that's a hunter out
26 there or fisherman is going to love this thing. As you
27 saw, the dashboard provides great access to fisheries,
28 escapement and harvest information, wildlife special
29 actions, closure maps and regulatory maps as well and
30 it is being expanded, as Rob explained. Subsistence
31 staff conducted public workshops throughout Southeast
32 Alaska in 2024 to inform the public of the program and
33 regulatory process and listen to subsistence users about
34 their needs and concerns. You've met Ashley Bolwerk; the
35 Forest Service Subsistence South Zone biologist and you
36 also know the Sitka Conservation Society Fisheries
37 Community Engagement Specialist Heather Bauscher and the
38 work that they have been doing with youth in their youth
39 engagement with -- regarding the Federal Subsistence
40 Board courses. So, 2024 subsistence -- or students
41 learned about Title VIII of ANILCA and the Federal
42 Subsistence Management Program, as well as the Alaska
43 Department of Fish and Game Regulatory Processes.

44
45 In 2025, the South -- the Sitka
46 Conservation Society, brought the largest number of
47 students ever to attend and participate in the Federal
48 Subsistence Board Fisheries Regulatory Meeting that was
49 held February 4th through 7th here in Anchorage. At that
50 meeting, 15 students participated in giving testimony

1 on a variety of topics and shared their personal
2 experiences practicing and living a subsistence
3 lifestyle in Southeastern Alaska. The Forest Service and
4 Sitka Conservation Society Youth Engagement Program is
5 highly regarded across the entire State of Alaska, with
6 all other nine regions looking to Southeast Alaska for
7 guidance in how to begin their own programs. We've been
8 hearing this over and over. So, Southeast is really
9 leading the way in bringing youth into this field of
10 study and understanding.

11
12 The subsistence staff worked alongside
13 the Ketchikan Indian Community and Chilkoot Indian
14 Association to continue to monitor the unique river
15 hooligan. And you also heard from Rob that last year,
16 Meredith Pochardt from the Chilkoot Indian Association
17 began an eDNA project up on the Unuk to increase
18 quantitative monitoring efforts on the Unuk hooligan
19 population. And I think it was Patti that asked about
20 whether or not it could be used for salmon monitoring.
21 And that is definitely the case, it's being done up in
22 the western part of Alaska right now on the big rivers
23 Unit. on the Yukon and Kuskokwim. Forest Service also
24 purchased a new jet boat to help in the monitoring
25 efforts up there on the river. So, that's an important
26 piece of the pie that you got to keep your equipment
27 moving up to date and working, functioning well. In
28 fiscal year 2020 for the Tongass Forest continued to
29 fund and participate in 7 Fishery Resource Monitoring
30 Program projects and two Partners for Fisheries
31 Monitoring Projects in Southeast Alaska. The Tongass
32 Forest staff continued the youth sockeye harvest event
33 and in the -- in you -- excuse me, in Angoon in
34 partnership with the Alaska Youth Stewards and expanded
35 it this past year to include Kake.

36
37 Finally, the Subsistence Program has
38 partnered with the University of Washington Graduate
39 program to begin developing resource materials and
40 visual aids to better explain the federal program and
41 dual management with the state to the agency staff and
42 public at large. And this work is planned to be continued
43 through 2026. Moving on to 2025. So, the federal
44 government's fiscal year typically begins on October 1st
45 so, in October 1st, 2024, and will continue through
46 September 31st of 2025. And as folks all know, the
47 federal government has undergone some really big changes
48 since the new administration took office. When I started
49 writing this report, the Alaska Subsistence Program had
50 received about half of its allocated funding for the

1 subsistence budget, and we thought we were doing pretty
2 well there, in the continuing resolution that ended last
3 Friday on March 14th. And you probably all know as well
4 that a second CR was passed on March 15th and signed by
5 the President. We do not know what our final budget is
6 yet, so we're waiting to hear on that, but we're hopeful.
7 Like I said, the subsistence budget is a line item in
8 the congressional budget. Currently, there is, however,
9 a hold on funding for many grants and agreements that
10 have been put in place by the executive -- the White
11 House, by executive order. There's a few exceptions,
12 however, and the Forest Service has been opening up and
13 we've been able to start to access some of those 2025
14 funds. But as far as the Fishery Resource Monitoring
15 Program, we're still using some 2024 funds to start to
16 get those projects into the field for this summer field
17 season. If a lot more time passes and we're not -- we
18 don't know if we're going to be able to access funds,
19 we would use them in the future. But at this point,
20 we're hopeful that things are going to start loosening
21 up.

22
23 Along with the grants and agreements
24 spending, travel has also been limited. I haven't heard
25 anybody say anything about this, so I'm just going to
26 mention it briefly. Travel by Forest Service staff has
27 been limited to mission critical activities,
28 emergencies, and congressional priorities. And I guess
29 we're doing okay because we are traveling to our Council
30 meetings across the State, this winter spring as well.
31 Likewise, purchasing has also been limited in many ways
32 to safety and emergency kinds of things. So, we're
33 waiting and hopeful that things are going to loosen up
34 a little bit more as time goes on. So, in 2025, we plan
35 to continue to do the following. We'll continue to hold
36 public workshops in remote Southeastern Alaska
37 communities, including in Ketchikan, when it becomes
38 rural officially. We will continue to teach the youth
39 engagement classes about ANILCA and the federal and
40 state regulatory programs at the college and Sitka using
41 the expertise of Ashley and Heather Bauscher. We'll
42 continue to work with the Alaska Youth Stewards and the
43 Youth Harvest Program, taking kids into the field to
44 harvest sockeye salmon at Falls Lake near Kake and Basket
45 Bay near Angoon, where local elders teach the youth how
46 to harvest and process salmon. Of course, these salmon
47 are distributed to the local elders as well during this
48 process. Rob and his crew will be continuing to improve
49 on the subsistence dashboard and hopefully we'll have
50 the funds and more expertise, a few more staff to help

1 with that process. It's a big undertaking.

2
3 Finally, you did hear a report on the
4 Tongass National Forest plan, which was last revised in
5 1997, and the new planning process was initiated in 2024,
6 along with the NEPA, Pacific Planning Support Group we
7 call the PPSG. The Alaska Subsistence Team has put in a
8 tremendous amount of time and energy to help draft the
9 new Tongass Forest Plan assessment, and we do appreciate
10 any comments and all comments that the Council will be
11 able to provide to us. And there will be plenty of
12 opportunities for this because the forest planning
13 process is slated to last probably at least through 2028.
14 Currently, and I think Rob may have mentioned this
15 earlier too, but I'm not sure that we are developing a
16 need for change document that describes the desired
17 future conditions and standards and guidelines for
18 subsistence. Because in the past forest plan, there was
19 really very little in there. Basically, just a short
20 summary of what is in ANILCA. So, that's all I have to
21 share with you today. If you've got questions, I'd be
22 happy to answer them or try to. And if not, there's
23 folks there with you today that could probably help as
24 well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Greg.
27 We'll see if the Council has any questions. Anybody?
28 Patti.

29
30 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
31 Hernandez. Thank you, Mr. Risdahl. I was wondering
32 about, you know, the subsistence household use surveys.
33 I know they're being updated in some communities, but
34 it would be important to continue to update those
35 household use surveys. A lot of those -- data are, you
36 know, way past being current and it would be good to
37 have, you know, continued -- is that part of the wildlife
38 monitoring or subsistence salmon -- fish monitoring?
39 Also, I want to -- this is my own opinion that I'm
40 speaking right now and that as you know, I tend to be a
41 planner and for planning for this transition of non-
42 rural to rural in the Ketchikan area. The -- you know,
43 it's just creating a lot of turmoil that we don't know
44 whether they're going to be on the island or not. We
45 don't know if they're going to be rural or non-rural or
46 not, you know, for this 2025 season. And so, as a period
47 of transition, it would seem like, if we could get
48 through the 2025 season as is, until it makes it through
49 the regulatory process and then to implement it in the
50 2026 season. I mean, just for the, you know, for

1 stability. It seems like I personally -- that's how I
2 feel about it. I know you probably have no control over
3 it as a manager, but I just wanted to get that point
4 across. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5
6 MR. RISDAHL: Yes. Through the Chair.
7 Patti, I appreciate the questions and I do have a little
8 bit I can share with you as far as the subsistence
9 surveys and basically redoing some of those that have
10 been done in the past. That is definitely a high priority
11 for us on in the Forest Service and we have been
12 patiently waiting to see how things are going to turn
13 out. But that is one of our priorities for using for
14 FRMP money. That -- or I should say SMS or subsistence
15 money. There may be some changes in how the FRMP program
16 is funded in the near future, but we will be prioritizing
17 some of those subsistence surveys, and we'll be working
18 with our partners on that, including the state and
19 tribes. So, that's something that we definitely have in
20 mind. As far as your second question as you note, I
21 really can't tell you what's going to happen in the
22 future. But I can tell you right now, we are waiting
23 patiently to get guidance from the Washington office.
24 We do have the fisheries regulations, basically, those
25 have been submitted at one point, and they were stopped.
26 And we're waiting for the word to go ahead and resubmit
27 those to go through the clearance process both within
28 USDA and the Department of Interior.

29
30 Similarly, the new regulations that
31 would include the rural determination decision made by
32 the Board. I really cannot tell you how that's going to
33 go. I think you heard from Jason Roberts yesterday or
34 the day before that it could take 18 months. I mean, we
35 really don't know if, when, how that's going to happen.
36 I do know that there are some rumblings out there. There
37 are people that are concerned about it as you are, but
38 I cannot offer you anything more than we just don't know
39 what the timeline will be if and when we'll be able to
40 go through these clearance processes to have regulations
41 published. As you know, the rural determination process
42 isn't official. The rural determination finding for
43 Ketchikan is not official until it's published in the
44 Federal Register and then it isn't until after that point
45 that an entity could ask for a request for
46 reconsideration. At any rate, there's not much more I
47 can tell you. I think you guys are doing a great job
48 discussing it at, you know, at length and thoroughly
49 trying to come up with some ideas as to how to alleviate
50 some of your concerns about what could happen if you

1 have an influx of deer hunters there on Prince of Wales.
2 But right now, there's just no way that I have any
3 information that I can share about that because we don't
4 have any information. It's not even coming to the
5 regional forester's office. It's still way up above us
6 out here in Alaska. So, I hope that -- hoping that helps
7 a little bit is I can guarantee you that as soon as we
8 find something out, you will all know we will pass it
9 on to DeAnna. And of course, she communicates with you
10 folks regularly and very good about getting on top of
11 things immediately. So, you will know shortly after we
12 know, or maybe even as soon as we know. Because if you're
13 watching the news most of what we know is what we're
14 seeing in the news. Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Greg.
17 Frank, question or comment?

18
19 MR. WRIGHT: Just a comment, Mr. Chair.
20 I'd like to thank the U.S. Forest Service for being --
21 thinking of the youth all the time, you know. So, we
22 have some young people in Hoonah that are kind of
23 disappointed because they're not able to go out in the
24 woods anymore because we don't know what the budget is.
25 You know, like I said earlier, that one young lady was
26 -- had a chance to work in the corporation in ISP, and
27 make good money. But her mom kind of talked her into
28 just working for the tribe and restoring streams and
29 stuff, and her mom had talked to me, and she's a good
30 friend of mine and said that she's sure a heck of a lot
31 happier out there in the woods. And, you know, you got
32 young people that are doing stuff like this and not
33 having to worry about who's looking over you because
34 you're -- they're being physical and working and having
35 fun out there. And when you think about -- you know, we
36 as a Council always think of the most important resource
37 which is our young people. And we're thinking -- and
38 that's exactly what we fight for, is making sure that
39 all the natural resources are there for the young people
40 as they grow older. But the Forest Service is looking
41 after our young people, and I really appreciate it.
42 Gunalchéesh.

43
44 MR. RISDAHL: Yes. Thank you very much,
45 Frank, for that comment. And we -- as you know, we really
46 value our youth, ourselves both as individuals in our
47 personal lives, but also the Forest Service. We have a
48 very strong, I think, ethic toward our youth in this day
49 and age, and all agree and understand the value of
50 spending time in nature, and I do the same thing with

1 my child. I have a young boy who's just seven now and I
2 -- he doesn't have an iPhone; he doesn't have an iPad.
3 And we go outside, we go out to the cabin, we hunt and
4 hike and fish. And that's because I know that's where
5 he's healthiest and happiest. And I see that it's a lot
6 -- it's very helpful for young kids in this day and age
7 to have that tie. And it goes a long way to have the
8 community and help with that as well as the Forest
9 Service. We can do it, and we have people that are
10 dedicated to doing it. So, yeah, I agree, it's a great
11 thing. So, thank you for your comment.

12

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else?

13
14 Cal.

15

16 MR. Casipit: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Calvin Casipit, Gustavus. I probably know the answer to
18 this, but where are we in in getting a wildlife
19 information program going? You know, I know we've been
20 working for a long time in fisheries resource
21 monitoring, and I'm -- just want to know where we are
22 in wildlife. I know we're probably -- it's all probably
23 tied up in this funding issue and all, but I'd just like
24 to encourage, you know, that we continue to push that
25 noodle up the hill.

26

27 MR. RISDAHL: Yeah. Thank you for the
28 question, Cal. Well -- so, we -- like I mentioned
29 briefly, we are looking at kind of doing things a little
30 bit different, I think from the Forest Service
31 standpoint with the Fishery Resource Monitoring Program.
32 We have talked amongst ourselves and have realized that
33 we are not getting some of the things done that we really
34 would like to do, and we're going to try to prioritize
35 both fisheries and wildlife surveys, monitoring,
36 research, whatever that benefits subsistence, prior to
37 submitting a lot of extra FRMP program projects, because
38 we have found that if we don't get selected for some of
39 those projects, then we're not getting the research done
40 that we wanted or the surveys and monitoring. So, we
41 will be looking at doing more of that, spending more of
42 our money based on the kinds of projects that we think
43 we should prioritize on the Tongass. So, other than that,
44 there's not really any likelihood at this point that the
45 subsistence budget is going to increase in any way other
46 than by us reprioritizing where we put our funds. So,
47 we are definitely looking at that and we do look to the
48 Council for ideas, topics, guidance, whatever that you
49 guys, the things that you guys' think are important as
50 well because you're out there in the field day in and

1 day out. So, we'll be in touch about that sort of thing
2 as the year goes on and we develop our priorities for
3 the next season. Thanks, Cal.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: John.

6

7 MR. SMITH: Yeah. I just want to echo
8 what Patricia shared about the rule. My feelings are the
9 same and worry about that. But also echo what Frank
10 Wright was sharing about our youth. I'm a retired
11 educator in the district out of Hoonah and retired out
12 of Juneau, of Alaska just a few years ago. So, I do echo
13 and my question to you is maybe to DeAnna that, I don't
14 know, it was a 2 or 3 years ago where we were requesting
15 you know, just like Thomas out here, Mr. Smith, that
16 he's mentoring DeAnna. So, you know, where is that
17 situation where we requested having a seat right here
18 at the table with our team? Just curious about that.

19

20 MR. RISDAHL: Yeah. Thank you, John, for
21 the question. DeAnna, yeah, go ahead. I was going to
22 just pass it off to you.

23

24 MR. PERRY: Thanks, Greg, and through the
25 Chair. This is DeAnna Perry Council Coordinator. It's
26 what we talked about in the Council charter yesterday.
27 It is in the charter and hopefully in the next year or
28 so, we will go through that process with the applications
29 we've received. And we'll have a youth sitting right
30 next to you guys. So, it is in our charter. It's just a
31 process of -- developing the process to go through those
32 applications since this is all new, but we hope sooner
33 rather than later. Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
36 John. Yeah. Greg, this is Don Hernandez. I have a
37 question. It's regarding the forest plan process that's
38 going on. I don't know if you have -- might be able to
39 have some insights into that and some of the concerns
40 that that I have with this process. It's just beginning
41 under a new administration and, you know, we hear things
42 from this administration that are not in line with what
43 the views of the folks on this Council are, or for that
44 matter, a lot of the folks in Southeast Alaska. And I'm,
45 you know, referring to such things as we got to cut more
46 timber, you know, on our national forests. We can't even
47 talk about climate change, you know, it's -- and those
48 are topics that are of, you know, a lot of importance
49 to folks in Southeast Alaska. So, my question is, you
50 know, entering into this process, is the executive

1 branch going to be driving a lot of what happens with
2 this forest plan, or is it going to be more driven by
3 what happens here locally on the Tongass? Do you have
4 any insight into that, or are you hearing anything?
5

6 MR. RISDAHL: Well, Mr. Chair, that is
7 an excellent question and of course, I don't think any
8 of us really have the answer to that. But I can tell you
9 from a personal standpoint and working with the Tongass
10 Subsistence Team, Rob and Ashley and Jake and others,
11 we have been doing our due diligence to create the best
12 document we can come up with. We know the previous
13 document was highly lacking and we are -- you know,
14 we're not under any strict guidelines, or rules, or
15 sidebars or anything from the Washington office to take
16 things out or put things in. We're not -- we don't have
17 anything like that at our level. So, we're doing the
18 best we can to come up with the best document that
19 benefits subsistence users. That's pretty much all I can
20 say. Who knows what's going to happen? I mean, do you
21 see -- the big thing that -- you know, one of the big
22 things that has happened with the Tongass was during the
23 past administration, the Roadless Rule was changed back
24 to the way it was in its original form to protect old
25 growth. And now it appears as though it could swing the
26 other way again, that is something that we really have
27 no control over. But at this point in time, as far as
28 the Tongass Forest plan we are doing, you know, the best
29 that we can to provide the information necessary to
30 continue to manage the forest for its health and fish
31 and wildlife resources for the benefit of subsistence
32 users across the forest. That's pretty much all I can
33 really say at this point other than, as I mentioned,
34 this is a long process, and it will be extending out
35 through -- I'm sure it'll go at least till 2028. From
36 what I have seen, the way these documents -- how long
37 it takes for them to be written, it could go past that,
38 but we just -- we will just keep doing what we need to
39 do to get -- to do the best job. And hopefully in the
40 end we'll come up with a good document with the input
41 that we receive from our partners, including you guys.
42 So, it's really important that you do have that buy-in.
43 And so, what you guys say does matter and those are the
44 kinds of things that will be at, you know, a part of the
45 final document, I'm sure of it. But we are we have not
46 been given any, you know, kind of cautions about what
47 we can or cannot say to this point.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
50 for that, Greg.

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MR. RISDAHL: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any other questions or comments? Patti, go ahead.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman Hernandez. Mr. Risdahl, I don't know if I should be asking you this question but, you know, the Council had written a letter after our All Council meeting, you know, asking for more stable representation on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Specifically, you know, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife seat was not being well representing a subsistence. And I'm just wondering what the status of our correspondence to the -- you know, we brought this to the attention of the Federal Board. Just wondering what the follow up is on that. I know you're with the Forest Service, but where you're the umbrella that we fall under. So, just wondering what the status is of that. If you have a -- if you can tell me -- us. Thank you.

MR. RISDAHL: Yeah. Patty through the Chair. That's a good question, too and I can tell you that your letter, along with about -- goodness sakes, I think we had 15 or 20 letters that we pushed really hard to get to Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack before they left and were replaced. And I'm not remembering off the top of my head what happened to that letter. I can tell you that, you know, as far as the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, I know that's a Fish and Wildlife Service. They do have a non-voting seat on the panel and sometimes it seems like not a whole lot going on there, as you say. And we would like to see some more real firm representation for subsistence on that. But I'll tell you what I will do is I will look and find out today if we have received anything on that because our -- I do work across the state with all ten Regional Advisory Councils. And so, I was involved in reviewing, editing, writing letters and responses from the Secretaries, etcetera or for the Board across the State. And I don't remember what's come out of that one-year letter regarding -- asking for more subsistence representation on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. But I will find it for you and see where we're at.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Patti.

1 MR. RISDAHL: That's -- Yeah, that's all
2 I can say at the moment till I take a look at my tables.
3 There's a lot of letters there, and I can't remember
4 what we ended up with that, where we are with that one
5 so far, I'm sure it's made it to the secretary's office.
6 Now, what's happened to it since then? I'm not sure.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Greg.
9 We do have somebody available on the phone that might
10 be able to add some more to that question from Patty,
11 and that would be Jill Klein from Fish and Wildlife
12 Service, are you there?

13
14 MS. KLEIN: Hi. Yes, this is Jill. Can
15 you hear me?

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Go ahead.

18
19 MS. KLEIN: Hi. Great. Thank you. As you
20 may recall, I introduced myself the first day of the
21 meeting, and I'm the position of the regional
22 subsistence coordinator. So, based in Anchorage at the
23 regional office, and I help support our regional
24 director in her participation at the Federal Subsistence
25 Board as the interagency staff committee member. And I'm
26 aware that the Council, the Southeast Council, also
27 wrote a letter that was -- it was addressed to the --
28 as Patti mentioned, I think to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
29 Service and the Federal Subsistence Board. And at the
30 moment we haven't written an official response back to
31 the Council. But I can update you that since the
32 beginning of this meeting cycle where the North Pacific
33 Fisheries Management Council has been meeting starting
34 in October, and they have five meetings a year, usually
35 we have had representatives sitting at the table for all
36 meetings that have taken place so far. And there will
37 be a meeting coming up in April and then the final one
38 in June. And the one of the topics that's been of great
39 interest has been salmon bycatch that the Council is
40 working on in the North Pacific in the Bering Sea pollock
41 fisheries, and they're working on a chum salmon bycatch.
42 So, we've been trying to be more actively involved in
43 that. And the staff member's name is Boyd Blihovde. He
44 used to be a refuge manager out at the Yukon-Kuskokwim
45 Delta National Wildlife Refuge and has since moved into
46 our regional office and is currently in a position that's
47 called our refuge supervisor. So, yeah, just wanted to
48 let you know that we have had a new person sitting at
49 the table, and he's been involved, and we typically
50 submit what's called a B report that can be found on the

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1 Council's website if you're perusing their meeting
2 materials. And I don't think we submitted one for this
3 upcoming April meeting, but we do review all the topics
4 on the agenda. And so, if there is anything in the
5 Southeast region that you're interested in, us tracking
6 and paying more attention to or sharing more from the
7 Councils, you know, we'd be happy to hear about that.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
10 Follow up, Patty?

11
12 MS. PHILLIPS: Yeah. Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Go ahead.

15
16 MS. PHILLIPS: Chairman Hernandez. So,
17 the Southeast Subsistence Council has been working on
18 these talking points on unguided non-resident fisherman
19 issues. And we it's an issue that we've brought before,
20 both the Alaska Board of Fish and to the North Pacific
21 Council. And, you know, as a private citizen, it's an
22 issue that I presented to the International Pacific
23 Halibut Commission, and it just seems like it runs into,
24 like you know, a roadblock. You know, we don't deal with
25 it. They deal with it. They get it, we don't deal with
26 it. They deal with it. So, it's just a -- it is a activity
27 that potentially impacts food security of our rural
28 communities. And we'd really like to, even if it's
29 incremental steps forward to address it. So, it's just
30 something I'd like to highlight to you, Ms. Klein, a
31 U.S. Fish and Wildlife person. So, thank you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
34 Patti. Any other questions for either Jill Klein or for
35 Greg Risdahl? Hopefully, you're still there, Greg. Any
36 other questions from the Council?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 Okay. I'm not seeing any. So, thank you
41 both. Thank you, Greg, for being our eyes and ears there
42 in the higher levels of the this program. So, appreciate
43 your insights and answering our questions and giving
44 your report.

45
46 MR. RISDAHL: You're very welcome. Thank
47 you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, we can
50 break for lunch now and when we get back, we will have

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1 this presentation on Food from the Forest by Dr. Ryan
2 Bellmore and Marie Gutgesell. Probably didn't pronounce
3 that correctly, but we'll hear that after lunch. So,
4 let's -- it's a little past noon. Let's just say 1:15.
5 Come back at 1:15.

6

7 (Off record)

8

9 (On record)

10

11 MR. PERRY: Good afternoon, everyone.
12 This is the Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory
13 Council meeting. Council members are almost back to
14 their seats, and we'll be getting started shortly. The
15 Council is on agenda item 13.d.iv. We'll be getting
16 started here shortly with a presentation, Food from the
17 Forest. Thank you.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Just need one
22 more Council member to show up here before we get
23 started. So, if there is anybody out there in the hall
24 that could hear me, we need to get the Council members
25 back to the table.

26

27 (Pause)

28

29 Okay. Yes, we can get started with the
30 presentation now. This is Food from the Forest, and we
31 have folks ready to present their -- on the phone.

32

33 DR. BELLMORE: Yep. We're here. Thank
34 you.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. You can get
37 started.

38

39 DR. BELLMORE: Hi, everybody. My name is
40 Ryan Bellmore. I'm a research fish biologist for the
41 Forest Service, Pacific Northwest research Station at
42 the Juneau Forestry Sciences Lab here in Juneau, Alaska.
43 First, I'd like to thank the Chair and the members of
44 the Council for allowing us some time to present some
45 of the subsistence research we've been doing the last
46 few years. So, as many of you know, the Forest Service,
47 I think, has traditionally done a pretty decent job at
48 assessing the value of our national forests for timber
49 resources. But as we all know, these forests are also
50 very diverse and productive food systems. The pantry in

1 our backyard, so to speak, that's crucial to human well-
2 being and communities across the region. And along these
3 lines, we've been undertaking a study as I said, the
4 last year, year and a half to better understand the
5 magnitude and diversity of wild food harvests supported
6 by, in this case, the Tongass National Forest, but also
7 the Chugach National Forest, and to identify ways that
8 that our agency can manage and co-manage our lands to
9 maintain productive, diverse and accessible wild foods.
10 And with that, I'm going to actually hand it over to Dr.
11 Marie Gutgesell, who's a postdoc that's been working in
12 our lab for the last year and a half on this work, and
13 she's going to lead the presentation. Thank y'all.

14

15 DR. GUTGESELL: Awesome. Thank you so
16 much, Ryan, and thank you to the Chair and to the Council
17 for giving us the opportunity to present some of our
18 work today. We're really excited to share this with you
19 all. I just want to check if you are able to see my
20 screen.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes, we can.

23

24 DR. GUTGESELL: Okay, perfect. Thank you.
25 And so, as Ryan mentioned, some of the work we're going
26 to talk about today is a project that we've been working
27 on over the last year, year and a half or so, trying to
28 understand how Alaska's national forests contribute to
29 wild food systems. And so, the Tongass and Chugach
30 National Forests are part of an incredibly diverse
31 landscape that extends from alpine regions to forests
32 and wetlands downstream, through freshwater streams and
33 rivers that ultimately lead to both nearshore and marine
34 ecosystems. And we can characterize these ridge-to-reef
35 coastal ecosystems by sort of those broad habitats that
36 they connect. So, we're -- where these landscapes
37 connect terrestrial, freshwater, nearshore, and marine
38 habitats. And these habitats support a broad diversity
39 of wild foods and so, we can think of these forested
40 landscapes as food systems, where the communities that
41 harvest these diverse foods across the landscape are an
42 important part of those wild food systems. And
43 importantly, these wild food systems are an essential
44 part of the way of life of Alaskan people. And as Ryan
45 mentioned at the beginning, the importance of these
46 forests as part of these diverse food systems has
47 historically not been fully recognized by the Forest
48 Service. However, the importance of these wild food
49 systems highlights a need to develop broader management
50 strategies that integrate and acknowledge these wild

1 food systems. So, towards this, we are working on this
2 project where we are trying to understand the diversity
3 and magnitude of wild foods that are harvested by rural
4 communities that are living in and around both the
5 Tongass and the Chugach National Forests.

6
7 And this work is being co-produced by a
8 really amazing and large interdisciplinary team of
9 scientists, managers and tribal representatives across
10 federal, state, tribal, nonprofit, and university
11 organizations and is part of a larger project that is
12 focused more broadly on understanding how Alaska
13 national forests contribute to wild food systems, and
14 how management can work to maintain the productivity,
15 and stability and resilience of these food systems and
16 help maintain access to diverse wild food sources. For
17 this component of the project, we are using data from
18 the community level subsistence harvest surveys that the
19 Alaska Department of Fish and Game has collected from
20 communities across Southeast since the 1980s, and that
21 is stored in the publicly accessible Community
22 subsistence information system, and we are using
23 information from the Comprehensive Subsistence Surveys
24 as they provide these really highly resolved harvest
25 data that we can then use to examine the magnitude and
26 diversity of wild foods that are supported by Alaska's
27 national forests, and look at patterns of wild food
28 harvest across communities.

29
30 So, one of the first things that we did
31 was to quantify the diversity and magnitude of foods
32 harvested by all rural communities that are living in
33 and around the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. And
34 we can see that rural communities harvest a really large
35 magnitude and also a really broad diversity of foods.
36 So, it is estimated that approximately each year, over
37 2,667 metric tons of food are harvested across these
38 forests that span over 130 different taxa. And so, based
39 on standard serving sizes as defined by the U.S.
40 Department of Agriculture for both plant and meat
41 products, we estimate that this is about 477 servings
42 of food per person each year. And we estimate that
43 approximately 68% of wild foods harvested are directly
44 supported by Alaska's national forests, where
45 essentially, we are considering foods that are harvested
46 from terrestrial freshwater, which also includes
47 anadromous fish and nearshore habitats as foods, being
48 directly supported by our national forests. As species
49 in these habitats either live in -- live directly within
50 these forests or rely on nutrients or inorganic matter

1 that flows out of these forests. We have also started
2 to do some really rough cost replacement estimates for
3 these wild foods. However, we recognize that many of
4 these foods are not able to be replaced in the grocery
5 store and that this economic or this estimated economic
6 value definitely does not capture all of the other values
7 that are associated with harvesting and eating these
8 wild foods. Based on our sort of first, really sort of
9 rough preliminary approach to trying to quantify an
10 economic estimate we estimate that approximately \$88.5
11 million worth of food are harvested from the Tongass
12 each year, which is approximately about \$3,500 per
13 person and approximately, \$21 million worth of wild
14 foods are harvested from the Chugach.

15
16 When we look at and zoom in a little bit
17 on the Tongass, we can see how these estimated costs
18 break down across those sort of four major habitat
19 categories that we have been looking at, and how
20 different species or different taxa within those
21 habitats contribute to that -- to the estimate. So, the
22 largest estimated replacement cost from freshwater and
23 anadromous fish species are, not surprisingly, comes
24 from salmon in marine environments. The majority of that
25 cost comes from halibut and then the terrestrial from
26 deer. And in that nearshore environment, the sort of
27 larger portions of those bars are -- come from both
28 seaweed and kelp and nearshore crabs such as Dungeness
29 crab.

30
31 For the second part of our project, we
32 are trying to understand if we can identify harvest
33 strategies or different sort of patterns of harvest that
34 might help maintain more productive or consistent wild
35 food systems. So, trying to see are there patterns in
36 harvest that help maintain harvest levels in the face
37 of changing conditions or in the face of species losses
38 or declines? So, to help answer this question, we looked
39 at harvest patterns across habitats and over seasons for
40 each community. Here is a simplified representation of
41 a harvest structure for a community in Southeast and
42 that shows the diversity of different foods that are
43 harvested and how that harvest is distributed across
44 that landscape. And the weight of those lines there sort
45 of represents like per capita harvest. So, we can see
46 how that magnitude of harvest is spread across those
47 different species.

48
49 Then to look at harvest, over time, we
50 generated the seasonal harvest patterns for each

1 community. And so, we can look at how harvest
2 accessibility changes over the season. So, here are
3 different colors again represent our different habitats.
4 And we can see that harvest availability varies
5 seasonally across these habitats where in the sort of -
6 - in the winter and early spring more harvest is
7 accessible in that nearshore intertidal zone, whereas
8 in the fall there's increased access for terrestrial
9 food sources such as deer. And so, these -- this seasonal
10 variation provides differential harvest opportunities
11 through time. And when we look at these harvest patterns
12 across the 46 rural communities in and around the Tongass
13 and Chugach National forests, we can start to look at
14 relationships between patterns of harvest. So, things
15 like harvest diversity and the variability of total
16 harvest over time or how consistent that harvest is
17 across season. And this can help us begin to get an
18 understanding of how harvest patterns might influence
19 that consistency. So, here I'm just showing on the x
20 axis a harvest diversity, which indicates the number of
21 species harvested, as well as how evenly those different
22 species are harvested, where lower values are indicative
23 of lower harvest diversity. So, tend to be communities
24 harvesting a fewer diversity of resources and higher
25 values are indicative of higher diversity. And then on
26 the y axis, we have variability of total harvest over
27 the course of a season. And here those higher values are
28 just indicative of larger fluctuations in total harvest
29 over the year. And lower values are indicative of a less
30 variable or more consistent harvest over the year.

31
32 And when we look at these patterns
33 across communities, we can see that having access to
34 diverse foods across multiple different habitats does
35 indeed provide more consistent harvest over time. And
36 we also wanted to look at how harvest patterns might
37 influence how strongly species losses or declines might
38 influence total harvest. So, again, here on the x axis,
39 I'm just showing that harvest diversity and this time
40 on the y axis we have what we call the rate of harvest
41 decline, which essentially is just a measure of how
42 strongly total harvest is affected by the loss of
43 harvested species. So, where higher values would be
44 indicative of harvest that is really strongly or quickly
45 affected by species loss. So, as you lose one or a few
46 species, that total harvest really rapidly declines, and
47 lower values are indicative of harvest that is less
48 affected by species loss.

49
50

1 And again, in this case, we can see that
2 there's this really strong positive effect of harvest
3 diversity. So, having access to diverse foods across
4 multiple different habitats helps to maintain harvest
5 levels in the face of species loss. So, overall, our
6 results suggest that integrating wild food systems into
7 coastal watershed management should focus on identifying
8 and promoting ways that maintain access to diverse
9 resource opportunities across these connected coastal
10 habitats. And wild foods are important to multiple
11 aspects of community well-being, especially in a
12 landscape with a long history of communities not having
13 the sovereignty or voice to manage availability and
14 accessibility of these foods, and so effective
15 management of these wild food systems really requires
16 working closely with communities to co-develop
17 management strategies. But as we know, things are
18 rapidly changing here in Southeast with climate change
19 and other land use changes. And so, we are continuing
20 to work with our partners and communities across
21 southern coastal Alaska to help understand how will
22 climate change affect the availability of wild foods?
23 How might these shifting patterns in food availability
24 influence food system resilience? And how might
25 different adaptation strategies help to maintain harvest
26 resilience? And so that's just a brief overview of some
27 of the work that we have been doing and thank you so
28 much for the opportunity to present our work. We are
29 happy to take any questions and also feel free to reach
30 out to us if you are interested in learning more or have
31 any questions or feedback about our work, we would really
32 love to hear from you. Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
35 Marie. Does Council members have any questions? A lot
36 of information there.

37
38 (No response)

39
40 I do have a question. How do you foresee
41 all this information being put to use?

42
43 DR. GUTGESELL: Sorry. Thank you for that
44 question. I will try and take a brief answer and then
45 might let Ryan also jump in. I think really what we're
46 hoping to do is to, to use some of this information to
47 put into reports and publications that we can
48 communicate to other people higher within the Forest
49 Service to really emphasize the importance of these wild
50 food systems and the importance of considering them when

1 we're developing management strategies. Might let Ryan
2 add to that.

3
4 DR. BELLMORE: Yeah, I'll add to that, a
5 little bit. I mean, we're -- I'm, with the research
6 branch of the Forest Service. So, we don't directly
7 influence management or policy. But ideally the goal is
8 that the science we do informs management, which could
9 effectively inform policy eventually. So, I'm hopeful
10 that depending on how the forest plan revision goes into
11 place in the future, that, like this information, for
12 instance, could be incorporated into any revised forest
13 plans and also management efforts. Thinking about how
14 we co-steward these resources with communities on the
15 Tongass.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
18 very much. I like the sound of that. Any other Council
19 members? Cal.

20
21 MR. CASIPIT: I had just a quick
22 question, comment. The data that you're collecting, can
23 you -- are you able to deter -- well, I'm thinking about
24 changes in the environment, you know climate change,
25 what have you. As things change, do you see -- and, you
26 know, there's obviously responses in populations of
27 different things that people hunt and fish. Do you see
28 where species may for instance, when deer populations
29 go down, does seal pop -- does seal hunting go up when
30 seal populations go down, do deer do deer harvests become
31 more important or any kind of those interactions where
32 changes in one population of animals that are hunted or
33 fished -- as that changes, do you see responses in the
34 use of other animals or fish?

35
36 DR. GUTGESELL: Yeah. Thank you so much
37 for that great question. We do in some cases see evidence
38 of that switching. A really sort of prominent example
39 in and around Prince William Sound is after the Exxon
40 Valdez oil spill happened and we see a reduction in
41 marine harvest. And that reduction in marine populations
42 essentially led to an increased harvest of other
43 freshwater fish species. And so, we do tend to see some
44 of that trade off in harvest.

45
46 DR. BELLMORE: And I'll just add, someone
47 brought this up earlier that there's been -- there hasn't
48 been a lot of subsistence -- family household
49 subsistence surveys done by ADF&G partners in recent
50 times. I think the most updated surveys that are in

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1 Marie's analysis from 2014 and not very -- and a lot of
2 communities don't have very many surveys over even a 40-
3 year time period. And so, it's man, having some
4 contemporary new surveys would be really valuable to
5 start hallucinating patterns of how, you know,
6 communities might be shifting harvest as resource
7 availability is changing.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
10 Any other Council members with a question? Frank, go
11 ahead.

12
13 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
14 just looking at your last page here. Your 2080 forecast.
15 That's -- looks pretty scary. So, how would -- how did
16 you come up with these -- this graph here, it's got red
17 and Juneau and 6.3., 6.8. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18
19 DR. GUTGESELL: Thank you, and so, we
20 actually didn't come up with these numbers ourselves.
21 This map and these potential predicted temperature
22 changes are from the Inter -- International Panel on
23 Climate Change predicted temperature changes. So, and
24 those are modeled -- I can't remember exactly which
25 scenario they used for this one. But it's not something
26 that we ourselves put together.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
29 Any other questions, comments?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Okay, I'm not seeing any. So, thank you,
34 Marie and James, for presenting that to us. So, certainly
35 a lot of interest to folks around this table. So, thank
36 you very much.

37
38 DR. GUTGESELL: Thank you very much.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: And along these
41 same lines as that report, we just had Council members
42 you may see in front of you also a document entitled Sea
43 Bank Report and also kind of deals with our harvests and
44 Southeast Alaska more of a marine oriented. And we have
45 somebody that is in the room here that can maybe just
46 tell us briefly what this is all about. So, go ahead.
47 You have the table there.

48
49 MS. SCOTT: Good afternoon. Thank you,
50 Mister Chair and Council members for letting me speak

1 briefly today. My name is Emily Scott. I work for the
2 Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust. ASFT is a nonprofit
3 that strengthens fishing communities and marine
4 resources through research, education, and economic
5 opportunity. I wanted to speak briefly about our Sea
6 Bank Initiative. Sea Bank is a multidisciplinary
7 approach to identify, assess, and communicate the value
8 of the Southeast Alaska ecosystem and to empower
9 residents, visitors, and policymakers to make sound,
10 long-term decisions that promote stewardship and
11 sustainable economics. ASFT recognizes the inherent
12 cultural, ecological, and social value of the Tongass,
13 but we also understand that some decision makers are
14 most influenced by economic value. For that reason, we
15 tackled the challenges of capturing the economic value
16 of the incredible Southeast ecosystem, and we just
17 wanted to make sure the RAC was aware of this resource.
18 So, in front of you is a snapshot of our 2024 report.
19 But the full report can be accessed by anyone online at
20 our website, thealaskatrust.org. Thank you for your
21 time.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
24 for bringing this to our attention because I was unaware
25 this was an organization here in Southeast. So, thanks
26 for coming to the Council. I want to take a minute.
27 There might be some questions. Any Council members have
28 a question for Emily? Yeah, I see everybody's looking
29 it over. So, maybe there'll be some questions for you
30 at some time. If you're still in the room. So, thank you
31 very much for that.

32
33 MS. SCOTT: Thank you so much.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Now it's time for
36 the southeast fisheries report from Jake Musslewhite.
37 And the staff.

38
39 (Pause)

40
41 John.

42
43 MR. SMITH: (In Native). I just, you
44 know, my brain was thinking when you were going through
45 the Foods from the Forest, the I really want to just,
46 you know, echo out the book that Calvin shared earlier
47 in the -- in our meeting. Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx
48 Sitee: Our Food Is Our Tlingit Way of Life. I think
49 reviewing that book and looking at the history that's
50 in there, but also it has a nutritional value chart

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1 that's in there that, that's very positive. Just want
2 to share that. Sorry for being off topic.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, well,
5 thanks for that reminder. And Jake, are you ready to go?

6

7 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes, I am. Thank you
8 Mr. Chair. For the record, Jake Musslewhite and I'm just
9 going to walk you through a quick review of the fisheries
10 in 2024. With, you know, concentrating on some of our
11 FRMP monitoring efforts and such. If I had a headline
12 for 2024, it was that, it was good news for sockeye. We
13 saw in a lot of our monitored systems, we saw record
14 escapements and I think out of the 12 sockeye systems
15 where there's formal escapement goals, they were met or
16 exceeded in 11, with only, I think, Hugh Smith not
17 meeting their escapement goal, which they've been
18 terrible for a long time. So, and while the harvest data
19 for 2024 is not all the way in yet, but just the places
20 where we do have, you know onsite surveys or, you know,
21 up to date harvest information. We saw at the same time
22 much better harvests in 2024 of sockeye. So, just wanted
23 to start off with a little bit of good news.

24

25 But it is hooligan time right now. A
26 quick review, back to the 2024. You'll remember that the
27 Forest Service, along with KIC and various other
28 cooperators, have been monitoring the Unuk using
29 qualitative surveys. So, you know, like we discussed
30 earlier, it's not a count of a number of fish, but sort
31 of a tiered abundance levels. Just so we have, you know,
32 some sort of relative index of what's going on there and
33 eyes on, you know what's going on, boots on the ground,
34 sort of look at what's going things. So, that's, you
35 know, aerial surveys and a lot of just walking the
36 streams and seeing what they see. So, last year they
37 were, you know, on the system monitoring things roughly
38 about this time, of course. And they assessed the 2024
39 return as abundant, which is, you know, large, high-
40 density schools that -- the description there. So, you
41 know, large schools and widespread throughout the
42 system.

43

44 And then the fishery in 2024, you know,
45 as we've seen for the past few years, was closed to non-
46 federally qualified users. And with only the Unuk open
47 to qualified users with a limit of five-gallon bucket
48 and gear limited to dipnet and cast net and so, we did
49 have nine permits with reported harvest in 2024. And hot
50 off the presses. I don't think this was on your handouts

1 or anything, but I did get some information from John
2 Hyde down in Ketchikan. This year, their monitoring
3 efforts are a little different due to, you know, some
4 travel and budget issues. They aren't able to stay onsite
5 for the duration of the hooligan season. So, they're
6 doing what they can with making day trips you know,
7 trips by plane for the day in one area, surveys and
8 stuff. So, but they have been doing what they can and
9 so far, it looks like it has been pretty good, probably
10 one of the larger returns they've seen in a while. And
11 it has just peaked over here over the last few days.
12 And, you know, he would initially categorize it as
13 abundant again and they have issued 37 permits, mostly
14 to folks from the Metlakatla area, along with a handful
15 of designated fisher permits, and he also mentioned
16 encountering some of those folks while in the field there
17 doing surveys and, you know, being able to use them to
18 gather additional information while in the field about
19 where they had seen fish and you know, what kind of
20 abundance they had seen and that sort of thing. So, that
21 was pretty helpful. So, it looks like good news from the
22 Unuk, at least compared to, you know, what we've seen
23 over the past couple of decades.

24
25 Okay. So, pretty much the rest of this
26 is all salmon focusing on sockeye and moving roughly
27 north to south. We had a good year for sockeye on the
28 Situk with and as we have been having the past number
29 of years. So, the 75,000 fish through the weir there
30 which is, you know, just a little bit over the escapement
31 goal of 30 to 70K. And then, you know, also, as we've
32 been seeing for the last few years, the chinook return
33 continues to be not quite as good as we'd like it, and
34 it just barely creeped-in into the lower bound of the
35 escapement goal. And so there we also did what we've
36 been doing for most seasons, which is closing fisheries,
37 you know, during that initial part of the season, until
38 we see that the chinook are going to meet the escapement
39 goal.

40
41 And moving over to the Taku River. You
42 know, as you know, the Council's had a proposal to
43 establish basically a regulatory package for subsistence
44 fishery on the Taku, and that has been deferred until
45 things can get straightened out with Pacific Salmon
46 Commission and treaty folks to establish that new
47 fishery. So, but there is and has been for quite a while
48 an existing personal use fishery, and we would expect
49 to have a subsistence season on the Taku this year, with
50 regulations essentially mirroring those -- that personal

1 use fishery. You know, until the new subsistence fishery
2 gets clearance through the treaty. And it was a good
3 year for sockeye on the Taku with 114,000 sockeye for
4 the in-river population there, well over the, you know,
5 well over the escapement goal.

6
7 And over to Hoonah where we have a FRMP
8 project on Neva Lake. And it was a good year for sockeye
9 on Neva as well. That red dot there, we had, you know,
10 a little over 6,000 fish, which is the best we've seen
11 in quite a while and kind of continues a generally stable
12 or increasing trend. The harvest limit there was a couple
13 of years ago increased from 10 fish to 20. We had seen
14 declining effort in harvest there because it wasn't
15 worth going over there for ten fish. But, you know, we
16 now have decent harvest data for 2023, the first year
17 where that kicked in and, you know, we saw 230 fish
18 reported, which is a lot more than we had been, you
19 know, five-year average of 63 fish a year before that.
20 So -- and I can just say from being there too, we're
21 seeing more activity and more harvest occurring it at
22 Neva. So, it looks like things are going pretty good
23 there in terms of both escapements and being able to
24 support some increased harvest.

25
26 Then moving over to the Angoon area, it
27 was the best year we've ever seen in quite a few years
28 of monitoring by a long shot there at Sitka Lake. So,
29 over 23,000 fish and you know, which was great. There
30 was sockeye all over the place there, and the remote
31 monitoring system we use there ran really good this year
32 compared to last year. We were switching to Starlink and
33 had some issues, but everything ran nice and smoothly
34 there and lots and lots of fish.

35
36 Then Kanalku near Angoon, which has been
37 an important spot for Angoon residents for a long time.
38 We haven't had any information about escapements there
39 in quite a while, but we our main monitoring tool at
40 this point is word of mouth and monitoring harvests. And
41 harvests have been declining, but it's not clear if
42 that's due to lack of fish or lack of effort. You know,
43 I try to quiz folks whenever I can and it's -- I kind
44 of get mixed stories and everything, but you know, we
45 continue to see reported harvest at least declining
46 there at Kanalku. The '20 and 2024 is a very preliminary
47 number, but it feels like it's continuing that trend
48 towards, you know, lower and lower harvest set Kanalku.
49 And we also continued, you know, our youth fishing
50 efforts both here, you know, this one shows with the

1 Angoon Youth (indiscernible) Athabascan Bay. Ashley did
2 a similar thing with Kake folks over at Falls Lake. So,
3 and we're going to -- I'm going to try to expand that
4 program here and do some work with Hoonah kids over at
5 Neva, and maybe in take Angoon kids over to Sitka Lake.
6 I've had a problem with collecting good scale samples.
7 You know, I've been collecting them from spawners up at
8 the lake, and the scabby old fish we're getting -- only
9 1 or 2% of the scales are readable because they're so
10 deteriorated. So, I'm going to try to combine doing these
11 youth harvest events with collecting scale samples from
12 fresh fish right out of the ocean. You know, at the
13 mouth of the stream and get good scales and bring home
14 fish back to the community all at the same time so, and
15 teach them to do some of that, you know, filling out the
16 data forms and that sort of thing. And we're also doing
17 this in conjunction with not only fishing, but the
18 paperwork where they make each kid pick an elder and go
19 through the whole process of getting a proxy permit and
20 all the legit paperwork and everything. So, just trying
21 to make that educational, educate on the process as well
22 as the, you know, the fishing and such. So, looking
23 forward to that, doing that again.

24
25 And then down to Sitka area, the Klag
26 Bay. The project, run by the Sitka Tribe and saw just a
27 little over 7,000 fish there in 2024, pretty similar to
28 the last year and an improvement from some pretty low
29 years for a while there. In 2023, that was closed in-
30 season due to, you know, escapement concerns. I think
31 they have issues where low water prevent the fish from
32 making it up into the system, and they just become
33 sitting ducks for, you know, anyone fishing right in
34 front of the stream. Interestingly, we saw quite a bit
35 less harvest in 2024, despite the fact that there was
36 no closure, and I think that closure in 2023 probably
37 just kind of discouraged folks from going back there
38 again. So, we'll see if that trend continues. You know,
39 they may have kind of taken it off their list of places
40 to go to after a closure.

41
42 And then, of course, the big story is a
43 Redoubt, which continues to set new records each year.
44 Over two 210,000 fish through the weir. So, probably a
45 total return of well over 300,000 fish between
46 escapement, commercial catch and subsistence catch. So,
47 it, you know, blows the escapement goal out of the water,
48 blows the management plan out of the water. So, I do
49 have concerns about what the future is going to look
50 like. I don't know, use a little laser pointer thing.

1 But if you look at this little -- last time, we had a
2 bump of, you know, 100,000 fish escapement. Well,
3 though, that, you know, if you can just kind of shift
4 forward four years. So, those escapements made these
5 right here, these low returns. So, what's remains to be
6 seen is what, you know, these huge escapements are going
7 to do to, you know, future production, so hopefully we
8 can ride that train as far as it'll go. But it's all
9 kind of a big unknown. And also in Redoubt news, the
10 Board of Fish did approve a -- the use of net gear, both
11 sein and gillnet, you know, in their -- in the inner bay
12 with just, you know, 100 yard separation zone from the
13 area where people dip net and such. So, that should be
14 good news for efficient, you know, efficient harvest
15 there and Redoubt Bay. So, good news there.

16
17 Over to the Stikine, which is mainly
18 Wrangell and Petersburg folks almost exclusively fishing
19 that we have the second highest harvest there in that
20 Stikine fishery, which was great. Seemed like there was
21 quite a few sockeye, but again, there is that early
22 season closure. Stikine chinook are kind of the limiting
23 factor for the early part of that fishery. And so, we
24 again for 80ht years, I think, yeah, eighth year in a
25 row, we had that early season closure to let those
26 chinook by. And as you can see this is the escapement
27 estimates for the two main Stikine stocks, both the
28 Tahltan and the main stem Stikine that you know, the
29 last dot in the series there for 2024, you know, and
30 escapement is well above the escapement goal range. So,
31 again, sockeye just seem to do really well all across
32 Southeast. Yeah, and continuing that trend, you know,
33 moving down to the Prince of Wales, Hetta Lake had over
34 40,000 fish through the weir there, which is you know,
35 quite a few more than have been seen in many, many years
36 of monitoring and we had a pretty substantial harvest
37 there as well. So, that was all good news. And it's
38 pretty remarkable considering that the parent year for
39 that came from that dip, you know, down there and right
40 here. So, you know, we saw some really remarkable
41 production there. So, we'll see how long that continues,
42 you know. But that was really good to see because they
43 have had some really low years here in the past few
44 years.

45
46 One of the few dark spots here has been
47 Eek Lake, which is, you know, near Hetta there and also
48 used by Hydaburg but only counted 162 sockeye into Eek
49 and we've had some pretty low escapements there. And so,
50 the, you know, the harvest there was several times the,

1 you know, the actual escapement. So, that's going to be
2 something that's probably going to take some sort of
3 action by community or agencies to start protecting Eek
4 Lake sockeye here. We're going to, you know, they're
5 going to be in big trouble.

6
7 And then finally just kind of getting
8 on my crystal ball. I guess a little bit. While 2024 was
9 a great year for sockeye, I wouldn't expect that to
10 happen twice. The ocean entry conditions, you know, for
11 the fish are going to be returning in 2025, weren't all
12 that great. So, you know, not that promising. We'll see.
13 But and then but one of the main factors, of course, is
14 the intensity of the commercial seine fishery. The pink
15 forecast is this, you know, this year and the market is
16 terrible. So, you know, remains to be seen how much
17 seine effort there will be, and which may be a mitigating
18 factor in that. Another thing I'm watching very closely
19 is that we have virtually no snowpack throughout
20 Southeast Alaska. I do snow surveys there in Juneau, and
21 I think we have 10% of the normal snowpack. Maybe, you
22 know what elevation and so, come July, August is, you
23 know, that could be a real problem for, you know,
24 returning salmon, so. You know, there may be saved by a
25 rainy summer, but I expect that to be an issue here in
26 this upcoming season. And yeah, I think with that, I'm
27 happy to take any questions.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jake.
30 Any questions from the Council? Patti.

31
32 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Thank you,
33 Jake. On the Eek Lake, I mean, can't the Forest Service
34 do a special action to close it? I mean, why are they
35 allowing double the harvest over escapement?

36
37 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes. Well, the federal
38 system only has jurisdiction in the freshwater, and
39 almost all of that fishing occurs just right out in
40 front of the stream in saltwater. So, that would be a
41 state jurisdiction issue for almost all that fishing.
42 Yeah.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Anybody else?
45 Frank? Frank, Go ahead.

46
47 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah,
48 I noticed this low snow snowpack, too, and happened a
49 few years ago. Same thing. And I was like, oh, man, this
50 could be bad. But we had a rainy summer, and that saved

1 us, you know. So, let's hope.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Patti, again.

4

5

6

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. I have a couple of questions, but isn't there a, some sort of a what is that called? Like, where the biologists get together and talk about an area plan. I mean, can you -- can't you influence the state system and about being concerned about that Eek population?

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MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes. And I know that there have been conversations with the local fish and game manager. I've been part of those. But I think, honestly, a big factor is the Community of Hydaburg, you know. You know, they have had things like voluntary closures at Hetta when, you know, things have been rough there. So, I think any action that occurs there, is going to have to be led by the Community of Hydaburg, along with Fish and Game. So, yeah, I think they -- it feels to me like -- I'm not super familiar with that community, but it feels to me like there is a lot of sort of de facto community management of those fisheries. So, I think if anything meaningful is going to happen, that's where it's going to have to happen.

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MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chair, on the hooligan it says abundance assessed as abundant. How many years of abundance does it need to be at to consider it sustainable? Because, you know, we've been in rebuilding stage. So, are we still rebuilding or what?

MR. MUSSLEWHITE: I would definitely say we're rebuilding. Hooligan are a forage fish that has a life history strategy of abundance. And so, I think that probably the returns we're seeing now, even though they're considerably greater than we've seen in the recent past when it almost winked out to nothing. There's still probably a fraction of like a normal natural abundance. So, and it's a -- I think, a classic case of where we see a shifting baseline effect where people grew accustomed to, you know, anything more than zero was doing pretty good. So, I think I think we're a long-ways from having a open fishery, and I think we still need to be very cautious for quite a while. But that's my personal opinion.

47

48

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Cal, you have a question.

1 MR. CASIPIT: Not a question. More like
2 a -- more of a comment. Thinking about the Unuk. Before
3 the crash, I think there was fishing that went along --
4 went on there that was -- the harvest was enough for
5 folks to actually make grease. And I don't even, you
6 know, with this abundance that you're showing up there.
7 A few five-gallon buckets, that's not enough to make
8 grease, so I think you're right. We're still rebuilding
9 and like you said, shifting baseline. And, you know I
10 wouldn't consider that run reestablished until people
11 can start making grease again. So, that's my
12 perspective.

13
14 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes. I think it's also
15 important to note that being able to allow even a limited
16 fishery, while we're in this rebuilding maintains those
17 traditions of traveling to the Unuk and catching the
18 fish and doing the processing, even if it's not at the
19 levels where you can make grease or thing. But, you
20 know, we're able to maintain that because sometimes when
21 there's a break, those traditions don't start again. So,
22 I'm happy we can do at least that while it is rebuilding.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Frank, question.

25
26 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Neva
27 came up pretty good this -- last year. So, is there a
28 way, you know, Fish and Game guesstimate about how much
29 is going to come? So, is there a way that you can
30 guesstimate how much -- how you would do, like, now,
31 Neva got a lot of fish in there. So, they're going to
32 put a lot of eggs in there. So, the next 3 or 4 years
33 coming back, we would expect a bigger run there, right?

34
35 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yeah. I think you're
36 talking about a building a forecast essentially, where
37 we use things like the escapements of parent years and
38 such to predict the return. Yeah, we don't have a lot
39 of the age structure, enough if age structure and things
40 like, you know, and catch in other areas and such. But
41 we -- I can certainly use just the trend of the last few
42 years and, and I would imagine that we're probably going
43 to stay stable in that 5,000-ish fish escapement. I --
44 it seems to be like it's stabilized right around there,
45 and which I think is a pretty good place for it to be.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Follow up,
48 Frank.

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1 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. Just to comment. So,
2 we're hoping that each year gets better, right?

3
4 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: I mean, I always hope
5 that. Sure, up to a certain point, I mean, we have seen
6 escapements of 14,000 fish in the Neva and I think it
7 can do that again. I do think that there's a period
8 where water withdrawals by the ocean beauty plant
9 actually really hampered the productivity of that lake.
10 That plant is closed. They're no longer drawing water
11 from the stream. I've actually seen what appears to be
12 a dramatic increase in -- there's two populations of
13 sockeye within Neva lake. The ones that spawn in the
14 inlet stream and ones that spawn along the beach, and
15 I've seen the beach fish almost just sort of disappear
16 and now everybody wants into that stream. And that
17 subpopulation has just taken off in the last couple of
18 years, so I would not be too surprised as it builds back
19 a little bit to see 8- or 10,000 fish. And that would
20 be, I think, an ideal escapement for that system.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Jake.
23 I was going to make a comment kind of relative to what
24 Frank was just talking about, but kind of like one of
25 my observations looking at all your escapement data
26 there is, I don't always see a really good correlation
27 between high escapements and parent year returns. I
28 mean, I saw instances where there were great escapements
29 in the in the parent years and poor returns and vice
30 versa. So, kind of like my observation from that is that
31 escapements don't necessarily drive returns at all
32 cases. And, you know, there's other factors out there.
33 I don't know if I'm just not interpreting the data right,
34 or I don't know if you have any comment on that.

35
36 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: No. You are absolutely
37 right. I mean, in general, we need healthy escapements.
38 You know, it takes fish to make fish, but, you know,
39 there is a ton of factors, you know, such as the -- I
40 think the ocean conditions and just the first couple
41 months after outmigration are absolutely crucial, which
42 is why, you know, I looked at the ocean entry conditions
43 to kind of look forward to this thing. And they were
44 like, you know, but it's a big complex machine and we
45 don't always know all the factors, you know, and we're
46 going to see the results of a natural experiment here
47 at Redoubt when you have huge escapements. And if we can
48 sustain that, you know, but yeah, I've definitely seen
49 some sometimes very small escapements can produce
50 almost, you know, incredible returns because those

1 juveniles had all the resources to themselves, you know,
2 no density dependent effects. And, you know, they have
3 remarkable survival. So, yeah, there's a lot of factors
4 that confound the prediction. Yeah.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Just to follow
7 up, do you have any thoughts on the old conventional
8 wisdom that you don't want to over escape a stream
9 because you get too much escape and as you know, damaging
10 to the to the return?

11
12 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yeah. I think there is
13 some truth to that. I think sockeye are the one place
14 where that, you know, can hold true. Like you know, if
15 you pack a lake, you know, since they are rearing in a
16 lake there's a finite amount of resources for those
17 juveniles. And you see at some point where if they're
18 packed in, like everybody does badly. But for the most
19 part, more is usually better in just about all their
20 cases. Especially, you use -- more often leads to
21 diversity, diversity in run timing, diversity in life
22 history strategies and things like that. So, that may
23 pay off there, you know, there may be some years where
24 one particular life history strategy does really well
25 just due to the timing of weather and things. So,
26 whenever you have more fish, you have a wider
27 distribution of strategies going on and that are better
28 able to take care of -- take advantage of whatever
29 pathway was successful in that one particular year. So,
30 in general, I think more is better, except in very,
31 yeah, very limited circumstances.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thanks.
34 Good to hear your opinion. So, appreciate it. Anybody
35 else? Mike.

36
37 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
38 Yeah. We write a letter requesting the department close
39 Eek. You know, 160 fish. I've fished in Eek before,
40 years back and there are big brown of sockeye. I mean,
41 the fish are big, but it's never been a real powerful
42 producer, you know. I mean, it was okay, but why would
43 we not request emergency action to have them close it?
44 It's still open, even though there's nothing there and
45 that's not okay.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: We can certainly
48 take that up when we're discussing who we want to write
49 letters to here at the coming up in the meeting here
50 shortly. I guess you could consider that unless somebody

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1 says we can't, I don't think there's anybody that says
2 we can't. So. Okay. Anybody else with a question or
3 comment?

4

5 (No response)

6

7 Okay. Thank you, Jake. One more comment.
8 Go ahead, Mike.

9

10 MR. DOUVILLE: So, the snowpack on Prince
11 of Wales doesn't seem to be -- yeah, all the snow is
12 melted off by the time the fish come in. So, it's not a
13 great impact on our island as it would be in other
14 places. It seems to be.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
17 Mike. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program update. Rob
18 Cross and Jason Roberts.

19

20 DR. ROBERTS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
21 Members of the Council. This is Jason Roberts with OSM.
22 I'm joined by Rob Cross with the Forest Service. I just
23 wanted to give you a brief update on OSM's Fisheries
24 Resource Monitoring Program. And like a lot of things
25 this cycle -- I can't give you as definitive an update
26 as I'd like, but as you know, OSM administers the
27 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program to gather
28 information for the management and conservation of
29 subsistence fishery resources and federal public waters.
30 The monitoring program is also directed at supporting
31 meaningful involvement in fisheries management by Alaska
32 Native and rural organizations, and to promote
33 collaboration among federal, state, Alaska Native, and
34 local organizations. So, the notification of funding
35 opportunity has not yet been published, but OSM is
36 expecting to publish this notification for the 2026
37 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in the very near
38 future and once that publishes application information
39 and supporting materials will be available on the OSM
40 website at doi.gov/subsistence/frmp and I can pass that
41 link along to DeAnna to share with everyone. I'm not
42 sure if Rob has more information from Forest Service.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, any
45 questions? Fisheries monitoring project outlook.

46

47 (No response)

48

49 Guess not. Thank you both. Let's see.
50 Looks like he might be up next as well for Partners for

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1 Fisheries Monitoring Program. Kind of a related topic,
2 I guess.

3
4 DR. ROBERTS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Jason Roberts again. Yeah. So, very similar program. The
6 Partners Program is a competitive grant for Alaska
7 Native and rural nonprofit organizations that aims to
8 strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in
9 federal subsistence management by providing salary funds
10 to organizations so they can hire professional
11 biologists, social scientists, or educators, and program
12 funds can also be used for science and culture camps and
13 paid student internships. So, like with the FRMP
14 program, OSM is expecting to publish the notice of
15 funding opportunity for the 2026 Partners Program in the
16 very near future. Application information and supporting
17 materials will be available on our website once that
18 notice of funding opportunity is published and that will
19 be at doi.gov/subsistence/partners. And so, another
20 announcement in relation to that, I don't know how many
21 of you were all familiar, but our longtime point person
22 for the Partners Program at OSM Karen Hyer recently
23 retired, actually a couple of weeks ago. So, the new
24 points of contact at OSM are Jarred Stone, who's a
25 fisheries biologist, and Liz Williams, who is an
26 anthropologist and I can get their contact information
27 to anyone who's interested.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
30 Jason. Questions on the Partners for Fisheries
31 Monitoring Program? Cal.

32
33 MR. CASIPIT: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Calvin Casipit, Gustavus. Quick question. I know there's
35 one Partners Program person that's working in southeast
36 right now out of Hoonah, and I've talked to him a couple
37 of times on the phone. Is there anyone else that's in
38 Southeast that's under the partners program?

39
40 DR. ROBERTS: Yeah. So, I believe we have
41 one other partners program recipient, and that's the
42 Yakutat Tribe.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you.
45 Anybody else with a question or comment?

46
47 (No response)

48
49 Okay. Guess not. Thank you both. And
50 yes, next up is -- says general report from Lisa

1 Grediagin. So, Lisa, what do you have for us in general?

2

3 MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you,
4 Mister Chair. Members of the Council. For the record,
5 my name is Lisa Grediagin, the wildlife division
6 supervisor for OSM. And first of all, on behalf of OSM,
7 I would like to thank you all for the great service you
8 do on behalf of your community, subsistence users and
9 the resource. And we greatly value your expertise and
10 volunteer contribution of knowledge, experience and time
11 to this process. As many of you know, Congress
12 administratively moved OSM from the U.S. Fish and
13 Wildlife Service directly to the Office of the Assistant
14 Secretary, policy, Management and Budget. This move
15 became effective July 15th, 2024. This move was one of
16 the many efforts that the Department of the Interior has
17 made to strengthen the federal Subsistence Management
18 program and to ensure that federally qualified
19 subsistence users and Alaska Native peoples have an
20 opportunity for meaningful engagement in our public
21 process implementing the federal subsistence priority.
22 This January, in case any of you missed it, President
23 Trump returned to the white House and Doug Burgum was
24 sworn in as Secretary of the interior. Recently, Tyler
25 Hassan was appointed Senior Advisor to the Secretary,
26 exercising the delegated authority of the Assistant
27 Secretary for the Office of Policy, Management and
28 Budget. So, basically now Crystal Leonetti who is our
29 director, her direct supervisor, is in D.C. there,
30 another political appointee, Eva Burk -- Eva, someone I
31 forget. It's been so recent, all the turnover, it's just
32 been the last couple of weeks that we've gotten the
33 final appointees and so then above her it's Tyler. So,
34 he's kind of two steps above our director.

35

36 In February we welcome new public Board
37 members, Raymond Oney of Alakanuk, Benjamin Payenna of
38 Nome and Frank Woods of Dillingham and completed another
39 successful Board meeting. We hope to have updated
40 federal regulations for subsistence fishing published
41 in the final rule soon. Fingers crossed. And the proposed
42 rule, as you all know for the 2026 Wildlife Regulatory
43 Cycle, published on February 7th, and we're accepting
44 proposals through April 4th. So, now for some staffing
45 updates. In December 2024, OSM officially welcomed our
46 new director, Crystal Ciisquq Leonetti. She has been
47 acting in that role for over six months until she was
48 formally hired. Previously, Crystal was Alaska Native
49 Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
50 Service. Among regular OSM director responsibilities,

1 Ciisquq continues to lead OSM through its administrative
2 move, and has been doing a wonderful job. Since last
3 fall's Council meeting. Several OSM staff acted in
4 different roles to help through the transition to the
5 Office of the Secretary. Starting in February, Chris
6 McKee came over to OSM from the BLM to act as the
7 Operations Deputy Director for four months. Chris is the
8 Subsistence Coordinator at BLM and a member of the
9 Interagency Staff Committee, and previously Chris worked
10 for OSM in my position as the Wildlife Division
11 Supervisor. Scott Ayers, this is really hot off the
12 press. I think it just became official this week, has
13 just recently become the sciences deputy director of
14 OSM. And so, now OSM actually has two deputies. Our org
15 chart was redone after we moved to the Office of the
16 Secretary, because certain functions that the Fish and
17 Wildlife Service helped us do, like with FACA committee
18 reporting and regulations, we now have to do all on our
19 own. So, we structure it -- restructured it a little
20 bit and now have two deputies. So, Scott Ayers is the -
21 - officially now the sciences deputy director for OSM
22 and previously Scott was the Fisheries Division
23 supervisor for OSM. We also had a couple departures since
24 your last fall meeting, George Pappas, the OSM state
25 liaison, left OSM and took a job with the Department of
26 Fish and Game as their director of subsistence. So,
27 that's actually kind of an exciting move. Since he kind
28 of is uniquely positioned to really understand the
29 federal program and the state program and we're looking
30 forward to having him in that position with the state
31 and continuing to work with him in a different capacity.
32 And then, as Jason just mentioned, Karen Hyer, the long-
33 term fisheries biologist for partners and the ANSEP
34 program, retired just a few weeks ago. And now Jarred
35 Stone and Liz Williams is [sic] the contact for the
36 Partners Program.

37
38 Some upcoming meeting dates for the
39 Federal Subsistence Board summer work session will be
40 July 23rd and 24th, 2025, and then the Tribal and ANCSA
41 Corporation consultations on wildlife proposals and
42 closure reviews is scheduled for August 12th and 14th,
43 2025. All right. We continue to remind Council members
44 about the change requirements for U.S. travelers. You
45 must be Real ID compliant to Board domestic flights and
46 access certain federal facilities. I think we've been
47 saying this for years and years, but this time I think
48 we actually mean it that beginning May 7th, 2025, every
49 air traveler will need to present a Real ID compliant
50 identification to fly within the United States, even

1 when you fly on small commercial bush carriers. For our
2 program, you will need to have your Real ID in time to
3 travel to your fall 2025 Council meeting. You can find
4 more information on real ID requirements on the State
5 of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles website.

6
7 Just a little bit on correspondence. I
8 know you guys are going to get into this a little bit
9 later on in the meeting more in detail, but Council has
10 received a handful of responses earlier this year from
11 the Secretaries based on issues raised during individual
12 Council meetings and the All Council meeting last year.
13 OSM has also integrated a correspondence review,
14 standing agenda item in the Federal Subsistence Board
15 meetings to keep them apprised of all ongoing and
16 completed correspondence to and from the Councils. We
17 are aware of concerns that have been raised on timely
18 responses and are continuing to work on ways to help
19 expedite things as we move forward.

20
21 Finally, a brief litigation update, a
22 litigation update was provided to the Councils during
23 their fall 2024 Council meeting cycle. Since then, in
24 the Kake Emergency Hunt Matter briefing has been
25 completed before the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals and a
26 three judge appellate panel heard oral argument on
27 February 7th. We expect a decision sometime this summer.
28 In that Kuskokwim matter, the District Court found in
29 favor of the U.S. on all claims, and enjoined the State
30 from taking any further actions in the violation of Title
31 VIII on the Kuskokwim River. The State has appealed and
32 briefing before the Court of Appeals is now complete.
33 Oral argument is scheduled for April 11th. So, thank
34 you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council, that concludes
35 the OSM report, and I'd be happy to address any
36 questions.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you very
39 much, Lisa. Questions? I have one. When does the Board
40 get to see our special action request proposals? And
41 when do they act on them, and how does that happen? Is
42 there any public input into that into that decision?

43
44 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. So, both of those
45 special -- or all three of those special actions would
46 be temporary special actions. I mean, we have plenty of
47 time and they're longer than 60 days anyway. So, we'll
48 have to -- we'll schedule a public hearing for them. And
49 you know, the timing of -- I guess, exactly when the
50 Board will act on them, I can't say. I mean, you guys

1 haven't even submitted them yet and once they're
2 submitted, then usually staff meet to figure out the
3 timeline of the public hearing and when the Board could
4 act on them. I mean, off the cuff and unofficially, you
5 know, the work session might be a good opportunity. It's
6 like just before deer season starts, but it's hard to
7 get all the Board together. So, if they're already
8 planning on meeting, that might be an opportune time.
9 But I mean, I can't give you an exact date at this point.
10 We kind of figure that out after the requests are
11 submitted.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. But --
14 right. For those requests, there will be -- they do
15 require public comment periods, right. So, and you, you
16 schedule them in the affected communities. Is that where
17 that happens generally?

18
19 MS. GREDIAGIN: You know, ever since
20 Covid, we've started having a lot more telephonic public
21 hearings. So, we'll have to discuss whether we have --
22 you know, and sometimes we have multiple public
23 hearings. You know, if you want to have one or several
24 and maybe one telephonically one in the communities.
25 Yeah. All that's kind of to be determined.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. I say it's
28 important, and probably controversial issue so, I just
29 kind of want to make sure that the public stays, you
30 know, well informed on the process here. So, hopefully
31 that will happen. Okay. Thank you. Any other questions,
32 comments from the Council?

33
34 (No response)

35
36 Thank you very much. So, unless I miss
37 something, I think that's the last of our reports. DeAnne
38 is nodding her head. We only have a couple of kind of
39 update issues, but we also have some work to do on
40 finalizing any letters we want to write and review --
41 the whole Council needs to review the work of the Work
42 Committee on the Tongass Forest Plan working group
43 session that we had the other night, and there has been
44 a handout to the Council members that's important that
45 we take a look at that and, you know, make your thoughts
46 known on what we have here, which is put together by the
47 staff from the comments that we made at the work group
48 session. So, I think it might be a good idea to take a
49 break, take 15-minute break, give people a chance to
50 look over some of the handouts we have here. We have

1 drafts of the special action requests that we ask for,
2 and those come with a justification suggested by the
3 staff based on what we said in our discussions. So,
4 let's take a break. We'll come back, give everybody a
5 chance to look these documents over, think about them,
6 and then we'll finish up any of our letter writing
7 efforts, I guess, as well as the last few items of
8 business that are just informational. So, okay let's
9 come back at 2:45.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (On record)

14

15 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, Council
16 members, if you could come back to your seats, we'll
17 resume here. So, I'd like to begin now with the Council's
18 review of what the work group worked on Tuesday night
19 with our comments about the Tongass Forest Plan
20 revision. So, just to recap, put together a -- I think
21 it was a six-member working group. We sat down with
22 Forest Service staff who answered questions and took
23 notes. And the staff has very helpfully put together a
24 kind of a synopsis of bullet points of the issues that
25 we talked about that you should have in front of you and
26 hopefully everybody has a chance to read through those.
27 And so, what we need to do now is decide if the Council
28 wants to put forward a -- what I think what is
29 appropriate, I think we were told would be a letter that
30 would go into the planning process from the Council,
31 just kind of stating our input on -- into what up till
32 this point has been the assessment phase of the planning
33 effort. So, the Council will have to adopt a motion to
34 accept the work of the working group as the work of the
35 Council so we can submit it. And now is the opportunity
36 for Council members to add to or change or make any
37 adjustments to what the work group did the other night.
38 So, any questions? Ted.

39

40 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, I had an editorial
41 thing here, you know, on the timber portion of it here,
42 you -- pretty bold, No old growth timber harvest is
43 supported by the RAC. You know, I think that we need to
44 change that just a little bit. I mean, there's small
45 value-added, small companies according to on Prince of
46 Wales Island, where they do select cut type things. Also,
47 we have free use and cultural trees you know, that are
48 old growth. We got to be careful how we phrase that. I
49 guess if we put limited commercial old growth you know.
50 Like I said, small value-added type things. I mean, then

1 we got to make sure that the free use program and the
2 cultural program aren't affected by that statement, so.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted,
5 getting right into the meat of it here. That's good. I
6 of took note of that as well. Because yes, we do have I
7 don't know if, you know, the Council wants to be able
8 to support some of the smaller localized timber sales
9 that make use of wood available for local use. I think
10 that's an important part of the program that actually
11 benefits subsistence communities. So, yeah, that no old
12 growth timber harvest should be, probably not so
13 absolute. There's -- I think we probably would want to
14 allow some old growth, but it would have to be for --
15 more geared towards small scale local use. And that would
16 include, you know, personal use. You know, most people
17 are cutting old growth for that as well, as you know,
18 smaller sales for local use. It's just the large
19 industrial cutting of old growth that we would object
20 to. Any other Council members have any thoughts on that?
21 Mike.

22
23 MR. DOUVILLE: No, I totally agree. And
24 we discussed it at the tribal level as well. And we --
25 that was a portion that we thought was important that
26 got by me in our conversation the other night, but we're
27 -- that small sales -- small local sales for local wood
28 manufacturers, if you will was a consideration. And for
29 use wood -- personal use wood or reuse permits, you know
30 would be exempt from the old growth -- the old growth
31 is not supported, with the exception of those things.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
34 Anybody else? And, yeah, this topic or any other topic.
35 Patti.

36
37 MS. PHILLIPS: I'm going to stick to
38 timber and, you know, select timber harvest. I think
39 that's a practice select timber harvest. And then for
40 forest management, let's not -- build capacity within
41 communities for forest management. Similar to what --
42 there's a team in Hoonah that goes out and does forest
43 management practices. So, it's building within the
44 capacity of the communities. Also unrelated to that, but
45 on the one above, non-timber forest products. So, where
46 it says contact communities, but having some sort of
47 online notification system that so people are aware of
48 you know, these non-timber forest product permits
49 because the discussion should be with, you know, not
50 only the tribe but, you know, people of the region.

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1 Also, I would like to see a stop to land swaps like
2 state land for Forest Service land. It's being used as
3 a mechanism for clearcutting, and I don't -- I want to
4 see that not permitted. And one other note that I have,
5 that was all I had. Good job, work group.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
8 Patti. Any other Council members have any comments on
9 the topics that Patti would like to add? Maybe I should
10 just cover that. I just want to make sure that the
11 Council was okay with that. Any objections? Okay. Not
12 seeing any. Cal, you have something else?
13

14 MR. CASIPIT: Yeah, I just had one quick
15 one. Yeah. I think I mentioned that at that workgroup
16 meeting about a desired future condition standard. I
17 don't know if that last bullet under subsistence fish
18 and wildlife monitoring plan development was -- that
19 last bullet, if that was that thought that I had. If it
20 is, some ties that it should be as a desired future
21 condition, to me, that's the point. May not ever get
22 there, but that like I said, that's something we should
23 work towards, where every community has a, you know, has
24 a project that helps us all do our job better. That's,
25 you know, you know, getting more information to the
26 table. So, anyway, that is that's all I had. I realize
27 why you may not be able to say at least one project for
28 blah blah blah, but I would like something like that
29 idea written into the DFC, desired future conditions.
30 That's all I have. Thank you.
31

32 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal.
33 Mike.
34

35 MR. DOUVILE: I didn't mention the
36 personal use wood and small mills wood, but I don't know
37 if cultural wood was included in that. It was. Oh, okay.
38 Thank you.
39

40 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
41 Anybody else? John.
42

43 MR. SMITH: More of a sharing. The
44 University of Fairbanks as a training now of grading
45 wood and, you know, how to record it so that you can
46 actually use it, building your home. And just like you're
47 talking about other mills, we don't have that many mills
48 in many locations because of the that, we don't have
49 scalars, we don't have this and somebody to actually
50 qualifying guarantee that the log is solid enough to

1 support, you know, so they -- I think they did pass and
2 now, they're doing an education with the University of
3 Fairbanks. So, you can look into that if you're planning
4 to harvest off the land and get your 10,000 board feet
5 and, and build your home, that it's all by recording,
6 you know the quality and what you're using it for, if
7 you're using it for framing or if you're using it for
8 the full support of the building that they'll guide you
9 through learning how to do that. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: John. Patti.
12

13 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you. Oh so, Pelican
14 Alaska would like to have some sort of you know community
15 hearing, I guess, on the on the plan. So, you know, the
16 Forest Service can bring in a team to do a workshop and,
17 you know, a hearing in our community, we'd appreciate
18 it. Also trail maintenance. It seems like rural areas
19 like mine that are out in the middle of nowhere have
20 very limited trail improvements. And we have had some
21 recently only because Sitka Conservation Society was
22 able to get permission from the Forest Service to work
23 on the trail up to up to Goulding Lakes. But, I mean,
24 you go to other communities, and you see these elaborate
25 trails and you're like, why can't we have something like
26 that in our area? And so, we'd like to see some -- we're
27 trying to build, you know, visitor recreational capacity
28 in our community. And it's like small rural communities
29 like mine are kind of ignored. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
32 Patti, and Ted.
33

34 MR. SANDHOFER: Hey, thanks for that,
35 Patti. I think that her comment about visiting
36 communities, and I think they strive to do that, but I
37 think we need to make sure all communities have that
38 personal type visits. I think, you know, we're tending
39 in this technology world to do a lot of stuff over, like
40 over the web or whatever. I think that personal visits
41 to all the communities is important.
42

43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
44 And I think we were informed earlier, I don't remember
45 by whom, but you know, these local visits have been
46 planned. I knew that we had one actually scheduled for,
47 you know, Point Baker, Port Protection, which is only
48 about 50 people here and coming up in April. But it got
49 -- I was told it got canceled. You know, budgets or
50 whatever. Everything's kind of on hold. So, they're

1 hoping to have those visits sometime here, maybe in the
2 fall. But yes, they've made an effort you know, to get
3 out to the rural communities. I had a phone call, you
4 know, from the district ranger's office asking me for
5 one would be a good time to meet. And yeah, I was -- I
6 really appreciated that. So -- but those are on hold for
7 now. Anybody else? Patti.

8
9 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
10 our community has very small cruise ship visits, you
11 know, once a week over the, you know, starting -- end
12 of May through the end of August. But anything larger
13 than those small cruise ships they, with their outfitter
14 guide on Board. I mean, it's -- it almost becomes like
15 a competition. You go to a certain area where there'll
16 be a whole lot of tourists all of a sudden, and it's not
17 scaled to our rural area. So, we'd like to see, you
18 know, for areas like ours keep that small -- visitor
19 ships small and not inundate us with the larger cruise
20 ships. And I don't know if there's some sort of cruise
21 ship plan development in development, but if there is,
22 then it should include those rural communities in that
23 conversation. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
26 Patti. And I'd like to point out that we covered this a
27 little bit under the special uses topic there. And in
28 that topic, we asked to be -- we asked that the RAC be
29 consulted regarding new guide activities and renewals
30 of existing guide activities, and I think we meant to
31 include all the outfitter permits that are issued on the
32 forest as well. So, you know, not knowing who would be
33 best, you know, would be the best way to get that
34 information out. We thought, you know, at least being
35 in contact with the RAC and the RAC, having a lot of
36 connections within the communities would be, you know,
37 a good way to get information out. But if there's other
38 you know, other ways you think would be helpful and, you
39 know, just informing the local -- our concern was that
40 sometimes the local communities aren't in the loop
41 enough when, you know, recreational planning is
42 happening and they're issuing special use permits, you
43 know, for activities. And we know that, you know, the
44 organized guides and outfitters are probably in those
45 Forest Service offices asking for this and that, you
46 know, and yeah, we need to be consulted as well, because
47 some of those activities impact our local uses. So, that
48 was that was our best attempt to you know, cover that
49 topic. And if anybody's got any other ideas around the
50 table, that would be helpful as well. Questions anymore

1 Comments? Frank, did you have something? Yeah. Go ahead,
2 Frank.

3
4 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
5 don't know if this is -- with this thing but, you know,
6 whenever we spoke to the Forest Service a few years
7 back, it got so dry and Hoonah that it scared the heck
8 out of me. I mean, if anyone was out there in a picnic
9 ground or anything like that and starting a fire, that
10 there was no way to stop it. So, I've been planning to
11 talk to the city about how do we set up something where
12 if someone starts a forest fire, how do we react to it?
13 And I don't think there's any -- I don't know if there's
14 any plan or anything that the Forest Service and Hoonah
15 has done to address this issue. Because I know there was
16 a fire out there toward Game Creek, but I think we lucked
17 out of it. That happened in the Muskeg, didn't happen
18 in the forest, but they were able to put the fire out.
19 So -- and that was a really dry season. So, you know,
20 Hoonah's got a lot of trees in the back and it gets pretty
21 dry right now that it's been raining. But if we have a
22 hot summer it's going to be scary again. So, I'm
23 wondering if something like putting in, how do we deal
24 with forest fires? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Thank you,
27 Frank. I think that's I think that's a good topic. Yes.
28 The ecosystem is changing. We're getting some really dry
29 conditions sometimes now, and nobody thinks about fire
30 on the Tongass. But in the long-range plan like this,
31 it might be something that should be included in the
32 planning process. It's a good thought. Mike, did you
33 have your hand up?

34
35 MR. DOUVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 Something that you are getting close to is the permitting
37 for freshwater guides in Unit 2 or affecting subsistence
38 uses. And I've never -- I can't recall ever being
39 consulted by the Forest Service on the effect of those.
40 I believe they're issued by the district ranger, or at
41 least the office. You know, I think that since they are
42 affecting subsistence, that consultation with the tribes
43 at least would be in order.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
46 Mike. Patti.

47
48 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So,
49 I believe that there are certain locations where the --
50 where there are food -- food forests. And, like, I'll

1 give an example, like at White Sulphur Hot Springs, which
2 is in the Sitka Ranger District. There is a, like, a --
3 more than a patch, but they, you know, a crabapple,
4 trees that run along the coast on either side of the
5 White Sulphur Hot Springs cabin. You know, like two miles
6 this way, one mile that way, and that they were purposely
7 put there because of the berries they can produce. But
8 now that they're -- and these are ancient, and so now
9 because it's a wilderness and so much traditional
10 knowledge has been lost and it's not utilized as a --
11 for food anymore. And then also in that same area are --
12 -- and I probably shouldn't even say this on the record
13 because they're kind of, you know, gems, but, you know,
14 long patches of huckleberries after the cranberries. So,
15 to me, these were food forests where traditional people
16 used to seasonally go to harvest berries. And then
17 there's also areas where there were big strawberry
18 fields, but because they're in wilderness areas, the
19 encroachment of the forest is taking over that what was
20 once a big strawberry or strawberry and nagoonberry
21 field. So, I don't know. I mean, I know where they are.
22 People don't really go there anymore. But I mean, it was
23 one at one time, a traditional food harvest areas. They
24 say that if you own a salmonberry patch that you're
25 wealthy. Well, you know, those salmonberry fields,
26 nagoonberry fields were a source of food security, but
27 because of leave it alone wilderness area status, it's
28 really -- it's a lost food security. So, I just want to
29 say that because it's something that I really felt feel.
30 Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
33 Patti. Cal?

34
35 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Just a long what
36 Patti was saying there's a reason there's thimbleberry
37 patches right around sockeye systems. You know right,
38 you know, I can think of Sitka Lake, there's a huge
39 thimbleberry patch right there at the mouth of the river,
40 and Neva, same thing. There's thimbleberry patches all
41 over that place, and yeah, they're there for a reason.
42 They break right about the same time you're going to go
43 harvest sockeyes. So, that's a good observation, Patti.
44 I -- I've seen the same thing.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
47 Cal. John.

48
49 MR. SMITH: Just to share a little
50 history to add to both, what you guys are sharing. Our

1 people transplanted these berries in many locations. You
2 go straight across from Port Frederick from Hoonah is a
3 Groundhogs Bay. It's a traditional location that a
4 Kaagwaantaan live. And you can go there till today, even
5 where there's a grave site that goes back to the 1700s.
6 That's right off to the left side. And if you're ever
7 stuck in Icy Straits and you need a place from the
8 western, the easterly wind that's come in there's a
9 little cove. You could sit there. It's just amazing how
10 you can sit there in the fresh water, where you can see
11 that there's a waterfall that comes off of there. Right
12 up on the top of there's 3, 4 or 5, 6 apple trees that
13 are still there today, that the river comes down in
14 there and you can see what was man made, where they
15 would pull over the river and made a ditch where it got
16 really deep, and then it got higher up to where they
17 bathed, they washed their clothes but still connected
18 right back to the river. So, it was all always cleaning
19 itself. Then you had the thimbleberries, the
20 huckleberries, the salmon berries, the blueberries all
21 the way around the whole village. And even today, that
22 that it's still there. There's actually an old fishing
23 sign that's there. It used to be the cutoff when we used
24 to seine over there to where the where the
25 (indiscernible) grew right through the sign and the sign
26 still sitting there. Just a little history about our
27 people. They were very cultivating and very smart and
28 intelligent to have their food right there. And of
29 course, in Freshwater Bay, the strawberries that were
30 there. And I remember taking my family out fishing there,
31 and there's all the wild strawberries that were out there
32 where -- there was kids on four wheelers that were over
33 there, and I had to leave my family and go over and do
34 some education with the kids. Hey, you know, look
35 underneath where you guys are tearing up the
36 strawberries that are right underneath your wheels and
37 they did stop. But that -- actually the Forest Service
38 built a beautiful cabin. It's just amazing. Beautiful.
39 That's right. Sits right there in front of the
40 salmonberry. So gunalchéesh, thank you guys for doing
41 that. All my grandkids and my son, and my family spend
42 a lot of time there. Yeah. Good day.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
45 John. Other Council members want to add to or make
46 comments on what we have in front of us here?

47
48 (No response)
49
50

1 I just kind of want to comment on I
2 think, you know, we had some discussion about what the
3 overall intent of this, you know, forest plan might be
4 desired condition and I think I think what the Council,
5 the work group members were most interested in was that
6 this newest forest plan be more responsive to, you know,
7 community needs and concerns. And, you know, especially
8 within the subsistence communities, you know, that we
9 get more consideration, I think, in this forest plan
10 than previous forest plans. And I don't know if it's,
11 you know, something that to be added as a comment or not
12 at this phase, but I just think that, you know, to the
13 extent possible, it would be best if this forest plan
14 did not have too many elements imposed on it from outside
15 of Southeast Alaska. I guess, I'm hoping to see that
16 it's more generated from, you know, within Southeast
17 Alaska. I know, you know, as a national forest, you have
18 to be somewhat responsive to national concerns. But I
19 just think it would be a better plan if it was, you
20 know, more responsive to the local communities and not
21 have too much imposed on it from, from elsewhere. And
22 that was t the question I asked, you know, Greg Risdahl,
23 you know, that that really concerned me, that concerns
24 me, that, you know, at higher levels, they're going to
25 be telling the planners here, you will do this, you will
26 do that. And it's coming from outside of our communities
27 and I hope that doesn't happen. So, you know, if a
28 statement like that could be added coming from the
29 Council, if they would approve it, I would like to see
30 that.

31
32 MR. CROSS: Mr. Chair, can you just
33 repeat that statement one more time? I think I got it,
34 but.....

35
36 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: So, yeah, the,
37 the main comment is that we would hope that this forest
38 plan is more responsive to local communities input, and
39 to not have too many elements of the plan being imposed
40 on us from, you know, outside of Southeast Alaska, to
41 the extent possible, knowing that it is a national
42 forest. But as I said, to the extent possible, we would
43 like to see more of a community, local, community-
44 oriented plan. Any other anybody else on the Council
45 want to add any topics statements, observations? Go
46 ahead, Patti.

47
48 MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chair, so in the north
49 end, you know, with the glaciers melting, we have that
50 isostatic rebound, which means the land is rising. That

1 means that the marine waters are going, you know, further
2 out as the land is rising, the Tongass is getting bigger
3 on the north end. I just -- and it's also creating, you
4 know, some of these rocks that used to be -- you didn't
5 have to worry about them for navigation. Now you got to
6 worry about them. So, yeah, there's a change in the
7 geography.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
10 Patti. Any other topics comments. So, people might still
11 be thinking of things. But in the interim, I just -- I
12 kind of want to be clear here as the process as we move
13 forward. So, you're taking notes. You provided us with
14 some bullet points to be -- I think the next step is to
15 have these worked into letter form. That would come what
16 -- from our Council to the planning team. Is that how
17 it works? Be entered into the record.

18
19 MR. CROSS: Yes, Mr. Chair, for the
20 record, Rob Cross from the Forest Service. That's my
21 understanding of it and so, I don't know, we've been
22 keeping track of the changes that have been suggested.
23 So, I don't know if the Board needs consensus on those
24 changes, Ms. Perry.

25
26 MS. PERRY: I believe the vote was to
27 approve a letter, but I don't think they need to go line
28 by line to approve the changes. I think the original
29 vote would probably encompass that.

30
31 MR. CROSS: Okay. So, I guess just
32 consensus from the Council that the -- you want to accept
33 these changes. And then from that point the staff will
34 draft a letter, get that to the Council Coordinator, and
35 then we'll make sure that that gets to the planning
36 staff. Largely it will be the Tongass subsistence staff
37 that will be drafting these documents. But we'll also
38 get it to the PPSG, Pacific Planning Services Group
39 that's assisting with the process. And then also the
40 Tongass planning Group as well. And very likely the
41 forest leadership, I think, would be the appropriate
42 measure.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
45 Rob, DeAnna. So, I guess what I take from that is that
46 you know, in the course of our discussions here and what
47 we have on the record, transcripts can be reviewed, I'm
48 sure, in developing a letter. But as long as nobody on
49 the Council objected to any of the bullet points. I know
50 we made some modifications, so those should be noted,

1 but as long as there was no objections from the Council
2 on anything that we've talked about or see in front of
3 us that to my mind would constitute approval from the
4 Council, but we will need to have a motion and a vote
5 just to you know, move forward, that the Council will
6 adopt these as a letter to be submitted. So, are there
7 any other additions, comments? Patti, go ahead.

8
9 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
10 I just want to clarify on my stop land swaps. I'm
11 specifically talking about land swaps, where we're going
12 to trade federal land for state land so that you know,
13 I -- the practice of doing that so that it allows clear
14 cut on that what was once federal land. That's what I'm
15 talking about, about stopping those land swaps, those
16 sort of land swaps. Not all land swaps. Just type that
17 are made to clear cut. Thank you.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah.
20 Essentially what's been happening is they've been taking
21 areas that were say granted to the mental health trust
22 and the university trust. And if those areas were in
23 places that people necessarily didn't want to see the
24 logging activities that might happen near their
25 communities, they traded off for Forest Service land
26 that was, you know, in most cases further away from the
27 originally affected communities, but it just kind of put
28 that burden onto other, sometimes smaller communities.
29 So, that's what's been happening in the past. And, yeah,
30 it's kind of affected our smaller communities,
31 definitely. So, Ted.

32
33 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, I just had a
34 comment. You know, I know talking with Chad at the last
35 meeting, you know, with the change in administration a
36 lot of times we get changes in leadership, you know, and
37 at the regional level, we had a reassurance by the
38 regional forester that he would consult with us, you
39 know, early and often, you know, and we could be involved
40 in the process. I just hope that if there is a change
41 in leadership, that that same cooperation is going to
42 continue. And maybe we could put something in the letter
43 to that extent, because with changes in leadership,
44 sometimes you get a lot of changes and ideas and
45 involvement. Thanks.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I think that's a
48 good idea, Ted. Right, we did have a commitment from --
49 right, previous you know, people -- management people.
50 And that may not be true in the future. So, I think it's

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1 good to point out. Anybody else? Rob.

2

3 MR. CROSS: Yes, Mr. Chair. So, would
4 that be in addition to the statement, the expectation
5 of the Regional Advisory Council is to continue to be
6 engaged throughout this process as written?

7

8 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Regardless of
9 change in leadership, I guess, you know, just make sure
10 that we get that commitment going forward, regardless
11 of who's there.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Sounds good.
14 Thank you, Ted. Anybody else want to add anything?

15

16 (No response)

17

18 Okay. Are we ready to put forward a
19 motion on this topic, anybody? Cal.

20

21 (Simultaneous speech)

22

23 You are our motion maker this meeting.

24

25 MR. CASIPIT: All right. Thank you, Mr.
26 Chair. Calvin Casipit, Gustavus. I move that we support
27 this bullet pointed list for as amended by our discussion
28 just now, be turned into a letter to be sent to the
29 planning team and leadership of the Forest Service.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Sounds good. Do
32 we have a second?

33

34 MR. SANDHOFER: Second.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
37 Is there any other -- any discussion on the motion?
38 Details to be added?

39

40 (No response)

41

42 (Simultaneous speech)

43

44 MR. DOUVILLE: I call for the question.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Question
47 has been called for. I think I could do a voice vote
48 here. All in favor of the motion to submit a letter to
49 the planning team, based on the comments presented to
50 the Council by the working group. All in favor, say aye.

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IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Is there anybody
opposed? Say no.

(No response)

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Okay. Very good. Yeah. I wanted to thank you as well. Did a do a very good job of taking our round table discussions and turning it into a coherent set of document that we can look at. So, it's an art, not a skill. Okay. We should review any letters that the Council might want to generate from this meeting. We should talk about letters, and we should also -- I know they -- I know we voted to submit a special action request, but we have some special action requests, drafts written-up for us by the staff that we can look over, make sure they accurately represent what we are requesting. So, the Council should have those special action requests in front of them to look over. But we also want to take some time to talk about any letters that we propose to write. Cover the forest plan. The ones I took note of were -- we talked about sending a letter, I think it would be to the Board, requesting a longer wolf hunting season of 45 days. And another letter that Mike Douville requested was concerning the Eek Lake sockeye fishery. So, we need to put some thought into those. Is there any other letters that anybody wanted written that I missed? Do you have any notes on that, DeAnna?

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MS. PERRY: I just had a question. Mr. Chair, just to clarify, were these in addition to special actions that were mentioned? I think Mr. Douville mentioned a special action, emergency special action on Eek Lake. Are you wanting to do a letter as well?

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah, I guess he did pose it as a, right as a letter requesting a special action. But I guess a special action request is probably more accurate. So, Ted.

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MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think Jake mentioned that that was mostly a state-type harvest because it was outside of federal jurisdiction. So, maybe a letter to the State of Alaska stating that, hey, can you kind of cease this harvest because, you know, the escapement is very small, and we're concerned with the future viability of that stock.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
3 Yes. Your recollection is correct, I believe, since it
4 was a state managed fishery. Yeah. Special action
5 request wouldn't be appropriate. So, that would require
6 a letter from us to the -- I guess I'm not sure who to
7 send it to, local area managers or department itself or,
8 yeah, those are the kind of things we need to discuss.
9 So, Mike maybe we'll ask you on this Eek Lake sockeye
10 fishery, what did you have -- what did you have in mind
11 there?

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MR. DOUVILLE: I believe that should go
to the department. So, it has some teeth and not a
voluntary basis thing. That would be my suggestion.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I guess what
level of the department is the a question? I'm not too
versed in the state system. So, but we can think about
where the letter goes. So, if you want to just maybe
kind of flesh out a little more what you think needs to
be put in the letter.

MR. DOUVILLE: Mr. Chair. As far as I
know, the state does not have escapement goals for these.
And you know, a few years back, we raised a similar
issue with Sarkar. That should be a household limit. And
it did happen eventually instead of you know, because
it was getting harvested too heavily. But in this case,
I think just to closure until that recovers is an order.
We have jurisdiction of above mean high water. But that
doesn't help in salt water. And that permit -- that
stream is still listed on the permits, and that one
should be closed. I mean, for conservation purposes and
where the letter goes, I don't know if the area biologist
responsible for that area has the ability to do an
emergency closure on those. I would suspect that that
it's possible, that I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you,
Mike. So, that's pretty straightforward. An outright
closure. So, we should probably put that into a motion
that should be voted on to put forward, put out such a
letter. So, maybe we could just kind of restate that as
a motion so we can act on it.

(Pause)

Ted.

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1 MR. SANDHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
2 I make a motion to send a letter to the state area
3 biologist or commissioner to close the personal use
4 fisheries and Eyak until the run gets to a point where
5 it's sustainable. I guess the wording could be changed
6 a little bit, but of those to.....

7
8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: We have a second?

9
10 MR. Casipit: I'll second it. And that's
11 Eek Lake, right. Not -- yes, yeah, yeah. Because probably
12 in good shape.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Okay. So,
15 any further discussion on the motion? Go ahead, Mike.

16
17 MR. DOUVILLE: I'll just make a comment
18 about these. These are unique sockeye. They are really
19 big. The biggest I've seen in any of the streams and
20 it's really kind of a special place for that reason. And
21 it's a little bit later run. It always was. I don't know
22 what it's like today. I was in there last year and we
23 didn't see any fish at all. And the year before we did
24 not see any either. But anyway, they're kind of a special
25 run because they are that -- I don't know what makes
26 them that way when right across the street, they're only
27 half as big as the head of, you know, it's just a
28 different system. And I will speak in favor of the
29 motion.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. It's just
32 a letter. So, we don't have to go through any criteria
33 or anything, but any other comments? John.

34
35 MR. SMITH: Even just connecting the data
36 that Jake shared with us on that.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, good.
39 Anybody else? Ready for the question?

40
41 MR. CASIPIT: Call for the question.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you. The
44 motion was to submit a letter to the Department of Fish
45 and Game, Fisheries Division requesting a closure to Eek
46 Lake, personal use sockeye fishery until such time as
47 that system becomes sustainable again. So, all in favor
48 say aye.

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50 (No audible response)

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Is there anybody opposed? Say no.

(No response)

Okay. Got that letter covered. I know we also proposed a letter requesting a longer wolf trapping season of 45 days minimum, I think was the term we used. So, we need a little more discussion on that and then a motion. And I know that one kind of got a little more complicated, but I need to talk about, you know, who to address this letter to, and maybe a little more justification as to why we want this to happen. So, give that a little thought. Cal.

MR. CASIPIT: Yeah. Just some thoughts. For the letter. I think we need to mention that the need -- the continuation of subsistence needs for -- wolf pelts are not being met. I mean, I heard that from the -- I heard that from some testifiers earlier this morning that you know, wolf pelts are expensive, and they're -- he thinks that -- he thought that there should be more harvest so that there's more wolf pelts available for handicraft items and making of regalia. So, I think that needs to be part of this letter.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal. The continuation of subsistence uses of wolf hides is an issue involved here, yeah. I just, you know, that's the wording in ANILCA. Continuation of subsistence uses. And that's that covers a lot of ground, you know, a lot of uses that involve the taking of wolves. So, John.

MR. SMITH: Yeah. So, that would be Mike and George from Kasaan that you're speaking, and thank them for their testimony, but also looking at I mean, I'm just throwing this up their team, the minimum is going to be the, the 30-40 days that you're talking about, but making note that in all other areas that they open up the hunting season in August and here on the Prince of Wales, they don't open until September, but the closure in Prince of Wales is in March when all other areas are in April. So, I can see -- I can actually see an opening in August and then a closure in April giving it a, you know, two more months of time for them to harvest for cultural use.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John, but those opening and closing dates, that's for the hunting season. There's also a hunting season for

1 wolves, but the trapping season has been limited to 30
2 days for the last three years, I believe. And November
3 15th to December 15th, the 31 days, actually. But -- so,
4 I mean, one of the issues is, you know, trappers are
5 always working around weather conditions. Getting into
6 that mid-November to mid-December time and quite often
7 is restricted by weather factors, the ability to
8 harvest. And I mean that, just lengthening out the season
9 another couple of weeks could help alleviate that. So,
10 that was one of the issues mentioned. Are there any
11 others? Frank.

12

13 MR. WIRGHT: Mr. Chairman if this is
14 going to be an action item, we need to put it into
15 motion.

16

17 MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, the Council has
18 already voted to write a letter to the Board on wolf
19 Management yesterday, so I assume this was just building
20 the record on those items that you wanted included from
21 the vote yesterday.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. We did have
24 a vote. That's good for reminding us. But thank you
25 also, Frank, for -- yeah making sure that we checked on
26 that. Yeah. So, we did have a vote to submit a letter.
27 So, I guess that's -- that is what we're doing now.
28 We're -- yeah. The Eek Lake issue, that was a new issue,
29 but we did have a vote on the -- submitting the letter.
30 So, we're just making sure we get the contents of the
31 letter as to what we would like to see. So, other points
32 to put in the letter? Ted.

33

34 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, you know, we talked
35 about traditional and customary use. You know, I think,
36 we -- a lot of times get tied into consumption, you
37 know, eating what, what but I mean, giving these wolf
38 hides to trade barter to sell them in order to get
39 ammunition for you can subsist. I mean, I think we just
40 got to make sure we don't narrow that down too much. You
41 know, I mean, there's a lot of uses for that wolf that
42 are not just to help the deer population, which is just
43 a byproduct of the traditional and customary use.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
46 I think yeah, I think that's a factor there. I mean,
47 there are many reasons why people have trapped wolves
48 for generations. The customary and traditional practices
49 associated with wolf trapping, and it's, you know, it's
50 not just one thing. And maybe sometimes it's made out

1 to be just one thing, but it -- I don't think it is.
2 People trap for lots of different reasons. It's -- means
3 something different to, you know, probably everybody
4 that is involved in it. So, I don't like to see it
5 characterized as being for one purpose. So, I think we
6 need to recognize that. Mike.

7
8 MR. DOUVILE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
9 am supportive because I solidly believe there is a
10 harvestable surplus. I've been trapping wolves for 61
11 years. I've been studying and trapping wolves for that
12 long in my area and I think I got a pretty good idea of
13 how it works. But when I go to question the seasons and
14 so on, I have better luck talking about that canoe to
15 get anywhere in the frame of thinking that the department
16 has today. So, it just doesn't get anywhere. But I'm
17 certain that there's a harvestable surplus that --
18 because the department is using a really low-end number
19 of harvest, the number of days they allow you is -- it
20 takes you to the low end of what could be harvested. So,
21 I'm not looking at a predator control or anything, I
22 just firmly believe that there is enough there to offer
23 a better subsistence opportunity or more of a
24 subsistence opportunity. You know, we've had three ESA's
25 and none of them found were -- found any grounds to go
26 there. And now we're running into fewer -- the department
27 is fearful of a narrowing of a DNA. Well, you know, they
28 live on an island, so the DNA is going to be probably
29 slightly narrower. I mean, that's a gimmick. But you
30 don't see any wolf that is other than normal. They're
31 about healthy. I can show you pictures of wolf that, you
32 know, people couldn't believe it. They thought it was a
33 deer, but it's just fact. You know I've said this before
34 to keep my dogs that fat, I got to feed them twice a
35 day. But -- and I've spent a lot of time trapping. I've
36 caught a lot of wolves. And I've also looked and, you
37 know, I know what they're eating because I cut them open
38 and look, I don't have to go get the scatt. I know what
39 they are, and I've caught hundreds of them. So, anyway.
40 I do support -- I am supportive of for those reasons and
41 I think that would certainly give us a little better
42 subsistence opportunity. You know, you mentioned whether
43 that's a factor, not so much on the Road System, but if
44 you're working on the islands, it is a big factor. And
45 -- but like I say, no matter what the weather is, it
46 seems to be a harvest level of the same kind. But you
47 know that's that doesn't apply when you're working off
48 of a boat. So, thank you.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike.
2 And I think it's worth mentioning in the letter that we
3 do hear, you know, extensive traditional ecological
4 knowledge in regards to the health and sustainability
5 of the Prince of Wales Island wolf population, which is
6 what you're talking about. And I think that's, you know,
7 stating specifically in the letter that that's the
8 traditional ecological knowledge that this Council, you
9 know, relies on to make decisions, recommendations --
10 make recommendations like this. Ted.

11
12 MR. SANDHOFER: Ted. One more item. I
13 know, I believe it was yesterday when we were talking
14 with Lisa. It appears that the State is not following
15 their own management guidelines as far as their wolf
16 population and how long they're going to eat and keep
17 the season open. I think it was, you know, if there's
18 between 174 and 200 wolf, the season was going to be
19 this long. And I just it appeared to me that they're
20 being way too conservative and not fall in their own
21 management plan on wolf trapping on Prince of Wales
22 because of some concerns. And I think that's important
23 to put in that letter.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted.
26 John.

27
28 MR. SMITH: Even on the other hand, too,
29 is doing more monitoring with the cameras, with the wolf.
30 I know I've seen some of the cameras. I know they're
31 pretty bulky, you know, even developing something more
32 smaller. So, it's not aggravating the wolves, or the
33 wolves aren't trying to bite and chew it off, the other
34 one, you know, because they see a relative. But I've
35 seen many different videos of the cameras on the wolves,
36 and it was pretty amazing what I seen. It was like you
37 were able to see the whole family, see what they were
38 doing, what they were, what they were up to, where they
39 were at, where they were traveling. Yeah. And also, I
40 was looking up the trapping regulations. And they're
41 open November 15th through March 31st. And, you know,
42 you could still -- we could still request it to open in
43 August and closure in April. You know, just opening it
44 long enough to, you know, maybe not in all the other
45 areas because we don't have any issues of conservation.
46 But, you know, maybe on the Prince of Wales that we just
47 open it up another, you know, just thoughts, you know,
48 that that giving more time for people because of weather,
49 because of travel and then maybe even covering more of
50 the country, being able to move around a little more to

1 find them. Got a howl for them.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.

4 Patti.

5

6 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Chairman
7 Hernandez. I remember being at our RAC meeting and
8 Wrangell and I specifically said if we -- if -- often
9 when they take it away, we don't get it back. And you
10 know the managers assuring us that, oh, we'll be
11 responsive if, if it rebuilds, we'll give it back. And
12 then now past that we have, you know, we had the three
13 ESAs and as Mike, you know, said that those ESAs were
14 found to not exist. The endangered -- they're not
15 endangered. So, the management of subsistence resources
16 to cause the least adverse impact on rural residents who
17 depend on the subsistence uses of resources of such
18 lands, consistent with management of fish and wildlife
19 in accordance with recognized scientific principles.
20 While for us the inclusion of traditional and ecological
21 knowledge is scientific principles and so, we need to
22 be providing an opportunity for rural residents.
23 Traditional ecological knowledge says there's more
24 wolves there than there's than these current scientific
25 methods are saying, I appreciate the effort that they're
26 going to through scientific measures. In most cases I'll
27 support that. But in terms of the wolf, I mean, it's
28 impacting the entire ecosystem. So, yeah, if it's
29 inhibiting the continued viability of deer populations
30 for subsistence use because we're letting that wolf
31 population increase to a degree that's harming the
32 environment then we should be taking more. We should
33 have a 45-day season. We should have a more expansive
34 quota than what we have now. And so, you know, that's -
35 - we have a very strong record towards that because we
36 have federally qualified subsistence harvesters willing
37 to take more and customary traditional use would be put
38 -- would be used on the harvest. So, thank you, Mr.
39 Chair.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
42 Patti. I think we have enough points for this letter.
43 DeAnne has been vigorously taking notes over there, so
44 I think we're good. I think we're good on this one. And
45 as has been pointed out, we did vote to put forward a
46 letter. So, I think we got the points in it that we
47 need. And we do have another important thing for the
48 Council to do here. We voted to submit special action
49 requests, three of them to the Board, to go into effect
50 this hunting season. And we have -- the staff has put

1 together some wording that they think would be
2 appropriate for these special action requests. But the
3 Council should certainly review these and make sure it
4 meets the intent of what we wanted to do. So, are we
5 able to put those up on the screen for folks to read?
6 We all have them here in front of us, but we want to
7 make any changes or adjustments or anything that would
8 be easy to do it on the fly, probably.

9
10 MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chairman, could we
11 number these?

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Number them?

14
15 MS. PHILLIPS: Cause [sic] there's five
16 of them. I support all but five. Number five.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Five. I thought
19 there were three.

20
21 (Pause)

22
23 Okay. Yeah. Yeah. There's five, and
24 we'll go through them one by one. So, not all at once.
25 If that's what you were worried about. Yes. Okay. Yeah.
26 It won't be a bulk approval. We'll go through them
27 individually. So, yeah. Okay, here's number one. I just
28 numbered it. Okay. The first special action request
29 would be to close federal public lands to deer hunting
30 by non-federally qualified users in Unit 2. This is a
31 special action, but we're -- Council is also submitting
32 a -- wait a minute. I don't know if that goes through -
33 - might have to explain your wording there. What's the
34 companion's special action request.

35
36 MR. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin for
37 the record. So, there's three special actions and two
38 proposals. And so, you guys submitted -- you voted to
39 submit both a proposal and in a special action for
40 closure of public lands to deer hunting by non-qualified
41 users in Unit 2. So, that's -- this is the proposal
42 version. And it's just noting that there's also a special
43 action requesting the same thing for the 2025 season.
44 And you know you'll see at the special action request
45 it says you know there's also a wildlife proposal. So,
46 it's just kind of noting that there's.....

47
48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Yeah, I see
49 what you've done there. Right, we anticipate also
50 putting in a proposal as well as a special action. So,

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1 this is the proposal and this would -- this is a proposal
2 that would go through the analysis and come back to the
3 Council in October for our action as a proposal. And so,
4 this proposal would affect the 2026 hunting season. Is
5 that clear for everybody? So, this is a proposal and it
6 is to close federal public lands to deer hunting by non-
7 federally qualified users in Unit 2. You have all the
8 regulatory language there if we need to review that.
9 Maybe go right to the justification.

10

11 So, I guess I can read that as well.
12 Council believes this closure is necessary for the
13 conservation of a healthy deer population in Unit 2, and
14 to continue the subsistence uses of deer by Unit 2
15 residents. Prince of Wales Island -- or Prince of Wales
16 Island residents are not meeting their subsistence needs
17 for deer, which is one of the most harvested and utilized
18 subsistence resources by Prince of Wales communities.
19 Increasing competition with non-federally qualified
20 users over dwindling resource is also a growing concern.
21 All biological data are lacking with no actual
22 population estimates. Traditional ecological knowledge
23 from POW residents strongly attest to the significant
24 decline of Unit 2 deer population. Using harvest as index
25 for population size, this TEK is corroborated by
26 substantially decreasing reported deer harvests since
27 2015. Of particular alarm, the unit two deer population
28 is not positively responded to the mild winters over the
29 past two years. Deer populations usually increase as a
30 result of mild winters due to higher overwinter survival
31 rates because forage is more accessible. However, while
32 units 1, 3 and 4 saw an uptick in deer harvest in
33 response to mild winters, Unit 2 harvests slightly
34 declined. The Council views this proposal as a proactive
35 measure to conserve Unit 2 deer population before the
36 situation becomes even more dire, as one bad winter could
37 devastate the population and greatly prolong recovery.
38 While multiple interactive factors such as predation,
39 habitat loss and weather have contributed to the decline
40 of Unit 2 deer population, hunting and harvest mortality
41 are the most controllable factors. The Council is also
42 concerned about the age structure of the deer
43 population, as hunters often harvest large bucks, which
44 negatively impacts reproduction as those are less likely
45 to breed with younger bucks. The Council also has immense
46 trepidation about the impacts of Ketchikan becoming a
47 rural federally qualified community on the deer
48 population and subsistence users in Unit 2. However, the
49 Council understands that restricting non-federally
50 qualified users is necessary before restrictions to

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1 subsistence users may occur. The Council also submitted
2 a request to conduct an 804-user prioritization analysis
3 for Unit 2, deer. And was at the conclusion of the
4 justification we probably was. Okay. Council members,
5 any questions or thoughts on the justification? Patti.

6

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MS. PHILLIPS: I make a motion.

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(Pause)

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. Can I? I was going to respond to Patti. I think you were absent at the time, but the Council voted to submit this proposal. We already did. So, now we're just seeing if their wording -- yeah -- meets our approval. Okay. Thank you. And any -- Mike, did you have something you wanted to draw attention to?

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(Pause)

MR. DOUVILLE: Yes. Mr. Chair. Ask your question again, please.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Do you do you have something you wanted to draw our attention to here in this proposal or justification?

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(No response)

Okay. Apparently not. Patti.

MS. PHILLIPS: So, unless Mr. Chair, where it says traditional ecological knowledge from POW residents and public comment at our RAC meetings.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. That's easy addition. Anybody else?

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(No response)

So, can we just go to the last sentence again, Lisa? So, I think it's also, you know, wanting to note that the Council also submitted a request to conduct an 804-user prioritization analysis for Unit 2. So, I believe the understanding is that if you're going to start prioritizing amongst subsistence users with an 804 process, you do have to close to all other non-subsistence users. So, that is one of the more significant statements there in the justification. Anybody else? Meets the approval of the Council? Still

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1 some discussion going on.

2

3 (Pause)

4

5 MR. HIATT: Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yes. Go ahead,
8 Lewis.

9

10 MR. HIATT: Lewis Hiatt. I guess we're
11 still confused about the doe is still in here, correct?

12

13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: The doe hunt?

14

15 MR. HIATT: Right.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: That's on a
18 different proposal.

19

20 MR. HIATT: Okay. So, here we're just --
21 I'm sorry. Here we're just restricting the non-federally
22 qualified users and then setting up for the 804?

23

24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: I think that
25 would be the best way to state it. Yeah.

26

27 MR. HIATT: Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: In order to do
30 an 804, you first have to close two more than restrict,
31 you have to close to all non-federally qualified users.
32 Okay. So, that cleared everybody? Any other comments on
33 this proposal. I think we're good. So, next up, that's
34 a proposal. Now to go along with that, we have a special
35 action request because the proposal will not be in effect
36 for this 2025 season. In order to do something for the
37 2025 season, we need to have a special action. So, this
38 is the companion special action request. It is also to
39 close federal public lands to deer hunting by non-
40 federally qualified users in Unit 2 for the 25-26
41 regulatory year. And then it states the Council has also
42 submitted a companion wildlife proposal for the next
43 cycle. So, is the justification the same?

44

45 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. Yeah. The
46 justification on this one is pretty much exactly the
47 same as what you just read. So, I think the only addition
48 was right here.

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1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Right, Okay.
2 Same reasoning for the special action, we're going to
3 submit a 804 user prioritization. So, that requires a
4 closure to non-federally qualified users. If you're
5 going to -- before you can even consider an 804
6 prioritization, you have to have a closure. That's the
7 Council's understanding. Correct. Yes. So, any questions
8 on that?

9
10 (No response)

11
12 Okay. So, now we move ahead to the next
13 one. So, this is also a proposal, and the issue is to
14 conduct an 804 user prioritization analysis for deer and
15 Unit 2, it says the Council submitted a companion special
16 action request for the 2025 deer season. And is there a
17 justification for this? So, can we just look over it?
18 Can I -- maybe we should look over the wording of this.
19 This is the special action request.

20
21 MS. GREDIAGIN: I'm sorry, the wording
22 for what?

23
24 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Well its -- the
25 purpose is to ask for an 804 prioritization. How is
26 that? How is that worded in the.....

27
28 (Pause)

29
30 I just kind of unclear as to where --
31 other than the issue, where does it say that we are
32 requesting a 804 prioritization?

33
34 MS. GREDIAGIN: The issue statement is
35 the request.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: The issue
38 statement is a request.

39
40 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. And then under if
41 you look under proposed regulations you know that also.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, I see.
44 Okay. That's what I was looking for. Federal public lands
45 are closed to deer hunting, except by residents of
46 communities to be determined via an 804 analysis,
47 hunting under these regulations. Okay, that was a key
48 statement. I was looking for it and I hadn't seen that.
49 Okay.

50

1 And this would be a different
2 justification. So, I'll read out. The Council believes
3 an 804 analysis is required to prioritize a subsistence
4 users most dependent upon the Unit 2 deer population.
5 The Council is extremely concerned about the impacts to
6 the deer population and subsistence users on Unit 2, now
7 that Ketchikan is a rural federally qualified community.
8 Prince of Wales Island residents are now meeting -- are
9 not, excuse me, are not meeting their subsistence needs
10 for deer, which was one of the most harvested and
11 utilized subsistence resources by Unit 2 communities.
12 Where there are already conservation concerns over the
13 Unit 2 deer population, these concerns will increase
14 exponentially once thousands of additional federally
15 qualified subsistence users from Ketchikan harvest deer
16 from Unit 2 under federal regulations. Previously,
17 Ketchikan residents were limited to two bucks on federal
18 public lands. Federal regulations allow for the harvest
19 of five deer, one of which may be a doe. The Council
20 also notes that the need for 804 determinations if
21 Ketchikan becomes rural was a central discussion point
22 during deliberation on the non-rural determination
23 proposal and acknowledged that many Ketchikan -- and
24 acknowledged by many Ketchikan residents. The Council
25 understands that restricting non-federally qualified
26 users is necessary before restrictions to subsistence
27 users may occur and notes a request to close deer hunting
28 to non-federally qualified users was also submitted.
29 While biological data was lacking with no actual
30 population estimates, traditional ecological knowledge
31 from POW residents strongly attest to the significant
32 decline of Unit 2 deer population. Using harvest as index
33 for population size this TEK is corroborated by
34 substantially decreasing reported harvests since 2015.
35 Of particular alarm, the Unit 2 deer population has not
36 positively responded to the mild winters over the past
37 two years. Deer populations usually increase as a result
38 of mild winters due to higher overwinter survival rates,
39 because forage is more accessible. However, while Units
40 1, 3, and 4 saw an uptick in deer harvest in response
41 to the mild winters, Unit 2 harvest slightly declined.
42 The Council views this proposal as a proactive measure
43 to conserve the Unit 2 deer population before the
44 situation becomes even more dire, as one bad winter could
45 devastate the population and greatly prolong recovery.
46 While multiple interactive factors such as predation,
47 habitat loss, and weather have contributed to the
48 decline of Unit 2 deer population, hunting and harvest
49 mortality are the most controllable factors. The Council
50 is also concerned about the age structure of the deer

1 population, as hunters often harvest large bucks, which
2 negatively impacts reproduction, and those are less
3 likely to breed with younger bucks. Is that the
4 conclusion of the justification? So, that's the
5 justification for requesting the 804 analysis to
6 essentially allocate resources within the subsistence
7 communities of Ketchikan and Prince of Wales Island. Any
8 questions or comments on the proposed -- proposal or the
9 justification?

10

(No response)

11

12
13 And like I say, I think this one, we're
14 looking at the special action request, correct?

15

(No audible response)

16

17

Patti.

18

19

20 MS. PHILLIPS: On the second paragraph,
21 under justification. It's where it says previously,
22 Ketchikan residents were limited to two bucks on federal
23 public lands from Unit 2, it should say from Unit 2. It
24 just says federal public lands. I know we're talking
25 about Unit 2, but federal public lands are all over
26 Southeast. Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
29 Patti. That change has been made. Any others?

30

(No response)

31

32
33 Okay. I think the Council is in
34 agreement with that one.

35

36 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. And then -- Lisa
37 Grediagin, for the record. Yeah. The next one is just
38 special action request that pretty much, you know, is
39 the same as the proposal, which is for the 2025 season.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Any questions on
42 that? Have a companion special action request to go
43 along with the proposal.

44

(No response)

45

46

Right.

47

48

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Make the same
2 changes.

3
4 (Pause)

5
6 Okay. Now we go to the final special
7 action request. So, this -- we felt was necessary for
8 this upcoming season -- upcoming hunting season. And
9 this one states the issue is to eliminate the doe hunt
10 in Unit 2 for the 25-26 regulatory a year. If the final
11 rule establishing Ketchikan as a rural community
12 publishes before the end of the Unit 2 deer season. And
13 I might take a minute here, Patti. You expressed some
14 concern about this one. Is that t clear what we're doing?
15 This whole issue of the publishing of the Federal
16 Register that we could conceivably see that Ketchikan
17 is federally qualified, you know, as this season
18 commences, and if they become federally qualified and
19 nothing is done, then those -- all those Ketchikan
20 hunters are eligible to take a doe in Unit 2. And that
21 was something we're trying to prevent. However -- well,
22 maybe we'll read the justification here and see if that
23 covers it and -- okay, justification. While there are
24 already conservation concerns over the Unit 2 deer
25 population, these concerns will increase exponentially
26 once thousands of additional federally qualified
27 subsistence users from Ketchikan harvest deer,
28 particularly does from Unit 2, under federal
29 regulations. Previously, Ketchikan residents were
30 limited to two bucks on federal public lands. The federal
31 regulations allow for the harvest of five deer, one of
32 which may be a doe. While biological data are lacking
33 with no actual population estimates, traditional
34 ecological knowledge from P.O.W. residents strongly
35 attests -- and public comments strongly attest to the
36 significant decline of the Unit 2 deer population. Using
37 harvest index for population size, this TEK is
38 corroborated by substantially decreasing reported deer
39 harvests since 2015. Doe harvest is a customary and
40 traditional practice for Prince of Wales residents, and
41 current levels of doe harvests in Unit 2 are sustainable.
42 From 2020 to 2023, an average of only 68 out of 1600
43 or.....

44
45 MS. GREDIAGIN: I have to verify those
46 numbers. That's why it's highlighted.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: But let's just
49 say. Yeah, it looks like you're trying to put a
50 percentage on there. So, let's just say an average of

1 only 68 out of 1600 are a very small percentage of
2 reported deer harvest from Unit 2 were does. However,
3 the Council is extremely concerned about the highly
4 unsustainable doe harvest when thousands of Ketchikan
5 residents may harvest deer from Unit 2 under federal
6 regulations, significantly increasing doe harvest.
7 Because of this, the Council believes conservation
8 concerns over the viability of Unit 2 deer population
9 necessitate eliminating doe harvest completely. A
10 recognized principle of wildlife management is to
11 mitigate female harvest when there is a conservation
12 concern, as they are the reproductive engines of the
13 population.

14
15 The Council views this request as a
16 proactive measure to conserve the Unit 2 deer
17 population, before the situation becomes even more dire,
18 as one bad winter and excessive doe harvest could
19 devastate the population and greatly prolong recovery.
20 While multiple interactive factors such as predation,
21 habitat loss, and weather have contributed to the
22 decline of Unit 2 deer population, hunting and harvest
23 mortality, particularly of does, are the most
24 controllable factors. Well, the Council recognizes
25 eliminating doe harvest may hurt POW subsistence users
26 whose subsistence needs for deer are already not being
27 met, regulatory mechanisms do not currently allow for
28 doe harvest by only a subset of subsistence users, and
29 conservation of does is paramount to protect subsistence
30 opportunities into the future. The Council is aware that
31 a proposal to eliminate the doe hunt has been submitted
32 for the 26 to 28 regulatory cycle to address this issue
33 and codified regulations. However, the Council considers
34 this special action request necessary to get through the
35 25-26 deer season without further exacerbating
36 conservation concerns. So, questions, comments? Patti.

37
38 MS. PHILLIPS: I just have a little edit.
39 So, the paragraph that begins, however, where the
40 sentence that says because of this comma for the 2025
41 slash 2026 regulatory year comma, the Council believes
42 da da da, the believes conservation concerns over the
43 viability of Unit 2 deer population. So, I just insert
44 the 2025-2026 regulatory year.

45
46 MS. GREDIAGIN: Wait, sorry. Could you
47 say that again? Because of this.....

48
49 MS. PHILLIPS: Comma.

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1 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah.

2

3 MS. PHILLIPS: For the 2025-2020. Oh,
4 sorry. Thank you. Because of this comma, for the 2025-
5 2026 regulatory year comma the Council believes.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
8 Patti. So, does anybody have any other issues as the way
9 this is being presented? Patti, you kind of express some
10 concern about this, do you see what the issue is here
11 and why we're doing what we're doing? I know you were -
12 - you weren't here. We had this very lengthy discussion
13 on this. So, if you have any questions.

14

15 MS. PHILLIPS: I was here, Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Oh, okay.

18

19 MS. PHILLIPS: My no vote was counted.
20 Thank you. Okay, I'll go with the majority vote. Thank
21 you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. You did
24 make it for that portion. Very good. Thank you. Okay.
25 Anybody else?

26

27 (No response)

28

29 Okay. Apparently not. So, we already
30 have the approval of the Council to submit them. We
31 don't have any objections to the way they're worded, so
32 I think we're good. Okay. Thank you, Lisa.

33

34 I think we covered everything that I
35 have on my list that needs to be done. Was -- anybody
36 on the Council has thought of any other actions, letters
37 we want to do? Okay, I think we've only got a couple of
38 items to attend to here before we can adjourn. So, we
39 still are looking for a Council correspondence update,
40 and that comes from DeAnna.

41

42 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
43 is DeAnna Perry Council Coordinator. I'll be giving a
44 brief summary of the correspondence that the Council
45 voted to send at its last meeting, and any additional
46 correspondence pertinent to the Southeast that's been
47 received. You'll find all of these letters starting on
48 page 159 of your meeting books. Last December, the
49 Council submitted its comments on Alaska Board of
50 Fisheries Southeast and Yakutat finfish and shellfish

1 proposals. You commented on 23 different proposals. The
2 next letter is the request for funding to send a Council
3 member to attend and engage at the Board of Fisheries
4 meeting that was approved, and member Casipit was able
5 to provide those state fisheries comments in person.
6 Starting on page 169, there are seven response letters
7 from the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture. The
8 first few are responding to Southeast Alaska issues such
9 as receipt of Sitka Kaagwaantaan clans petition for
10 extraterritorial jurisdiction. Trans boundary mining
11 issues; a response to the State of Alaska's November
12 13th letter that was on Unit 4 deer. And then starting
13 on page 199, there are four other response letters from
14 the Secretaries. They were responding to this Council
15 and other Councils concerns on Council member
16 compensation request, fisheries management concerns, the
17 programs correspondence policy, and a response to Kodiak
18 Aleutians concerns regarding the notification of the
19 Talking Circle sessions held before the Federal
20 Subsistence Management Program was moved from the U.S.
21 Fish and Wildlife Service.

22
23 I also put together information for the
24 back pocket document for the unguided non-resident
25 anglers with help from Council members. The Council
26 wanted to have this handy for any Council member
27 attending meetings in the future, such as Board of
28 Fisheries, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
29 I've distributed those internal talking points to the
30 Council. Since the Council has already voted to create
31 that document, we don't need to approve that, but I'd
32 be interested in any further comments from you
33 individually if there are additional edits you'd like
34 to see. And again, this is just for the Council's use
35 as a resource in the future if needed. Those -- or that
36 concludes the correspondence update for the Council. Mr.
37 Chair.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
40 DeAnna. Any questions on the correspondence from the
41 Council?

42
43 (No response)

44
45 Okay DeAnna, maybe you can move on to
46 the non-voting young leader seat update. Yeah.

47
48 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That'll
49 be quick. Again, this is DeAnna Perry for the record.
50 On page 207, you have a bit of information regarding the

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1 non-voting young leader seat. The Board advertised the
2 open period for the non-voting young leader membership
3 earlier this year. It closed on February 16th. Staff are
4 reviewing these letters of interest, and the applicants
5 will be evaluated this summer. And hopefully we'll have
6 an announcement before the next winter meeting. And so,
7 we'll keep you updated on that. Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you.
10 Any questions? Questions or comments from the Council?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Yeah, I think that was pretty clear. We
15 hope to have a youth seat shortly. How about the
16 declining balance cards? What's going on there?

17
18 MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair, again.
19 DeAnna Perry, for the record. At the fall meeting, it
20 was discussed that the way the Council members receive
21 compensation will be changing. There will now be two
22 options that members will have. It will be implemented
23 at the fall 2025 meeting and I think in the fall meeting
24 we called it declining balance cards. But actually, the
25 current options are one that's called a stipend card,
26 and this would be with an advance payment and final
27 payment on this card. And that's your travel advances
28 and the per diem reimbursement which you guys know is
29 like your final travel voucher check. Again, those two
30 will be paid with these cards. A primary benefit of
31 using the stipend cards is that we do not need to obtain
32 any of your banking information. And we, of course, will
33 be continuing to use our corporate cards for the airfare
34 and lodging. So, that's option number one, and then
35 option number two is to do a direct deposit of the entire
36 trip at the end of travel or completion of the voucher
37 or and completion I should say and there would be no
38 advance. Now for that option, the direct deposit,
39 obviously, we would need your banking information. So,
40 I know that's kind of dependent on each individual
41 Council members' comfort level. I can follow up with
42 individual members to check your preferences.

43
44 For option number one, the stipend card,
45 I won't need any information. If you choose the direct
46 deposit, I have a form for you to fill out that you can
47 give us your banking information so that those direct
48 deposits can happen. And that's an update on that, Mr.
49 Chair. And again, I'll follow up with each member
50 individually for that.

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CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: So, are there any questions for DeAnna on this new plan? Patti.

MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, with the stipend card, I would use it like, if I want to eat out and they take -- it's like a debit card. Is that what I would do?

MS. PERRY: Thank you. Member Phillips, that is your per diem. Your per diem amount. You get so much every day. You could use that for however you see fit. Whether it's -- yeah, it would be for your meals and incidentals.

MS. PHILLIPS: Mr. Chair, but I would -- like if I paid for a meal, I could use it like a credit card.

MS. PERRY: Yes, like a debit card or a credit card. Yes. And it would just -- the balance on it would just keep whittling away with each charge.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Question. Seems like we'd have to somehow keep track of what was left on the cards, so we don't end up the restaurant with a used-up card. Do you know how that would work?

MS. PERRY: It's similar to what you're doing now, in a way. You're, you know, you're maintaining your own budget. You know how much you get each day. So, at the end, we're sending you a check to reimburse you. In this instance, we're basically giving you that money up front. Your advance would be, you know, the advance you normally get by a check, and then your voucher money would hit the stipend card later.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. So, it's up to us to keep track of how much we spent and make sure we don't go over it sounds like, okay. Thank you. John, go ahead.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, just curious if like that card would have a pin so that you could actually put it in a -- and check how much you have left or, you know, like what I'm saying, but I know in the last meeting we were deciding whether we were going to do this or not. Is this something we have no choice on that we either have this here and that's it or...? Gotcha.

1

2 MS. PERRY: Yeah, that's a good question,
3 member Smith. Sorry, I'm losing my voice. It was decided
4 at a higher level that we do not have the choice of
5 continuing to receive the paper checks. It's going to
6 be one of these two options.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
9 Ted.

10

11 MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah, I was just curious.
12 Yeah. Is there any restrictions on that card? You know,
13 a lot of times I just use cash to pay for my whatever.
14 And what happens if I want to go Cabela's and use this
15 card? Would that be okay? You know, because, I mean, our
16 liquor store, you know, I mean, I know federal
17 regulations allow, you know, on a travel card, you can't
18 use it for this or that, depending on the vendor. I was
19 just curious how that would work.

20

21 MS. PERRY: Member Sandhofer, I would
22 have to get back to you on that. That's not part of the
23 information that was given to us, but I can certainly
24 get that information from you. Again, I think it's you're
25 given a certain amount of money and it's up to you to
26 budget that. We think and we hope you're using it for
27 meals and incidentals. But I don't walk you around to
28 your restaurants and make sure that you do that now.

29

30 MR. SANDHOFER: Well, yeah, a lot of
31 times I use cash, and I probably will still use cash and
32 use -- I mean, it's just -- yeah, I don't like using --
33 I'll probably use the other option. So, that's good. I
34 was just curious.

35

36 MS. PERRY: Thank you.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay, John,
39 another question.

40

41 MR. SMITH: And I -- I'm just assuming,
42 I'm just assuming that once those checks are given to
43 us, you know, it's our money. You know, it's what they
44 give us for stipend and what we use it for, as long as
45 we don't end up going and we're starving and you can't
46 pay for your meal, that's going to be an issue. But I
47 think once it's in your pocket, that's the money that
48 they gave you to survive while we're here. So, to me,
49 if you bought a pair of rain gear with it and you
50 suffered for three days not eating, that's your

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1 decision. It's my thoughts.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, John.
4 I guess question comes to mind for me. I kind of like
5 the idea of the card, but as Ted said, you know, when I
6 come to the meetings, I kind of like to use cash, so I
7 know you know exactly how much of my stipend I'm using.
8 I don't have to keep track of my own things. So, could
9 you go into the bank with these cards and just withdraw
10 the money as cash and then spend it that way? Then you
11 know what you got.

12

MS. PERRY: Member Hernandez, that would
13 be my understanding. The advance, like what normally
14 comes in your check, it would be deposited initially on
15 that card, which you could use for some meals and
16 incidentals. But if you're using the stipend card, you
17 would get the final amount deposited on your card at the
18 end of travel. And when the voucher is done, just like
19 you receiving your last voucher check by mail that you
20 normally do, so you wouldn't have all of your money up
21 front deposited on the card. If I wasn't clear. Thank
22 you.

23

24

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Well, any
25 other questions?

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(No response)

So, you will be contacting us
individually asking which we prefer at some point here
in the future?

MS. PERRY: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you
for that. Any other questions?

(No response)

And that was the last item on the
agenda. So, we actually are finishing up a little bit
here before five, gives us the opportunity to see if the
anybody on the Council wants to make any closing
comments. So, I guess just kind of raise your hand if
you want to want to have anything to say at the end of
the meeting. Cal, go ahead.

MR. SANDHOFER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Calvin Casipit, Gustavus. I only want -- to make this

1 short, but I just wanted to thank staff again for hanging
2 in there with us. Doing some really great work. Keeping
3 notes for us and helping us write letters and proposals
4 and all, and yeah. Thanks for all your hard work. You
5 sit here through the whole thing with us, and you
6 persevere with us, and then you work at night trying to
7 document the stuff that we just did. It's great work,
8 and I really appreciate it and just wanted to make sure
9 you guys knew that we may -- even though we may be tough
10 at you -- tough on you at times on the witness table,
11 we sure appreciate your help.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Cal.
14 Patti.

15
16 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
17 I just would like to compliment staff, federal staff and
18 State of Alaska staff for their contribution to our
19 meeting material analysis. I especially like the
20 regulatory history that they put in into our books. The
21 verbiage and the tables. I found it really helpful. And
22 it's just to see the degree of professionalism in these
23 documents is really appreciated. So, thank you, Mr.
24 Chair.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you,
27 Patti. Anybody else? John.

28
29 MR. SMITH: Yeah. (In Native) I echo
30 everything that Calvin and Patricia and very thankful
31 for that. But I want to echo that out to the community
32 and the tribal members and the folks that -- even our
33 youth for being here and sticking the whole time here.
34 Just one concern I have and just to -- something that I
35 wanted to bring up was about the elk, you know, is there
36 anything that we're going to do in that field? I know
37 that you know, going to Wrangell AC meetings and other
38 meetings that they had that concern about that. And of
39 course, listening to, you know, the data saying that
40 although there's not many of them, you know, we're having
41 the same issue of wolf. So, just thinking of more of a
42 study, is there time? Is there this to actually get a
43 count of how many is on Wrangell? How many is on the
44 island? How many is up in the POW, or the Prince of
45 Wales and those kind of things just, you know, that's
46 just something that it's on my mind, anyway.

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48 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: John, might hear
49 more about that when we're in Wrangell come next October.
50 Okay, Ted.

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MR. SANDHOFER: Yeah. I just want to echo to the staff, you know, I know it's a rough time for you guys. And you, you do excellent work. Even under the turmoil that you're facing right now with the uncertainty. You know, thanks to Mike and George for coming, really appreciate it, Heather, everybody. You know, thanks for sticking around and can't believe we're going to be done early. That's first for me on my third meeting. So, that's cool.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Ted. Anybody else? Mike.

MR. DOUVILLE: I concur with Cal's comments. This RAC has had meetings where we didn't have support, and I really appreciate it. It's -- this RAC is notorious for creating lots of work. Anyway, I do really appreciate your help, because we did -- we had lots of meetings where we did not have any help, and it was much more difficult. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike. Anybody else? Frank.

MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I too would also like to thank the staff, because sometimes we had to try to make a decision when we -- and we're just struggling to try to figure out what we're doing. And it's so much easier when someone gives us some facts. Gunalchéesh. And another thing is I think that we need to give our recorder a stick so I can keep it in John off that. Every time he grabs on to his mic, she's always hitting him.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, thank you, Frank. Yeah. It's good thing they see John next to the recorder there. That's okay Mike, you had something.

MR. DOUVILLE: Yeah. So, I would like to thank the tribal representation. It's something that I really encourage and it's really nice to have you here. And hopefully down the road we can even make that stronger, Gunalchéesh ho.

CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mike. Anybody else? Yeah. I want to, you know, acknowledge that we had the two tribal members from Kasaan here. I think they were here for the entire meeting and testified. And I'm sure you're going to bring a lot of

1 information back to your community and maybe other
2 tribes as well. So, appreciate you being here. I know
3 we had some important issues before the Council that you
4 were interested in. So, thank you for your
5 participation. And, of course, the staff you know, it's
6 been said by the Council, and I totally agree. Yeah,
7 truly dedicated public service. That's all I can say and
8 you need to be appreciated. I also want to thank the
9 Council for just being such good Council. You really
10 take on these tough issues, and boy, there's a lot of
11 thoughtful comments and a lot of thought goes into what
12 we do, and it shows so much -- everyone should appreciate
13 you guys. So -- and Patti go ahead.

14

15 MS. PHILLIPS: Could we have a Council
16 photo in front of the canoe after we're done?

17

18 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Sure.

19

20 MS. PHILLIPS: Thank you.

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22 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Yeah. You bet. We
23 got daylight. Okay. Is that -- that pretty much cover
24 it? I'll declare that the winter meeting of the Southeast
25 Regional Advisory Committee -- oh, we have to have a
26 motion. Okay. Sorry. Don't read it yet. We need a motion
27 to adjourn.

28

29 MR. SANDHOFER: I make a motion to
30 adjourn.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Motion to
33 adjourn has been made. Do we have a second?

34

35 MS. PHILLIPS: Second.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON HERNANDEZ: Okay. Meeting
38 adjourned. Thank you all.

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40 MS. PERRY: Thank you everyone.

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42 (Off record)

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44 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Rafael Morel, for Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 126 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME III recorded on the 20th day of March;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 13th day of June 2025.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager