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EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

WEDGEWOOD RESORT, GAZEBO ROOM  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
December 16, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Wright, Chair  
Susan Entsminger  
Donald Woodruff  
Eva Burk  
Andrew Bassich  
Linda Evans  
Dorothy Shockley  
Gerald Alexander

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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

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(Fairbanks, Alaska - 12/16/25)

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(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, it seems we  
better get started as the day is going by here fast and  
to start, we're going to have Sue do an invocation.  
Thank you, Sue.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Let's all stand. Father  
God, we come to you in this beautiful, cool morning in  
Fairbanks, and to meet for the Eastern Interior RAC. And  
we pray that we all can contribute and respect and we  
thank you for all the blessings that you do give us, in  
Jesus' name. Amen.

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(Pause)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm gonna [sic] call  
the meeting to order at 9:25 am and do roll call. Thank  
you. Mr. Secretary.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Good morning. I'll start  
at the top of the list. Sue Entsminger

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Dorothy Shockley. Are you  
online?

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(No response)

34

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Linda Evans, are you online?

36

37

(No response)

38

39

Eva Burk.

40

41

MS. BURK: Here.

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43

MR. WOODRUFF: Andrew Bassich.

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MR. BASSICH: Present, online.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie Wright.

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49

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Here.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Galen Gilbert.

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3 MS. MCDAVID: Galen is absent and  
4 excused.

5

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Don Woodruff is here.  
7 Gerald Alexander. Gerald, are you online?

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Gerald should be joining  
10 us a little bit.

11

12 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. There you go.

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, with five of  
15 nine Council members present, we have quorum.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
18 for that. I see you have some meeting announcements. Go  
19 right ahead.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. Good morning,  
22 everyone, and welcome to day one of the rescheduled fall  
23 2025 Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory  
24 Council meeting. We have a hybrid meeting today. We're  
25 here in Fairbanks at the Wedgewood, and also have folks  
26 joining us online and by phone. I do have some  
27 housekeeping announcements before we get started today,  
28 so please just bear with me for a few moments. This is  
29 a public meeting, and it is being recorded and it will  
30 be transcribed. For those attending in person, please  
31 remember to sign in at the sign-in sheet each day of the  
32 meeting. If you are joining us online, you can find the  
33 agenda in the meeting materials on the Federal  
34 Subsistence Management Program website, and that address  
35 is [www.doi.gov/subsistence](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence). And then under the Regions  
36 tab you can choose Eastern Interior and then Meeting  
37 Materials. The most recent draft of the agenda is on the  
38 web page and there are also these sorts of beige copies  
39 at the back of the room on the public info table.

40

41 Just a reminder for folks online, please  
42 remember to keep yourselves muted if you are not  
43 speaking, use the mute button on your computer or you  
44 can press star six on your phone. And it's also star six  
45 to unmute yourself if you're joining on the phone. If  
46 you would like to speak, please press star five and that  
47 will raise your hand, and we'll call on you when it's  
48 time to speak. We might have to mute lines if they become  
49 a distraction. And then for folks helping moderate  
50 online, please don't select the mute all button because

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1 that will also mute us here in the room. Friendly  
2 reminder about conduct and ethics. We do use Robert's  
3 Rules of Order to the best of our ability for these  
4 meetings and the meeting will be led by our Chair, Mr.  
5 Charlie Wright, with assistance from myself and others.  
6 We just ask that folks please don't speak out of turn  
7 and wait to be called on by the Chair. There will be  
8 opportunities for public comment throughout the meeting.  
9 Each morning we'll have a public comment opportunity on  
10 non-agenda items. And then if you'd like to comment on  
11 a specific agenda item, the Chair will call on you when  
12 that agenda item comes up. We do have green cards at the  
13 back to sign up for public comment, public testimony.  
14 You can just fill those out and pass those to me or any  
15 other staff, and we'll get those to the Chair.

16  
17 We do look forward to hearing all public  
18 testimony, but we just ask that you please be considerate  
19 of the full agenda and try to limit your comments to  
20 about 3 to 5 minutes. And let's see, written comments  
21 are also accepted. You can submit them to myself or you  
22 could email them to [subsistence@ios.doi.gov](mailto:subsistence@ios.doi.gov), and be sure  
23 to include your name and affiliation. Today's AV support  
24 is being provided by Gabe from Talking Circle Media, and  
25 the audio recording of this meeting will be transcribed  
26 by a separate group. So, I just please ask folks to  
27 remember to state your name before each time you speak.  
28 And I think I might have broken my rule there and forgot  
29 to introduce myself, so I'll do that now. I'm Brooke  
30 McDavid. I'm the Council Coordinator for the meeting.

31  
32 I have a quick membership update. We  
33 have one new vacancy on the Council, Member Olivia Irwin  
34 had to step down and she is -- has taken on a new role  
35 on the Alaska Board of Fisheries. We will have an open  
36 period for Council member applications and nominations,  
37 if anyone is interested. That'll open up after the first  
38 of the year. There are applications on the back table,  
39 and we can also send those to you online. Mr. Chair,  
40 that concludes my housekeeping announcements. Thank you  
41 to everyone that has joined us and we look forward to a  
42 great meeting.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.  
45 Okay. It's time for Welcome and Introduction. So, I  
46 really appreciate everybody showing up this morning,  
47 coming through the cold, starting your car and torturing  
48 yourself and your vehicle. I guess we will do -- that's  
49 my welcome, and we could do introductions. How are we  
50 going to start here? We're going to go with the sun. Do

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1 we want to do Council members first? Okay.

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(Pause)

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5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Introductions. Sue  
6 Entsminger from Mentasta Pass.

7

8 MS. BURK: Eva Burk from Nenana and  
9 Manley Hot Springs.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Charlie Wright,  
12 Rampart, Tanana. Chair.

13

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Don Woodruff, Eagle.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: And then, if folks that are  
17 joining us in the room could just come up to the front  
18 table and introduce yourselves. Please press the button  
19 on the mic to speak.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sue says please get  
22 in line, so it'll go faster. Thank you so much.

23

24 MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi, I'm Lisa Grediagin,  
25 the Wildlife Division Supervisor with the Office of  
26 Subsistence Management and also the LT, Leadership Team  
27 Lead for this meeting.

28

29 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, Wildlife  
30 Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management.

31

32 MS. MONTGOMERIE: Good morning. Council  
33 Chair Charlie Wright. I'm Claire Montgomerie, I'm the  
34 Ecologist for the Eastern Interior Field Office of BLM.  
35 You're probably used to seeing Jim HERRIGES represent  
36 the Eastern Interior Field Office, but he sadly has  
37 retired. So, I'm taking over some of his duties.

38

39 MS. MILLER: Hi. Dana Miller, I'm an  
40 intern with BLM at the Eastern Interior Field Office.

41

42 MR. LANE: Good morning. I'm Ryan Lane.  
43 I'm a Biological Science Technician with the Bureau of  
44 Land Management, Eastern Interior Field Office.

45

46 MS. KETRON: Good morning. I'm Caroline  
47 Ketron. I'm the Anthropologist and Subsistence  
48 Coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management in  
49 Glennallen.

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1 MR. MERRILL: Good morning. Clayton  
2 Merrill, Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic and Yukon  
3 Flats National Wildlife Refuges, U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
4 Service.

5  
6 MR. HERRON: Good morning. Keith Herron,  
7 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Assistant In-season  
8 Fisheries Manager on the Yukon.

9  
10 MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. Kim Jochum,  
11 National Park Service Regional Subsistence Program.

12  
13 MR. RICHARDS: Good morning, Mr. Chair,  
14 Members of the Council. My name is Mark Richards. I'm  
15 with Resident Hunters Alaska, currently live in  
16 Fairbanks.

17  
18 MS. LAPP: Good morning. I'm Krystal  
19 Lapp, Tanana Chiefs Conference.

20  
21 MS. COCHON: Hi, my name is Grace Cochon,  
22 and I am with the Office of Subsistence Management, and  
23 I will be helping Brooke's division for a few months.

24  
25 MS. JAMES: Sarah James, Elder  
26 Spokesperson for Arctic Refuge from Arctic Village for  
27 Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government, NVVTG.

28  
29 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I'm Liz  
30 Williams, Anthropologist with OSM and with the Eastern  
31 Interior Council.

32  
33 MS. MILLER: Hi, I'm Pamela A. Miller.  
34 I'm a member of the public and I'll wear the hat of  
35 Arctic Connections.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you all for  
38 that. And anybody who's online, can you introduce  
39 yourselves, please?

40  
41 MR. YASKA: Good morning. George Yaska,  
42 Indigenous Knowledge Liaison on a temporary detail with  
43 (distortion).

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
46 for being here today, George. Anybody else online?

47  
48 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, good morning.....

49  
50 (Simultaneous speech)

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MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. This is Greg Risdahl. I'm the Forest Service Subsistence Program Lead and Interagency Staff Committee member. Good to see you all.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Anybody else?

MR. THOMAS: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Bruce Thomas, CATG.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning, Bruce. Thanks for being here. Anybody else?

MS. LEONETTI: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Crystal.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. JALLEN: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Yukon River Summer Season Fishery Manager here in the Fairbanks office.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning, Deena. Anybody else?

UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. STONE: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Jarred Stone, Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management.

MS. LA VINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair, and members of the Council. There's somebody who we -- who has been trying to announce herself. She's very faint. So I'm going to call out the last four numbers of her phone number, and then we can give her a moment to announce herself. I'm Robbin La Vine, subsistence policy coordinator in Anchorage by the way, and I would love to hear from 8646. Can you please introduce yourself?

MS. JALLEN: Hi Robbin, this is Deena Jallen. That was me just announcing myself. Thanks.

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1 MS. LA VINE: Oh. Oh, okay. Thank you.  
2 We got you. Alright. Never mind, everybody.

3  
4 MS. JALLEN: Yep. Thank you.

5  
6 MS. LEONETTI: I'll try next. Waqaa. Good  
7 morning, Mr. Chair. This is Crystal Leonetti, Director  
8 of Office of Subsistence Management.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning,  
11 Crystal. Thank you for being with us today. Anybody else  
12 online?

13  
14 MS. ERICKSON: (In Native). This is  
15 Diloola Erickson with Tribal Resource Stewardship,  
16 Tanana Chiefs Conference.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning Diloola.  
19 Thanks for being with us. Anybody else online?

20  
21 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning.....

22  
23 (Simultaneous speech)

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25 MS. KOSBRUK: Good morning, Council --  
26 sorry.

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

29  
30 MS. KOSBRUK: This is Deanna Kosbruk  
31 calling from Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. Good  
32 morning and good to see you all. Thank you.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning to you.  
35 Thank you.

36  
37 MR. POETTER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
38 Members of the Council. Aaron Poetter with the state of  
39 Alaska, the Federal Subsistence Liaison. Good morning.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I'm going  
42 to be quiet. And if there's a few of you more, just jump  
43 on after the next. Thank you.

44  
45 MS. KLEIN: Hi, good morning, this is  
46 Jill Klein. I'm.....

47  
48 (Simultaneous speech)

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1 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning, Mr. Chair.  
2 Members of the Council.....

3  
4 MS. KLEIN: I -- I'll just finish. Sorry.  
5 This is Jill Klein, Regional Subsistence Coordinator  
6 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and also  
7 Interagency Staff Committee member listening in. Good  
8 morning.

9  
10 MS. CRAVER: Good morning. This is Amy  
11 Craver with Denali National Park and Subsistence Manager  
12 and Cultural Anthropologist for the Park. Thanks.

13  
14 MS. TAYLOR: Good morning. This is Sara  
15 Taylor. I am with the Secretary of the Interior's Office  
16 in Anchorage, Alaska. Happy to join you today from  
17 Anchorage.

18  
19 MR. FOLEY: Good morning, Chairman  
20 Wright, members of the Council. This is Kevin Foley,  
21 fisheries biologist with the Office of Subsistence  
22 Management, calling in from Anchorage, Alaska. Thank  
23 you.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think that might  
26 be all. Now, unless there's anybody left that wants to  
27 introduce themselves.

28  
29 MR. RANSBURY: Good morning. This is  
30 Shane Ransbury, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
31 Fisheries Assistant Biologist in Fairbanks. Thanks.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning,  
34 Shane. Thank you. Anybody else online?

35  
36 MS. PILCHER: Good morning. This is Nissa  
37 Pilcher, Council Coordinator with OSM.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning.

40  
41 MS. OKADA: Good morning.....

42  
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else?

46  
47 MS. OKADA: This is Marcy Okada...

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning.

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1 MS. OKADA: .....Subsistence Coordinator  
2 for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

3  
4 DR. VOORHEES: Good morning, this is  
5 Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist with OSM.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else online  
8 want to introduce yourself? Okay. We've had one more  
9 join us here in the room. If she could introduce herself,  
10 it'd be -- appreciate it.

11  
12 MS. EVANS: Is that right? Linda Evans.  
13 North Pole, Rampart, Tanana, Manley.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning,  
16 Linda. Thank you for being here. We'll have our Council  
17 report in a little bit here down the agenda. So, we just  
18 want to do the introductions right now. And I think that  
19 covered everybody online and everybody in the room. And  
20 we will move down the agenda to Review and Adopt the  
21 Agenda at this time. Give a minute. Yeah. If everybody's  
22 seen it already and yeah. Go ahead, please. Thank you.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
25 is Brooke, for the record. So, we have a little bit of  
26 a different layout for our agenda than we normally do  
27 just because of the unique circumstances of this  
28 meeting. Today the main action items are going to be to  
29 start into reviewing and making recommendations on  
30 federal wildlife proposals and closure reviews. That  
31 will continue on Thursday. Tomorrow, the Eastern  
32 Interior RAC and the Western Interior RACs are going to  
33 be meeting together in this room, and they will be  
34 discussing primarily fisheries issues in the morning.  
35 And then in the afternoon, the Secretarial Review of the  
36 Federal Subsistence Management Program. We will be  
37 taking public comments on non-agenda items this morning  
38 after Council Member Reports and Service Awards, and  
39 again on Thursday. Tomorrow, non-agenda item comments -  
40 - we'll give an opportunity at the end of the day if  
41 there's still time, but just because it's the only day  
42 the 2 Councils are meeting together tomorrow, we'll  
43 prioritize public comments on agenda items and then the  
44 Chairs will provide opportunity if we have time at the  
45 end of the day. So, I just wanted to get that on the  
46 record, and if there's any other questions about the  
47 agenda, Mr. Chair, I'll turn it back over to you.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any  
50 questions on the agenda? Everybody looked at it? Okay.

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MS. BURK: I make a motion to approve the agenda. This is Eva.

MR. WOODRUFF: Second.

MS. MCDAVID: That was Don Woodruff with the second.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Don. Okay. We'll ask for unanimous consent. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Oh, I didn't have to say that. Any opposed to the unanimous consent?

(No response)

Hearing none. Adopt agenda. And now moving down to Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke. The minutes are found on page seven of your meeting book and that was for the February 19th through 20th meeting.

(Pause)

MR. WOODRUFF: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don Woodruff. I move that we accept the minutes as read -- or written.

MS. BURK: This is Eva, I second.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you again. I'll ask for unanimous consent. All those against. All opposed. Please signify by saying aye.

(No response)

Hearing none. Motion passes, thank you. And now we're down to Council member reports, and I guess we'll go with the sun. So, Don, I'll ask you to start, please.

MR. WOODRUFF: Well, where would I start? The fisheries on the Upper Yukon is still a total disaster and I haven't put up fish since 2017 as far as salmon go. And from my perspective, the people on the

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1 Yukon are getting pretty fed up with not being able to  
2 fish or only being able to fish on a windows schedule.  
3 And they're beginning to fish as they feel they need to,  
4 to put food on the table. The Fortymile Caribou are  
5 doing okay but growing very slowly. The moose in our  
6 area are doing okay, but just a few miles out of town,  
7 we're in marmot country. It's just straight up. So, it's  
8 not moose habitat, really. And there was a lot less out-  
9 of-town hunters this fall, and I'm thankful for that.  
10 But if you think about, you got these river corridors  
11 through the Yukon-Charley in our area. Nobody goes more  
12 than a mile off the river to get a moose unless they're  
13 dang stupid. Because it's just a tremendous amount of  
14 packing. I did that once early when I was in my 20s, and  
15 it was ten trips and we didn't get the hide or the head.  
16 The rabbits are coming back pretty good and I was able  
17 to get out and get seven marten. So that's a good sign  
18 that the rabbits are around. Thank you.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Dorothy, are you  
21 online? Okay. She's not online. I guess it's you, Linda.  
22 Thank you.

23  
24 MS. EVANS: This is Linda Evans. My  
25 report is probably pretty brief. Like Don said it's  
26 pretty sad. Not much [sic] resources, subsistence  
27 resources. And it's getting harder and harder. Because  
28 the price of other things, supplement your -- within the  
29 stores are getting higher, too, so. And I feel really  
30 sad because our elders are used to eating their Native  
31 foods, you know, and it's harder for them to live  
32 without. I'm also concerned about, you know, the  
33 trawlers and Area M fisheries that are fishing during  
34 the time when our fish are coming into the rivers, you  
35 know, Kuskokwim, Yukon River. It seems that we need to  
36 really work harder together to try to make sure that  
37 people can get what they need for their tables. I have  
38 grandchildren that are growing up who don't even know  
39 what a fish camp is and that's pretty hard. We do try  
40 to go to Rampart in the summertime, but you know, now,  
41 my grandson is in baseball and, you know, that takes him  
42 away from going home to Rampart just to live in the  
43 village for a while. But those things are hard. I really  
44 feel that we can come to solutions that are good for  
45 everyone. So just have to work at it. Thank you.

46  
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is -- excuse me.  
48 This is Sue Entsminger. Being right on the border of  
49 Unit 12 and Unit 13 and on the Road System, really close  
50 to -- actually is easy access for Anchorage and

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1 Fairbanks. The -- there's plenty of hunters out there  
2 during season, and there's more requests for shutting  
3 down federal lands to sport fishing -- or sport hunting,  
4 and I see that as a domino effect that's going to create  
5 more problems in the end. I know we have lower sheep  
6 numbers and surveys from Fish and Game just recently  
7 show lower moose numbers and -- in areas, not all of it.  
8 And the Fortymile Caribou numbers are down from what  
9 they were, and they're less numbers allowed to be taken.  
10 And the -- it's interesting. I haven't had -- I haven't  
11 taken time to get fish off the fish wheel out of Slana,  
12 but people are still getting their fish in Slana. And  
13 we have close friends from the Kenai, and they brought  
14 us a bunch of fish completely -- this would be wonderful  
15 for people. They brought me like 20 fish filleted and  
16 vacuum packed and frozen. And I thought, wow, I kind of  
17 like that. That's really nice. And then I share with my  
18 friends in Mentasta. And I did want to report now, in  
19 case I'm not here at the end of the meeting. This is my  
20 last meeting. I've been on this Council 24 years and one  
21 of my biggest things that I see is the Yukon fish just  
22 never solved. It was bad when I got on, and it's worse.  
23 And it's just hard for me to understand how these kind  
24 of things happen. Why aren't -- where's the solutions?  
25 So, I think one of the things I did want to report is  
26 also that being on the Council, for me, it's real  
27 important that Native and non-Native respect each other  
28 and rural and non-rural. Sometimes it gets -- for me --  
29 oh, wow, there's a good way that I can do this type of  
30 hunting. You know if I use this season or that season.  
31 And I don't think that's productive. I think people need  
32 to work more together. All the agencies and the people  
33 need to work more together, like you just said, Linda.  
34 So that would be my report. Thank you.

35  
36 MS. BURK: Good morning. This is Eva. I  
37 really appreciate everybody's comments this morning.  
38 Especially thinking about fisheries and how bad things  
39 have gotten. I think Charlie will talk more about this,  
40 but a lot of people talked about the fish camps getting  
41 broken into. People had bear encounters. We actually got  
42 to fish this year in Nenana. We did the Culture and  
43 Education permit, and it was really hard when we got our  
44 permit and it says, you're allowed to get 25 fall chum.  
45 And when I look at the Bering Sea report, they got  
46 151,000 chum in their bycatch in this past year, 2025.  
47 That's the in-season report in December. That's hard.  
48 And so, I really want to -- I sit on that advisory panel  
49 to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and we  
50 have the action coming up in February. So, we'll really

1 get in that into that tomorrow. But I just wanted to  
2 share, like the really big difference in what people --  
3 like we have a cap, but there's no official cap in the  
4 Bering Sea Pollock Fishery yet for chum. But the Native  
5 people, if they want to do Education and Culture, they're  
6 capped at 25 chum and that don't go very far in our  
7 community. But we made the most out of it because that's  
8 what we do. We treated that chum, that probably would  
9 have been -- Charlie was -- thought it was dogfish. And  
10 I said I was like the -- that's what people are used to  
11 here. Our fish are paler. It's going to be good. Just,  
12 we'll smoke it and we cooked it over the fire. And it  
13 was so much juicier and richer and had more grease than  
14 the sockeye that we've been flying in and it was a real  
15 treat for our elders. They were really excited. We had  
16 a week of potlatches in Nenana. Well, actually we had  
17 Culture Camp, then Elders Potlatch, and then the next  
18 week we had three days of Memorial Potlatch for three  
19 different people and families. So, it was a really busy  
20 week, and those 25 fish made it to the table in all of  
21 those events that we had in those couple of weeks. And  
22 then similarly later in October, we did get a chance to  
23 fish for coho. I think what I heard Fish and Game say  
24 is they had like 9000 coho in the Delta Clearwater for  
25 escapement, which hasn't been seen in a long time. And  
26 we -- my cousin passed away too. And so, my other cousin,  
27 we were fishing and we got whitefish and coho for the  
28 potlatch. And they were -- they were pretty nice quality  
29 fish. And so, I feel like it's important to share those  
30 small blessings and keep having hope. And, you know, on  
31 the Tanana River, we keep having Culture Camp each year.  
32 We keep bringing the kids down to that river. And we fly  
33 in fish and we fish if we can, we keep trying to keep  
34 our kids connected even though we're in this crisis and  
35 it really has an impact on our community. This year at  
36 Culture Camp -- I'm the director. A lot of times I'm the  
37 director, sometimes we have some other people do it. But  
38 we had our young men fishing this year and that really  
39 lifted them in the community to be providers. You could  
40 tell that there was a buzz going on in Nenana that people  
41 were fishing and felt happy. So, it makes a huge  
42 difference when we do have opportunity.

43  
44 We also were hunting the moose for those  
45 different potlaches that we had, and some people had  
46 trouble, especially the one in October and then all  
47 around, I think the moose were fairly small, that people  
48 were able to get. The bison that have been released at  
49 Kantishna a portion of them have kind of moved into the  
50 Nenana-Totchaket area. They're even on our land that we

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1 just bought out there. We're getting videos of people  
2 driving behind them on their snow machines and on trucks  
3 and stuff.

4  
5 Another thing I wanted to talk about was  
6 the low water. The -- in July, the water was extremely  
7 real -- low on the Tanana River. Like, so I wonder how  
8 that affected any of the spawning. I don't know. It'll  
9 be interesting to see if any of the agencies have reports  
10 on that. There was some increased rain this fall, but I  
11 don't think it was as bad as a couple few years ago. And  
12 you know, there's a lot of conversation in here about,  
13 you know, we have these, like different regulations. And  
14 I think people, you know, we're talking about these  
15 salmon crisis and we're trying to protect the lands and  
16 what little is left on the lands and waters. And I think  
17 sometimes we have to really face the crisis that we're  
18 in, and I think that we all need to get a little more  
19 serious about that and really start having community  
20 meetings about what's going on and start bringing our  
21 observations together and bringing in those agency folks  
22 so we can start doing better land relationship planning.  
23 We're all interested in hunting and fishing, but how  
24 many of us are going out and clearing out streams that  
25 are getting too much debris in them? How many of us are  
26 going out and burning around lakes and trying to  
27 regenerate the browse and habitat? And so, if we could  
28 start working on positive things like that together,  
29 maybe that would help us. I'm being called a degenerate  
30 now. No, kidding. I know some background noise picked  
31 up, but those -- I don't want to get into that too much.  
32 I think we have a lot of discussion, but I just want to  
33 kind of put those ideas out there and let people know  
34 that this ecosystem is in crisis, and it's our job to  
35 take care of it and respond to that crisis.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, at this time,  
38 we'll swing back around and see if Dorothy is online at  
39 this time? Council member report.

40  
41 MS. SHOCKLEY: Good morning. This is  
42 Dorothy.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Morning, Dorothy.  
45 Go on ahead.

46  
47 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yeah. Sorry. I had a late  
48 meeting last night with the City Council. I have good  
49 news that the City Council has finally adopted the  
50 ordinance to do a land acknowledgement, so yay for that.

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1 But anyway, just you know, I, of course, agree with  
2 everyone else that the situation in regards to our way  
3 of life is no longer, you know, the way it used to be  
4 and that is very concerning. And as far as my report  
5 and, you know, our ability to feed ourselves off the  
6 land is no longer an option in this so-called management  
7 of the state and federal government. And, you know, I -  
8 - my concern at the moment is, what's happening on the  
9 federal level in regards to the draft proposal of --  
10 from the Department of the Interior and Department of  
11 Agriculture. I know it's on the agenda, but I just want  
12 to bring that up now because it definitely is a threat.  
13 And not only that, but all of the other things that this  
14 is -- that the federal administration is doing to take  
15 away, you know, some of the protections that are -- that  
16 have been in place. You know, the regional plans that  
17 were adopted and just, you know taking away protections  
18 in regards to EPA offshore drilling. I mean, you know,  
19 it's just so discerning, concerning and a bit scary, you  
20 know. I at times get very anxious about it. But other  
21 times, when I'm able to ground myself in the land, in  
22 our culture and, you know, try to really think about  
23 what our ancestors would be doing at this time, you  
24 know. Really try to you know, think about that and  
25 really, you know, because, you know, we've -- and they  
26 have, our ancestors have dealt with so many things and  
27 have overcome, and with their strength and with their  
28 wisdom you know, we are here today as Native people and  
29 -- so in that regard, you know. And I have hope that we  
30 can overcome, I have hope in the resilience of our game,  
31 our fish. They have adapted to many, many things as well  
32 and continue to survive. So, I think as we work together  
33 with our land, with our animals, with our fish, we can  
34 as well survive and will continue to. We just need so-  
35 called management to include our way of life, our  
36 thousands of years of knowledge, into their scope of  
37 work. I think we also have to really work together with,  
38 you know, our regional corporations, our regional -- or  
39 our village corporations, they are landowners as well.  
40 We need to work together with other regions and really  
41 come up with a plan. You know, as everything is burning  
42 down around us, we need to come together and have a  
43 plan. An indigenous, holistic view response to rebuild  
44 what is being burnt down. And so, I think looking into  
45 the future, you know, working together to rebuild. You  
46 know, one of the things that I heard during the united  
47 tribal summit or conference, whatever that was called  
48 in Anchorage prior to AFN was, you know, we have --  
49 we've adopted the language from the environmental  
50 groups, the environmental department, and the challenge



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1 from the President of NCIA was for us to come up with a  
2 environmental scope. I suppose if you want to call it  
3 that or, I don't know, some kind of environmental,  
4 holistic view of our way of life. Instead of having it  
5 all broken up, you know, as Western scientists do. You  
6 know, have it in a holistic environmental view so that  
7 we are talking and we -- it represents our way of life.  
8 You know, years and years and years ago my aunt Sally,  
9 my dad's sister, you know, told us that, you know, we  
10 and our way of life have been -- we've been  
11 environmentalists. All of our existence has been to  
12 protect you know, our waters, our land, our air. And so,  
13 you know, I'm really thinking about that. But also, you  
14 know, just thinking about how we can rebuild. And, you  
15 know, of course, you know, working together, you know,  
16 with our tribes and our corporations and, and rural  
17 stakeholders to overcome, you know, to challenge and  
18 adapt, I guess. But, I mean, we've always adapted to  
19 changes but, you know, to really work together, look  
20 into the future.

21  
22 And, you know, my other hope is, the  
23 young people that are stepping up and, you know, really  
24 you know, challenge -- challenging the federal and the  
25 state government and you know, really looking and  
26 grounding themselves in our indigenous ways. So, thank  
27 you. Those are my comments. I know we'll talk more about  
28 the proposed draft changes from DOI and Department of  
29 Agriculture. But I also wanted to tell you that, you  
30 know, I got a copy of the May 5th letter to the  
31 Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture  
32 from its 11-page letter with six pages of proposals from  
33 the Safari Club International. And, you know, they're  
34 of course, in favor of a lot of what DOI and the  
35 Department of Agriculture is proposing. So, I can bring  
36 that to the meeting. I'm sorry. I yeah, I need to retract  
37 a couple of things from last night. So anyway, I'll be  
38 in as soon as I can. So, thank you and see you all soon.  
39 Thanks.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
42 Andy Bassich. Are you online?

43  
44 MR. BASSICH: Yes, I am, thank you, Mr.  
45 Chair. Can you hear me?

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. You got  
48 the floor.

49  
50

1 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. First of all, I  
2 apologize for not being able to be there in person. I'm  
3 currently (indiscernible) it out here at my homestead.  
4 So, I, really value my time spent in face-to-face  
5 conversation with Council members and members of the  
6 audience and agencies. Hopefully, I'll be there in the  
7 next meeting. I wanted to give my report. It covers  
8 quite a bit of the resources here, but I want to start  
9 out by just saying, I've been living out here in remote  
10 Alaska for about 40 years now, and I can honestly say  
11 that the last 2 years have been the poorest I've ever  
12 seen as far as wildlife resources for subsistence  
13 lifestyle. This year during the moose hunting season, I  
14 saw one set of fresh tracks. That's never happened in  
15 the past. I believe there were only 2 moose taken in the  
16 community of Eagle for both the Village of Eagle and  
17 Eagle Proper. To the best of my knowledge. I think that's  
18 probably one of the lowest moose harvest ever. Caribou  
19 have not shown up in our part of the country, to my  
20 knowledge. At least not where I'm living. I've seen three  
21 sets of caribou tracks, and that's it for the whole  
22 winter. I've probably traveled a little over 150 miles  
23 with my dog team so far this winter. It's pretty empty  
24 out there. The only tracks I'm seeing are rabbits. So  
25 pretty bleak.

26  
27 I also wanted to report that one of the  
28 things that I have turned to over the past 5 or 6 years  
29 due to the salmon collapse and the low moose populations  
30 have been black bears. This is the first year since I've  
31 been living out in the Eagle area for 40 years that I  
32 did not harvest a black bear. In fact, I did not see a  
33 black bear during the springtime, which is usually when  
34 I hunt them and I only saw one black bear in the fall  
35 time. So black bear populations, I'm not sure what  
36 happened. They were really strong a couple years ago.  
37 But they're really in decline right now.

38  
39 Speaking about fisheries, I have a lot  
40 of the same views as everyone else here. However, the  
41 one thing I'm most concerned about are the chum salmon  
42 returns. There's a lot of focus on chinook salmon, but  
43 in my view, in the upper river, fall chum have always  
44 been kind of the standard or the go-to fish when chinook  
45 salmon follow their ups and downs. We have not seen fall  
46 chum returning. It's now been six years. We'll be going  
47 on seven years this year, not meeting escapement goals  
48 and having extremely poor returns. I'm really concerned  
49 about extirpation of fall chum not only for harvest  
50 purposes, but also for that eco system balance. Fall

1 chum have always been in large numbers up into the  
2 Canadian waters. They bring a lot of marine derived  
3 nutrients up to the ecosystem, which really helped with  
4 the habitat, keeping the habitat healthy. Once the  
5 habitat deteriorates it's really difficult to rebuild.  
6 And so, I think that's a really primary issue that we  
7 are not facing. And I'm -- I really want to very strongly  
8 advocate for fall chum in the upper river regions, that's  
9 primarily Eastern RAC's region. That's probably one of  
10 the most sustainable -- in the past, one of the most  
11 sustainable fish that we had. And in the past, if you  
12 look at records, if they crash, usually within 2 years  
13 they started rebounding. So, they were fairly short  
14 intervals of low abundance. However, we're not seeing  
15 that now. So, there are some serious problems going on  
16 with fall chum that we need to address for food security  
17 and eco based management moving forward.

18  
19 I believe, and I've spoken about this  
20 for over 25 years on the Eastern RAC, that hatchery  
21 production is probably our primary issue with fisheries  
22 in Alaska and the decline of wild stocks and stocks  
23 getting smaller and I really wish that people would wake  
24 up to this. It's been brought to people's attention for  
25 a long time. We seem to focus on other people's  
26 harvesting of our fish, which is extremely important  
27 but, I think a root cause of where a lot of our  
28 deficiencies and our declines are -- is with hatchery  
29 production and the impacts of the marine pastures being  
30 overgrazed. This has been talked about by myself, former  
31 RAC member and Board of Fish member Virgil Umphenour and  
32 former Board member Stan Zuray for a long time, and I  
33 would really like to see this issue elevated both in  
34 state programs and also at the federal level. So, I'm  
35 encouraging all RACs to take up discussions on this  
36 topic. I think it is one of the most important things  
37 that we can do long-term for our fisheries.

38  
39 I'm hoping -- I'm very much in support  
40 of co-management of our fisheries, and I'm hoping that  
41 there will be some reports from agency members or tribal  
42 entities on progress towards co-management. I think this  
43 is also one of the most important things that we can be  
44 striving for on the Yukon River. The Kuskokwim River has  
45 been participating in a co-management system for over  
46 12 years, maybe longer and last I looked at their records  
47 in 12 years they have always made escapement goals. And  
48 I understand there are differences in the systems, but  
49 it clearly is a very successful program when co-  
50 management for fisheries is taking place. And I wanted

1 to point out that the main reason why they are being  
2 successful is that they always shoot for the upper end  
3 of escapement goals instead of the bottom end, and that  
4 requires a great deal of sacrifice by local subsistence  
5 users on the river on some years. But the long-term  
6 benefits of that are clearly showing now and that's a  
7 model that the Yukon River must -- if we're going to be  
8 successful into the future, we must strive to make that  
9 happen. That's a big challenge, but I think we have  
10 great examples of how it's working. We need to bring  
11 people together and coalitions and make sure that that  
12 happens.

13  
14 I reported last year that that I was  
15 really concerned about the bird populations. I'm happy  
16 to report that this past summer, the songbirds seemed  
17 to be returning in a little bit better numbers than I'd  
18 seen in the past. Waterfowl was slightly more than last  
19 year, but still much poor numbers of waterfowl in my  
20 region and flying over during the migrations than I  
21 remember in the past 10 to 15 years. So, it seems that  
22 they are doing okay, but certainly not in the abundances  
23 that they were 10 to 15 years ago, at least in my region.  
24 The one exception to that I'm happy to report are swans.  
25 I'm seeing a lot of swans in our area. I'm not really  
26 sure exactly why. It might be also due to the fact that  
27 beavers are doing much better now, and they're creating  
28 more pond and lake habitat, which is really suitable for  
29 swans. So that might be the correlation that I'm -- why  
30 I'm seeing more swans. And I think that's about all I  
31 really have to share at this point in time, Mr. Chair.  
32 Again, I apologize for not being there and look forward  
33 to working on a lot of these issues with everyone into  
34 the future. Thank you.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you,  
37 Andy, for that good report. I guess Gerald is not online.  
38 Okay. All right then I'm going to move forward with my  
39 Chair's report. And pretty much everything that I wanted  
40 to cover has been covered, but I want to talk about a  
41 few things. So, the people of the Eastern Interior RAC  
42 of stewarded this land for millennia. We all know that  
43 and we've done a really good job at that. There was so  
44 many -- the game -- fish and game was so plentiful 100  
45 years ago that it's hard to see and understand where we  
46 ended up at this time. There's so many things against  
47 our natural resources right now. Every -- like Andy said,  
48 that the salmon would usually bounce back. Just about  
49 anything if you take pressure off, they bounce back. But  
50 there's too many things against our salmon right now to

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1 help them come back. The fish are smaller and the  
2 population of wild salmon are starving because of the  
3 overpopulating hatchery fish going into our oceans, sea.  
4 I want to talk about the Kuskokwim and their management,  
5 co-management before I get to the Yukon. Going to many  
6 meetings and paying attention and listening to them.  
7 They aim for the top end of the escapement goal and  
8 that's why -- or one of the main drivers of more fish  
9 coming back into the Kuskokwim at this time. Yukon goes  
10 for the lower end. So, we might think about changing our  
11 strategy a little bit there. I have many hats that I --  
12 I serve on many Boards and Commissions, and the Yukon  
13 River Inter Tribal Fish Commission is one where we are  
14 really striving to work on co-management with the  
15 federal government right now federal managers. I think  
16 that's going to be key going forward with traditional  
17 knowledge and the Western way of science, mixing  
18 ourselves together and going forward in the best way  
19 possible. Making good decisions.

20  
21 The climate uncertainty that we have is  
22 really a big factor right now. In my own little area  
23 where I live, trap and hunt near Rampart, one salmon  
24 stream there that's seen a big, huge pulse of king salmon  
25 in 19. They were jumping on each other, running bank to  
26 bank for some time going into that creek and they did  
27 good. But now I worry about them coming back because  
28 that creek is a north side. I mean, it has steep  
29 mountains and it's shaded from the sun. It's really  
30 steep. So, in the last couple years, there's been a lot  
31 of permafrost melt in there and it's washing out. The  
32 bends are cutting out in that creek. There's -- the  
33 creek seems to be straightening out and running straight  
34 down the middle. We have straight earth running  
35 sometimes when it's cutting corners, straight steaming  
36 and earth, and there ain't no salmon that can make it  
37 through something like that on an episode that lasts  
38 longer than a week washing out one corner. So, there's  
39 that great uncertainties of a creek that I thought was  
40 going to be a real hopeful spot for helping the comeback  
41 of salmon. So now there's that uncertainty, and we have  
42 a whole bunch of creeks like that. Across the river from  
43 Rampart, there's a creek that's been in the sun for  
44 millennia. They don't have it so bad over there, but  
45 there's only chums over there, and there's not a lot of  
46 them either anymore. So, there's so many things  
47 affecting our way of life. The highways, the constant  
48 pressure on moose, caribou and bear, wolves and start  
49 taking effect. Our numbers of animals start going down,  
50 and then the department wants to add more pressure onto

1 the predators. But they're adding pressure to the wrong  
2 predators. The ones that take too much are the ones we  
3 gotta [sic] worry about. The animals manage their self  
4 better than us. We learn from them long ago and we  
5 managed like them. Even ducks know not to land in the  
6 interior and breed in the same and eat in the same place  
7 over the years in a row, they land somewhere different  
8 every year.

9  
10 And near our roads, people that come in  
11 come to the interior off the roads. I don't mean to bash  
12 or talk people down, but a lot of them are headhunters.  
13 They want that rack and because of this, a lot of the  
14 meat is going to waste. That breaks my heart, when a  
15 elder asked me for a soup bone in the middle of the  
16 winter and I've already passed out all my meat, I can't  
17 give it to them. And I think of all the waste that  
18 happens, all the meat that's found in waste stations,  
19 all the meat that's found in the river after the water  
20 goes down, bags of meat near gas stations in the  
21 villages, they have to decide whether they want to make  
22 it home with the gas they buy. So, they throw a couple  
23 legs out to boat, and they surface after the water goes  
24 down. I would like to see checkpoints along the highways  
25 coming in so people can show that they have their meat  
26 and what they're supposed to have with them on their way  
27 home. There's no way that a 16-foot boat can haul four  
28 people in four moose. They got three racks on top, four  
29 racks sometime, and I know they don't have the meat in  
30 there or they'll never get on step. So, we really need  
31 to start paying attention. This is not a free for all  
32 and you could just shoot and leave your meat. People are  
33 hungry. There's no other means in some communities. No  
34 other means, means they have no means to eat. When it  
35 gets January and February, these people are hungry. They  
36 -- we know who it is. If we live in the a village, we  
37 help where we have to and we can only help so much if  
38 we're struggling ourselves. So, it's getting rough out  
39 there. No other means is upon us and some of our  
40 villages. And we know the ecosystem is in trouble and  
41 Rampart, there's 2 big salmon streams. Historically,  
42 they were full when I was a kid. There's no birds, no  
43 seagulls, no eagles. Ravens are always there. They can  
44 survive. Those are survival birds. But the number of  
45 seagulls have gone down to -- I see 2 or 3 around Rampart  
46 when there used to be hundreds of them. Flies are gone.  
47 The bears are gone. So, it's really rough out there  
48 right now. The rabbits are down right now, in my area,  
49 And right now they have some pretty good prices for fur,  
50 marten and stuff. But that's -- the cycle is down. So,

1 there's another check on something that we can't prosper  
2 off of to buy food and that's just natural cycle. But  
3 it's just hardship. Every time we think we're going to  
4 get a break, we find another storm or another closure.  
5 So, it's really tough in the Eastern Interior on the  
6 Road System right now.

7  
8 The bears have been recking every cabin  
9 and camp along the river, and they're doing it double.  
10 They clean it up, board it up, and they come back and  
11 they tear it apart and wreck it again. It's even happened  
12 on a Tanana River. This is like -- to have a direct --  
13 they're mad, they're hungry. So, I thought that was  
14 pretty interesting that they're just going and wrecking  
15 everything they could find. I think about the bears too,  
16 and like I said earlier, that we got to think of a better  
17 management than killing predators because of our  
18 actions. I don't know what will be next. Pretty soon  
19 there will be nothing to get rid of anymore. Anyway, I  
20 could go on forever here, but we're in tough times for  
21 sure and I think that working together is the only way  
22 out of this crisis that we're in and our natural  
23 resources are in. And I really appreciate everybody  
24 talking that way and heading that way and the people  
25 that are willing to do that. It's the only way forward.  
26 And I appreciate the people that are working hard to go  
27 that direction. That is the answer and in the long run  
28 in my mind, in my opinion. So, I think I'll stop there  
29 and let this meeting go on because we got an awful lot  
30 to cover. And -- oh, you have it. Okay. Thank you. Now  
31 we have -- Brooke will do Member Galen's report. Thank  
32 you.

33  
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
35 is Brooke, for the record. Member Galen Gilbert emailed  
36 me a report that he wanted me to read since he wasn't  
37 able to be here. So, he says: Dear EIRAC Board members  
38 and team, I would first like to say my sincere apologies  
39 for not being present today in our EIRAC meeting. As we  
40 all know, the holidays are approaching fast and at the  
41 same time, we're all battling the cold weather in the  
42 villages. As myself and my team prepare for the holidays,  
43 we keep everyone in prayer and happy holidays to each  
44 and every one of you. Since the last EIRAC meeting in  
45 Fairbanks, I don't have too much to report. Besides just  
46 saying what my people and myself have been experiencing,  
47 such as caribou. Last winter, the caribou were  
48 surrounding, and also staying close to the village, we  
49 believe due to majority of predators.

1 I do get reports from our trappers. On  
2 a personal note, some have good catches, some don't. But  
3 I'm happy enough that the trappers are predator  
4 controlling for the village and the caribou. This fall,  
5 the caribou were late arriving. I'd say about 1 to --  
6 or 2 to 3 weeks late. They did not stick around like  
7 they usually do before they go south. They went on by  
8 to the south over a week. They returned after shedding  
9 all their velvet on their horns. They went on by towards  
10 Canada. Now, after returning from Canada, we haven't  
11 seen much of them. Some went by during this winter but  
12 wasn't a good harvesting stage of winter for my people.  
13 We're praying and expecting them to show up any day now.

14  
15 Arctic Village has had many events this  
16 past year. Our gathering was a great success. There was  
17 also a school/village culture camp upriver on the  
18 Chandalar. There was hide tanning, language programs at  
19 our school. My nephew in law when sheep hunting. They  
20 haven't seen a single track of sheep. So that's one of  
21 my villages big concerns and of course, our caribou not  
22 showing up yet. I haven't heard or seen much wolves this  
23 year so far. They are following the caribou most likely.  
24 That's all for my report. Just want to say my apologies  
25 once again, thanks to you all. Hope everyone takes care.  
26 God bless and happy holidays to you all and your  
27 families. Chief Gilbert.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, we definitely  
30 appreciate that report from Chief Gilbert. Thank you for  
31 that, Brooke. Okay and we're moving out of the reports.  
32 And now next on the agenda is Council Member Service  
33 Awards.

34  
35 MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you, Mr.  
36 Chair, members of the Council. For the record, my name  
37 is Lisa Grediagin, and I'll be reading the service awards  
38 while Brooke's handing out the certificates or the  
39 plaques. So first we have Linda Evans for a five-year  
40 award. Linda Evans has served on the Eastern Interior  
41 Council for five years. During this time, she has learned  
42 a lot about the Federal Subsistence Management program  
43 and increasingly contributes to Council discussions.  
44 Linda currently lives in North Pole, but she grew up on  
45 the Yukon River, living a subsistence lifestyle where  
46 she fished, hunted and trapped with her family. Linda  
47 returns to Rampart a few times throughout the year and  
48 loves spending time with her grandchildren. Linda is a  
49 retired educator but continues teaching younger  
50 generations about traditions and subsistence ways. She



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1 brings a great deal of experience and knowledge to the  
2 Council. The Federal Subsistence Management Program in  
3 the Eastern Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council  
4 thanks Mrs. Evans for her five years of service and all  
5 the work she has done for rural residents in the region.

6  
7 (Applause)

8  
9 MS. EVANS: Thank you. Didn't expect  
10 that. I can't believe it's already been five years.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
13 for your service.

14  
15 MS. GREDIAGIN: And we also have a very  
16 special award for Sue Entsminger. She -- it's her last  
17 meeting, but she served on the Council for 24 years. She  
18 was first appointed in December 2001. Sue has lived in  
19 Mentasta Pass for the majority of her adult life. The  
20 Council has benefited from her extensive on-the-ground  
21 knowledge of resource issues and uses in the upper Tanana  
22 and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve area.  
23 Although she has served as the Commercial Sport User  
24 Group representative over the years, Sue has been a  
25 strong voice for all user groups in her area, and she's  
26 never afraid to speak her mind and let her know -- let  
27 you know how she really feels and thinks about an issue.  
28 Sue served as the Eastern Interior Council Chair for  
29 many years and always provided consistent and passionate  
30 leadership to the Council during complex discussions and  
31 challenging times. She has also served on the Alaska  
32 Board of Game, the Upper Tanana Fortymile Fish and Game  
33 Advisory Committee and the Wrangell-St. Elias  
34 Subsistence Resource Commission. Sue is a master guide  
35 and probably one of the most experienced sheep hunters  
36 in the state. She has done so much during her time on  
37 the Council and throughout her life in Alaska. Although  
38 we are sad to see her retire from the Council, she has  
39 helped pave the way for others to fill her seat. She  
40 will remain active and resource management spaces in  
41 other ways, and we look forward to continuing to hear  
42 from her during meetings through public comment  
43 opportunities. So yeah, you're on the hook for coming  
44 back Sue. You can't just completely leave us. The Federal  
45 Subsistence Management Program in the Eastern Interior,  
46 Alaska Regional Advisory Council, thank Mrs. Entsminger  
47 for her dedicated 24 years of service and all the work  
48 she has done for rural residents in the region.

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50 (Applause)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
for your service, Sue.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: I will correct one  
thing. It was the Tok Cutoff Nabesna Road Advisory  
Committee. My husband serves on the Upper Tanana. Okay,  
but thank you. That was beautiful report, and I really  
appreciate it very much. Thank you.

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MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

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MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I'm sorry I  
can't be there in person, but I just wanted to say a  
word or 2 for Sue. Recognizing her. Really sad I'm not  
there to see her in person, but I wanted to just share  
some personal experiences I've had with Sue, and that  
is that I met her at my very first Council meeting in  
Anchorage. It was a Tri-RAC meeting, actually, I think  
it was in Wasilla or Palmer many, many years ago. And  
throughout that time, she became Chair, I think about 4  
or 5 years later. And I just wanted to say I -- she's  
done an exemplary job of being the Chair of our RAC for  
many, many years. We have a very prolific RAC. We have  
great leadership through Sue. And she really set the bar  
high for how to Chair a meeting and how to get positive  
actions taken place. And I also wanted to share that one  
of the things that I really value about Sue is that she  
has a great sense of advocating for what she believes  
in. But she also has a great sense of listening to  
opposition and there have been many times where Sue and  
I have agreed on things, and there have been a few times  
when we haven't. But what I really appreciate is that  
we've always had really good discourse, and she takes  
into consideration -- has always taken into  
consideration opposing points of view, and has been very  
open to hearing those viewpoints. And that's what makes  
our Council strong, is having some opposing views and  
coming to some sort of median. But I just wanted to say  
that because I think it's really important to recognize  
that quality and how important that is, especially in  
these really tough times for people. So, I just want to  
say thank you, Sue. I've learned so much from her. Both  
as a Council member and also in Chairing other meetings  
or Boards or entities, things that -- other things that  
I've done I learned a lot from her leadership and her  
style of leadership. So, thank you very much, Sue. Sorry  
I can't be there to see you.

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(Applause)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. I want to add a little bit to that. I, too, want to thank Sue for mentoring me at the Chair here. Appreciate her hanging around to do so and she's still doing it from over there right now. I appreciate her in so many different ways. You know, she's a true leader and -- for her people and for the resources. I really appreciate the time that I got to spend with you. Sue, thank you so much for your leadership and leadership style.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you very much, very much. You did bring me to tears, Andy, but thank you. Yes. Oh, I -- sorry. I said it's been a long road and I really -- I'd like to see things get done and -- yes, thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Now let's turn over here to my good friend Gerald. Could you introduce yourself, Gerald? That's all we need. And maybe a little report from your area, what you're seeing up there and what's going on. Any concerns? Thank you.

MR. ALEXANDER: Sorry for my tardiness, but anyway, my name is Gerald Alexander. I'm from Fort Yukon. I've lived there for -- all my life. And actually, the report that I've been seeing is there's very few fishing going on. As you know, it's closed, but people do try to get what little they can, but other than that, everything's still the same. No smoke in the smokehouses. But other than that, it's 45 below. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much for being here. Yeah. We're going to go into some proposals here pretty soon. So, I suggest we take a short break, let's say five. So, it'll end up being ten. Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're going to start back up again. Thank you. At this time, we're going to do -- oh, yeah Public and Tribal Comment on Non-agenda Items. And that will happen on day one and three. Tomorrow when we have the joint meeting. That'll

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1 be just things on the agenda we'll talk about. So, thank  
2 you. What do we start with? Sarah James, we have your  
3 card up here. Where is she? Okay, I see you. You have  
4 the floor, Sarah, for your public comment.

5  
6 MS. JAMES: Okay. My name is Sarah James.  
7 I'm from Arctic Village. I grew up off the land out  
8 there, maybe 50 miles from the nearest neighbor. English  
9 is still my second language. It's hard to understand  
10 many things because I can't explain very well in my  
11 language and English at the same time because it's  
12 totally different lifestyle. And it's hard for me many  
13 times to speak up and talk clearly about how things are  
14 with me, the way I grew up. My parents cared very much  
15 for the environment. My father has to be [sic] a trapper  
16 to feed us. We had to live on Western and traditional  
17 food out there and survive. Same thing with what we use  
18 out there, and same time we have to teach ourselves  
19 because that was required by the education. At that time  
20 it was hard for my parents to get us out there from the  
21 school system because they want to control us. They want  
22 to keep us in the village or town so we can have  
23 education. That's how -- we were nomadic and then school  
24 forced us to live in 15 village now, Gwich'in village  
25 in Canada and US. And we've been separate over 150 years  
26 now over -- between the border Gwich'in people.

27  
28 So, I'm here representing my tribe and  
29 Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government, which is  
30 NVVTG. And I see a great change because I've been living  
31 and I remember things since 1950. I'm 82 years old now,  
32 and I see a great change. Many predators are not out  
33 there. No fish. Caribou maybe because we were protecting  
34 Porcupine Caribou as united as the 15 village to keep  
35 them safe from gas and oil development. Maybe our caribou  
36 herds is doing good and going up in population, because  
37 we do care for it and it's our life. We're caribou  
38 people. But other herds, there's other herds in Alaska  
39 besides just caribou, Porcupine Caribou, are not doing  
40 well. There's not -- There's one herd that's declining  
41 pretty fast. And one of the ways we gather food and when  
42 I was growing up was go upriver into the mountains for  
43 sheep and then we hit the valley to get our caribou and  
44 moose and then we go back to the village. By that time  
45 fish runs. Arctic Village is good for fishing because  
46 that's why they put the village there. So, we can survive  
47 by fishing, we've got nothing else to eat. In that  
48 valley, there's a lot of lakes there and if we have  
49 nothing else to eat, we'll have fish to eat. And then  
50 there's a river goes by, Chandalar River runs in to

1 Yukon and Chandalar River connected up with East Fork  
2 River. So, our village is on the East Fork. So, by the  
3 time we come back from up gathering food for winter then  
4 we start fishing when the fish start moving. And we only  
5 got clear water fish. And then my mom, when we come back  
6 to the village, she make different pile -- a certain  
7 amount of pile for people that lives in the village.  
8 Like we got one woman that's blind that the family stayed  
9 there because of that and other elders. So, she made  
10 sure she share with them that can't hunt and fish out  
11 there. All that's been changed because of weather. I  
12 know whether climate change should not be brought too  
13 much because it's not in the book for this time. But it  
14 is real. What's happening right now out there, it's real.  
15 So everyday climate is kind of -- horrible thing  
16 happening to it and that means it's happening to our  
17 animals, our plants, our way of life, and those are very  
18 important.

19  
20 But I want to talk more about me being  
21 here at many times. I think it's important that all the  
22 tribal leaders or the chief gets to these meetings and  
23 Fish and Wildlife meetings, because that's the only way  
24 we can change things. There's some good, represented  
25 people here from our villages as a tribe and from other  
26 people. And I've been to this meeting many years. A lot  
27 of changes. Good changes, bad changes. Now we're toward  
28 bad changes. I'm kind of afraid. Even though I'm not  
29 living in Arctic Village right now, I'm living in  
30 Fairbanks because it's hard for me at my age. But I do  
31 go up there, as you know, as often as I can.

32  
33 So that's my subsistence life. I just  
34 want to share that here. Because that's what elders do.  
35 And so caribou and the fish, salmon fish, some of that  
36 are our people are located along the Yukon and they're  
37 not getting their salmon fish. And they sent us out in  
38 a sea fish that they were going to throw over. That's  
39 not the fish we're talking about. They donate that to  
40 us. Thank you for that donation because it is very good  
41 to have a fish, but it's not a fish we get from Rampart,  
42 Steven Village, Fort Yukon along the Yukon. Gwich'in  
43 villages, we trade and barter with caribou and fish and  
44 that's not happening because there's no fish. They're  
45 not getting those fish. Come 1st of July we're looking  
46 for fish from Fort Yukon. We're looking for fish from  
47 other villages. That's not happening. So, it's about  
48 certain -- where we live, no matter where we live as an  
49 indigenous people, we're born to that. So, we're used  
50 to that food and that's what we're talking about being

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1 sovereign, being a real subsistent and that's what we're  
2 talking about. We need to get more input from these  
3 areas. I go to Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed. I am  
4 one of the elder speakers. We talk -- we have meeting  
5 with 60 villages along the Yukon to clean it up. It's a  
6 non-profit organization. I have to listen to all these  
7 60 village crying for salmon. And their kids are crying  
8 to go to the camp, to be who they are and which they  
9 have a right to be who they are. And thank you for  
10 letting me talk this morning, and I'll see if I can talk  
11 some more. And if I could -- and another thing is, Red  
12 Sheep Creek, you know, that's another source of food  
13 that we have in Arctic Village. And I noticed that again  
14 all the sheep in Alaska, we'll throughout the world, I  
15 guess it's hurting in their population to survive, and  
16 we all need to do something about it. Thank you.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Can you  
19 wait a minute? We have a question for you. Thank you.

20  
21 MS. BURK: Thank you. Thank you for  
22 coming in and speaking for your people today. We heard  
23 Galen mention that he's seen a lack of tracks less  
24 caribou. The caribou were coming later. They didn't  
25 stop. They moved on and then they shed. And then they  
26 came back. And now they said they're waiting for them  
27 right now. Do you have any concerns when they describe  
28 that kind of caribou behavior, that they're late or that  
29 they're not stopping like they normally do, or that  
30 there's not a lot of tracks?

31  
32 MS. JAMES: Exactly. Because every year  
33 it's getting worse and worse because when I was growing  
34 up we looked for caribou with binocular every direction.  
35 Sometimes comes from the north, sometimes from the east.  
36 I mean, west and east and south. Now it's coming only  
37 in one way direction, seems like coming from the east  
38 and through Old John Lake and then hit the village. We  
39 think that got something to do with climate change. It  
40 got something to do with activities. It got something  
41 to do with the pipeline, and it got something to do with  
42 -- caribou migrate the way they always migrate. Even  
43 scientists don't know why they migrate, the way they  
44 migrate. And we think they migrate according to their  
45 food system and their safety system. So, the more  
46 unbalanced migrating, it really concern us. It affects  
47 our food on our table, it affects our arts and crafts.  
48 It affects our dance. You know, we do caribou dance, and  
49 it's a food on our table. It's our diet it, and  
50 everything like that, like Galen is talking about. It's

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1 exactly what that worries us most, and it's affected us  
2 directly because we are caribou people and we -- 75% of  
3 our diet still wild meat, which is made up of sheep,  
4 moose, caribou, ducks, small animals and fish. So, our  
5 diet is very important, and I have to watch my diet all  
6 my life in order to make it this far. So, because that's  
7 how I grew up. That's how my mom and dad raised me out  
8 there. So, I'm the example of, you know, the life we're  
9 talking about. Thank you.

10  
11 MS. BURK: Thank you, Sarah. Thanks for  
12 entertaining my questions. And I know that you're very  
13 strong and I have a lot of respect for you. When you  
14 said that Arctic Village is a good for fishing, and you  
15 mentioned how some people aren't getting their salmon.  
16 And then in Nenana, you know, we're a whitefish river  
17 too on the Tanana River. And we actually were caribou  
18 people too, but we haven't seen caribou in, I don't know  
19 how long. How do you think the whitefish are doing in  
20 your area? Because we're starting to have a little bit  
21 concern.

22  
23 MS. JAMES: Because again climate change  
24 and other uses, and the system or practice. We used to  
25 practice, like you said earlier, that we clean up these  
26 creeks that we use for fish. So, the fish would be free  
27 to go up the stream and spawn again, and nothing like  
28 that is happening. And I'm so happy you mentioned that  
29 earlier because that was our practice. That's our way  
30 of life to do that. And we even control sometimes when  
31 there is -- what they call it? Land eroding away. We  
32 stop these things too, with our shovel, with our hand,  
33 with the whole village go up and fix that trail. But now  
34 that trail has never been fixed from Arctic Village up  
35 to the foothills of Brooks Range. There is a trail all  
36 the way to Kaktovik. But now we can't go from Arctic  
37 Village to the mountain and -- foothills of the mountain.  
38 Because over on our side, where we kept the trail open  
39 all the time that erode away because nobody keep it  
40 packed. And so also goes for the creeks and now more and  
41 more, we spot salmon because one of the things that  
42 salmon must be disturbed by is their spawning ground.  
43 For some reason, by climate change or use or overuse or  
44 some other source from Yukon and in the tributary of  
45 Yukon. But we're getting more sight, more salmon,  
46 because I think we -- they're looking for a new spawning.  
47 So that's -- I know we noticed that is going on since  
48 1950 because my grandpa put a fish net right across the  
49 river. He put about a hundred. How many fishing net  
50 together to find out if king salmon come up there. And

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1 they did at that time, too, but not as much, you know.  
2 So, we noticed that, too. So, thank you for asking that  
3 question. I can take some more questions.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Unless anybody else  
6 has more questions for Sarah. We appreciate your time  
7 and your testimony today. Thank you so much for being  
8 here.

9

10 MS. JAMES: Thank you.

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12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else want to  
13 do public comment at this time? Anybody online?

14

15 MR. RICHARDS: I'm online. Norman  
16 Richards.

17

18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead. Please  
19 state your name and where you're from and go right ahead.  
20 You have the floor. Oh.

21

22 MR. RICHARDS: My name is Norman  
23 Richards. I'm from Nenana. I've grew up to subsistence  
24 lifestyle throughout my lifetime on the rivers in  
25 Nenana. And what's hurting us the most is the fish that  
26 comes up to spawn. And it's hurting our ecosystem. The  
27 -- we're getting more fires in our environment, in the  
28 interior. It's drying up. Without our fish coming up the  
29 rivers and spawning and enriching the land. We won't get  
30 our caribou back. We won't get our animals back. We  
31 won't get them flights of birds coming in every spring.  
32 The fish come up to spawn in our rivers, up to Tanana  
33 and on the Yukon and that's what feeds the interior for  
34 our ecosystem. And our elders are right, it's declining  
35 and diminishing because our salmon ain't coming up to  
36 produce the richness that we need for our environment  
37 throughout our communities on the river and our  
38 villages. It's getting harder to put food away and  
39 harvest from living off the land from growing up. And  
40 I'm believing in our elders here that when they're  
41 talking about diminishing, that's what's going on here.  
42 Our ecosystem is diminishing because our wild salmon  
43 aren't coming up to our rivers to spawn and die and give  
44 that richness of their (indiscernible) when they pass  
45 and bring back to the environment. Our ecosystem lives  
46 off of that, as we also live off that circle of life.  
47 And if we don't have our salmon, we don't have our  
48 ecosystem, ladies and gentlemen. And that's what I've  
49 been hearing since I've been on the phone for three  
50 hours listening to everybody talk. And it's coming up



1 about eco, ecosystem. Our rivers and our flow ways need  
2 that salmon to come into our lands and give back that  
3 bio ecosystem that's drying up our communities around  
4 the interior. Without the salmon, ladies and gentlemen,  
5 our ecosystem dies. Our circle of life dies. And as  
6 Native people, we live off that circle of life and that's  
7 what makes us Natives. That's what makes us who we are.  
8 So, I think we do have a right to fight for our salmon  
9 and get our ecosystems back. And to do that, I think  
10 that by salmon catcher whatever on the oceans is hurting  
11 us immensely. And that could go on and on and on about  
12 it, but it's hurting our ecosystem. It's hurting our  
13 elders, as we just heard our elders speak of how our  
14 ecosystem's dying. Without that salmon coming up our  
15 rivers, ladies and gentlemen, our circle of life  
16 diminishes. Our moose go, our caribou go, our rabbits  
17 go, so forth and so forth of that circle of life. Without  
18 that salmon in our circle of life and the ecosystem that  
19 it creates, we're going to lose it. And we can't lose  
20 that as Native people or, you know, what we fight for.

21  
22 Other than that, I think we really need  
23 to fight to get that salmon back so that our ecosystem  
24 rebuilds our forests, you know, get our ecosystem back.  
25 Without that ecosystem, we don't have a circle of life  
26 and that's hurting us as people, as Natives. And I think  
27 we need to come together as this and fight for it. It's  
28 a bigger picture than just one community not getting  
29 fish and going to another community to get the fish. We  
30 don't have fish to come to spawn in our rivers. We have  
31 no circle of life, ladies and gentlemen. And those salmon  
32 need to come up and spawn so we can keep our ecosystem  
33 going. I watched the thing on the Serengeti where this  
34 fish was declined in their ecosystem. They brought this  
35 fish back for their ecosystem, and what happened? Their  
36 ecosystem reproduced more greens, more waters coming in.  
37 Just that one fish brought back all that and all their  
38 animals back, and they all started coming back. This is  
39 that same situation we're having here in the interior  
40 of Alaska without our salmon. And I think we need to say  
41 something about that. I'm from Nenana, Alaska. Thank you  
42 for listening to me. If you have questions, I would love  
43 to answer them.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
46 Don -- we have a question for you, hang on.

47  
48 MR. RICHARDS: Okay.

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1 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for your  
2 testimony. This is Don Woodruff. I think 15 years ago,  
3 I was up in Teslin, in the upper part of the Yukon, and  
4 those folks were telling us that the salmon weren't  
5 coming back, and it was turning into a desert. That's  
6 how he described it. And at that time, I had no clue  
7 what he was talking about. But I totally agree with you.  
8 If you don't get the bioenergetics back into the system,  
9 then you get nothing. Thank you.

10  
11 MR. RICHARDS: We got less than those  
12 people. There's no we either and we as people, that's  
13 what keeps us going, is that ecosystem from drying out  
14 and moving our animals away to someplace different. With  
15 the fish coming back in the rivers, this brings back our  
16 ecosystem. And this brings back our elders from getting  
17 sick of cancers and diabetes and all that. I mean, it's  
18 hard. And as a Native growing up, you know, I never grew  
19 up with anything. I never asked for anything. I'm always  
20 a guy that helped people. Living off the land is a big  
21 part of how I was raised and grown up. And without that  
22 ecosystem of a wild salmon to spawn and die, it won't  
23 feed our lands. It's going to dry up like it's doing and  
24 our animals won't come back and it's drying up the  
25 interior and if you can't see that, you can see it in  
26 the summertime in Alaska. There's fires everywhere, and  
27 it's getting worse and worse. We bring that fish back,  
28 our wild salmon, it's gonna [sic] reproduce our  
29 ecosystem, bring back our grasses, bring back our  
30 tundras, bring back what we need for our ecosystem to  
31 come back. And I think that's a big part. We gotta [sic]  
32 get our salmon back upstream or we're going to lose that  
33 ecosystem.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
36 for that. Any more questions? One more. Hold on.

37  
38 MS. BURK: Thanks, this is Eva. How is  
39 the fishing in Nenana? I know you guys were out there a  
40 little bit in October. How was it -- the fishing for  
41 you? Because I think we all had a little bit different  
42 experience.

43  
44 MR. RICHARDS: For me?

45  
46 MS. BURK: Yeah, for you guys, when  
47 you're fishing.

48  
49 MR. RICHARDS: In our fishing. Well, it's  
50 kind of weird because they stay open the -- it's open

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1 to fish. And what fish? It's open to fish for what fish?  
2 I mean, our chum salmon died down completely to almost,  
3 you know, we get certain runs that come in like our  
4 whitefish. Our whitefish are doing good. I mean, our  
5 chums went down quite a bit, but our salmon is what's  
6 really hurting the environment. It's like I got to put  
7 on a pirate hat just so I can go and fish on my rivers,  
8 and I think that's just wrong. I don't know why Fish and  
9 Game can't do something about those guys on the outskirts  
10 fishing with those big trolleys or whatever they're  
11 doing. I mean, that's just -- that's hurting the whole  
12 ecosystem and hurting our ways of life. But as far as  
13 fishing goes, I feel like a pirate on my river and they  
14 say I can't go and fish for king salmon while they're  
15 going by. And I can't, I got to go out, and I got to  
16 sneak around and go catch me a wild salmon in which I  
17 throw the females back in the water so that they can  
18 reproduce. But I keep the male. But it's come to pirating  
19 fish? Come on now. We gotta stop this bycatch and -- so  
20 our ecosystem comes back, and I'm not happy right now.  
21 I mean, 15, 20 years ago, I was the happiest man on  
22 earth. Everybody was happy. Every community on the river  
23 was happy. We took what we needed. We never took over  
24 what we needed. We just put away what we needed. And if  
25 you can't see that happiness from our fish flowing up  
26 the rivers and letting these big trolleys, take over and  
27 kill our fish, they're killing us, guys. It's as simple  
28 as that. I mean, you take our ecosystem. We have nothing,  
29 as a we, as Native people and as community, as people  
30 that live off the land in Alaska for thousands of years.  
31 I mean, to not even be able to fish on the river and  
32 see, you know, you could smell fish in the river and  
33 they tell you, you can't fish for salmon because the  
34 bycatch. I mean, what the hell are they doing with our  
35 salmon? What the hell are they doing with our salmon?  
36 They're taking it away from us. It's hurting our people.  
37 I'm sorry, but I'll just get more mad on the subject.  
38 But pirating on my own river, on the Tanana River is not  
39 the lifestyle I was looking forward to in 20 years,  
40 that's for sure. But our fishing has gone down. It's not  
41 as happy as it was 20 years ago. I mean, you could go  
42 anywhere on the Tanana or the Yukon 20 years ago and  
43 there was life everywhere on the river. Now it's almost  
44 like a graveyard now. I mean, it's just we got to get  
45 our ecosystem back. So, this, I don't know, it just  
46 makes me mad. I gotta feel sorry about fishing on my  
47 Tanana River without being able to fish because of rules.  
48 And pirating my own fish for salmon and putting away for  
49 my elders is wrong. And they shouldn't do that to us  
50 either, period. But our ecosystem is going to die along

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1 with our circle of life if we don't do something about  
2 our wild salmon getting up here, and we thrive in our  
3 land and prosperity because as I see it, our land will  
4 burn in the summertimes and just keep burning and not  
5 reproducing without that wild salmon producing what they  
6 produce in our ecosystems.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
9 for that. Thank you for calling in today. Any more  
10 questions?

11  
12 (No response)

13  
14 Hearing none. We appreciate you and  
15 thank you for your time today.

16  
17 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you. Have a great  
18 day. Merry Christmas everybody.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yep. Same to you.  
21 Thank you. Anyone else online want to do a public comment  
22 this morning? Non-agenda items.

23  
24 (No response)

25  
26 Hearing none. Any tribal comments?

27  
28 (No response)

29  
30 Hearing none. I guess we'll move on down  
31 the agenda to number 11. Action item: Developing  
32 recommendations on wildlife proposals and wildlife  
33 closures and wildlife anthropology.

34  
35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this  
36 is Brooke. Before our analysts start going through the  
37 proposals, I just wanted to remind folks about the  
38 procedures that we follow as we go through proposals and  
39 closure reviews. This just makes sure that we have an  
40 opportunity to hear from our analysts and then hear from  
41 anyone in the public and any other groups that might  
42 want to comment before the Council moves into their  
43 deliberations. So first off, our staff will present the  
44 analysis, and the Council will have the opportunity to  
45 ask any clarifying questions. At that time, it's not the  
46 time to get into discussion or talk about your views or  
47 opinions. We'll save that till after the public  
48 comments. Our analysts will share any comments that were  
49 received during the open public comment period, if there  
50 were any. And then staff will also share if there are

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1 any comments received during tribal or ANCSA corporation  
2 consultations. And then we'll move into agency and  
3 tribal comments. Anyone in the room or online that would  
4 like to comment on the proposal or closure review and  
5 then comments from advisory groups like the other RACs,  
6 ACs or the Subsistence Resource Commissions.

7  
8 If anyone has submitted public comments  
9 to me during the meeting or online, we will read those  
10 and then any other just open public testimony from  
11 anyone, personal testimony before the Council will move  
12 into making a motion. Motions for proposals, as a  
13 reminder are always made in the positive. If it is a  
14 closure review those motions are a little bit different,  
15 and there's a little cheat sheet on the back of your  
16 name cards with those options for proposals or for  
17 closure review motions. And then after the motion is  
18 seconded, the Council will move into discussion. And on  
19 the back of your yellow laminated card here in the room,  
20 Council members, there are a list of different just  
21 discussion prompt questions if needed. You guys are  
22 always really good about having in-depth discussion. But  
23 if you're stumped for some reason and need a little  
24 assistance, feel free to refer to the back of your card.  
25 It is really important that the Council builds a good  
26 justification for the record. So that when your  
27 recommendations go to the Board they're well supported.  
28 And then after that, we'll restate the final motion for  
29 the record. And the Council will vote and we can always  
30 do a roll call vote as needed if there's varying  
31 viewpoints on the issue. So that's all I wanted to say  
32 about the procedures. Thanks.

33  
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We'll start  
35 with the Eastern Interior WP26-71 - Unit 12 brown bear,  
36 increase harvest limits to 2 bears. That is on page 87.

37  
38 MR. PLANK: Good morning, Mr. Chair,  
39 Members of the Council. For the record, my name is Tom  
40 Plank, and I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of  
41 Management. And I will be presenting this summary for  
42 the analysis for wildlife proposal WP26-71. And as the  
43 Chair already pointed out, that starts on page 87 in  
44 your books. Wildlife proposal WP26-71 was submitted by  
45 this RAC and it requests increase in the harvest limit  
46 for brown bears and Unit 12, to 2 bears. The proponent  
47 states that increasing the brown bear harvest limit in  
48 Unit 12 will provide additional opportunities for  
49 federally qualified subsistence users, and in Unit 12,  
50 state hunting regulations already allow 2 bears for

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1 resident hunting -- hunters. There are no conservation  
2 concerns for brown bear in this unit. Regulations have  
3 not changed much since the start of the federal  
4 management of subsistence fish and wildlife resources  
5 on federal public lands began. And at its March 2026  
6 meeting, the Alaska Board of Game increased the resident  
7 state brown bear harvest limit in Unit 12 from 1 bear  
8 per 2 -- per year to 2 bears per year, and the Board of  
9 Game concluded that there were no biological concerns.

10  
11 The biology information is extremely  
12 limited, and no population surveys for brown bears have  
13 been conducted in Unit 12. The last population estimates  
14 was in the fall of 2000, and an estimated 350 to 425  
15 bears, based on extrapolations from surveys conducted  
16 in similar habitats. The annual harvest from 2002 to  
17 2023 averaged 21 bears in Unit 12, and on average,  
18 residents harvested 12 bears and non-residents 9 bears  
19 per year. The average harvest has remained relatively  
20 stable since 1983. If adopted, this proposal would  
21 increase the brown bear harvest limit in Unit 12 to 2  
22 bears, providing additional opportunities for federally  
23 qualified subsistence users to harvest brown bears under  
24 federal regulations. No increase in harvest or impacts  
25 to the bear -- brown bear populations are expected, as  
26 users may already harvest 2 brown bears on most federal  
27 public lands in Unit 12 under state regulations, and  
28 harvest pressure is very low. Wrangell St. Elias  
29 National Park Lands and Unit 12 where state regulations  
30 do not apply, are extremely remote where brown bear  
31 harvest is unlikely to occur, and although population  
32 data are extremely limited, there does not appear to be  
33 any conservation concerns due to low harvest pressure.  
34 No observed substantial increase in brown bear harvest  
35 in other units, where the harvest limit has increased  
36 to 2 bears and adopting this proposal would decrease  
37 regulatory complexity by aligning state and federal  
38 regulations.

39  
40 OSM's preliminary conclusions is to  
41 support proposal WP26-71. This proposal increases  
42 harvest opportunity for federally qualified subsistence  
43 users. There are no conservation concerns due to low  
44 harvest levels and because Alaska residents may already  
45 harvest 2 bears in Unit 12 under state regulations. Thank  
46 you, Mr. Chair, Members of the Council. I'd be happy to  
47 answer any questions.

48  
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions,  
50 Council members? Go right ahead, Don.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Tom, thank you for that report. Aligning the state and the federal harvest of the brown bears in 12, is that not a big step towards co-management that we align the regulations?

6

7

MR. PLANK: Thank you, member Woodruff. I don't have an actual answer because I -- I'm pulling a blank on that. Actually, I'm going to ask Lisa to help me on this. Have her come up. I want to make sure I give you an answer that makes sense instead of me babbling on.

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin for the record. Yeah, thanks. Throwing me under the bus here, Tom. Yeah, I don't -- I guess -- could you -- I mean, we certainly, at OSM, have not thought about aligning state and federal regulations in terms of co-

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MR. WOODRUFF: Yeah. I would like to refer to our All-Council meeting. When I got my 20-year award, I asked the liaison guy, I forget his name. The -- between the state and the feds, and he had a total blank, too. And I asked him how can we help the state work with us? Now, the only thing after a lot of thought and discussion is that we, as Council members, get on the ACs, and therefore, we can work with Fish and Game directly to achieve a co-management strategies that will benefit the people. That's what I'm getting at. Thank you.

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, through the Chair, Member Woodruff. I mean, I don't -- again I mean OSM when we were analyzing this proposal, I mean, we certainly have a lot of proposals that align or misaligned state regulations, and we've never really thought about it in terms of co-management. I mean, this is a dual management system. So, yeah, I -- anyone else -- I mean, we don't have a good direct response to your question. I mean, we do have the executive order now that directs federal opportunity to be consistent with state opportunity. But again, it's a dual management system, not really a co-management system.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I just want to  
2 bring it up. We're supposed to ask questions. So that  
3 was a good question, Don. But as I recall in the past  
4 when there was more opportunity for hunting and state  
5 land, we would love to see the same on federal land. And  
6 that was the reason why these put in. So, I just wanted  
7 to bring that out. That's the -- we didn't like seeing  
8 regulations that were more restrictive for subsistence  
9 than state.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, you have a  
12 question?

13  
14 MR. BASSICH: Negative. Well, I was going  
15 to point out what was stated, and that is that I think  
16 we got hung up on the terminology co-management versus  
17 dual management. So, and I think most people's minds co-  
18 management is involving indigenous people into the  
19 process. And dual management would be between the state  
20 and the federal programs. Just wanted to clarify that.  
21 Thank you for the record.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Eva.

24  
25 MS. BURK: Thank you. Through the Chair.  
26 I have a question about how Fish and Game arrived at the  
27 conclusion that Unit 12 has relatively high densities  
28 of brown bear in 2024, but there's never been any  
29 surveys?

30  
31 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burk, for  
32 the question. Again, for the record, Tom Plank. When I  
33 analyzed these, I can only go off the information that  
34 they have. And the reason that they stated that that was  
35 the case was because they as mentioned, they  
36 extrapolated the information by the data by comparing  
37 it to other habitats that are similar. And that's where  
38 they came to that conclusion in the information that I  
39 got on that. Does that answer your question or...?

40  
41 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I don't know if  
42 I said that for my last question, I might have a few  
43 questions. How -- did you come up with a sex and age  
44 composition of the population estimate? How much are --  
45 how many females do you have in the 350 to 425 bears  
46 that they extrapolated?

47  
48 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burk, for  
49 the question. Again, Tom Plank. That information was not  
50 available there, just extrapolated the population as a



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1 whole. The information that I received did not specify  
2 which sex it was or age cohorts.

3  
4 MS. BURK: I have -- I want to  
5 understand. So, what's -- how many -- like, I'm a little  
6 more familiar with how Fish and Game does the moose data  
7 and like how the report on twinning ratios and stuff  
8 like that. So I guess I'm trying to understand better  
9 the reproductivity and reproductive success and the  
10 amount of females that's in this population estimate,  
11 and then kind of comparing that to the annual harvest  
12 and understanding how if we're going to -- we could  
13 possibly take up to 39 bears per year of the 350, how  
14 much per year are being put back, basically. Thanks.

15  
16 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burk. Tom  
17 Plank again, I wish I had a better answer for that, but  
18 the information for Unit 12 is just so limited that I  
19 was not able to acquire that information to handle --  
20 to be able to answer that with any kind of subsistence  
21 -- substance information.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to say that  
24 that system of counting is not really good, because  
25 there's -- we have the results of that type of counting  
26 with moose and, and the results don't ever come out  
27 good. Now, like, for instance, 20F is down to the all  
28 time low of 11 kills of moose when we've had these  
29 questions come up over and over and over again, they're  
30 not able to do a good count. So, they're doing what you  
31 said, they're guesstimating, and that has failed  
32 terribly. So, in the future, I know it's just a hard,  
33 hard way to manage. I'm sure you understand that yourself  
34 just causes a lot of question and uncertainty. And it  
35 seems that we can't go into management with, like,  
36 blindfold on. You know, that's just guesstimating. So,  
37 I think that's what I -- how I understand it. Thank you.

38  
39 MS. BURK: So, if I were to like,  
40 summarize it, the state of Alaska in 2024 increased the  
41 limit from 1 to 2 bears, but that's based on extrapolated  
42 data that doesn't account for the reproductivity or the  
43 percent of females in the population. Thanks.

44  
45 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burk. Tom  
46 Plank. Basically, when I dug into it, their -- they just  
47 concluded that there was no biological information. That  
48 was the information that I had in the transcripts that  
49 I dug into for that. I really wish I had a better answer  
50 for you. I really do, but I -- that was all I could find

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1 and get.

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4 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. The -- is there  
5 anything in this data that has on the harvest, males and  
6 females? What -- how many -- on the -- each of the --  
7 there's a graph there on page 91. There should be more  
8 information on -- of those harvested, how many males and  
9 females?

9

10 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Ms. -- Member  
11 Ensminger. Tom Plank, for the record again. There just  
12 above the -- that graph you're talking about, it shows  
13 that they want to -- they don't -- no more than five --  
14 I'm sorry, give me a second. So, they manage it to a  
15 harvest of a three year mean harvest that does not exceed  
16 28 brown bears, of which no more than five can be females  
17 greater than five years old, per year and include at  
18 least 55% males in the harvest. That is the state  
19 objective. But when I went through it, I did not see  
20 where it specified. and I can only make assumptions on  
21 that, I apologize.

22

23 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, that's important  
24 information to have in here when you write these up.  
25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin for  
28 the record. And I just wanted to say it's really hard  
29 for OSM to speak for ADF&G. I mean, we're just getting  
30 data from ADF&G. They're the ones that are collecting  
31 the data and what we have is just as good as the data  
32 we're receiving from them. So, we don't have all the  
33 details on how they're making their determinations on  
34 extrapolations and all the details of the harvest data.  
35 And, you know, if anyone from ADF&G is online to speak  
36 more to the details of this, that would be very much  
37 appreciated. But basically, my understanding is ADF&G  
38 manages this population based on harvest. And so that's  
39 -- they used harvest as an index for like the biological  
40 status of the population. And so, Tom just read you the  
41 management objective, you know, to manage the harvest  
42 of the three year mean harvest does not exceed 28 brown  
43 bears. And so, they've been meeting that objective. And  
44 that's kind of an indicator they use to say, okay, this  
45 is a sustainable harvest. The population's doing okay.  
46 And I mean similar they have -- your concerns about the  
47 number of females versus males in the harvest. And when  
48 we -- I guess we don't have any analysis of whether that  
49 objective is being met, that no more than five females  
50 greater than five years old are harvested and 54 -- 55%

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1 males are in the harvest. Our assumption understanding  
2 is that those objectives are being met as well. So again,  
3 it's kind of their way of managing the population just  
4 due to lack of resources, staff, time, money, other  
5 priorities. You know you can't do everything. So again,  
6 that's just our interpretation of ADF&G information.  
7 Thanks.

8  
9 MS. BURK: Thank you for that. And then  
10 you know, thinking more about this, does Fish and Game  
11 report on the -- or the harvesters report to Fish and  
12 Game? Do they collect data on the condition of the bear,  
13 like the relative size? Also, what is the bear eating  
14 and how is that doing? Like, how are the moose, caribou  
15 and salmon in that bears territory doing? How is the  
16 vegetation of the land doing? For example, we have  
17 blueberry disease now. So, where you go to pick berries,  
18 you might not have them. And that can also not only  
19 affect humans but the bears. So just wondering how Fish  
20 and Game is -- if they look at these other factors and  
21 looking at the kind of health of the bear population.  
22 Thanks.

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So as is and stated  
25 oh -- I'm Charlie. Charlie Wright, for the record. Oh  
26 okay. I'll let you answer first. My apologies.

27  
28 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,  
29 Chair. Tom Plank, OSM again. Those are very good  
30 questions, Member Burk. I wish I could give you an answer  
31 again. I'll just repeat what Lisa said. If an ADF&G  
32 representative is online can answer this, that'd be  
33 great. But the information I got, I cannot say yes or  
34 no to that because I don't know.

35  
36 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, Lisa Grediagin for  
37 the record. I'll just add to that, you guys -- I mean,  
38 these bears are required to be sealed, so all harvested  
39 bears must be sealed. And you all probably know better  
40 than we do what information they collect at the time of  
41 sealing. I mean, Sue, you probably harvested brown bears  
42 in Unit 12 and taken them to be sealed. And so, you  
43 probably know better than we do what information they  
44 collect at that time.

45  
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: I probably do, but  
47 Robert's Rule says I can't give information. I can only  
48 ask you questions.

49  
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1 MS. GRADIAGIN: You know that better than  
2 we do!

3  
4 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm supposed to ask  
5 questions. The question is, do they get sealed? Yes,  
6 they get sealed. The other question is, do they do a lot  
7 of work on the information they get? Yes, they do. There  
8 is -- and do you want this to go now or in discussion?  
9 I could -- okay, that's kind of where I was getting at.  
10 There's a lot of information I can bring to that  
11 discussion.

12  
13 (Pause)

14  
15 You know, I'll argue that they do have  
16 information and I'm not going to pick on you, but it's  
17 the kind of questions you're hearing here that you should  
18 ask them yourself and have that for these meetings.  
19 That's very important to have, because these are the  
20 kinds of questions you have to think as a biologist,  
21 what would I ask? I would have been asking those if I  
22 was on the Board of Game when they did the 2-bear limit.  
23 I've been asking all these questions, and I can't imagine  
24 they weren't asked at the time, so.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue. I  
27 just have one quick comment. If the hunt is sustainable  
28 with these numbers now and then we add another bear to  
29 it that's going to bring these numbers up. Kill numbers  
30 and harvest numbers. And that's my fear is, they get too  
31 thin. That's my only comment. Thank you.

32  
33 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, guys, that's good  
34 discussion. Remember to bring those back up when we --  
35 points when we get to the discussion. Were there any --  
36 oh.

37  
38 MS. GREDIAGIN: Oh yeah. Lisa Grediagin  
39 for the record. And I guess when OSM is analyzing 60  
40 plus analyses, you know, we -- for this one we kind of  
41 just looked at, the state already allows 2 bears under  
42 state regulations. And so, unless people are going into  
43 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, which is extremely  
44 remote in Unit 12, there's no difference in harvest  
45 opportunity under federal regulations. I mean, it's in  
46 some ways an administrative housekeeping change because  
47 there's going to be no difference in harvest. People can  
48 already harvest this, you know, 2 bears during the same  
49 season under state regulations. So, I guess from OSMs  
50 perspective, it's not a conservation concern. There's

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1 not going to be any increase or difference in harvest  
2 because people can already do it under state  
3 regulations.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
6 for that.

7

8 (Pause)

9

10 Okay. Was there any Tribal or ANCSA  
11 Corporation consultation reports?

12

13 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom  
14 Plank, OSM. For this proposal no, sir.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
17 Okay. I'm just going to go down the list. Do we have any  
18 public comments?

19

20 MS. KOSBRUK: Hi, this is Deanna Kosbruk.  
21 I'm calling in from Ahtna Intertribal Resource  
22 Commission.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have the floor.  
25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. KOSBRUK: Thank you. So, Ahtna  
28 Intertribal Resource Commission, Fish and Wildlife  
29 Committee had written comments, and I believe those were  
30 provided to the Council. And AITRC Fish and Wildlife  
31 Committee supports WP26-71 with the following  
32 considerations. Is that the regulatory consistency, the  
33 state already allows resident hunters to harvest 2 brown  
34 bears in Unit 12, and aligning federal regulations  
35 reduces confusion for federal qualified users and  
36 enhances harvest reporting accuracy. No conservation  
37 concern. The proposal explicitly states that there are  
38 no known conservation issues with the brown bear  
39 population in Unit 12, with adequate biological  
40 monitoring and sealing requirements in place. This  
41 increase is sustainable. Limited access, low risk of  
42 overharvest. Much of Unit 12 includes remote terrain  
43 where harvest is naturally low. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
46 Any other agency or tribal comments? Go ahead, Tom.

47

48 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the  
49 record, Tom Plank. I want to apologize, I misspoke. This  
50 one, we do have a written comment, and it is on page 243

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1 of your books. That was completely my mistake, I  
2 apologize.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.  
5 And how about the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,  
6 skipped over you, got any comments?

7  
8 MR. POETTER: Yeah, through the Chair  
9 Thanks for the recognition. Aaron Poetter, subsistence  
10 liaison with state of Alaska. Now, we don't have any  
11 formal comments drafted at this time. Again, as  
12 mentioned, this is a regulatory alignment proposal. You  
13 know, we can be supportive of those in a similar fashion  
14 as already stated by members of the public and staff  
15 that, you know, this is -- this update to align with  
16 state regs as it affects all of Unit 12 anyway, is a bit  
17 of a redundancy. So federally qualified subsistence  
18 users are already qualified and allowed to harvest the  
19 2 bears under state regulations in Unit 12. So, thank  
20 you.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.  
23 Go ahead, Sue.

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I didn't catch  
25 your name. This is Sue Entsminger.

26  
27 MR. POETTER: Yeah, my name is Aaron.  
28 Aaron Poetter.

29  
30 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh. Okay. The one thing  
31 that you're forgetting is in the Wrangell-St. Elias,  
32 they would still under subsistence where they can come  
33 in on federal lands. I think, I might be wrong. I think  
34 they still would not be able to do it unless it was a  
35 subsistence regulation. Yeah, I'm getting a nodded  
36 ahead. So, I just want to point that out to you that  
37 there's that big chunk of Unit 12 that is in the park,  
38 and the only subsistence season they have is in the  
39 federal regular or rate -- regulation book. So, this  
40 would help them. And I just want to ask you that  
41 question. I hope that's a question.

42  
43 MR. POETTER: Yeah, I guess.....

44  
45 MS. ENTSMINGER: That was a question.

46  
47 MR. POETTER: .....I didn't really see  
48 that as a question. It sounded more like a statement.

49  
50

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: I didn't do a good job  
2 as a question, but it is a question. Did you see that?

3  
4 MR. POETTER: See that there are federal  
5 lands within Unit 12? Yes. I'm aware.

6  
7 MS. ENTSMINGER: And in some of those  
8 federal lands, only subsistence can hunt there. Did you  
9 see that?

10  
11 MR. POETTER: Yes.

12  
13 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, your statement would  
14 be wrong, correct?

15  
16 MR. POETTER: Board of Game provides this  
17 -- they don't break out -- the state regulations don't  
18 break it out. It is effective for all of Unit 12,  
19 according to the -- as the Board of Game had passed it,  
20 so.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you. Any  
23 more questions for ADF&G?

24  
25 (No response)

26  
27 Hearing or seeing none, we'll move down  
28 to tribes and ANCSA corporations. Any comments?

29  
30 (No response)

31  
32 Okay. Moving down. Advisory group  
33 comments, other RACs, Fish and Game Advisory Councils,  
34 Subsistence resource commissions.

35  
36 MS. JOCHUM: Yes, Mr. Chair.

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You got the floor.

39  
40 MS. JOCHUM: Thank you. Kim Jochum,  
41 National Park service, so I'm going to read comments  
42 from the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence  
43 Resource Commission to the proposals today. So, for W -  
44 - they actually picked up WP26-24, -25, -26 and -71 and  
45 one comment. So, if it's okay, I would like to read the  
46 comment one time and then just refer back to -- okay,  
47 great. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence  
48 Resource Commission unanimously supported a group of  
49 proposals increasing the harvest limit of brown bears  
50 in Units 11, 12, and 13, with a modification requesting

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1 that monitoring continues of brown bear populations.  
2 Many observations have shown that brown bears have been  
3 doing well in these units, but it is important to prevent  
4 overharvest. Increasing the harvest limit will allow for  
5 more harvest opportunities for local subsistence users.  
6 Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
9 Any questions, comments?

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 Okay, moving on to agenda. Other written  
14 public comments?

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: I have not received any,  
17 Mr. Chair.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Okay.  
20 Public testimony.

21

22 (No response)

23

24 Hearing or seeing none. Council motion.

25

26 MS. ENTSMINGER: I make a motion to  
27 support WP26-71, to increase the brown bear in Unit 12  
28 to 2 bears.

29

30 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second that. This is  
31 Don.

32

33 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. I'll do the best  
34 I can on discussion. This is Sue Entsminger. A lot of  
35 the questions that were asked -- I was just asking  
36 another one by Eva. Do you eat brown bear meat? And I  
37 said yes, we do a lot. The people in our area are brown  
38 bears are, in the fall, mostly berry fed. And there are  
39 some even when they go into hibernation, they're up there  
40 and they're berry fed. And that whole southern end of  
41 Unit 12 is pretty remote. And there are guides in the  
42 area for the state land, but the guides are limited to  
43 1 brown bear. It's only the residents and we do have a  
44 good bear population. And so, in the Wrangell-St. Elias,  
45 if they didn't have this open for 2 bears, if people go  
46 out there and go hunting and they want to take 2 bears,  
47 they, you know, they're limited to a sow. If they kill  
48 a sow, it can't have cubs. They are in an age group of  
49 if there are 2 or 3 years old, it's very hard to  
50 determine for anyone that's out there if -- there's 3,



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1 2 -- and they do have 2 and 3 cubs, if that mother has  
2 some three-year-old cubs, which technically, by state  
3 regulation is legal to hunt or shoot it, you don't want  
4 to shoot it because you're not sure it's going to be  
5 three years old. So, if you see sows and cubs, you're  
6 not shooting all of those animals. And most people are  
7 looking for a single bear and normally that would be a  
8 male, so. And I don't want everybody going hunting where  
9 I go hunting, but there's bears there. There's plenty  
10 of black bears. And I see, they're hard on moose calves  
11 and it's -- and I don't really see that many people, I  
12 don't know. Is it necessary to have a 2-bear limit? I  
13 don't see that many people going out and shooting 2  
14 brown bears. So, if you guys have -- I'm trying to cover  
15 all the stuff you ask. Eva, I know I'm missing some. Can  
16 you help me out?

17  
18 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I was  
19 concerned about reproductivity and then how much of the  
20 females are being harvested, considering that 45% of the  
21 harvest could be female?

22  
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, and I believe I  
24 addressed that because there's so many that -- they're  
25 usually double. They're usually having twins and  
26 occasionally having triplets. And I see it all the time,  
27 I have pictures of them. And that is not bears that  
28 hunters want to shoot. They don't want to be shooting  
29 that. So, you're kind of singling out hunting boars. Was  
30 there another one? What was it? Oh, yeah. The sealing.

31  
32 MR. WOODRUFF: Sue. Part of the sealing  
33 process. My wife's a sealer. We pull a tooth, we measure  
34 the skull. We do sometimes can determine the sex. If we  
35 can get the hide, you know, in a fairly decent time  
36 period. It's not frozen in a ball or something. So, Fish  
37 and Game takes that tooth ages the bear and then they  
38 measure from the measurements of the skull and the sex  
39 they can determine how healthy that bear is. If it's a  
40 three-year-old bear and it's, you know, huge. Okay. You  
41 know, that's where we're at. Thank you.

42  
43 MS. MCDAVID: And that was Don Woodruff  
44 for the record.

45  
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh, and I just heard her  
47 ask the question, so I'll ask it. Where's the  
48 information? And I think that's what we were saying  
49 earlier. That information should come to our meetings.  
50 And it's out there and Tom, I'm not picking on you,

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1 honestly, but I think it's good questions to ask Fish  
2 and Game. Because they have that data, just like Don  
3 says on the sealing. Sometimes -- I live on the boundary  
4 at 12 and 13. In 13 they wanted to do more work because  
5 there's so many bears in that area. And so, they were  
6 doing -- taking hair samples and all kinds of things.  
7 So, there's a lot of work out there that's being done  
8 by Fish and Game. It's an incredible amount of work. And  
9 I just ask the questions, I guess. And I think what  
10 happens to Fish and Game is there's so many meetings  
11 anymore and the feds are doing this side and the states  
12 doing this side, and then that just gets used up just  
13 like us as users going -- you guys, all your fishery  
14 meetings. Oh my gosh. But there's a -- they are really  
15 monitored, really good in my opinion. And all the years  
16 like being on the Game Board and all these advisory  
17 committees, they can't really do an aerial study of  
18 bears. Bears are in areas that you can't really say,  
19 okay, I'm going to do an aerial study and know what --  
20 how many bears are out there. You can't do that. They  
21 do it by what they're seeing in harvest and what's coming  
22 in. And, and it's -- I think they're doing the best they  
23 can with Bears. So -- and they do have collared bears.  
24 They do more information on that too. So yeah, I think  
25 that this is fine. I don't see that this is going to --  
26 all this -- this would affect the people in the Wrangell-  
27 St. Elias that actually would go into those remote areas,  
28 and they could get 2 bears. So, it's not going to hurt  
29 this bear population, because the rest of that land is  
30 mostly state and it's already 2 bears there.

31  
32 So, for all of that information, I would  
33 vote in favor of this proposal and it was our proposal,  
34 and I don't even remember who put it in. But one of us,  
35 I don't think it was me. Was it me? That's why I'm  
36 quitting. I can't remember anything. Okay, so I would  
37 favor this proposal. And one more thing, because it is  
38 good that the user doesn't have to look at 2 books all  
39 the time to figure out what's legal.

40  
41 MS. BURK: Through the Chair. This is  
42 Eva. So did Fish and -- when did Fish and Game change  
43 the limit from 1 to 2 bears in 2024? Was it 1 bear prior  
44 to that?

45  
46 MR PLANK: I guess I can answer that one.  
47 Through the Chair, Tom Plank. Yes, you are correct.

48  
49 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, we have one season  
50 right there -- this is Sue again -- on that page. Oh,

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1 we don't have it. It only goes to 23. It would be good  
2 to have that just to help you all. It would show what  
3 was taken.

4  
5 MS. BURK: And then this is Eva again.  
6 One more question. You mentioned -- because I'm not --  
7 I don't hunt brown bears in Wrangell. So, I really have  
8 to ask you a lot of questions just like I did the other  
9 guy. You mentioned that the non-residents are limited  
10 to 1 bear?

11  
12 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.

13  
14 MS. BURK: So, there was a lot of in 2021,  
15 the non-resident beg -- their harvest was quite a bit  
16 more than the resident. Is there any concern about that  
17 going up at all in the future?

18  
19 MS. ENTSMINGER: I really don't think so.  
20 Mostly because of the 1 bear limit, and mostly because  
21 the areas where the guides are guiding in all of Unit  
22 12, they're on federal lands, they're restricted, and  
23 there's only 1. And I mean, it's something that we will  
24 take -- we -- I believe I would be very concerned if  
25 something changed and we didn't make a regulation to  
26 change it. But as far as the subsistence regulation,  
27 it's probably not going to change.

28  
29 MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie, I call for  
30 question.

31  
32 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, this is the last  
33 chance for any comments from Council members. This is  
34 your time to discuss before voting. So, Eva, if you do  
35 have something to add, please do it now.

36  
37 MS. BURK: I -- thank you. This is Eva.  
38 I appreciate all the information, and I appreciate the  
39 local information. I am glad that Deanna called in today.  
40 I also want to acknowledge Ahtna's work in putting  
41 forward how to survey for bears with the bear hair. That  
42 was something that they brought forward, and they should  
43 be acknowledged for that. And then also Ahtna did provide  
44 a comment letter. And so, I'm trying to look at the  
45 different people who use this area. And respond  
46 accordingly and try to listen to folks. It's not my  
47 business to tell people how to use their area, but then  
48 maybe it is. I have concerns about increasing limits on  
49 any species of anything in Alaska right now. I am  
50 concerned about the environment. I am concerned about

1 food chains and food webs that start in the ocean. And  
2 at the microscopic level, there are lack of insects that  
3 we don't see. The black bears in my area, we don't have  
4 the population counts, and I have local people telling  
5 me that they're coming in and hunting the -- we say  
6 (indiscernible), they're hunting lots of bear. And we're  
7 hearing from the local people that they're not quite  
8 sure how the black bear is adapting, but that they're  
9 now catching whitefish. And that when they're hunting  
10 them, they're seeing that their stomachs are full of  
11 whitefish when they should normally be full of salmon.  
12 So, when you change a regulation in one year, it takes  
13 time to see how these things play out. While I do  
14 appreciate aligning state and federal regulations  
15 because it is a lot easier on a hunter and fisherman to  
16 have to follow one set of rules. And especially when  
17 you're hunting and you're traveling, like to know where  
18 you're at in the world. So, I say all this, but I'm also  
19 very concerned with the lack of information on the  
20 population itself. I don't know enough about the  
21 sealing. I didn't get enough information here at this  
22 table from Fish and Game about the stuff that Don was  
23 describing about using the size of the skull and the  
24 tooth analysis to determine just how healthy that bear  
25 was. If we don't see that, it's hard to make an informed  
26 decision and I'm -- I don't always think that we should  
27 follow Fish and Game. I do not agree with the way that  
28 Fish and Game is managing or has managed the Yukon River.  
29 I'll say it to anybody who asks me. So, if I were to  
30 apply that management and the science and methodology  
31 and bring it over to wildlife, I have to have those same  
32 reservations with the way that things are being managed  
33 in a changing climate, in a changing ecosystem. I will  
34 probably reluctantly support this proposal. I'm still  
35 making up my mind on that. And that's only because local  
36 people that have -- that are working to count bears,  
37 Ahtna people, people that have hunted and lived in the  
38 area for thousands of years because they're coming  
39 forward and providing comments and that look -- and I  
40 know what they're doing as far as trying to understand  
41 bear population, then I am a little more predisposed to  
42 support it. But in the way that information was presented  
43 to me from Fish and Game on the biology and the  
44 population, and the rational -- rationale for increasing  
45 the bag limit from 1 to 2 in 2024, I don't agree with  
46 that methodology just like that. I'll go on and on. But  
47 I just want to say the situation that we're in today,  
48 our elders have been coming to these rooms for 50 years  
49 and saying exactly what we're seeing today was going to  
50 happen, and nobody listened. And nobody gives them any

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1 credit for their predictions and observations that we  
2 see to be coming true today. And so, I have a real  
3 problem with the way things are managed. And I really  
4 think that we need to be working on these things at a  
5 local level and really creating land stewardship, land  
6 relationship plans with each other, with state and  
7 federal agencies and all user groups. I really believe  
8 that. So, with that, I'll say I'll still be making up  
9 my mind when we vote. I haven't got there yet. Thank  
10 you.

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. We do  
13 have a motion on the floor. Go ahead, Sue.

14  
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I just want to  
16 respond to that. Eva, I get it. I totally get it. Yeah,  
17 and I -- and if I was in your shoes, I would feel just  
18 like you, I'm sure. And just being on this Council for  
19 all this long and seeing the Yukon fish and I mean,  
20 there was -- you guys were doing strips whenever I first  
21 got on and it's gone. It's totally gone. And I get it,  
22 I totally get it. And I understand and, you know,  
23 emotionally to myself, I mean, it's part of my livelihood  
24 right now to be able to shoot grizzly bears. And I want  
25 that bear population sustainable. I don't want to see -  
26 - and I'd be the first one to come to here and have  
27 proposals to change it back, you know. And in a way, I  
28 don't think -- I have to be honest. I don't think people  
29 are going to be going out there shooting 2 grizzly bears.  
30 It's too damn much work. And so, it's the only  
31 reservation that says it's probably going to be just  
32 fine, but the minute it goes sour, we need to get right  
33 back on and change the regulations. So, I really  
34 appreciate what you're saying. I do understand totally.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Where are  
37 we at?

38  
39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Call the question.

40  
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Are we going  
42 to ask for a roll call vote or unanimous consent? Okay.  
43 Roll call vote. Thank you.

44  
45 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I'll restate the  
46 motion for the record, the motion is to support WP26-71  
47 to increase the brown bear harvest in Unit 12 to 2 bears.  
48 And we'll start online with Andy Bassich.

49  
50 MR. BASSICH: Yay.

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1  
2 MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy Shockley.  
3  
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: No. Excuse me. No.  
5  
6 MS. MCDAVID: Sue Entsminger.  
7  
8 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.  
9  
10 MS. MCDAVID: Donald Woodruff.  
11  
12 MR. WOODRUFF: I agree, yes.  
13  
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Linda Evans.  
15  
16 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. Did you get my vote?  
17 This is Dorothy.  
18  
19 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, Dorothy, we got you.  
20 Thank you.  
21  
22 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you.  
23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.  
25  
26 MR. ALEXANDER: Yes.  
27  
28 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright.  
29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie.  
31 Yes.  
32  
33 MS. MCDAVID: The motion passes 5 to 2.  
34 Oh, sorry. Eva. My bad. That's -- take that back. I was  
35 saving you for last, and I forgot about you. Eva Burk.  
36  
37 MS. BURK: Yeah. Yes.  
38  
39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you and I'll correct  
40 the record. Motion passes 6 to 2.  
41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
43 for that. Wow, we got through one of those.  
44  
45 MS. MCDAVID: 1 of 12.  
46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Do you all think you  
48 can cover lunch in one hour, or do we need a little  
49 longer? 1:30. Okay, let's move on to 1:30 and enjoy your  
50 lunch. And we'll see you back at 1:30. Thank you all for

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1 being here.

2

3 (Off record)

4

5 (On record)

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're ready to  
8 go. Gotta start or we're going to be here at 9 o'clock  
9 tonight.

10

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair  
12 and members of the Council. I'm Liz Williams, I'm a  
13 Cultural Anthropologist at OSM and today we are looking  
14 at proposal WP20 -- 26-72a. And as Brooke mentioned  
15 earlier, off the record, this is a customary and  
16 traditional use proposal. And so, I'd just like to remind  
17 everybody, especially new people and people who might  
18 be listening. We are only looking for a documented  
19 pattern of use, nothing else. We don't need to know how  
20 much or anything like that. Just have people used this  
21 resource and do they still. The other thing about this  
22 is that every time we come before you, we are looking  
23 at a draft. This is not a complete report, in the office  
24 we gather as much information as we can, a lot of it is  
25 from the transcripts. If we have other documents,  
26 whether it's oral histories from people from the region,  
27 all kinds of things. We put all that together for you.  
28 So, this is not complete though, because what you tell  
29 us goes into the next draft and that really tells us  
30 what's going on right now. Just like a lot of what you  
31 told us during your reports today. So, I'll get started.  
32 This proposal WP26-72a, was submitted by the Eastern  
33 Interior Regional Subsistence Advisory Council, you, and  
34 it requests the recognition of customary and traditional  
35 use of brown bear and Unit 20E by residents of Unit 20E.  
36 And when the proposal was made, the Council stated that  
37 residents of Unit 20E have long harvested brown and  
38 grizzly bear for subsistence and recognition of  
39 customary and traditional use would provide additional  
40 opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users.  
41 So, the rural residents of Unit 20E, this is mainly  
42 people that live in Eagle and Eagle Village, have  
43 customary and traditional use determinations for  
44 caribou, moose, sheep and other species are open to all  
45 rural residents and these include black bear, beaver,  
46 coyote, fox, hare, link -- lynx, wolverine, wolf, grouse  
47 and ptarmigan. So almost everything but brown bear.  
48 Currently, the only residents of Unit 12 and Dot Lake  
49 have customary traditional use for -- use determination  
50 for brown bear in Unit 20E, and this is just because

1 they're the only ones who have asked for it. When the  
2 program began in the 90s, especially around 1997, Ahtna  
3 and individuals from that region, some upper Tanana  
4 people too, really made a push to get a lot of their  
5 customary and traditional uses recognized. And even  
6 though they may not live right there, they have  
7 relatives, they have trading relationships so that is  
8 why it doesn't include 20E. And that's really important  
9 to know that when a lot of these early C&T proposals  
10 were made for this region, when the Councils discussed  
11 it then, there's a line from the transcript where the  
12 interagency staff committee noted that when they  
13 acknowledged the customary and traditional use of brown  
14 bear by the residents of Unit 12 and Dot Lake and Unit  
15 20E, the staff committee said these findings are not  
16 intended to suggest that other communities within those  
17 units are not eligible, nor does it foreclose the  
18 opportunity for those communities to come forward with  
19 additional information at some point in the future. So,  
20 it just hasn't been done yet.

21  
22 The communities are Eagle, Eagle Village  
23 and Chicken like I said. These practices are very much  
24 rooted in the traditional practices of the Han  
25 Athabascan people. In the 70s, a lot of "back to the  
26 land" people came and homesteaded in this area. Some of  
27 them say they apprenticed with the people of Eagle  
28 Village. Even though these are two distinct communities,  
29 ADF&G Subsistence Division research documents the close  
30 interactive relationship between the two communities.  
31 They work together on subsistence harvests and other  
32 things. They also kind of got connected to the highway  
33 in the 50s and so that has affected, you know, a lot of  
34 visitor access to these communities. And then with  
35 ANILCA, the Yukon-Charley Preserve was created and led  
36 to more regulation in the area. So, we have a little bit  
37 of subsistence information for Eagle and Eagle Village,  
38 a very recent survey, none from Chicken. But again, that  
39 doesn't necessarily mean they don't use brown bear. So,  
40 if you look on page 97, you'll see the factors that we  
41 look at for customary and traditional use  
42 determinations. And these are a holistic approach. We're  
43 not doing a checklist here, we're looking for a community  
44 system, a pattern of use. One thing that I really like  
45 to think about when I'm looking at customary and  
46 traditional use determination, is that people in rural  
47 communities have a wide, wide variety of things they  
48 harvest and this allows them to -- sustainability. If  
49 one population goes down, they may start to rely on some  
50 other things instead. And so, this is about one of those



1 resources that, as one Eagle resident said, you just  
2 have to fill in the gap with whatever you've got. And  
3 she was saying that in regard to the and -- of you know,  
4 just the same, a disaster that you've been talking about.  
5 So, people are flexible, they're adaptable and they're  
6 opportunistic. Something new comes into the region that  
7 is giving itself to you, or it's there, so you harvest  
8 it. And I'm preaching to the choir, please forgive me.  
9

10 So, the subsistence practices of Eagle  
11 and Eagle Village were documented in surveys by the  
12 Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 2017, I believe.  
13 And they -- harvest methods have changed. But the Han  
14 and the residents of Eagle and Eagle village continue  
15 to harvest bear in addition to other species introduced  
16 to them. In 2017, during the surveys I mentioned, this  
17 was a one-year snapshot of household harvests of almost  
18 every resource possible in Eagle and Eagle Village, and  
19 the only report of brown bear usage was a household in  
20 Eagle using but not harvesting brown bear. However, this  
21 really is not super consequential. Number one, it's one  
22 year. You can never talk to everybody. If somebody is  
23 eating a bear that they took in defense of life and  
24 property, they may not want to talk about it. All kinds  
25 of factors fit in. But what I like to look at, number  
26 one, there's a quote from Ray Collins from the Western  
27 Interior Council who talked about resources that people  
28 don't use a lot. But when we talk about customary and  
29 traditional use, we don't just -- we do just focus on  
30 that one resource. And brown bear has been used, is used  
31 but not frequently. And so, we don't really look at  
32 other resources. But in this situation, it's important  
33 to bring up what people have already talked about today  
34 for the most recent living history -- living memory in  
35 history or now, a lot of people relied mostly on salmon  
36 and caribou and that's not there. So here's where we  
37 look at that big picture of all the things people use.  
38 And that's why they've asked to have their customary and  
39 traditional use of bear -- brown bear recognized. And I  
40 didn't go [sic] all the transcripts in the past but  
41 almost everybody on this Council has commented over the  
42 years how they're tired of eating bears because the other  
43 stuff they like isn't there. They're happy to have bears,  
44 but. So one thing that Ray Collins said, and he was on  
45 the Western Interior forever, he said the general  
46 question that comes to mind when you're doing these CT  
47 findings, customary traditional use findings, on an  
48 animal like brown bear that is very limited in use now  
49 it seems to me that it's self-regulating. People are  
50 choosing not to use it very often. Is that sufficient

1 reason to find that there was not C&T when it was there?  
2 Because in many of our area, I lived in Nikolai for many  
3 years, brown bear was used regularly in potlatches and  
4 use has declined. But it was never the whole community,  
5 only a few individuals, and it was prized by older men,  
6 and it was just eaten by men, not the others. But if you  
7 made a C&T finding based on that fact, that the  
8 subsistence user determined whether they want to hunt  
9 it or not, and just because use is declining, is that  
10 sufficient reason to say that there wasn't a C&T? Well,  
11 in this case we have use increasing.

12  
13 So, there's another good quote that is  
14 very good summary of the Eagle and Eagle Village,  
15 customary and traditional use. It's a quote that an old  
16 anthropologist found digging through all kinds of  
17 records while he was somewhere in New York. But I'll  
18 read this quote to you, and it's on page 97B. I forgot  
19 to mention that the last three pages of the analysis  
20 didn't show up in the book. And that's the pages I give  
21 you -- gave you. So black bear, their brown variation  
22 and grizzlies are reported to have been killed and eaten  
23 in the Han area. Schmitter, an Army guy provided --  
24 proved a sheer acc -- provided a clear account of the  
25 classic Athabascan technique of killing bears with a  
26 lance. A pike or spear is nearly always used in killing  
27 bears. The hunter attracts the bear by making a raven  
28 like noise, causing the bear, as the Indians say, to  
29 think the raven has discovered a dead moose. They also  
30 further explain that the big bear's only would come as  
31 the little bears would not know what the croaking meant.  
32 As the bear approaches, the Indian holds the spear in  
33 position facing the bear as it draws near to him, and  
34 as the bear springs, the Indian sticks the spear into  
35 its throat at the top of the breastbone, at the same  
36 time shoving the handle of the pole into the ground,  
37 thus causing the bear to spear himself with his own  
38 weight. Sometimes three men hunt in this matter, two of  
39 them attacking the bear on either side as if rushed  
40 forward. The meat of the young bear, when killed in the  
41 fall, when they feed on huckleberries, is considered a  
42 great luxury. So, like a lot of the sources about bear  
43 harvest in this area, the brown or black is not  
44 specified, but this one says both. But I really like  
45 this quote because it doesn't -- it doesn't just show  
46 that people harvested and used bear. It shows the  
47 traditional knowledge involved in harvesting the bear.  
48 And even if people don't believe or do the exact same  
49 things, that value persists through today and that's why  
50 OSM supports this proposal as our preliminary conclusion.

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P.S. I invite Council members who have talked about this before to please put lots of information on the record so we can add it in. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Okay, so now we go to public comment received during the open comment period.

(Pause)

MS. WILLIAMS: There were no public comments on this proposal.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultation report.

MS. WILLIAMS: This proposal did not receive comments during the consultation. This is Liz Williams. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Liz. How about agency and tribal comments?

(No response)

Now we can ask ADF&G if they have anything to say about it.

MR. POETTER: Yeah. For the record, Aaron Poetter, no comment from the state at this time.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Federal agencies.

(No response)

Tribes and ANCSA Corporation.

(No response)

Advisory Group comments, other RACS. Fish and Game advisory councils.

(No response)

Subsistence Resource Commissions.

(No response)

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1 Any other written public comments?

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: We have received none.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Okay.

6 Moving into public testimony.

7

8 (No response)

9

10 Seeing or hearing none. Council motion.

11

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Move to adopt this  
13 proposal.

14

15 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'll second.

16

17 MR WOODRUFF: This is Don.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Council discussion.

20

21 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy Bassich.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, for the  
26 record member Bassich, resident of Eagle area. I  
27 strongly support this proposal. I really appreciated the  
28 analysis by OSM, I think it was accurate. Trying to  
29 build on the record, I think one of the things that I  
30 have noticed in my 40 years of living around here is  
31 that although most people around here don't actually go  
32 out and target grizzly bear, they -- it is a very much  
33 appreciated, opportunistic resource for people here. As  
34 we're seeing our moose populations decline there's a lot  
35 of biological data that supports that grizzly bears are  
36 quite voracious when it comes to killing moose calves.  
37 As I stated in my opening remarks, what I'm noticing  
38 around here is a very predominant reduction in black  
39 bears. And we also know that grizzly bears kill black  
40 bears in the area. They don't cohabitate very well  
41 together. And I -- I'm -- from my personal experience I  
42 think that's what's happening to some of our black bears  
43 in the region that I am on generally just a little bit  
44 outside of Yukon-Charley Preserve. It's a stone throw  
45 away. When I travel down into the Yukon Charley Preserve  
46 federal lands, what I'm seeing down there in the  
47 summertime on the open sandbars and open shorelines is  
48 almost purely grizzly bear tracks now, it used to be a  
49 mix in the past, but it seems like that's shifting and  
50 it's primarily grizzly bears in the area.

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1  
2                   The other thing that I want to point out  
3 is that moose are very scarce in this area. And  
4 oftentimes when people are out hunting moose, if they  
5 do happen upon a grizzly bear, it's a great opportunity  
6 to be able to harvest meat. The meat is extremely good  
7 eating, in this area So it's a very valuable subsistence  
8 food. As was stated earlier, most of the time, that time  
9 of year, they're eating blueberries, rose hips, a lot  
10 of highbush cranberry. So, the meat is really good for  
11 them. They're not fish eaters in this area, there are  
12 no spawning streams in the Eagle around in the area that  
13 I live in. I think it's actually kind of a real  
14 oversight, I was a little bit perplexed that other areas  
15 can have a CT -- C&T determination for a specific unit,  
16 and the unit itself doesn't necessarily have that locked  
17 in place. So, I see this as almost more of a housekeeping  
18 from my perspective. I hope that that helps to reinforce  
19 the record. But as I'm seeing things change through  
20 climate change and through many of the changes that are  
21 impacting all of our species moose, caribou, black  
22 bears, salmon, it seems that grizzly bears are doing  
23 fairly well. And that's an important resource for food  
24 security for people living out in rural areas. So, I'm  
25 going to support this proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26  
27                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
28 Andy. Go ahead, Don.

29  
30                   MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. I'd  
31 like to say a couple things about the use of brown bears.  
32 I've had my share of brown bear meat and brown bear fat.  
33 And the last brown bear I harvested, I got enough fat  
34 off that bear to eat all winter on a moose. The moose  
35 was very lean. It was harvested after all the state  
36 harvests in that area. So generally, by the 25th of  
37 September, those bulls are -- don't even have a drop of  
38 fat on their heart. So, it's pretty dry piece of meat.  
39 So that fat is really, really beneficial. My wife makes  
40 pies out of it, it makes great pies. I have some bear  
41 salve here that I use on my skin, if anyone would like  
42 to look at it, it's pure white. And I have some issues  
43 with my skin, and I put it around my eyes a little bit  
44 because I don't want to put petroleum products around  
45 my eyes. It's bad for my vision. And brown bear harvest  
46 isn't necessarily, back in the 70s, a documented harvest  
47 because we wouldn't come out till spring, and by then  
48 we didn't care what we had harvested in the fall. And  
49 the hide just got used, you know, you make clothes out  
50 of it, I'm a fur sewer so I use all kinds of fur. And I

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1 had a bear moccasins and I trimmed my mukluks and I've  
2 made hats and ruffs. And if you notice, some of my  
3 clothes have some ruffs on it, a little bit rough  
4 looking, but that's the way it is, that's what I got.  
5 And now we don't have salmon, and the bears and the  
6 wolves are taking 84% of the neonatal moose calves.  
7 That's almost the whole production for that year. It's  
8 crazy. And so, I think we should eat some more brown  
9 bears. And this is what this is about. Thank you.

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much,  
12 Don. Any more comments? Discussion? Go ahead, Sue.

13  
14 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I have to say you  
15 know, there are traditions that people don't eat grizzly  
16 bear or even black but then there's places where they  
17 do and both of them are very good eating, especially  
18 around the -- grizzly bears in the fall. If they're not  
19 eating fish, they're excellent. And see, now, I just  
20 wanted to make one comment. It's interesting to hear  
21 Andy say that the black and brown don't cohabitate. They  
22 do in our area. It's very significant. There's so many  
23 in the same drainage all the time. And I will have to  
24 add to Andy's that -- that's pretty amazing that 20E did  
25 not have 20E for -- and yet people in unit 12 did that  
26 I think it is more of a housekeeping thing that needs  
27 to be taken care of. Thank you.

28  
29 MS. BURK: Real quick. This is Eva. I  
30 just have a question. Don, where'd you get that  
31 information about 84% of the neonatal moose calves are  
32 being eaten?

33  
34 MR. WOODRUFF: It's in our book. It's on  
35 page 149, last paragraph. Habitat is not a limiting  
36 factor in Unit 25. We're talking about moose okay. As a  
37 whole, it contains excellent moose habitat that is  
38 maintained by wildfires. Predator by wolves and bears,  
39 however, appear to be a limiting factor for moose. And  
40 if you read this whole thing about the background of  
41 moose taken this area at the bottom of that paragraph,  
42 it says predation of neonatals calves less than a month  
43 old by black bears, brown bears was the primary source  
44 of mortality. If you guys like eating moose, you better  
45 start eating some bears.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I  
48 grew up in Rampart and there's stream on both sides that  
49 supported salmon when I was a kid. A lot of salmon. And  
50 -- so we'd all cut fish, every family had a smokehouse.

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1 On the other side of the river where we dumped our heads  
2 and guts, there would be 20 -- 15 to 20 bears all shape,  
3 size and color. Even though there was a lot of fish in  
4 that stream right there above where those guts were  
5 dumped, the big bears were still coming, kill some of  
6 the black bears. We'd hear them screaming. They'd catch  
7 them in the edge of the trees and kill them. We'd hear  
8 them fighting. And then you hear one being killed, be  
9 screaming. And even though they got all the fat fish,  
10 they really liked that black bear meat. I'm saying that  
11 that exists, you know, even where there's a lot, lot of  
12 fish, a lot of game, a lot of bears of each kind. I've  
13 seen it. They just like to eat those black bears. And I  
14 seen -- we search for the dens in the winter. And on a  
15 cotton ridge going up the hill, there'll be five holes  
16 and all five of them will be pushed in. You can tell the  
17 big bear pushed it in by the big claws and big claw  
18 marks, so they hunt them and they like to have something  
19 to eat when they wake up. So, they might like to make a  
20 catch of moose or anything that's big enough to sustain  
21 them after they wake up. So they're continuously hunting  
22 them. But I think that we got to do our part. Like Don  
23 said, there's no more salmon. We just have to be careful  
24 how we do it and how things go. Thank you.

25  
26 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom  
27 Plank, OSM. And unfortunately, I do have to point out  
28 one little thing. Don's right. It does say that, but  
29 that 84% is 84% of the mortality, not the mortality. So  
30 -- but when you read through it, it talks about the  
31 mortality of the neonates and of all the neonates that  
32 die 84% of them are taken by bears. I just want to  
33 clarify that. So yeah, sorry.

34  
35 MR. WOODRUFF: It sounds the same to me.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Even [sic] worst.

38  
39 MR. PLANK: But at least now it's clear  
40 on the record.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
43 for that. Okay, any more discussion?

44  
45 UNITIFIED: Question.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Questions been  
48 called. And we're going to go for a unanimous consent  
49 this time? Okay, Andy, go ahead.

50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. Now, I was just  
2 going to add one more thing, but since we're into the  
3 vote, that's fine. I'm fine with the information there.  
4 Thank you.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.  
7 We're going to go for unanimous consent. All those  
8 opposed, please signify by saying aye.

9  
10 (No response)

11  
12 Hearing none passes. Thank you.

13  
14 (Pause)

15  
16 Okay. Next will be WP26-72b. And that'll  
17 be on page 101. It's a Unit 20E, brown bear increase  
18 harvest limit to two bears.

19  
20 MR. PLANK: Thank you again, Mr. Chair.  
21 Members of the Council. For the record, my name is Tom  
22 Plank, Wildlife Biologist with Office of Subsistence  
23 Management and I will be presenting the summary of  
24 analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-72b. And as the  
25 Chair pointed out, that starts on page 101. Wildlife  
26 Proposal WP26-72b was submitted by this RAC and it  
27 requests increasing the harvest limit for brown bears  
28 in Unit 20E to two bears. And the proponents stated that  
29 increasing the Unit 20E brown bear harvest limit would  
30 provide additional opportunity for federally qualified  
31 subsistence users in Unit 20E. State hunting regulations  
32 already allow for two bears for resident hunters, and  
33 there are no conservation concerns for brown bears in  
34 this unit. Federal brown bear unit hunt in Unit 20E was  
35 established in 1998. And then in 2004, the Alaska Board  
36 of Game increased the state brown bear harvest limit in  
37 20E from one bear per year to two bears per year. And  
38 just kind of additional note, this is along with the one  
39 Liz just told you about the WP26-72 for the C&T  
40 determination.

41  
42 And we're going to say this a lot when  
43 it comes to the brown bear proposals but biological  
44 information is very limited. There have only been two  
45 population surveys conducted in 20E in the last 40 years.  
46 One was conducted in the 1980s, and the second survey  
47 was done in 2006, utilizing a DNA based mark and  
48 recapture method and results is an estimate of 10.7 to  
49 13.4 bears of all ages per 1000 kilometer squared. There  
50 has been an active intensive program -- management



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1 program for moose in Unit 20E since 2004. However, the  
2 brown bear control portion of that program was removed  
3 in 2009 because the bear removal objectives were not  
4 being met. All brown bears in Unit 20E must be sealed  
5 within 30 days of harvest. And the take of cubs and --  
6 sows with cubs is prohibited under federal and state  
7 regulations. Annual harvest from 2012 to 2023 average  
8 17 brown bears in Unit 20E, and the average harvest has  
9 remained actively relatively stable since 1983, even  
10 after the state upped it to two bears in 2004.

11  
12 If adopted, this proposal would increase  
13 the brown bear harvest limit in Unit 20E to two bears,  
14 providing additional opportunity for federally qualified  
15 subsistence users to harvest brown bears under federal  
16 regulations. No increase in harvest or impacts to the  
17 brown bear population are expected, as users have  
18 already been able to harvest two brown bears in Unit 20E  
19 under state regulations since 2004 and the harvest  
20 pressure is very low. Adopting this proposal would also  
21 decrease regulatory complexity by aligning state and  
22 federal regulations. The OSM's preliminary conclusions  
23 support proposal WP26-72b, this proposal increases  
24 harvest opportunity for federally qualified subsistence  
25 users and there are no conservation concerns as current  
26 harvest levels are very low and Alaska residents may  
27 already harvest two bears on all federal public lands  
28 in Unit 20E under state regulations. Thank you, Mr.  
29 Chair, Members of the Council. I'd be happy to answer  
30 any questions.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any  
33 questions?

34  
35 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Of course I have  
36 a question. Can you -- when it says the brown bear  
37 control portion of the program was removed in 2009  
38 because bear removal objectives were not being met, does  
39 that mean that they were not harvesting the number of  
40 bears that they wanted to?

41  
42 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burke. Tom  
43 Plank OSM, that was what I determined from what I read  
44 in there, is it wasn't -- they weren't getting enough  
45 bears. But that is my assumption from what I gathered  
46 on it.

47  
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, that that control  
49 program was not the state going out and killing bears.  
50 It was just an idea for the locals to go out and take

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1 more bears. And it didn't help. Is that how you  
2 understood it?

3

4 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Entsminger.  
5 Tom Plank, OSM. That was what I got from reading the  
6 management report that was on it, but I cannot say for  
7 100% sure. You would know that probably better than me.

8

9 MS. ENTSMINGER: I needed to ask a  
10 question, so. Yeah. Yeah, that was what happened. My  
11 husband's on the advisory committee, and that's what my  
12 understanding was.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Maybe to  
17 help answer that question a little bit is that in Unit  
18 20E, the Taylor Highway is the only real public access  
19 into that unit. And as far as the federal lands go,  
20 there's BLM land along the Taylor Highway but primarily  
21 where most of the activities take place is in Yukon  
22 Charley, which is strictly boat access only. And about  
23 99% of the people never go more than a quarter mile to  
24 a half mile off the river. So, any type of predatory  
25 control would have very limited access, especially by  
26 locals in their traditional hunting and use patterns.  
27 So, I hope that helps for the record. And yeah, I'll  
28 leave it at that. Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,  
31 Andy. Any other questions? Go ahead, Don.

32

33 MR. WOODRUFF: I remember what Sue was  
34 asking about and I worked at a sonar project on the  
35 Sheenjek, and there was a huge amount of bears there. I  
36 mean, every morning you'd see fresh tracks right at the  
37 door of your tent and you're just like, oh, my God, I  
38 could have been toast, you know. But they did a community  
39 harvest there around Fort Yukon and it knocked them back  
40 a little bit. And I think that's something that that's  
41 a valuable tool because I've seen grizzly bears swim  
42 down moose across the Yukon. They just catch them. They  
43 just determined. And the moose just gets tired and says,  
44 well, I can make it, but they don't. It's impressive to  
45 see those guys, they're cunning. Thank you.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
48 for that, Don. Any more questions?

49

50 (No response)

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Nothing online?

(No response)

Okay. Any ADF&G, got any comments?

MR. POETTER: Yeah, Mr. Chair, thank you for the -- public comment. No comments. The state, as previously mentioned, the State's been providing two bear -- brown bear harvest opportunity in 20E, since 2004. That's 20 years where the regulation has been in existence there. We don't have a conservation concern. And yeah, again, all Alaska residents and non-residents are eligible for the two bear limit. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much for that. Any federal agencies?

(No response)

Tribes and ANCSA Corporations?

(No response)

Any advisory group comments? Other RACS?

(No response)

Fish and Game Advisory Councils?

(No response)

Subsistence Resource Commissions?

(No response)

Other written public comments? I see there's none on the page here. Public testimony?

(No response)

Council motion.

MR. WOODRUFF: Move to adopt this proposal 26 -72b.

MS. BURK: I'll second it, it's Eva.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any discussion?

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MS. BURK: Thanks. This is Eva. I'm not going to get into my comments but I'm just going to reference my earlier comments about increasing from one bear to two bears in Unit 12. So, I'm just going to reference those comments and probably reluctantly support again.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to point out that it's been a pretty long standing regulatory harvest availability for two brown bears in 20E whereas in many other parts of the State it's not. So, that establishes that the population is healthy and can withstand that. And I also wanted to reference my earlier comment that the federal lands primarily in 20E are located -- the main lands are located on the Yukon River with relatively limited access and harvest pressure most of the time only during the moose hunting season. So, it's a very limited period of time. So, I'm not concerned about a conservation concern with overharvesting grizzly bear in 20E and I also wanted to reference the fact that I think it would also encourage people to potentially harvest more grizzly bear, which will help with moose survival in the area. We have what has been -- always been considered to be a healthy moose population but a very low moose density population here. So, the country is pretty hard to access other than by riverboat or directly on the Yukon -- Taylor, I'm sorry, the Taylor Highway. So that really restricts a lot of the hunting pressures from being spread out through the whole unit, which then allows those, I call them the islands or the oaseses [sic] where wildlife can rear unbothered by humans. It allows them to disperse into other areas. And we do know that that grizzly and brown bear do travel fairly long distances, probably more than black bears do. So that's another factor that that allows for their sustainability. I think that's all I have. I'm going to support the proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I just want to add one more thing. Don spoke about the fat from the grizzly and boy in the fall, they are really fat. And I also used it to -- render down to make cookies and pie crusts and all kinds of things. So, thank you. And I'm going to support this proposal.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more discussion?

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5

UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

6

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Question has been called.

9

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14

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke. For the record, the motion on the floor is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-72b to increase the harvest limit in Unit 20E to two brown bear.

15

16

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18

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: To hearing all the testimony we'll ask for unanimous consent. All those against, please signify by saying aye

19

20

MS. SHOCKLEY: Aye, on principal.

21

22

MS. EVANS: Aye.

23

24

25

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. We need to do a roll call then if we have two nays. Thank you.

26

27

28

29

MS. MCDAVID: All right, we'll do a roll call vote. I heard Linda Evans nay. Dorothy Shockley, nay. Sue Entsminger.

30

31

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.

32

33

MS. MCDAVID: Andy Bassich.

34

35

MR. BASSICH: Yay.

36

37

MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.

38

39

MR. ALEXANDER: Yes.

40

41

MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

42

43

MS. BURK: Yes.

44

45

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Donald Woodruff.

46

47

MR. WOODRUFF: Yes.

48

49

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Chair Charlie Wright.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes, 6-2.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you all, for  
6 that wonderful work. We'll be moving down to WP26-73 -  
7 Unit 25B brown bear, increase harvest limit to two bears.  
8 Page 107.

9

10 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Members  
11 of the Council. Again, for the record, my name's Tom  
12 Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence  
13 Management and I will be presenting a summary of the  
14 analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-73. Wildlife  
15 Proposal WP26-73 was submitted by this Council in a  
16 request to increase in the harvest limit for brown bear  
17 in Unit 25B to two bears. Proponents states that this  
18 would provide additional opportunity for federally  
19 qualified subsistence users and there are no  
20 conservation concerns for brown bears in Unit 25B and  
21 is one of the least inhabited areas of the State. For  
22 regulatory history, there's just two times when the  
23 season was extended, once in 2004 and second time in  
24 2017. And then like the other areas, there's very little  
25 biological data for this. The population estimate of  
26 brown bears in Units 25A, -B, and -D, is based on an  
27 extrapolated, outdated estimates and represents a best  
28 guess. The 2014 to 2018 estimated brown bear population,  
29 which included Units 25B and -D combined, was 580 brown  
30 bears. Harvest tickets are not required to hunt brown  
31 bears in Unit 25B, although all harvested bears are  
32 required to be sealed. In Units 25B and 25D most human  
33 caused brown bear mortality is likely not reported.  
34 During the regulatory year 2014 to 2018, 4 to 12 brown  
35 bears were reported harvested and one brown bear was  
36 killed in defense of life and property. From regulatory  
37 year 2016 to 2018, a three-year annual mean harvest  
38 caused -- human caused mortality was five bears,  
39 including an average of one female annually. Although  
40 most Bears harvested were not reported during this time  
41 period, the management objectives were likely met as the  
42 actual harvest was likely less than 47 Bears. From 2010  
43 to 2018, the vast majority of successful brown bear  
44 harvested in Units 25B and -D were by non-local  
45 residents, ranging from 2 to 9 bears per year. Only two  
46 local residents, defined as residents of Unit 25B and  
47 25D, reported harvesting a brown bear in 2013. And all  
48 other years between 2010 and 2018, local residents  
49 reported a harvest was zero.

50

00071

1                   One alternative considered was to extend  
2 the Unit 25A and 25B brown bear season to open July 25th  
3 to align with the season opening date. Currently the  
4 federal brown bear season in Unit 25A and 25B is shorter  
5 than the state season. However, this alternative is  
6 outside the scope of the proposal. If adopted, this  
7 proposal would provide greater opportunity for hunting  
8 brown bears in Unit 25B for federally qualified  
9 subsistence users. No conservation concerns, impacts on  
10 the brown bear population or substantial increase in  
11 harvest are expected given the very low harvest  
12 pressure, especially by local residents in this very  
13 remote area. However, this proposal would increase  
14 regulatory complexity by further misaligning state and  
15 federal regulations. OSM's preliminary conclusions  
16 support proposal WP26-73. Adopting this proposal  
17 increases opportunity for federally qualified  
18 subsistence users and there are no conservation concerns  
19 due to the extremely low harvest pressure in this remote  
20 area. Current harvest rates in Unit 25B are below state  
21 management objectives and increasing the federal harvest  
22 limit from one pair to two bears in Unit 25B is not  
23 expected to increase harvest rates above sustainable  
24 levels. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of Council, I'd  
25 be happy to answer any questions.

26  
27                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any  
28 comments?

29  
30                   MS. ENTSMINGER: Quick question.

31  
32                   CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Go ahead, Sue.

33  
34                   MS. ENTSMINGER: So, the seasons are  
35 different for 25B and state and federal. States July 25.  
36 And federal is gotta [sic] look at this again July 1st.  
37 Am I looking at that right?

38  
39                   MR. PLANK: Thank you, member -- the --  
40 Tom Plank, OSM. So, the federal regulations right now  
41 is August 10th to June 30th and that's for 25A and 25B  
42 together and with the one bear. And then the current  
43 state regulations it's also for Unit 25A and 25B is July  
44 25th to June 30th and residents and non-residents have  
45 one bear every regulatory year.

46  
47                   MS. ENTSMINGER: So that would mean you'd  
48 have more opportunity with the state. Yeah, I don't know  
49 how these regulations get so messed up.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more comment  
2 [sic]?

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke.  
5 If the Council -- because that changing those dates is  
6 outside the scope of this proposal. If you wanted to  
7 flag that for a future proposal next cycle, I can always  
8 make a note of that. So just wanted to add that.

9  
10 (Pause)

11  
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

13  
14 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. Just  
15 to clarify, so it said -- you don't have the harvest  
16 data like you have presented in the other proposals,  
17 like on a graph per year. But what you're saying is,  
18 years between 2010 and 2018, there were zero harvests  
19 by local residents. So, this is -- and then where's the  
20 data beyond 2019?

21  
22 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Burk. Tom  
23 Plank, OSM. That's correct and unfortunately the only  
24 data I was able to obtain was up to 2019.

25  
26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Quick question. Who --  
27 this is put in by our RAC, so somebody here wanted it.  
28 We don't know that?

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, do you have  
31 anything to say about this proposal?

32  
33 MR. BASSICH: Well, when we get into  
34 discussion. Yes, Mr. Chair.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.  
37 Okay. We're going to move down the list right here. If  
38 there's no more public comments, then I'm going to follow  
39 the -- you can talk about it later. So, tribal and ANCSA  
40 Corporation consultation report.

41  
42 (No response)

43  
44 Okay. Agency and tribal comments.

45  
46 (No response)

47  
48 ADF&G, anything to say about this?

49  
50



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1 MR. POETTER: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair.  
2 Aaron Poetter again, for the record. We don't have any  
3 formal comments to provide at this time. Would like to  
4 highlight, though, that this would be a deviation from  
5 current state regulations limited information in that  
6 area regarding overall populations of bears, brown  
7 included or specifically. I would like to mention that  
8 the Alaska Board of Game will be looking at Unit 25 for  
9 their 2026-2027 regulatory cycle. So, this particular  
10 Federal Subsistence Board process will be coming ahead  
11 of the Board of Games [sic] look at that at 25B unit.  
12 So, we want to put that on you guys' radar. Thank you.  
13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.  
15 Any federal agencies?  
16

17 MS. ENTSMINGER: Before you go on, I have  
18 a quick question of Fish and Game. Hey, am I doing my  
19 math correct that there's only a five-day closure of  
20 bears during that season because it closes on the 30th  
21 and reopens on the 25th, or vice versa?  
22

23 MR. POETTER: Yeah. 20-25 day closure-  
24 ish. Three week closure.  
25

26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh, it's three weeks.  
27 Okay, that was my question. Thank you. I wasn't doing  
28 my math right.  
29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to  
31 move on to federal agencies now.  
32

33 (No comments)  
34

35 Tribes and ANCSA corporations.  
36

37 (No comments)  
38

39 Advisory group comments, other RACs.  
40

41 (No comments)  
42

43 Fish and Game Advisory Councils.  
44

45 (No comments)  
46

47 Subsistence Resource Commissions.  
48

49 (No comments)  
50

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1 Other written public comments.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 Public testimony.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 Seven: Council motion.

10

11 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. I can repeat  
12 the motion if you like. Move to adopt WP26-73, Game Unit  
13 25B.

14

15 MS. BURK: I'll second, it's Eva.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any  
18 discussion?

19

20 MS. SHOCKLEY: Dorothy.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
25 I just want to point out that I'm sitting here talking  
26 to you and I'm sitting in 20E Unit. And when I look out  
27 the window, I'm looking at 25B Unit, on the other side  
28 of the Yukon River. What I'm trying to point out is that  
29 often times, we have the situation where there are  
30 delineations in units that really don't make a lot of  
31 sense as far as the harvest pattern of the people in the  
32 area. So, Unit 25B is on the north or the eastern side  
33 of the Yukon River, depending on where you're at. In  
34 this region and I'm speaking locally around the Eagle  
35 region and in Yukon-Charley. I also wanted to reiterate,  
36 and I agree with the analysis by OSM, 25B to my  
37 knowledge, at least in this area, there's only two people  
38 who live in 25B and they're actually fairly close to  
39 Eagle. Down in Yukon-Charley Preserve, there is no  
40 permanent residence that I'm aware of in 25B. This area  
41 again is only really hunted during the moose season, for  
42 the most part by people. So, most of the bears taken are  
43 opportunistic. I also want to point out history, Don  
44 would probably be able to collaborate this. In the in  
45 the past, there was quite a few people, relatively  
46 speaking, that lived in 25B and would harvest moose,  
47 caribou, black bear and grizzly bear in that area. One  
48 of the things that I'm hearing or seeing in the reporting  
49 is a lack of reporting of harvest or sealing and that  
50 is because oftentimes those people in those remote areas

1 who did not have powered boats. If they were going to  
2 follow the law, they would have to get in their canoe  
3 line 80 miles upriver to Eagle with a hide and a head  
4 in their canoe, get it sealed to meet those requirements.  
5 That -- that's not realistic. So just trying to explain  
6 why, maybe there is some harvest, especially in the past  
7 and maybe not much record of it. Times are changing now.  
8 Most everybody has a motor on their boat. I think you  
9 would probably see that if people are harvesting over  
10 in those units, they're going to bring them back and  
11 seal them. But all of this leads to the point that the  
12 harvest is pretty low. It's opportunistic. And the only  
13 thing that's really creating the problem is the Yukon  
14 River and the boundaries of these particular units.

15  
16 I also want to point out is some of the  
17 earlier testimony on the other two proposals and that  
18 is about food security. And I think it's going to be  
19 really important for people in the future to have  
20 opportunity on any resource that's out there. One of the  
21 things that I'm kind of struggling with is I really want  
22 to see young people establish themselves and come in and  
23 take the place of some of us that are starting to age  
24 out in this lifestyle. The only thing you need to live  
25 a subsistence lifestyle is some hard work and access to  
26 a reliable resource. And I think the access to reliable  
27 resources has declined dramatically in the last ten  
28 years. Even as a person who I feel pretty confident  
29 about taking care of myself and having the skills, I'm  
30 finding it increasingly more difficult to live solely  
31 on subsistence resources that are out here and that's  
32 why people move out into remote areas, is to establish  
33 that lifestyle. That's what's being missed in a lot of  
34 our discussions and a lot of our thinking about the  
35 future. And I think that is an incredibly valuable asset  
36 to the state of Alaska and to the people of Alaska to  
37 still have the opportunity and have -- even if it's just  
38 a handful of people living out in those remote areas  
39 such as the woman from Venetie that grew up out in the  
40 remote areas, up in the northern regions, that's  
41 incredibly valuable. People that live out on the land  
42 are sentinels. They notice fish and game trends and their  
43 insights, and their observations are really valuable for  
44 a holistic approach to fish and wildlife management.

45  
46 So anyway, I'm just -- I'm throwing a  
47 little bit extra in there, but I really support this.  
48 I'm the one who encouraged this. I'm not necessarily  
49 concerned about the dates and the hunting being aligned.  
50 I think there's ample opportunity and the addition of a

1 day or two or a week or two on either end, I don't think  
2 really makes a practicable difference. So, I don't see  
3 that as any kind of a concern. I know we're trying to  
4 align state and federal all the time but I don't see  
5 that as a big issue in the actual way that these hunts  
6 or harvests are prosecuted in the in the region locally  
7 here anyway. I think that's all I have, Mr. Chair. Thank  
8 you.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Did you  
11 want to say something? Go ahead. Go ahead, Eva.

12  
13 MS. BURK: Okay, thank you. This is Eva.  
14 First of all, the state limit is only one bear right  
15 now. They have a little bit of a longer season, but  
16 they're still only taking one bear. And then  
17 additionally, from the information that we do have,  
18 which doesn't have the most recent years, which I would  
19 really like to see that these hunts are only being filled  
20 -- the harvest or at least the data that they have, is  
21 only -- and I know you mentioned that people aren't  
22 reporting hunts maybe, but it's still only showing that  
23 these are non-resident -- non-local residents that are  
24 are taking advantage of this harvest. And so, for me, I  
25 don't see a compelling reason to increase the harvest  
26 for local people if they're not even taking advantage  
27 of the one bear limit as is. So, the thing I would  
28 entertain and to align regs would maybe be to look at  
29 that State season opening date, give it a little bit  
30 more opportunity for subsistence. But I also wanted to  
31 point out again that the limit for the state used to be  
32 only one bear every three years -- said one brown bear  
33 every four regulatory years. Thank you. Until 2004, then  
34 it was increased to one bear per year. So just kind of  
35 on that history and lack of information and lack of use  
36 by local residents right now, I don't really see it --  
37 compelling reasons to increase the harvest limit right  
38 now.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,  
41 Dorothy.

42  
43 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy  
44 Shockley for the record a couple of things. It says on  
45 the general description that this proposal was submitted  
46 by the Eastern Interior Alaska Subregional Regional  
47 Advisory Council. So, I think it needs to be more clear  
48 on who exactly submitted this, because as a Council, I  
49 mean, it just is misleading because I don't think the  
50 Council submitted it, for one thing. And we're just now

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1 voting on it. So yeah, to me that's very misleading. And  
2 I feel like, most people I think, that we're just making  
3 decisions blindly. I mean, we don't have the data, we  
4 don't have the information we need to make decisions.  
5 So yeah, I'm going to vote no. I mean, just primarily  
6 well, on principle but also just because of lack of  
7 information on feds and the state. Thank you.

8  
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
10 is Brooke. And Dorothy, I just wanted to respond to your  
11 comment about who submitted this. And it was this  
12 Council, at your last meeting in February, you all voted,  
13 as a Council. Even if, you know, 1 or 2 of you may not  
14 have supported submitting it, the majority did. So, it  
15 is a Council proposal, it's not an individual's  
16 proposal. Thank you.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

19  
20 MR. BASSICH: No, thank you, Mr. Chair.  
21 I just wanted that on the record.

22  
23 MS. MCDAVID: And just to add again,  
24 sorry, Mr. Chair, you guys did a whole slew of these.  
25 There's about five of them or so, so that's why we're  
26 going through all these different bear -- increase to  
27 two bear limits.

28  
29 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy.

30  
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Does Andy want to  
32 talk? Did you have something to say, Andy?

33  
34 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Yeah, I just wanted  
35 to, yeah, thank you. I just wanted to bring up that I  
36 understand Eva's point and Dorothy's point there. I  
37 think one of the things we have to understand is that a  
38 lot of these analyses take a long time and cost a lot  
39 of money. And declining budgets are forcing both the  
40 Department of Fish and Game and Yukon-Charley to really  
41 think about where they're going to spend their money and  
42 so, they're going to spend it on more than likely moose  
43 and more sought after and more dependent resources. I  
44 think you have to entrust that the local people who live  
45 in the area have a pretty clear understanding of  
46 populations, whether they're increasing or decreasing.  
47 And I think, you know, from my perspective, all of you  
48 know, that I'm a pretty conservation-minded person and  
49 tend to lean very heavily towards conservation if I'm  
50 concerned about overharvest or a misuse of a resource.

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1 So, just sharing with you that from my personal  
2 experience of living, not even in Eagle, but out in the  
3 bush and I'm out on the river almost every day during  
4 the summer and a good part of the winter time with my  
5 dog teams. My observations are coming to you from boots  
6 on the ground of what I'm seeing. And what I'm seeing  
7 is that grizzly bears are becoming much more prolific,  
8 black bears are in a pretty precipitous decline. It --  
9 I don't know if it's going to be long term or not but  
10 what I'm seeing is, wherever there's grizzlies, there's  
11 no black bear and there's very few moose. And we're  
12 seeing a lot more grizzlies sign than I've ever seen in  
13 the 40 years I've lived here. That's what I'm basing my  
14 recommendations on. For what -- for whatever it's worth.  
15 So, thank you for that.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, I got a  
18 question of you, if I may. This is Charlie.

19  
20 MR. BASSICH: Go ahead.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Since you've been  
23 stating the facts of your area and stated more than once  
24 that all your resources are in decline in your area,  
25 moose, caribou, black bears. You're losing those  
26 opportunities. No salmon. So, increasing this grizzly  
27 bear take would be important to you now that you're in  
28 the state of no other means in your area. Is that true?  
29

30 MR. BASSICH: Absolutely. In fact, you  
31 know, as I was out moose hunting this year, I was  
32 actually hoping to come across a grizzly bear. They tend  
33 to only show themselves more in the late evening hours,  
34 so they're pretty difficult to harvest at times. I'm not  
35 20 years old anymore, so my hunting techniques are being  
36 modified but having this opportunity to be able to take  
37 two bears instead of just one and it's a resource that  
38 seems to be fairly abundant, is an important resource  
39 for me as a subsistence user living in a remote area.  
40 Thank you.

41  
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.  
43 Anymore? Oh. Go ahead, Eva.

44  
45 MS. BURK: Thanks. And this -- my  
46 comments come out of concern because just because this  
47 big animal is at the top of the food chain doesn't mean  
48 that it's not going to have the problems that everything  
49 below it is having. It just might take a little bit  
50 longer to show up. And that's where a lot of these

1 comments are coming from. Wanting to understand about  
2 how the production is going and then also, you know, who  
3 is harvesting. So, my question for you Andy, when I'm  
4 reading in the report that we have in front of us only  
5 two local residents, defined as residents of Units 25B  
6 and 25D, reported harvesting a brown bear in 2013. All  
7 other year's local resident reported harvest was zero.  
8 So, do you have any insight on whether anybody in your  
9 community was successful in hunting bears 2019 to now.

10  
11 MR. BASSICH: Yes, I know that bears have  
12 been harvested, and I think it's a personal choice  
13 between people, whether they want to follow the  
14 regulations on sealing or other things. But I do know  
15 that bears are harvested in this area, and I guess I'll  
16 just leave it at that.

17  
18 In regards to your earlier comment, I  
19 liken this very much to the same analogy of our concerns  
20 with trying to bring back salmon. There are other factors  
21 out there that are killing salmon, displacing them,  
22 bycatch, whatever. And so, we're trying to address some  
23 of those mortality factors for salmon. It's the same  
24 with grizzly bears. If grizzly bears are being very  
25 successful, they're hungry. The salmon aren't there.  
26 They're going to eat black bears. They're going to eat  
27 moose. It's it goes to overall abundance. When overall  
28 abundance starts to decline, then those predators in the  
29 area that are the top of the food chain are going to be  
30 the successful ones. Everything else starts falling off  
31 in succession. So, if we want to bring back moose or we  
32 want to maintain healthy moose populations at this point  
33 in time, I can guarantee you from my experience, what  
34 I've seen, grizzly bears will harvest moose calves at a  
35 much greater rate or a much greater success rate, I  
36 should say, than a single black bear would. So, it just  
37 goes to trying to support a healthy ecosystem. Anytime  
38 anything is out of balance, that's not good. I understand  
39 your concerns for that. But you know, it's like I said,  
40 I think a lot of times basing everything just on reported  
41 harvest, you can go anywhere in the state of Alaska and  
42 the farther you get out, the less people follow those  
43 regulations, whether it be inconvenient or they just  
44 don't want to be bothered or whatever.

45  
46 I've heard of people feeling like  
47 they're being harassed. They come in and then they start  
48 getting questions when, where and how they got it. People  
49 who live out in the bush are pretty private people.  
50 They're just trying to take care of themselves and

1 they're just trying to feed themselves. And that's  
2 getting really difficult right now. So that's the  
3 perspective I'm coming from. I know it's not a perfect  
4 world. I know not everybody's going to comply with every  
5 rule or regulation. And I think if you're a person who  
6 studies the social structure of subsistence living, you  
7 will realize that people, the farther out they live, the  
8 less they really care about rules or regulations. That's  
9 the simple fact of the matter. And I think that's one  
10 of the inclinations as to why we don't see those harvest  
11 reports in certain areas. Hope that helps.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. No,  
14 I think Dorothy. Did he interrupt you? Andy, when he  
15 started talking? Did you have something to say? Okay.  
16 Okay, go ahead, Don.  
17

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. I want  
19 to concur with what Andy said. When I first moved out  
20 into the Yukon-Charley, in the 70s, we were a paperless  
21 society. We didn't have permits or tags or none of that  
22 stuff. And occasionally if I was in town, being Eagle,  
23 in the fall, which was very unusual, I would get a  
24 general harvest moose tag. That's it. I didn't have to  
25 carry a whole wallet full of permits and tags and all  
26 that stuff. And look, this is about putting food on the  
27 table. And the reference I'm going to say is there's two  
28 folks I know, they're dear friends, they live in Yukon-  
29 Charlie. They used to fill their jars and they had a lot  
30 of them, with salmon, king salmon. And that's what they  
31 ate in the winter. And now they're filling their jars  
32 with bear meat because that's all they got. And that's  
33 the way it is for a bunch of people. If I got another  
34 grizzly bear tomorrow, I'd be putting it in jars. Thank  
35 you.  
36

37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.  
38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm looking at the  
40 federal regs and I'm seeing that in 25D -- we're talking  
41 about 25B, right? So, the remainder is the residents of  
42 25 and Eagle qualify. Is that correct? This is the C&T  
43 use determination for brown bear in the remainder. So,  
44 Eagle would qualify for A, B, C and D. Is that correct?  
45

46 MS. MCDAVID: That is, you're reading  
47 that correctly in the reg book. But if anyone from  
48 anthropology sees it differently, you could let us know.  
49



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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, as they're looking  
2 that up, I just want to ask a quick question. When I'm  
3 looking at the -- this nice big plastic thing with all  
4 the federal land, did this BLM land just get turned over  
5 to BLM or something? Because it's not in the state regs,  
6 on theirs. It's not here.

7  
8 MS. MCDAVID: I think that's because  
9 subsistence priority doesn't apply on those lands. Is  
10 that correct? No, okay, Lisa's going to.....

11  
12 MS. GREDIAGIN: Through the Chair. This  
13 is Lisa Grediagin. In -- the state regulation booklets  
14 do not depict BLM lands. They just.....

15  
16 (Simultaneous speech)

17  
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: They just don't depict  
19 BLM.

20  
21 MS. GREDIAGIN: They don't depict them.

22  
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay.

24  
25 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah.

26  
27 MS. ENTSMINGER: So then, then I go back  
28 to the federal. That whole 25B is mostly federal lands,  
29 there's very little state lands there. And it's very  
30 remote. Am I seeing this? This is extremely remote. We  
31 only have -- I don't see any names of villages in there  
32 or -- no, just B, Chalkyitsik in D as in dog.

33  
34 MR. WOODRUFF: Circle and Eagle are  
35 villages in -- that border 25B, so that's considered  
36 25B. If there's any islands across from the Eagle  
37 Village, then that Eagle Village side of the island is  
38 25B, so that basically puts the 25B right on the  
39 shoreline. Thank you.

40  
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, I was just going  
42 to point out it looks like it's, you know, just people  
43 live along these -- the boundary of 25B but not -- I'm  
44 not seeing villages inside or any town. Okay. And I get  
45 a thumbs up there, okay. So that -- my point is that's  
46 extremely remote and then there's the access issue. So,  
47 I think I'm going to have to vote for this. I feel the  
48 concerns of Eva and others, but I don't have any problem.  
49 I want to vote for this because I think it's a  
50 subsistence priority.

1  
2 MS. BURK: I guess -- this is Eva. This  
3 question might be for both of you guys, Don and Andy.  
4 Is the regulations as-is now, are you guys -- I guess I  
5 want to be careful cause [sic] I -- I'm trying to  
6 understand how this affects you and if there's a  
7 situation where you've already filled your one bear  
8 limit and you had an -- you had this opportunity to get  
9 a second bear. But because of this regulation that  
10 affected you personally, has that ever happened to you,  
11 to you personally or people that you know.

12  
13 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for that  
14 question.

15  
16 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, this is Andy.  
17 Yeah. Go ahead, Don. And then I'll respond after you.  
18 Thank you.

19  
20 MR. WOODRUFF: We have what you probably  
21 know more about than anyone, is extended families. Does  
22 that answer your question?

23  
24 MS. BURK: It does. But we.....

25  
26 (Simultaneous speech)

27  
28 MR. WOODRUFF: It's not gonna change that  
29 I'm not going to get two bears. What it's going to do  
30 is allow me to share meat, red meat, with my friends and  
31 neighbors and family. Thank you.

32  
33 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

36  
37 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, I really  
38 appreciate that question Eva, I think it's a great  
39 question. From my perspective as a person living out  
40 subsistence. What preoccupies and has preoccupied my  
41 mind over the last ten years is trying to figure out how  
42 I'm going to meet subsist -- my subsistence needs, with  
43 all the declining resources on every front. And so, the  
44 reason this proposal was brought up is the vision of  
45 understanding the trends that are happening locally in  
46 our region, looking at what is going to be abundant or  
47 what we may have to depend on into the future. So, basing  
48 things on past or present in this situation have a  
49 bearing but the bigger bearing from my perspective is  
50 to ensure that I have opportunity into the future. And

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1 so that that's the perspective that I'm coming in because  
2 I'm always thinking of five and ten years down the  
3 future. I very seldom think about just this season or  
4 last year. I use those as a -- as a mechanism to try and  
5 look into the future. And what I see in our future in  
6 our region is A: we're extremely sparsely populated  
7 here. B: not a lot of people, even in Eagle and Eagle  
8 Village, get out into the country that much. So primarily  
9 when harvest takes place, it's because something shows  
10 up at their front door or in their backyard. That --  
11 that's the patterns that I'm seeing from people. So, I'm  
12 not concerned about overharvest in this particular case.  
13 And I think Sue brought up a great comment or an  
14 observation, in my understanding, looking at it the only  
15 person that I -- the only family I know that lives in  
16 25B between Eagle and Circle, is five miles from Eagle.  
17 There's nobody else living in 25B once you get down into  
18 Yukon-Charley. I'm not sure if there's one family still  
19 lives down closer to Circle out there but the fact of  
20 the matter is, there'd be at the most, only two  
21 households living in 25B. And all the rest of the lands,  
22 even the country, it's almost all mountainous country,  
23 so it's extremely hard. Other than landing on a gravel  
24 bar with a super cub, it's pretty hard to access for  
25 anybody flying in there. So, I'm not too concerned about  
26 heavy guiding in it, harvest or even local Alaskans who  
27 have pilot's license. There's just not a lot of access  
28 to the country. So, I'm not I'm just not concerned about  
29 there being an overharvest. And I really appreciate you  
30 drawing attention to that, because I think about that  
31 as a primary issue. And then if that -- if I don't have  
32 concerns with that, then I start looking at what can be  
33 sustainably harvested over time. And it's all about that  
34 word sustainably. Hope that helps.

35  
36 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the  
37 record. And I just wanted to offer two clarifications  
38 for this discussion. In the harvest data that's  
39 presented in the analysis is Units 25D and -B combined.  
40 And while it's -- that's just how the ADF and G  
41 management report, you know, collates lumps the harvest  
42 together. But I imagine the vast majority, probably 95%  
43 of the harvest is from 25D because that's where the  
44 villages are. And so -- and also when the analysis says  
45 only two local residents harvested -- reported any  
46 harvest, that's only residents of Unit 25D and 25B, so  
47 Eagle residents are not included in that. And so, it's  
48 possible Eagle residents harvested bears from 25B and  
49 reported them but it's not reflected in the data that's  
50 in the analysis. Thanks. And just again, that's just how

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1 the ADF&G management reports present the data. So that's  
2 what we have to go on.

3  
4 MS. BURK: Thank you, this is Eva. I'm  
5 not going to support this. I feel for you guys out there.  
6 I'm also going through it, so I know exactly how you  
7 feel. My reasons are that this would make different --  
8 double the limit from what already exists in state  
9 regulations. So, if part of our -- we've been talking a  
10 lot about aligning regulations, I'd like to keep these  
11 regulations aligned with the one bear harvest. And you  
12 know, Andy, you're thinking about the future and maybe  
13 needing that extra barrier out there or something comes  
14 knocking on your door and you need to not be at your  
15 harvest limit. I don't know if there's proxy hunts but  
16 I'm assuming that there is, because that exists a lot  
17 [sic] of places. So, I'm assuming that people can,  
18 through that mechanism. That's a safer way, because what  
19 I envision when I read this data is, yes, this is very  
20 remote. Yes. You need a guide to go in here. And that's  
21 actually who's been successful from the data that I have  
22 in front of me is -- and that's what I envision, is more  
23 guiding in more remote areas, as things become more  
24 scarce and scarce. And so, I don't think at this time  
25 that there is a food security issue. I still think that  
26 you're able to get the amount of bears that you need  
27 with the existing regulations. And so, I'm even looking  
28 in here at like I was going to maybe think about  
29 modifying the proposal to say, hey, maybe we should  
30 extend the season. But then the data again, what I have  
31 in front of me is that 83% of the harvests occurred in  
32 August and September. So, making the season earlier, to  
33 July doesn't even seem to make too much sense. And the  
34 other 14% are in the spring, before the June 30th. So,  
35 I just -- I -- again, I sympathize with everybody and I  
36 appreciate everybody trying to plan but I think that we  
37 have to be caring about the ecosystem. And what's in  
38 front of us right now is not about increasing a limit  
39 that's only for federally qualified subsistence users,  
40 it's increasing the limit for all users the way I read  
41 it. So, I think with that, that's a real liberal and  
42 it's just a little too liberal for me, because anything  
43 that's more liberal in this than the State, I really  
44 have to question that. So those are my comments. Thanks.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

47  
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, I just want to point  
49 out Eva, that a guide -- a non-resident that is high --  
50 hires a guide to take them out. That guide has to abide

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1 by state regulations. So, this doesn't affect them or  
2 does it affect other people that are not subsistence  
3 qualified, they would still be with the state at one.  
4 So, it only affects the people that have that C&T in  
5 that area to have two. Yeah. I just want to point out  
6 it does not affect the guides at all. They can't take  
7 any more, none. Because it's a federal subsistence. Not  
8 for non-residents.

9

10 (Pause)

11

12 I'd just like to state too, that it is  
13 -- it's pretty limited because there's just 25 you know  
14 and in C&T is really limited, who can go there and have  
15 that extra. I just that just needs to be on the record.

16

17 (Pause)

18

19 MR. PLANK: Thank you, through the Chair,  
20 for the record, Tom Plank, OSM. And to clarify what Sue  
21 has mentioned, the only people who have customary and  
22 traditional use for the 25B bears would be residents of  
23 Unit 25, excluding 25D, and Eagle are the only ones who  
24 have customary traditional use on that. So, if you go  
25 through the regulations, you'll see there's two  
26 different ones for brown bears for 25 and one of them  
27 says 25D and those are only residents of 25D and then  
28 one says 25 remainder. That's basically 25A, -B, and -  
29 C, and then Eagle are the only ones that have customary  
30 traditional use. Hope that kind of helps clarify it up  
31 for you.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Go ahead,  
34 Andy.

35

36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I call question.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Will you roll call  
39 vote, please.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Thank you,  
42 Mr. Chair. The motion on the floor is to support Wildlife  
43 Proposal 26-73 to increase the brown bear harvest limit  
44 in 25B to two bear [sic]. Go down the line. Andy Bassich.

45

46 MR. BASSICH: Yay.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Sue Entsminger.

49

50 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes.

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MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.

MR. ALEXANDER: Nay.

MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

MS. BURK: Nay.

MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

MS. EVANS: No.

MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy Shockley.

MS. SHOCKLEY: No.

MS. MCDAVID: Donald Woodruff.

MR. WOODRUFF: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: It's a tie vote, 4-4. So,  
the motion fails.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Moving down  
the list. WP26-6 -- -76 - Units 20 and 25C sheep, extend  
closure to all users for two years. Page 113 in your  
book.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members  
of the Council. Again, for the record, my name is Tom  
Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence  
Management. And I will be presenting the summary of  
analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-76. And that's  
starting on page 113 in your books. Wildlife Proposal  
WP26-76 was submitted by this Council. In a request to  
extend the federal lands closure to sheep hunting by all  
users in portions of Unit 25C and 25E, through to 2026  
to 2028 wildlife regulatory cycle. Proponent states that  
the Federal Assistance Board approved Wildlife Special  
Action Request 24-01, to close sheep hunting in this  
area for the 2024 and '25 regulatory years, due to  
significant declines in sheep populations and extreme  
conservation concerns. The intent of the original  
closure was to give time for sheep populations to rebuild  
and not enough time has passed for this to occur. And

1 therefore, the proponent wants to extend the closure  
2 another two years. It is the hope of the proponent that  
3 during the closure extension, the population will show  
4 signs of recovery. And the proponent adds that the  
5 surveys will be necessary to monitor the population  
6 status before the next regulatory cycle. Prior to 2014,  
7 there were no federal hunting seasons for sheep in Units  
8 20E and 25C. In 2023 the Board approved Wildlife Special  
9 Action to close sheep hunting to all users within Yukon-  
10 Charley Rivers National Preserve and Units 20E and 25C  
11 for fall 2023 season. In 2024, the Board extended closure  
12 to sheep hunting to all users within Yukon-Charlie's  
13 National Preserve and Units 20E and 25C, for the fall  
14 of 2024 season, with modification to also close federal  
15 public lands to sheep hunting by all users in the North  
16 Peak mountain area within the glacier mountain continued  
17 use -- CUA in Units 20E through to 2025 season. ADF&G  
18 issued an emergency order closing all 2024 sheep seasons  
19 in the Glacier Mountain CUA and the closure was extended  
20 for the 2025 season. The sheep population within Yukon-  
21 Charley Rivers National Preserve is naturally small and  
22 isolated from larger population sources which reduces  
23 recovery opportunities through migration. There has not  
24 been any indication that the -- excuse me. There has not  
25 been any indication that population has increased since  
26 most recent surveys conducted in Yukon-Charley in July  
27 2023, when only two legal rams were observed. The July  
28 aerial survey in 2024, for the Glacier Mountain  
29 controlled use area only observed 13 total sheep and no  
30 legal rams. Between 2018 and 2022, repeated sheep --  
31 reported sheep harvest within the preserve averaged 1.4  
32 rams per year, ranging from 0 to 3 rams per year. And  
33 no legal harvest has occurred since 2023.

34  
35 One alternative to consider is to close  
36 all federal public lands within the Glacier Mountain  
37 CUA, instead of only the lands in the North Peak mountain  
38 area. This would reduce regulatory complexity by  
39 simplifying regulatory language and aligning the current  
40 state closures. No impacts on the sheep population or  
41 subsistence users -- user opportunities are expected  
42 from this modification as a federal public lands within  
43 the Glacier Mountain CUA that are outside of the North  
44 Peak mountain area or low elevation, poor quality sheep  
45 habitat where sheep, and sheep hunting are very unlikely  
46 to occur. Another alternative to consider is to remove  
47 the limitation of the closure only being in effect for  
48 the 2026 and 2027 regulatory years. This would make the  
49 closure permanent until a proposal is submitted to  
50 rescind the closure. This alternative would reduce

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1 administrative burden and would not need a proposal  
2 every two years to keep the closure in place. However,  
3 if this alternative is adopted, then the closure would  
4 only be reviewed every four years. As proposed this  
5 closure would need to be addressed again in two years  
6 to -- in order to remain in effect for the 2028 and '29  
7 seasons.

8  
9 If this proposal is adopted, federal  
10 public lands with the Yukon-Charley and the North Peak  
11 Mountain area within the Glacier Mountain CUA and Units  
12 20E and 25C will continue to be closed to sheep hunting  
13 for all users through the 2026 and '27 seasons. This  
14 would continue the decreased opportunity for federally  
15 qualified subsistence users and for anyone hunting under  
16 state regulations in the short term but could help ensure  
17 sheep hunting opportunities in the long term. Federal  
18 lands within Yukon-Charley and Units 25B would remain  
19 open, which would provide some harvest opportunity for  
20 Yukon-Charlie under both state and federal regulations.  
21 Individuals hunting under state regulations will still  
22 be able to harvest sheep on private, state -- private,  
23 state and other federal lands outside the closure area  
24 in units 20E and 25C. This closure to federal lands  
25 could result in displacement of hunters onto these  
26 lands. Adoption of this proposal may aid in recovery to  
27 Yukon-Charley and Glacier Mountain CUA sheep populations  
28 by improving the chances of survival for the few  
29 remaining rams in the area. Conservation of any  
30 remaining rams and minimizing disturbance to these sheep  
31 populations will aid in faster recovery and reduce risk  
32 of local exportation.

33  
34 The OSM's preliminary conclusion is to  
35 support proposal WP26-76 with modification to close all  
36 federal public lands within the Glacier Mountain CUA to  
37 sheep hunting by all users for the 2026 and 27 regulatory  
38 year. Again, the population viability concerns warrant  
39 closure to sheep hunting on federal public lands within  
40 Yukon-Charley and Units 20E and 25C, as well as the  
41 Glacier Mountain CUA and Units 20E by all users. The  
42 sheep populations in these areas are naturally small and  
43 isolated, makes them more susceptible to extirpation  
44 during large population declines, which reported harvest  
45 was low prior to current closures, and any additional  
46 mortality could extend the duration of recovery or risk  
47 local extirpation. While federal public lands only  
48 comprise of a small portion of the Glacier Mountain CUA,  
49 the population viability concerns for Glacier Mountain  
50 sheep population are extreme. The sheep population has



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1 significantly decreased since 2019 to only 13 total  
2 sheep observed in 2024, with no legal rams observed in  
3 recent years. And lamb production has additionally been  
4 very low in recent years and there is no harvestable  
5 surplus of sheep in this population. Any additional  
6 mortality could extend the duration of record recovery.  
7 Closing all federal public lands within the glacier.  
8 Mountain CUA reduces regulatory complexity by  
9 simplifying the regulatory language and aligning with  
10 the 2024 and 2025 state closure. This modification has  
11 no impact to sheep or subsistence users. Thank you, Mr.  
12 Chair, Members of the Council. I'd be happy to answer  
13 any questions.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

16

17 MS. ENTSMINGER: I -- this is my  
18 question. Do you know anything about the 2012 survey?  
19 How it can be so extremely different than the average  
20 before and after? Everything was extremely higher. Ewe-  
21 like, sublegals and total rams. And yet it was more on  
22 an average on the 5 to 6 years before and after. Was  
23 there a different pilot? Something was different to see  
24 it like -- that's pretty drastic.

25

26 MR. PLANK: Thanks, Member Sue. Tom  
27 Plank, OSM, I do not know. That was not it was not  
28 recorded, why on that.

29

30 MS. ENTSMINGER: I knew that [sic] the  
31 answer. But yeah, the lack of Fish and Game here. That  
32 would be wonderful. Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anymore?

35

36 MS. SHOCKLEY: I'm not sure how you can  
37 maybe able to simplify this, but the whole closure for  
38 two years, can you explain that again? And then every  
39 four years? I mean, yeah.

40

41 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,  
42 Member Dorothy. Tom Plank, OSM. So, and I'm sorry, I got  
43 kind of a dry mouth while I was explaining that. So  
44 right now, the way it's set up is if -- currently we've  
45 just been closing it for regulatory cycle, which is two  
46 years. Every two years, we go through the wildlife cycle.  
47 So as of right now, we've being closing it in two-year  
48 steps. Another alternative is just to make it a permanent  
49 closure. And because of the way we handle closures, y'all  
50 review them every four years. So like, if you close it

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1 this year, not next cycle, but the cycle after it, will  
2 be as soon as we'd see it again. And it would stay closed  
3 until somebody puts in a proposal to reopen it. Where  
4 right now, the way it is, is every time y'all see us for  
5 wildlife, we're going to talk about this sheep. And so  
6 therefore it only stays closed as long as y'all say it  
7 stays closed. Does that help simplify it a little bit  
8 for you?

9  
10 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Thank you so much.  
11 And so, as I understand it -- through the Chair, the  
12 state is also closing it, right? I mean, they're --  
13 right?

14  
15 MR. PLANK: Through Chair, Tom Plank,  
16 OSM. Yes, ma'am. As of right now, they've had emergency  
17 closures to close it both in 2024 and '25. I don't know  
18 about next season, but as of right now, they have been.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other comments?  
21 Questions? Hearing -- go ahead.

22  
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, regarding her  
24 question, Dorothy's, this is Sue. When the federal  
25 closes it to everybody, the state has no option. Correct?

26  
27 (Pause)

28  
29 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank,  
30 OSM. That's where -- with federal closes, federal it  
31 closes it to -- on federal lands but it doesn't close  
32 the state lands or anything like that. And only for  
33 federal regulations. So, we don't supersede state  
34 regulations, if that's what you mean or.....

35  
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37  
38 MS. ENTSMINGER: No, I'm just talking  
39 about federal lands because that's all we're doing, is  
40 federal lands. So, when we close it everybody, states  
41 cannot open it. Yeah. That's all I wanted to make sure.  
42 Thank you.

43  
44 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more comments?

47  
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, one more question.

49  
50 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

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1

2

MS. SHOCKLEY: So, this proposal -- I know we review it every two years. So, is this proposal suggest or -- to review it every four years? No. So, but can we? Okay. Thank you.

6

7

MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy, if you wanted to modify it to not just be for two years, then you would have to state that when you go to make a motion. Cause [sic] right now it's just saying for the for this regulatory cycle, which would be two years.

12

13

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more comment?

14

15

(No comments)

16

17

Okay. Thank you. Moving on. There was no public comment made on a written comment put in, so we'll keep moving on. Tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation report.

21

22

MR. PLANK: Through Chair, Tom Plank, OSM. We didn't get any on this proposal during the open session for that.

25

26

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation reports.

28

29

(No comments)

30

31

Hearing none. Agency and tribal comments. ADF&G. Any comments?

33

34

MR. POETTER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Aaron Poetter, for the record. We don't have any comments drafted at this time that we can share with you regarding this particular proposal. Recent history is that we are actively surveying, actively managing to the extent that we can sheep within 20E. And I expect that we will continue to do such. I did want to address, I -- not sure who asked the question about the data on the table 1 survey information. I did want to point out on that specifically that the 2012 info, the previous year on the table is 2005. So, there's a seven-year gap between information there. So, it's not just a one-year change in survey output or survey results for that. So, take that into consideration if you're looking at that data. There was previous years that were unsurveyed [sic] prior to that. So, not -- it's -- I wouldn't say that the table is indicative of a particular trend or

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1 population change within that one-year interval that we  
2 see a number of (indiscernible). So anyway, that's all  
3 I have for the Board. Thank you.

4  
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,  
6 Dorothy.

7  
8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi. Who was the -- who was  
9 on the state side? Aaron. Hi. Aaron, this is Dorothy  
10 Shockley. Are there any proposals or continued proposals  
11 to continue closing that area on sheep hunting?

12  
13 MR. POETTER: I think, through the Chair,  
14 I -- the Interior Board of Game cycle will come up '26-  
15 '27. So, there will be proposal -- there will be a call  
16 for proposals probably in the not-too-distant future.  
17 As we prep for that for that Board of Game process.  
18 Nothing on my radar, but I haven't chatted with the area  
19 staff specifically for what they're hearing or reports  
20 from AC's and what their outlook is. Thanks.

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Aaron.  
23 Okay. Moving on down the list of federal agencies. Tribes  
24 and ANCSA corporations.

25  
26 (No comments)

27  
28 Advisory group comments, other RAC's.

29  
30 (No comments)

31  
32 Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

33  
34 (No comments)

35  
36 Resource -- or Subsistence Resource  
37 Commissions.

38  
39 (No comments)

40  
41 Other written public comment.

42  
43 (No comments)

44  
45 Public testimony.

46  
47 (No comments)

48  
49 MS. GREDIAGIN: I just wanted to make a  
50 note for people online. If you are joining by computer,

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1 you can raise your hand to signify you want to make a  
2 public comment. And if you are on the phone just calling  
3 in, you press star-five and that will raise your hand,  
4 so we know to call on you. So, I just want to make sure  
5 everyone listening online knows how to indicate they  
6 want to make a public comment. Thanks. And again, that's  
7 pressing starfive.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And thank you. Right  
10 now we're on public testimony. Moving on to Council  
11 motion if there's none.

12  
13 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

16  
17 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I'd like to make  
18 a motion to support proposal WP26-76, with a  
19 modification to increase the closure until the season  
20 2029 on all federal public lands.

21  
22 (Simultaneous speech)

23  
24 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second that.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Donald Woodruff  
27 seconded that. Any discussion?

28  
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30  
31 MR. BASSICH: Okay.....

32  
33 (Simultaneous speech)

34  
35 MS. MCDAVID: I have a clarifying --  
36 sorry, Andy, could I clarify? Was that -- did you want  
37 that with the OSM modification?

38  
39 MR. BASSICH: Correct. The OSM  
40 modification. But instead of just 2026 and 2027, it would  
41 also extend to '28 and '29.

42  
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just want  
44 clarification.

45  
46 (Simultaneous speech)

47  
48 MR. BASSICH: Yep. So.....

49  
50

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: So -- hey, just a  
2 clarification on the motion, Andy.

3  
4 MR. BASSICH: Go ahead.

5  
6 MS. ENTSMINGER: So right now, in front  
7 of us, the OSM was '26 to '27 and yours is to '28, did  
8 you say?

9  
10 (Simultaneous speech)

11  
12 MR. BASSICH: '29.

13  
14 MS. ENTSMINGER: '29. Okay. I just want  
15 to make sure. Thank you.

16  
17 MS. MCDAVID: And just to clarify, I  
18 think the.....

19  
20 (Simultaneous speech)

21  
22 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I can speak to  
23 the motion.....

24  
25 MS. MCDAVID: Tom can correct me. Sorry,  
26 Andy, to keep interrupting. I just want to make sure the  
27 motion is clear for everybody. The OSM modification is  
28 for the all-federal lands and the Glacier Mountain area,  
29 not just that portion in the North peak, like it was  
30 before. So that's the modification from OSM, not the  
31 years.

32  
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Andy, go  
34 ahead.

35  
36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you for that.  
37 I'm sorry I wasn't a little bit more concise. So just  
38 to repeat the proposal, the motion is to support proposal  
39 WP 26-76, with modifications to close all federal public  
40 lands within Glacier Mountain CUA to sheep hunting by  
41 all users for '26, '27, '28 and '29. And if I can speak  
42 to the motion, Mr. Co-Chair, or I'm sorry, Mr. Chair.

43  
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go right ahead.

45  
46 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I -- I'm  
47 not a sheep expert. I'll probably defer a lot to Sue on  
48 this. But it's looking at the survey data especially in  
49 the Glacier Peaks area, when I look at page 122. It's a  
50 pretty dramatic drop. As of 2021, from 15 total rams

1 down to 5. I want to point out that those years where  
2 we're seeing these really low numbers also coincide with  
3 extremely heavy snowfall years in this particular region  
4 up here. And I want to reference back to some  
5 presentations we had in previous meetings on the effects  
6 of heavy snowfall and winter kills. The correlation  
7 there and the survival of young sheep on years where we  
8 have heavy snowfalls [sic] or if we have those heavy,  
9 wet snows. So, I want to reference those presentations  
10 to us. From my perspective, I think it's really important  
11 to establish a long period -- longer period of time than  
12 what is the initial modification by OSM for full  
13 recruitment. My concern would be if it was only for the  
14 next two years. That doesn't give the very small number  
15 of underage rams an opportunity to fully grow without  
16 being potentially harvested. I think it's at this point  
17 in time, with the numbers as low as they are and the  
18 recruitment fairly low, it would be most advantageous  
19 for those sheep to just leave them alone for a longer  
20 period of time. Hopefully we won't have winterkill for  
21 future lambing during the next four years or so. So,  
22 it's a precautionary conservation measure to try and  
23 jump start the rebuilding of that -- those resources to  
24 the extent possible. I'll just leave it at that and then  
25 listen for discussion. Thank you.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Any  
28 discussion? Anybody? Sue. Anybody? Go ahead.

29  
30 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I  
31 appreciate this one, I will -- I'm supportive of this.  
32 Is -- I'm just curious why you picked four years if that  
33 was just kind of, like doubling the time frame and yeah.

34  
35 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This is Andy. Yes,  
36 partly that and if I'm not mistaken, I -- what I heard  
37 was that they look at these populations or they look at  
38 this on a 2-to-3-year regulatory cycle. Might need some  
39 clarification on that. But it's basically just trying  
40 to increase it so that we don't have to address this in  
41 in two years. We can let it rest and then readdress this  
42 and maybe have a little bit more time to get better  
43 survey results and better recruitment the next time we  
44 would consider this. So, it's some of it is basically  
45 just to take the workload off. I believe it's a lot like  
46 fish. Again, a lot of these wildlife issues, if you  
47 leave them alone, they'll do the best they can to come  
48 back. And why expend a whole lot of money scrutinizing  
49 them? Just leave them alone for a period of time and let  
50 them come back. What I've noticed over my lifetime of

1 observing is, once we get to -- even a very small  
2 harvestable rate of any species, whether it's fish or  
3 game, we tend to open it up to allow what we think is  
4 going to be a limited harvest. And sometimes I think  
5 we're shooting ourselves in the foot by not allowing a  
6 resource to come back to a much more sustainable level.  
7 Small populations are affected much more dramatically  
8 by weather events or climatic events and human impact  
9 and harvest on them, then larger well-established  
10 populations of any species. And so that's my mind behind  
11 those extensions. Eva, thank you for that.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,  
14 Eva.  
15

16 MS. BURK: Thanks. And then this might  
17 be a question for you to Sue, as far as like data. You  
18 know -- first of all, before I provide a little more,  
19 do you know if there's any other data on the like counts  
20 or the way they used to count prior to 2000? I'm asking  
21 Andy and then you. Yeah.  
22

23 MR. WOODFRUFF: Charlie, I can maybe  
24 help.  
25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.  
27

28 MR. WOODRUFF: I think it was in 2018,  
29 if I remember the data, that they had started having  
30 these serious weather events. I don't know if you could  
31 describe them as ice on snow or whatever but that's when  
32 the population started to drop pretty radically. And in  
33 2023, the population dropped 78%. And that set off alarm  
34 bells in my mind. That's like the worst-case scenario.  
35 Thank you.  
36

37 MS. ENTSMINGER: I can just add to that,  
38 where we were and I'm sure this was happening in Eagle.  
39 It was raining in January for several winters in a row,  
40 and that is lack of feed for sheep. Because they rely  
41 heavily on digging, on wind-blown ridges and that --  
42 it's pretty tough to dig through ice, so I don't think  
43 anyone knows the total ramification of what's happening  
44 that high in elevation because I don't think they're up  
45 there to see it. But it your brain is telling you, if  
46 it's raining here, it's probably raining up there. And  
47 probably not everywhere but it's enough to take care of  
48 the -- their ability to get feed. So, if you have more  
49 questions, I'll try.  
50



1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, I have a comment, I  
2 guess, on this table. And it would be really helpful if  
3 we had a little bit more information, even just a  
4 sentence or two or paragraph in regards to, like you  
5 say, the weather. I mean, whatever it is that is making  
6 these major changes. I think Fish and Game, wherever you  
7 are. If you could add those, that would be really  
8 helpful. Thank you.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Dorothy, for your  
11 information. I fly over that area when I come to town  
12 every six weeks for cancer treatment. And I can tell  
13 you, in the past few years, there's been significant  
14 wind-blown ridges that the sheep depend on. And they  
15 don't have a hoof like caribou, they can't dig these  
16 craters and rain-on-snow seals out the habitat. It just  
17 locks it up, they can't get at it.

18  
19 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you, I really  
20 appreciate that. And that would be so helpful, you know,  
21 to include that in these graphs. Because, you know, we're  
22 seeing this decline and, you know, if we're not flying  
23 over it like you, we don't know really what's happening.  
24 So, I appreciate that. And if that can be included and,  
25 you know, I know that, you know, with state and federal  
26 funds declining, then I think it would be really  
27 beneficial to ask local people, you know, to add to  
28 these reports. Like asking Don, you know, what are you  
29 seeing? And so, you can, using local information, I think  
30 added to these reports would be most helpful.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

33  
34 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the  
35 record. I just wanted to clarify regarding the timing  
36 of the closures. And so, if the closures are in  
37 regulation for four years, after four years, they'll  
38 just go away. And so, if you want to retain those  
39 closures after four years, you will need to submit  
40 another proposal. If the closures are put in  
41 permanently, indefinitely, then per OSM's closure  
42 policy, we review all closures every four years. That's  
43 why you get the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area  
44 Closure every four years. And it's like, why won't this  
45 go away? It's like if it's a closure regulation, we  
46 review it every four years. But if there's a time period  
47 on it, that it's going to sunset after four years, it's  
48 just gonna -- we're gonna have to submit another proposal  
49 to continue that closure in four years. So, I just wanted  
50 to hopefully clarify that so, you're all understanding

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1 when you'll have to submit a proposal, what's in  
2 regulation and what this closure review every four years  
3 means. Thanks.

4  
5 DR. VICKERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This  
6 is Brent Vickers, Division of Anthropology Supervisor,  
7 OSM and I just wanted to comment on Council member  
8 Shockley's question about reaching out to the public and  
9 getting that kind of data. We would love to. I mean,  
10 bottom line is OSM would love to be able to do that.  
11 When I came to OSM I said, you know, can we reach out  
12 and get that kind of data cause [sic] as anthropologists,  
13 that's what we do. I'm sure I'm not the first one to  
14 come in and ask that. And bottom line is, no, we can't.  
15 We are -- we for several reasons. Funding, staffing and  
16 then just transparency in our work. We are limited to --  
17 -- we don't collect primary data. We're limited to being  
18 able to take out of these meetings, the transcripts,  
19 what is being said on the record by public, by  
20 yourselves, Council members. And what we can find in  
21 published reports, you know, news, things like that, and  
22 so although we would love to be able to go out and get  
23 on the ground level and say, hey, what's going on?  
24 There's many reasons I've been told and it all makes  
25 sense that we are just limited doing what we are. So,  
26 we rely on others doing research. So, if you're listening  
27 and like to do research, please publish. Thank you.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

30  
31 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. If you're looking  
32 for data I'm going to give you some more and it's  
33 probably -- what I observe and what happens there. In  
34 my area there's natural sheep lick and I have been going  
35 there since the 80s to see -- and they had a -- Fish and  
36 Game decided not to tranquilize because so many sheep  
37 come to that. And they put nets out, and they put the  
38 collars on without tranquilizing. And there was a lot  
39 of data from that area. And for some reason, statewide,  
40 statewide, maybe like the Wrangell is not so bad but  
41 sheep populations are way, way down. And one of my  
42 theories is if you -- you know, they sheep had predation  
43 by wolves and bears and eagles forever. And at that  
44 sheep lick, the golden eagles were devastating on lambs.  
45 They would come down and lung them, and then they'd pick  
46 them up and eat them. And people observed it, we all  
47 observed it. And what happens when the numbers of lambs  
48 are lower and lower and lower and lower and lower because  
49 of winter and all the other predation, those eagles  
50 aren't lower and lower and lower. And I think they're

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1 very effective of taking lambs and making our sheep  
2 populations not respond like they would normally. So,  
3 and that's Sue's theory. But-- and -- but when I talk  
4 to other hunters about sheep, we're all saying the same  
5 thing. What are we going to do about eagles? What are  
6 we going to do about eagles? And we everybody admits  
7 we're not going to be able to do anything about eagles.  
8 So it's really hurting the sheep population, in addition  
9 to everything else, weather and other predation. And I  
10 think that's something that OSM needs to keep in their  
11 brain, that these kinds of things mean a lot to our  
12 populations. Thank you.

13  
14 MR. WOODRUFF: And I wish our Park  
15 Service was here, but they have acquired a funding for  
16 the next two years for surveys. So that's a big positive  
17 step. And one of the ways that they're moving in their  
18 surveys is, they're using helicopters. They're not using  
19 so much fixed wing. And you know, when you're flying up  
20 the backside of a ridge, you can just stop, you know,  
21 in a helicopter but you can't do that with a fixed wing.  
22 And so, there are some sheep that are surveyed with  
23 fixed wing that could be standing in the shade and you  
24 might not see them. The shade of the mountain, you know.  
25 So that's some of the data. I don't know if Park Service  
26 has four more years of survey data, but they work  
27 together with Fish and Game. That's it's a positive  
28 relationship and I'm glad to see that. Thank you.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other comments?

31  
32 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy.

33  
34 MS. BURK: Yeah, this is just -- oh.

35  
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, right after  
37 Eva. Thank you.

38  
39 MR. BASSICH: Go for it, thank you.

40  
41 MS. BURK: Thanks. I think one of the  
42 things that's nice about being on this Board is you're  
43 looking at a lot of different species, and you hear a  
44 lot more than just, like, sitting on a Fisheries Board.  
45 But one thing that pops out to me from all of the  
46 different presentations that I do get to sit on, on all  
47 the different species within Alaska and within our  
48 oceans too, is there's always a limitation on how far  
49 data goes back. So, for me, I see two problems in fish  
50 and wildlife management, and these are kind of general

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1 questions. But as we're looking to rebuild things and  
2 we're asking ourselves how did we get here? What are the  
3 factors? Like the Eagles, or is it us? Are we the  
4 factors, is statehood and the extra people on the land  
5 and the extra, you know, harvest of things, is that the  
6 real issue? And do we really understand our baseline of  
7 what we started from before we started harvesting on  
8 these lands? And I think if we started to look into  
9 those questions more, we would see that we really do not  
10 understand our baseline. And that when you look at the  
11 size, the sheer size of Alaska and all the different  
12 animals, migratory animals that have to feed here and  
13 we never account for them in our harvest. We never  
14 account for that. What other things does this animal  
15 need to feed? What other things are -- is this -- are  
16 eating this animal? And when I look at all these  
17 scientific studies, it's always lacking to me. And you  
18 know, what I'd like to see is like figure 4 the sheep  
19 harvest, kind of closer to the population counts and  
20 kind of seeing them on the same graph, you know, and  
21 then putting more information on that time line, like  
22 when Andy and Sue are talking about the extreme weather  
23 events but also changes in regulations and how come  
24 harvests are increasing. Because if you look at, you  
25 know, like figure 4 and then we're only looking in the  
26 populations how it's been decreasing in recent years.  
27 But then in figure 4, if you look at the sheep harvest  
28 between 95 and 2005, there was a nice regular sheep  
29 harvest. And for the past, almost 20 years, there's a  
30 much more limited sheep harvest. Then we harvest ourself  
31 down to single digit, double digit, you know,  
32 populations. And then we're trying to rebuild them. And  
33 so, I'm for a full on closure that we have to review  
34 every four years in saying all of this. I want to see  
35 more history. I want to see scientists -- like I this  
36 is a call out for research. Like please go back and  
37 start looking at the baseline. There's a shifting  
38 baseline which we operate from and manage from. And that  
39 baseline is not well understood. And it's constantly  
40 coming after 2000 when so many things happened in the  
41 70s, 80s and 90s that drove our populations down. And  
42 you see it after statehood, you see it on king crab, on  
43 halibut, on salmon, on moose, on caribou, on sheep, you  
44 know. So that's why I have so much [sic] comments about  
45 brown bears, because I see all the population of  
46 everything else. And it's very concerning to me. So, I  
47 won't go on my soapbox too much longer. But I just wanted  
48 to add those comments and I'm for this modified proposal  
49 and I would -- I'm [sic] almost want to modify it more,  
50 but I don't know if we're there yet because I don't know

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1 if Sue's ready, she's squirming, so I don't know if  
2 she'd like that.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, I think I see  
5 I had a list, Andy and then Dorothy. Go ahead, Andy.

6

7 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Eva,  
8 I think you need a taller soapbox. I can't agree more  
9 with what you said. Very well said. I agree that is  
10 primarily one of our biggest issues, fundamentally. The  
11 other thing I wanted to mention, based on Sue's comment  
12 is, I guess now we have to consider the bycatch of bald  
13 eagles not only in our fisheries but now with our sheep.  
14 It's all that darn bycatch. The one thing I wanted to  
15 add to what Eva said is that.....

16

17 (Simultaneous speech)

18

19 MS. ENTSMINGER: Golden.

20

21 MR. BASSICH: Yeap. The other thing that  
22 is happening very slowly that we don't realize is the  
23 technological changes available to people who go out and  
24 harvest. When I first came into the country,  
25 snowmachines, you were lucky to get them up a 20% incline  
26 and especially not in deep snow. Now, snow machines are  
27 set up to where there's no place you can't go with them.  
28 Super cubs are now 160-170 horsepower or more. For a  
29 Super Cub, they can land just about anywhere. That was  
30 not the case back in the 80s and early 90s, maybe even  
31 into the early 2000s. Hunting technology, optics, all  
32 of these things are these what I call the slow creep.  
33 And those are things that don't show up in studies.  
34 Those are don't -- things that don't show up in  
35 geographic or anthropological research unless people  
36 actually point those out directly. So, it's not  
37 something we can really do about, but it's something we  
38 need to bring into the formulation and that is that our  
39 capability for harvests has grown exponentially. Not  
40 only our population, but our technology has grown, our  
41 opportunity and our ability to harvest much more  
42 efficiently. And that's why a lot of our resources are  
43 declining the way I see it.

44

45 The final thing I wanted to just say is  
46 I'm hoping that the modifications or the extended  
47 modification language -- that is my intent is to try and  
48 get it out to four years from now. And I heard I believe  
49 it was Liz, I couldn't tell who made the comment from  
50 OSM. I'm hoping that the modifications in this motion

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1 work within the time frames and parameters. I wouldn't  
2 mind before we vote on it, getting a confirmation for  
3 that. I'm a little bit lost. Sorry, I'm not in the room,  
4 but I'm a little bit lost as far as the timing of my  
5 modifications for when things might happen again. Thank  
6 you, Mr. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.  
9 Brooke has something to say before Dorothy.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this  
12 is Brooke. Yeah. Andy, I just wanted to respond to  
13 clarify again about the closure review. So right now,  
14 the proposal as you've modified it, would basically  
15 sunset this closure after four years and you'd have to  
16 put in another proposal if you wanted to extend it  
17 another amount of time whether that be two more years  
18 or four more years. If you just took off the time limit  
19 out of your modification and just made this, quote  
20 unquote, an indefinite closure. It would come up every  
21 four years for review anyway, just like how we do with  
22 Arctic Village sheep, etc. so that -- those are your two  
23 options. Basically, this would sunset after four years  
24 and you'd have to put in another proposal or you could  
25 take off your four years in your modification and we  
26 would -- it would just automatically come up for review  
27 and you wouldn't have to put in another proposal in four  
28 years. Does that help clarify?

29

30 MR. BASSICH: Very much, so thank you.  
31 And I guess I would like to hear from other Council  
32 members, I -- I'm happy to modify my proposal or my  
33 motion. But I think maybe it would be good to hear from  
34 other Council members before we go through that process.  
35 My personal feeling is let's just give it a four-year  
36 break. If it's still a big issue maybe readdress it. I  
37 think maybe keeping it as it is, is probably going to  
38 be our most flexible tool at this point in time. But I  
39 would like to hear from other Council members on that.  
40 Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue. Oh,  
43 Dorothy was next. Yeah. On the list, I have here.

44

45 MS. ENTSINGER: You can go ahead. I can  
46 finish with him.

47

48 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry  
49 I didn't get your -- where'd he go. I didn't get your  
50 name, I'm sorry. Brent, okay, thank you so much. I really

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1 appreciate your comments. And is there -- and this is  
2 for feds or whoever. Is there a policy change that we  
3 need to make or can make in regards to including local  
4 knowledge? And I know, well, I know in the past and I  
5 don't know if it's still happening. You know tribes get  
6 resource -- natural resource dollars. And so, I know  
7 that corporation -- village corporations are also  
8 keeping track. So, if -- I mean, if they have the funds,  
9 if the tribes have the funds and can do, not necessarily  
10 maybe aerial surveys, or -- but on the ground local  
11 knowledge that can be included in these reports. How and  
12 what do we need to make those changes and can we?  
13

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Dorothy, Jim Herriges, who  
15 was a wildlife biologist for BLM for a long time and he  
16 just retired. He would call me on the phone and say,  
17 what do you think about this, Don? You know, and it  
18 would be, one bull harvest or one caribou harvest. Okay.  
19 And I'd always say we're trying to build a herd up a  
20 little bit. Just one bull harvest. Now, I hope that the  
21 new BLM staff can be that responsive, you know, and get  
22 public input. And -- all right. Thank you.  
23

24 MS. BURK: And I'm also the Chair, so.  
25 No, this is Eva. Well, you know, Dorothy, when we had  
26 this issue, I've presented for the Yukon River Inter-  
27 Tribal Fish Commission to you all on the chum salmon.  
28 And so, I think if there was a report that we put  
29 together -- people wanted to put together and presented  
30 to this body, we could most definitely make that happen.  
31 And so, everybody would have the opportunity, like how  
32 they're presenting. We would have the opportunity. I  
33 think that's possible within our structure. It would go  
34 in the book. Yeah. Everything we've we print -- we  
35 presented a presentation and I think mine was late, but  
36 one of them did make it in the books. And then we have  
37 the tribal comment here. So, if we prep our -- and that's  
38 like making sure that, you know, the communications to  
39 prep our tribes to be here. So, there is a couple tools  
40 that we have that we could do.  
41

42 MS. SHOCKLEY: But thank you, I  
43 appreciate that. But to me it's like, the local knowledge  
44 needs to be equally submitted, reported. I mean, it has  
45 to have -- I mean, I would -- what I would like to see  
46 is it for it to be equally embodied into our reports or,  
47 you know, have equal importance, I guess. As far as you  
48 know, we get the states, we get the feds, let's get the  
49 tribes, you know, or local knowledge, whatever that  
50 entails. You know, whether it's from, you know, just

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1 local folks or if it's a, you know, from like CATG or  
2 from a local tribe or corporation, I mean, just a local  
3 entity, you know. Like Manley has a community  
4 association or whatever. Oops. So, you know, that's my  
5 point. I mean, I would like local knowledge be part of  
6 what we're dealing with as just as important as the  
7 state and federal.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: They are part of  
10 this public process. I ask for them to make comment  
11 every time.

12  
13 (Simultaneous speech)

14  
15 MS. BURK: I know, I know, it should be  
16 embedded into this report.

17  
18 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this  
19 is Brooke. And, Dorothy, I did just want to also -- I  
20 think you're making good points. As Liz pointed out  
21 earlier, this is a preliminary analysis and this RAC  
22 meeting is a huge process of gathering information from  
23 local people that serve on the RAC, also from local  
24 people that call in and participate. And that does get  
25 added to this document before it goes to the Federal  
26 Subsistence Board for the final recommendation and Liz  
27 might want to add anything else.

28  
29 MS. ENTSMINGER: I really appreciate  
30 where you're coming from and I understand. But you know,  
31 when the -- to the -- the Federal Board was 6, I think  
32 it was and then it went to 8 and now it's how many? 11.  
33 And all of this is to get more information from the  
34 local people. All of that was that kind of work to get  
35 it done. And they made this whole thing to -- they got  
36 a guy hired that's supposed to do this tribal  
37 consultation, and we're not hearing anything. We're not  
38 hearing they call them. They set it all up. They asked  
39 all the people, it's time for tribal consultation and  
40 there's no participation to say it. And then we have all  
41 of this here. They know the schedule. They know that  
42 they could be here, up here. And it's -- and there's  
43 ACs. They're on ACs. A lot of people are on ACs. They're  
44 on these Subsistence Resource Commissions and even RACs.  
45 So, I think we're kind of using our poor Native people  
46 up. But hey, we want you to participate here and here  
47 and here and here. And it's just -- it's getting really  
48 difficult for them to be able to get into every one of  
49 these things. We've done stuff to help, but I don't --  
50 I think, I just don't know it. The governments is in



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1 these parameters and these are their parameters and it's  
2 not really helping out. So, I mean, they do. And I would  
3 like to speak to Andy's question after we're finished  
4 with this.

5

6 MS. SHOCKLEY: Can I respond? Through the  
7 Chair.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, you may. Okay,  
10 I think we're getting way off into the weeds. Yeah.

11

12 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, I appreciate that. I  
13 truly do. And, you know, for well, 60 years or so,  
14 whatever it is that you know, we've had state and federal  
15 management. We have been -- Native people have been  
16 making comments. And I think at this moment people are  
17 just tired. They -- because it's gone on deaf ears, deaf  
18 ears, ears because nothing has changed. You know, I mean,  
19 it's like we show up, we do our part and nothing happens.  
20 So, you know, as far as tribes showing up or whoever,  
21 local knowledge, local people, I think if they saw that  
22 that information, their knowledge, their comments,  
23 their, you know, like I say, local knowledge is part of  
24 what we're doing here. And I know there's opportunities.  
25 But like I said, people are just tired of showing up and  
26 doing their part and nothing happens. So, you know, we  
27 have to make changes, whether it's policy or whatever,  
28 so that, you know, we -- they are reporting like the  
29 state and feds do, you know. Thank you.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
32 Dorothy, some of these comments would be great about  
33 policy changes to bring up during the Secretarial Review  
34 discussion. That will be tomorrow afternoon. We'll be  
35 talking all about the federal program and any comments  
36 you guys want to make there. There'll be a section for  
37 other topics. So definitely maybe earmark that. Thanks.

38

39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

40

41 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Back to what I  
42 wanted to talk.....

43

44 (Simultaneous speech)

45

46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And then back to the  
47 motion.

48

49 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I just want to  
50 make sure I'm supporting what I think I'm supporting.

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1 We're not doing a federal closure. We're just having it  
2 come up in four years. Am I correct in that? Okay, so  
3 to answer Andy, I'm in favor of this. I want to know  
4 what's happening in four years from now. That's really  
5 important because maybe something wonderful will happen.  
6 Maybe God's going to strike or something. I don't know.  
7 I don't want to go into this total closure stuff. So,  
8 for that I support and I just want to clarify. Andy,  
9 Super cubs cannot land anywhere, I know a lot of pilots  
10 and they can't land anywhere. And they weren't bald  
11 eagles that are the problem. It's the golden eagle. Bald  
12 eagles are more scavengers. The bald eagles are the ones  
13 that are getting them. So, for that, I support the motion  
14 as written. And I'm ready to vote.

15  
16 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin, for  
17 the record. I just wanted to clarify one more time. This  
18 closure will not come up again in four years. It'll be  
19 up to someone to submit a proposal to make it come up  
20 again. So, I just want to make sure you guys all  
21 understand and clarify that. Thanks.

22  
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: What makes it come up  
24 in four years?

25  
26 MS. GREDIAGIN: It's a permanent,  
27 indefinite closure. Then it will automatically be  
28 reviewed in four years per our policy.

29  
30 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. That's better than  
31 the other. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I'm still in favor of it.

32  
33 MR. WOODRUFF: I call for question,  
34 Charlie, and clarify the motion.

35  
36 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, the motion on the  
37 table is to support Wildlife Proposal 26-76, with the  
38 OSM modification to close all federal lands in the  
39 Glacier Mountain controlled use area. And an additional  
40 RAC modification to extend the closure through  
41 regulatory year 2029. So, for four years, instead of  
42 just the two years in the original proposal. So, this  
43 means that this closure will sunset after four years,  
44 unless someone puts in another proposal to extend it.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I already called for  
47 the last one and I'll let you go this time.

48  
49 MS. BURK: Supersede your authority, Mr.  
50 Chair, as your Vice Chair. This is Eva. Can we -- it

1 says in here that we can remove the limitation of the  
2 closure only being in effect for the '26 and '27, and  
3 then it would make the closure permanent until a proposal  
4 is submitted. See? Yeah, but then it says however, if  
5 this alternative is adopted, then the closure would only  
6 be reviewed every four years. So it's -- I'm confused  
7 because what I want to do is say put in a closure and  
8 then it comes up for review in four years. What I don't  
9 want to do is say, hey, let's close this for four years,  
10 and then somebody remember to do this again in four  
11 years. That's what I'm afraid of.

12  
13 MS. MCDAVID: So if you want it to just  
14 automatically come up again in four years, you need to  
15 make a modification to the motion on the table to strike  
16 out the timeline. So basically, it would just say to  
17 support with the modified.....

18  
19 (Simultaneous speech)  
20

21 Oh, sorry. We have a open mic. Okay. I  
22 think it's been closed. So basically, the motion would  
23 need to be: support the proposal with the OSM  
24 modification for all of the Glacier Mountain federal  
25 lands and the Glacier Mountain CUA. And just don't say  
26 anything about the timeline. And then it would just be  
27 a closure that's on the book, and it would come up again  
28 in four years. It's up to the Council if you want to  
29 modify a motion that's on the table, you can make a  
30 motion to amend the motion and then that would need to  
31 be seconded. And then you guys would vote.

32  
33 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm hearing two  
34 different things here. I heard that it would sunset.

35  
36 MS. MCDAVID: As the current motion on  
37 the table is for this to only be for four years, and  
38 then it will sunset and someone will have to put in a  
39 proposal if you want it to continue.

40  
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think that's just  
42 fine.

43  
44 MS. BURK: I don't know if the rest of  
45 us.

46  
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay well, I that's  
48 where I'm at. I just want to make sure I'm (distortion).

49  
50

000108

1 MS. EVANS: Charlie. I think it should  
2 automatically come up every four years.

3  
4 MS. ENTSMINGER: So no date.

5  
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That would take a  
7 modification of the amendment to completely close it.  
8 And then it will just keep coming up every four years  
9 with the report and we'll know how things are doing. And  
10 if it's good the population is getting healthy again,  
11 we'll change to open it back up. Go ahead, Andy.

12  
13 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As  
14 the proponent or the maker of the motion, I'd like to  
15 amend the motion to support the proposal with the OSM  
16 modification with no time frames. And I believe I think  
17 Don was the second, so we would probably need him to  
18 concur for that modification. And then we have to vote  
19 on that modification of the of the motion.

20  
21 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. Yes, I  
22 concur.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: So, we'll do it that way.  
25 It's not technically a Robert's Rules of Orders. But we  
26 understand the intent and we do have the concurrence of  
27 the second. So, the new motion on the floor is to support  
28 Wildlife Proposal 26-76 with the OSM modification for  
29 all federal lands in the Glacier Mountain CUA, with no  
30 time restriction.

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. After  
33 hearing the consensus through the room, I ask for  
34 unanimous vote. All those against this motion.

35  
36 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, are we against?

37  
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well.....

39  
40 (Simultaneous speech)

41  
42 MS. ENTSMINGER: You just said against  
43 it.

44  
45 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, if I may, I  
46 think what we have to do first, is to -- we have to  
47 approve the amendment and then we can vote on the motion  
48 as a whole.

49  
50

000109

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All those in favor  
2 of the amendment, please signify by saying aye.

3  
4 IN UNISON: Aye.

5  
6 MS. ENTSMINGER: No.

7  
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All those against  
9 same sign.

10  
11 (Simultaneous speech)

12  
13 MS. ENTSMINGER: No.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All those against  
16 same sign.

17  
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: No. One no, right?

19  
20 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so the amendment  
21 passes 7 to 1. Now, we'll vote on the original or the  
22 final amended motion, which is again to support WP26-76  
23 with the OSM modification to close all federal lands in  
24 the Glacier Mountains CUA.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT Okay. Do we want a  
27 roll call vote again? Yes, please.

28  
29 MS. MCDAVID: Andy Bassich.

30  
31 MR. BASSICH: Support.

32  
33 MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.

34  
35 MR. ALEXANDER: Concur.

36  
37 MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

38  
39 MS BURK: Yes.

40  
41 MS. MCDAVID: Sue Entsminger.

42  
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: No.

44  
45 MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

46  
47 MS. EVANS: (In Native).

48  
49 MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy Shockley.

50

000110

1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Donald Woodruff.

4

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Yes.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes 7 to 1.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Five-minute break.

14 Bathroom break. Five minutes only.

15

16 (Off record)

17

18 (On record)

19

20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We're going to  
21 get started.

22

23 (Pause)

24

25 DR. VOORHEES: All right. I'll jump in  
26 if it's okay, Mr. Chair.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, please.

29

30 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you. My name is  
31 Hannah Voorhees. I'm an anthropologist with the Office  
32 of Subsistence Management. Can you all hear me? All  
33 right.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, we hear you  
36 fine, thank you.

37

38 DR. VOORHEES: Great. So, I don't  
39 normally work with this Council but I worked on this  
40 analysis. I usually work with the South-Central Council,  
41 so I'm calling in to present this for you. I'll be  
42 presenting Wildlife Proposal, WP26-74, which begins on  
43 page 133 of your meeting materials. This proposal was  
44 submitted by Bruce Gordon of Chitina, and requests that  
45 the Board recognize the customary and traditional uses  
46 of sheep in Unit 12 by residents of Chitina and Kenny  
47 Lake. The proponent states that he and other residents  
48 of the Unit 13 communities of Kenny Lake and Chitina,  
49 have a history of harvesting sheep in Unit 12. He  
50 explained that residents of both communities have

000111

1 historically adapted their hunting locations based on  
2 the changing availability of wildlife, competition on  
3 the Road System and the availability of permits. He would  
4 like to be able to participate in the federal Subsistence  
5 elder sheep hunt in Unit 12, because it is one of the  
6 few areas where he can do a sheep hunt on his own, on  
7 foot.

8  
9 In regulatory background, currently,  
10 residents of Unit 12, Chistochina, Dot Lake, Healy Lake,  
11 Mentasta Lake and Slana have C&T for sheep in Unit 12.  
12 Residents of Chitina and Kenny Lake already have a  
13 customary and traditional use determination for sheep  
14 in Unit 11. Additionally, within Unit 12, residents of  
15 the communities are federally qualified to hunt moose  
16 in Unit 12, remainder and wolf throughout the unit.  
17 Chitina and Kenny Lake are also already resident zoned  
18 communities for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, a  
19 portion of which is located in the southern part of Unit  
20 12. So, if the Board recognizes their customary and  
21 traditional use of sheep in Unit 12, they would also be  
22 able to hunt sheep in the portion of the park within  
23 Unit 12.

24  
25 As hopefully you've seen, the analysis  
26 covers aspects of Ahtna customary and traditional use  
27 of sheep, which is extremely well documented. The Ahtna  
28 hunted and hunt sheep in areas relatively close to their  
29 camps and settlements. In the ethnographic literature,  
30 hunting by Ahtna residents of the Chitina and Kenny Lake  
31 areas within Unit 12 was not documented, however.  
32 Chitina has been surveyed three times by Division of  
33 Subsistence. And surveyed Chitina households did not  
34 harvest sheep in any of the survey years. However, an  
35 average of about of about 8% of surveyed households  
36 attempted to harvest sheep across the survey years and  
37 an average of 11% used sheep, having received it from  
38 others. All documented search and use areas for Chitina  
39 for sheep occurred in Unit 13 not in Unit 12. Like  
40 Chitina, surveyed households in Kenny Lake did not  
41 harvest sheep in any of their three survey years. But  
42 in 2012, 5% of surveyed households did attempt to hunt  
43 sheep. And like Chitina, Kenny Lake residents also  
44 received and used sheep. But again, the surveys did not  
45 document any sheep search areas in Unit 12 for Kenny  
46 Lake residents.

47  
48 In the analysis at the time it was  
49 published, I did not have state harvest information for  
50 you. But that's available now, so I'll provide that here.

000112

1 Between 2000 and 2024, under -- for -- this is for  
2 hunting under state opportunity, across the state, as  
3 well as federal opportunity that would have been  
4 reported using a state harvest ticket, maybe in other  
5 areas. These -- so state harvest records show that  
6 residents of Chitina and Kenny Lake participated in 197  
7 sheep hunts in the state, but of these only two occurred  
8 in Unit 12. So, the OSM preliminary conclusion is to  
9 oppose proposal WP26-74. Traditionally, sheep were an  
10 important and valued part of the Ahtna diet,  
11 particularly during times when other ungulates were  
12 unavailable. The Ahtna harvested sheep within their  
13 traditional territory in areas relatively close to  
14 settlements. Over three subsistence surveys between 1982  
15 and 2012, participating Chitina and Kenny Lake  
16 households were not found to have harvested any sheep,  
17 although some hunting effort and use was documented. No  
18 search and use areas for sheep were specifically  
19 documented in Unit 12 for the communities. While Chitina  
20 and Kenny Lake have a demonstrated pattern of customary  
21 and traditional hunting for sheep. This pattern has not  
22 been demonstrated in Unit 12. Thank you and I am  
23 available to take any questions.

24  
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,  
26 Don.

27  
28 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Charlie. My  
29 question is that on page 141, it says a few eligible  
30 residents of these communities have applied for and  
31 hunted using the Unit 11 elder sheep hunt permit. The -  
32 - that doesn't give us very concrete data when they say  
33 a few. That's -- I don't know. That's something that the  
34 wordsmiths throw in there. Is it one or 2 or 10?

35  
36 DR. VOORHEES: Thanks for that question.

37  
38 (Simultaneous speech)

39  
40 MR. WOODRUFFHT: If you on page 141 at  
41 the bottom.

42  
43 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you. Through the  
44 Chair. If you scroll down, there's actually there are  
45 two tables that show the data right below that. Let me  
46 know if you can't find it. It's table one and table two.  
47 I don't have page numbers on my version, so that's why  
48 I can't just tell you the page number but. Hopefully you  
49 found it.

50



000113

1 (Simultaneous speech)

2

3 MS. ENTSMINGER: 142

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, it's page 142. Next

6 page.

7

8 MR. WOORDRUFF: Thank you for that.

9

10 DR. VOORHEES: No problem.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Could you -- while  
15 people are looking, could you read the public comments,  
16 please, if there's some.

17

18 DR. VOORHEES: Certainly.

19

20 (Simultaneous speech)

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie.

23

24 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you. Mr. Chair,  
25 there was one written public comment in opposition to  
26 this proposal. Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission or  
27 AITRC stated that the proposal does not meet the  
28 established criteria for C&T use as defined under  
29 Federal Subsistence Management Regulations. They stated  
30 that these determinations should be made based on  
31 community wide patterns rather than individual  
32 preference. Communities with C&T for sheep in Unit 12  
33 demonstrate intergenerational knowledge transfer,  
34 geographic proximity, and cultural significance of  
35 sheep.

36

37 MS. MCDAVID: And Hannah -- this is  
38 Brooke. I'll just add for folks in the room here. That  
39 comment from Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission is  
40 on page 252 of your meeting books.

41

42 (Pause)

43

44 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.

45

46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go for it.

47

48 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think you have the  
49 data but you have -- this is a Unit 12 proposal, and  
50 you've got the elder sheep hunt success rates in those

000114

1 two tables for the elder on June 11th, but not Unit 12.

2

3 DR. VOORHEES: Thank you for that  
4 question. So, the reason is that currently these  
5 communities do not qualify for the elder hunt in Unit  
6 12. They would if they have their C&T recognized by the  
7 Board. But they do currently qualify for the Unit 11  
8 elder hunt. So that data was just, just meant -- that's  
9 what we have. Because that's what they qualify for. So  
10 that was just provided as some supplementary  
11 information. It shows that they've been using that area  
12 in particular. But the data does not really show that  
13 they've used Unit 12 extensively.

14

15 MS. ENTSMINGER: I guess all I'm saying  
16 is sometimes it would be nice to compare, especially  
17 when you're talking about that unit.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, I agree with  
20 you. Okay. Moving down the list here tribal and ANCSA  
21 corporation consultation reports. Any of those?

22

23 DR. VOORHEES: There were none for this  
24 proposal.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Agency and tribal  
27 comments. ADF&G have any comments on this proposal?

28

29 MR. POETTER: We don't have any. This is  
30 Aaron Poetter for the state of Alaska. We don't have any  
31 comments for you at this time. Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Federal  
34 agencies.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 Tribes and ANCSA corporations.

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 Advisory group comments. Other RACs.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 Fishing and Game.....

47

48 (Simultaneous speech)

49

50 MS. KOSBRUK: Mr. Chair, this is Deanna.

000115

1

2

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

3

4

5

MS. KOSBRUK: I'm sorry. This is Deanna. I'm calling in from the Copper Basin and for Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, as well as a Tribal Citizen.

6

7

8

(Simultaneous speech)

9

10

11

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. You have the floor.

12

13

14

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27

MS. KOSBRUK: We do recognize the -- thank you. We do recognize the changes in climate and wildlife abundance and access infrastructure, and it has altered wildlife patterns. However, expanding the C&T eligibility should be based on regional tribal consultation, harvest documentation, and ethnographic records not solely anecdotal accounts or personal narratives, no matter how heartfelt. I just want to add that OSM did oppose this as well. And there is another you know, in the past we've seen proposals that come to wildlife and fisheries wanting to expand the customary and traditional use determination, modifying it and we just feel that this does not meet the criteria. So, thank you.

28

29

30

CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Thank you so much for that. Okay. Subsistence Resource Commissions.

31

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MS. JOCHUM: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, go ahead.

MS. JOCHUM: Thanks. Oh. Thanks. Kim. I can dance. Kim Jochum, National Park Service Subsistence Program. I would like to read some comments from the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. Thank you. The Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission opposed modifying this customary and traditional use determination for sheep in Unit 12. Neither Kenny Lake nor Chitina demonstrate the eight factors used to -- (indiscernible) Chitina. I am so sorry, I've been saying Chitina, it's absolutely wrong, Chitina. Demonstrate the eight factors used to determine customer and traditional use. The individual who submitted this proposal could go through the individual C&T process to recognize the personal history of hunting sheep in Unit 12. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

000116

1

2

(Pause)

3

4

5

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Okay, we are down to other written public comments and public testimony. Any public comments or public testimony? Then we're at Council motion.

8

9

(No comments)

10

11

12

13

14

MS. ENTSMINGER: Make sure I do this right. I make a motion to support 26-74. The request C&T for of Unit 12 sheep for Chitina and Kenny Lake. Making a motion in the positive.

15

16

17

MS. BURK: This is Eva (distortion)

18

19

MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second that.

20

21

22

23

24

25

MS. ENTSMINGER: Speaking to the motion. I serve on the Subsistence Resource Commission, which Kim just gave that report. It's pretty cut and dry. And there has been individual C&Ts, if people feel like they are disenfranchised. And that -- with the data it did not support. So, I am not in favor of this.

26

27

28

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any other discussion?

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

MS. BURK: Thank you this is Eva. Just for justification, I'll add a couple more comments. There wasn't any finding of successful harvest in Unit 12. Yeah, in Unit 12 by Kenny Lake or Chitina people. And also, like if you look at the history of the communities and when they formed, it doesn't it -- it sounds more like these were places that came up for industries that there no -- have long patterns of generational use. So, for those reasons, I don't support it.

40

41

42

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any more discussion?

43

44

(No response)

45

46

47

48

49

50

So, hearing none. (Indiscernible). Do we want to do a roll call vote. Unanimous. Okay. Unanimous consent. All those against. We -- oh, go ahead.

000117

1 UNIDENTIFIED: Could you just repeat the  
2 motion, please?

3  
4 MS. MCDAVID: The motion is to support  
5 Wildlife Proposal 26-74, to recognize customary and  
6 traditional use of sheep in Unit 12 by residents of  
7 Chitina and Kenny Lake.

8  
9 (Pause)

10  
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Unanimous  
12 consent. All those opposed signify by saying aye.

13  
14 IN UNISON: Aye.

15  
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah, that was  
17 confusing.

18  
19 MS. MCDAVID: So, we're seeing consensus  
20 that everyone opposes. Is that correct?

21  
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yep.

23  
24 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. That's correct. Thank  
25 you. Let the record show, all opposed.

26  
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That last proposal  
28 before this one just noodled everybody's brains, I  
29 think.

30  
31 (Pause)

32  
33 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'd just like to ask the  
34 Council. The next one, two, three, four, five, six  
35 proposals, are cross over for Southcentral, including  
36 brown bear, Nelchina caribou and moose. So, I don't know,  
37 I'm probably would suggest that in the -- or the essence  
38 of time, we have to decide if we want to take them up.

39  
40 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Just one quick  
41 comment. This is Brooke. Sue, I'll just note that  
42 proposal 24 and 25, you guys put in as a Council. So,  
43 it might be a little weird if you didn't weigh in on the  
44 proposal that you put in. But I don't know that you  
45 necessarily absolutely have to.

46  
47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, if we put it in,  
48 we better take it up.

49  
50

000118

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Moving on.  
2 Southcentral Crossover WP26-24. You have the floor, sir.

3  
4 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair and  
5 members of the Council. Again, for the record my name  
6 is Tom plank, Wildlife Biologist Office of Subsistence  
7 Management. And I am presenting the summary of the  
8 analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-24, that can be  
9 found starting on page 187 in your meeting books. And  
10 this request to increase the brown bear harvest limit  
11 to two bears in Unit 11. And as you all pointed out,  
12 this was submitted by this RAC. The proponents state  
13 that the proposal would provide additional opportunity  
14 for federally qualified subsistence users and that there  
15 are no conservation concerns for brown bears in this  
16 unit. Prior to 1999, there was no federal hunt for brown  
17 bears in Unit 11. In 2003, the Board extended the season  
18 to match the state season. And then in 2016, the Board  
19 allowed for hunting of brown bears over bait following  
20 the Board of Game adoption of a similar proposal in  
21 2015.

22  
23 Management objectives for brown bears in  
24 Unit 11 is to provide the greatest sustained opportunity  
25 to participate in hunting them. Brown bears are  
26 considered abundant in Unit 11. Frequent sightings of  
27 females with cubs suggest good productivity. And based  
28 on incidental observation and harvest locations, brown  
29 bears inhabit most of Unit 11, except high elevation  
30 glaciers. 2019 National Park Service conducted an aerial  
31 survey for brown bears that covered much of Unit 11.  
32 Preliminary results suggest that the brown bear  
33 densities within Unit 11 are consistent with recent  
34 density estimates in nearby units. Given the low yearly  
35 harvest access limitations and a large amount of habitat  
36 that serves as refugia due to a stricter eligibility for  
37 users per National Park Service regulations, hunting  
38 likely has no influence on brown bear numbers,  
39 composition, or productivity trends in this unit. No  
40 permits or harvest tickets are required to hunt brown  
41 bears in Unit 11 under state or federal regulations.  
42 Although all hunted bears are required to be sealed  
43 within 30 days of kill providing harvest information.  
44 And then bait may be used to hunt brown bears under  
45 state and federal regulations. Harvest increased after  
46 '99 -- 1999, when the federal brown bear season was  
47 established for Unit 11, opening the park to subsistence  
48 brown bear hunting and averaging 16 bears annually in  
49 the 2000s and 17 Bears annually from 2010 through 2013.  
50 Local residents only harvest 1 to 5 bear annually,

000119

1 averaging 2.6 bears per year for 25% of the total  
2 reported harvest. From 2014 to 2018, the percent females  
3 in the reported harvest averaged 34%.

4  
5 An alternative considered is to extend  
6 the Unit 11 brown bear season to close on June 30th to  
7 align with state regulations. Currently, the federal  
8 brown bear season in Unit 11 is shorter than the state  
9 season. However, federally qualified subsistence users  
10 may already harvest brown bears until June 30th on some  
11 federal lands under state regulations. Wrangell-St.  
12 Elias National Park, where state regulations do not  
13 apply, comprises of 63% of Unit 11, and this alternative  
14 was no longer considered because outside scope of the  
15 proposal. If this proposal was adopted, the brown bear  
16 harvest limit in Unit 11 would increase from 1 to 2  
17 bears, increasing subsistence opportunity. This proposal  
18 would also increase regulatory complexity by misaligning  
19 state and federal harvest limits for brown bears in Unit  
20 11. The prohibition on the take of cubs and sows and  
21 cubs under both state and federal regulations, help  
22 protect the productivity component of the population and  
23 promote recruitment. Federally qualified subsistence  
24 users have historically only harvested a few brown bears  
25 from Unit 11. Harvest is not expected to increase  
26 substantially from increasing the harvest limit to two  
27 bears. This proposal increases subsistence opportunity.  
28 There are no conservation concerns due to very low  
29 harvest pressure and brown bear populations that are  
30 considered abundant and healthy in Unit 11. The OSM  
31 preliminary conclusions to support the proposal. And  
32 thank you, Mr. Chair, Members of Council, I'll be happy  
33 to answer any questions.

34  
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Do we have any  
36 questions for this good man?

37  
38 (No response)

39  
40 Any public comment received during an  
41 open comment period.

42  
43 MR. PLANK: Through Chair, Tom Plank,  
44 OSM. We did receive one comment it is on page 246 of  
45 your books from the Ahtna Intertribal Resource  
46 Commission. And just kind of a heads up, they also called  
47 in during our tribal consultation and reiterated the  
48 comments that they sent us.

49  
50 (Pause)

1

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. This is Brooke. There  
4 was a request to read the comment for the record. So,  
5 the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission comment is --  
6 starts on the bottom of page 246. So, for WP26-24 they  
7 support with monitoring conditions. So, AITRC supports  
8 the proposal to increase the brown bear harvest limit  
9 in Unit 11 from 1 to 2 bears. The proposed change would  
10 provide greater flexibility and opportunity for  
11 federally qualified subsistence users. Brown bears are  
12 an important part of Ahtna cultural traditions. However,  
13 AITRC recommends that any regulatory change to increased  
14 harvest opportunity be accompanied by the following  
15 conditions: Regulator -- regular population monitoring,  
16 spatial tracking of harvest pressure and tribal  
17 consultation. Increasing the harvest limit aligns with  
18 the need for flexible and responsive subsistence  
19 regulations, especially as rural communities face rising  
20 costs of living, limited store-bought food access, and  
21 variable wildlife availability. With appropriate  
22 safeguards AITRC views this proposal as a beneficial and  
23 balanced step forward.

24

25 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question. Yes, so I  
26 appreciate them putting this in. So how confident, I  
27 guess is the word, that these conditions would be met,  
28 for Ahtna if this proposal passes.

29

30 MR. PLANK: Through Chair, Tom Plank,  
31 OSM. Honestly, I have -- that is outside of what I can  
32 do or answer. I would not have an answer for that, to  
33 be honest with you. Something like the monitoring, OSM  
34 themselves does not do monitoring, so I couldn't say  
35 whether or not the different -- I can't dictate what  
36 other agencies are able to do. Sorry.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And we are  
39 commenting to the Board right now to follow our word.  
40 And they made their -- they put in what they thought.  
41 So that's what I'll support is the position supported  
42 the monitoring conditions of Ahtna. I support that.  
43 That's why.

44

45 MS. BURK: Okay. So, thank you. This is  
46 Eva. AITRC recommends that the bear population data be  
47 reviewed at least every 3 to 5 years. So, my question  
48 is, is there regularly -- is there data that's regularly  
49 collected and accessible to us, available to us?

50

51



000121

1 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair, Tom Plank,  
2 OSM. Again, I don't have an answer on that because that  
3 comes from a different agency or a different department  
4 that OSM does not. What's in that proposal is probably  
5 the most recent data, so you'd have to ask -- she'll  
6 help.

7  
8 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin for the  
9 record. And the conditions of monitoring and data review  
10 are unlikely to be met. I mean, the Board does not have  
11 authority over that. They just have authority over the  
12 take, you know, setting the season, harvest limits. They  
13 can't dictate as part of their regulations that we have  
14 to, you know, monitor or review data. And I will say, I  
15 mean, the heads of each federal land management agency  
16 are on the Board. And so if the Council puts that, you  
17 know, in their justification that they would like to see  
18 monitoring, I mean, it might help, you know, the Board  
19 to hear that, and then it might trickle down to, you  
20 know, Wrangell-St. Elias put more money towards their  
21 surveys. But the reality is there's no regulatory  
22 enforcement or authority for the Board to make those  
23 sorts of conditions. And I think the Council has done  
24 that in the past where they've supported something with  
25 the monitoring. And it's like kind of to make that point.  
26 But the reality is it's not going to be, you know, you  
27 can't put that in regulation, so.

28  
29 MS. BURK: And this may be for you or  
30 maybe.....

31  
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Who are you?

33  
34 MS. BURK: I'm Eva. I think I am. Now you  
35 made me lose my question.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Don't make me say  
38 that then.

39  
40 MS. BURK: Okay, okay, so if we put the  
41 motion forward with the modification, it's like a  
42 conditional motion, right? But then how could the Board  
43 interpret that? If they can't provide the monitoring,  
44 will they say, well then, they don't approve it because  
45 we can't provide monitoring. I guess we've got.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, my  
48 recommendation for how you could approach this is to  
49 decide whether or not you want to support the proposal.  
50 You can add a comment to the Board that would say that

000122

1 you would support the -- it's just a comment. It's not  
2 within the Board's, like they said, the Board's  
3 jurisdiction to require that monitoring. But you can  
4 still say as a RAC that that's something that you would  
5 like to see. You think it's needed if that's how you  
6 feel about it. So, it wouldn't be part of your motion  
7 necessarily, but it could be part of your justification  
8 and add on to your justification or, yeah.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Going  
11 forward.

12  
13 MS. BURK: Question. Well, I mean, you  
14 know, Ahtna saying they support this with these  
15 conditions, if we can't guarantee these conditions,  
16 then, you know, why would we support it? I mean, it's  
17 like.....

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I got a question  
20 for you. Would you rather defer it back to the home area  
21 and not deal with it?

22  
23 MS. MCDAVID: So, for process sake, what  
24 we need to do is go through the rest of the procedure  
25 steps. When we get to Council motion, someone can make  
26 a motion, if you want to take no action and defer to the  
27 home region. So, then it would be up to the Southcentral  
28 Council to make their recommendation.

29  
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Going down the  
31 line here tribal and ANCSA Corporation consultation  
32 report. I said that already. Okay. Tribal and ANCSA  
33 Corporation consultation report, agency and tribal  
34 comments. ADF&G, do you have anything to say on this  
35 proposal?

36  
37 MR. POETTER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
38 We don't have any formal comments for you at this time.  
39 A couple things to note. This would be a deviation from  
40 existing state regulations providing more harvest  
41 opportunity in Unit 11. The Alaska Board of Game just  
42 reviewed proposals for Unit 11 earlier in 2025 and did  
43 not see a companion proposal similar to this one. So did  
44 not discuss bear -- brown bear harvest limits for Unit  
45 11. And. Yeah, that's all I have for you. Thank you.

46  
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. How about  
48 federal agencies?

49  
50 (No comments)

000123

1  
2 Tribes and ANCSA corporations.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 Advisory group comments, other RACs.

7  
8 (No comments)

9  
10 Fish and Game Advisory Councils. Oh, are  
11 you coming up to say something? Okay. Okay. Go ahead.

12  
13 MS. JOCHUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I  
14 will do better about pronouncing villages properly,  
15 sorry for that. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park  
16 Service Subsistence Resource Commission unanimously  
17 supported a group of proposals increasing the harvest  
18 limit of brown bears in Unit 11, 12, and 13, with a  
19 modification requesting that monitoring continues of  
20 brown bear populations. Many observations have shown  
21 that brown bears have been doing well in these units,  
22 but it is important to prevent overharvest. Increasing  
23 the harvest limit will allow for more harvest  
24 opportunities for local subsistence users. Thank you.

25  
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.

27  
28 MS. BURK: What I -- you can ask that,  
29 Sue. When you guys -- you guys are supporting this with  
30 the conditions as well, but do you have any influence  
31 to make sure that those conditions are met?

32  
33 MS. JOCHUM: Same as other federal  
34 agencies, we sadly do not. I mean, we can do, you know,  
35 from the Park Service side, we can try to get funding  
36 for specific projects that the Subsistence Resource  
37 Commission also -- or you guys also in the region  
38 recommend or ask us to prioritize. We do have currently  
39 specific annual funding for specific subsistence  
40 emerging needs, certain amounts. We hope it's not --  
41 yeah, that's the case currently. So, there's ways for  
42 us to try to prioritize that. Currently it's very  
43 limited, overall. I'm sorry, I don't I don't have better  
44 answers right now.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you. Go  
47 ahead, Sue.

48  
49 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, I, I have a memory  
50 problem. Also, I'm on the Subsistence Resource

000124

1 Commission and I remember somebody from McCarthy  
2 bringing this up, and that's how it got in the books.  
3 Do you remember, were we unanimous on that one?

4  
5 MS. JOCHUM: Yes, it kinda [sic] was all  
6 -- we had so many proposals, we were a little under time  
7 pressure so you also voted on them together, it was 24,  
8 25, 26 and 71 altogether.

9  
10 MS. ENTSMINGER: And we were unanimous.

11  
12 MS. JOCHUM: Yeah, unanimous.

13  
14 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. I just gotta [sic]  
15 make sure. Thank you.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you so  
18 much. Other written public comments. Public testimony.

19  
20 (No comments)

21  
22 Hearing or seeing none. We're down to  
23 number seven. Council motion.

24  
25 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll make a motion,  
26 Charlie.

27  
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Don. Go right  
29 ahead.

30  
31 MR. WOODRUFF: I make a motion that we  
32 take no action and refer this -- defer this back to the  
33 home region.

34  
35 MS. ENTMINGER: Second.

36  
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Council discussion  
38 and justification.

39  
40 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I will support  
41 this motion. I think that I -- one this -- this doesn't  
42 align with state regulations. And I always have concerns  
43 about that, that's why I voted no on the last one. And  
44 also, because there's this condition of monitoring, and  
45 that really speaks to me, that Ahtna is concerned about  
46 the need to monitor if we get more liberal, which is  
47 different from the feedback on the other increases. So,  
48 because we can't guarantee monitoring, I'm not  
49 comfortable trying to support this as written, but I do  
50 support the motion of deferring it back.

000125

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more  
3 discussion?

4  
5 (No response)

6  
7 Okay. We're down to a vote. I'm going  
8 to do it, unanimous consent. All opposed to this motion,  
9 please signify by saying aye. Did I say that wrong?  
10 Okay, you guys have me all confused now. I'm hearing  
11 stuff from three directions.

12  
13 All those in favor of this, please  
14 signify by saying aye.

15  
16 IN UNISON: Aye.

17  
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All opposed, same  
19 sign.

20  
21 (No response)

22  
23 Hearing none. Passes. Thank you.

24  
25 (Pause)

26  
27 Okay, moving on. Southcentral crossover  
28 again, WP26-25/26, you have the floor.

29  
30 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members  
31 of the Council. Again, for the record, my name is Tom  
32 Plank, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence  
33 Management. And I am presenting the summary of the  
34 analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP26-25/26. And that can  
35 be found on page 195 of your books. WP26-25 was submitted  
36 by this Council. And WP26-26 was submitted by the  
37 Southcentral Council. And they're both requesting to  
38 increase the harvest limit for brown bears to two bears  
39 in Unit 13. For WP26-25 proponent states this proposal  
40 would provide additional opportunity for federally  
41 qualified subsistence users. There are no conservation  
42 concerns for brown bears in Unit 13 and not much federal  
43 land. The brown bear harvest limit in Unit 13 was  
44 recently changed to two bears under state regulations.

45  
46 And for WP26-26, the proponent states  
47 that the Alaska Board of Game recently adopted proposal  
48 57 to increase the brown bear harvest limit in Unit 13,  
49 under state regulations. This proposal would keep  
50 federal and state regulations aligned, provide

000126

1 additional subsistence harvest opportunity and prevent  
2 federal regulations from being more restrictive than  
3 state regulations. Again, prior to 1999, there were no  
4 federal hunts for brown bear in Unit 13. And then in  
5 '99, when the Federal Subsistence Board established a  
6 brown bear season in Unit 13. And then in 2003, the  
7 Federal Board extended the brown bear season. And then  
8 2025, the Board of Game increased the brown bear harvest  
9 limit in Unit 13 to two bears under state regulations.  
10 The state managed objective for brown bears in Unit 13  
11 include reduced brown bear densities and maintain a unit  
12 wide population of 350 brown bears. In '98, the brown  
13 bear density was estimated of 21.3 bears per 1000 km  
14 squared, which equate -- equals about 1200 bears in Unit  
15 13. In 2011, there was an estimated drop to 13 bears per  
16 1000 km squared. And then the preliminary analysis in  
17 2022, estimated that'd had gone back up to 14.8 per 1000  
18 km squared. And the density of bears has gradually  
19 remained the same since.

20  
21 And while the density estimate for the  
22 Unit 20 -- Unit 13A study area may not be applicable to  
23 all other parts of Unit 13, these estimates serve as an  
24 index for the brown bear population over time. The  
25 generally lower population density for brown bear  
26 compared to 1998 baseline, is believed to be applicable  
27 to the Unit 13 population as a whole and the population  
28 is no longer in decline. And no permits or harvest  
29 tickets are required to hunt brown bear in Unit 11 under  
30 state or federal regulations. Although all harvested  
31 bears are required to be sealed within 30 days of  
32 harvest. Bait may be used to hunt brown bears under  
33 state regulations but not under federal regulations.

34  
35 Harvest has recently increased, which is  
36 likely associated with the allowance of brown bear  
37 harvest and bear bait stations in Unit 13D beginning in  
38 2013 and in the remainder of Unit 13 beginning in 2015.  
39 From 2010 to 2023, brown bear harvest in Unit 13 averaged  
40 138 bears per year. Harvest numbers are highest in Unit  
41 13E and lowest in Unit 13C. Differences in harvest levels  
42 between subunits can be attributed to multiple factors,  
43 including access, habitat, and overall subunit size.  
44 Current brown bear harvest pressure is highest in areas  
45 with road access to public lands. The percent of females  
46 in Unit 13 harvest has increased in recent years, both  
47 in overall harvest and in harvest of bears over bait.  
48 The percent of females in Unit 13 harvest has approached  
49 50% for several years. However, 2022 is the only year  
50 when it exceeded 50%. While not an explicit objective

000127

1 for Unit 13, ADF&G notes that they will closely monitor  
2 the percentage of female bears harvested. Although it  
3 is not a conservation concern.

4  
5 One alternative considered was to extend  
6 the Unit 13 brown bear season to year-round to align  
7 with the state regulation. This alternative was not  
8 further considered because it is outside the scope of  
9 the proposal. Another alternative considered was to  
10 except Denali National Park from the harvest limit  
11 increase as current federal regulations restrict brown  
12 bear harvest within the park to forbears. Increasing the  
13 harvest limit to two bears within the park means the  
14 season could close at their two federally qualified  
15 subsistence users harvest two bears each. Potentially  
16 decreasing opportunity for other federally qualified  
17 subsistence users. So, if only a few federally qualified  
18 subsistence users typically hunt brown bears within the  
19 park, this proposal could increase subsistence  
20 opportunity for those few users. However, current brown  
21 bear harvest from Denali National Park within Unit 13  
22 is unknown.

23  
24 This proposal would increase  
25 subsistence opportunity under federal regulations. No  
26 impact on the brown bear population is expected, as users  
27 may already harvest two brown bears on most federal  
28 public lands in Unit 13 under state regulations. There  
29 has not been an observed substantial increase of brown  
30 bear harvest in other units, where the harvest limit was  
31 increased to two bears, and this includes Unit 12 and  
32 16A, which are also on the Road System adjacent to Unit  
33 13 and close to large population centers. These  
34 proposals reduce regulatory complexity by aligning the  
35 state and federal harvest limits for brown bears and  
36 Unit 13. The OSM'S preliminary conclusions is to support  
37 proposals WP26-25/26. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of  
38 Council, I'd be happy to address any questions.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions?

41  
42 MS. BURK: Thank you, this is Eva. So, I  
43 have a question about the females taken. And like we've  
44 seen in other management objectives by the State of,  
45 like, trying to limit how much percent of females. That's  
46 -- is that a written -- that's not a written management  
47 objective for this unit?

48  
49 MR. PLANK: Thank you for the question. Give  
50 me just a second to look that up for you. Tom Plank, OSM.

000128

1

2

(Pause)

3

4

5

Okay. From what I can see here, the only two state management objectives that we have in here is reduced brown bear densities and maintaining unit wide population of 350 brown bears.

6

7

8

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Any more questions?

9

10

11

(No response)

12

13

Hearing or seeing none.

14

15

16

Any public comments received? Is there an open comment period?

17

18

19

20

21

22

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom Plank, OSM. We did receive a written comment from Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission that is on page 247. And that was also -- they called during the tribal consultation and reiterate their comments as well.

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

MS. MCDAVID: And Mr. Chair, I could read that again. It's similar to their last one, but we do have Deanne Kosbruk, still online with AITRC. If she would rather speak to it, it might be more meaningful to hear it directly from them.

30

31

32

33

CHARPERSON WRIGHT: That would be really good if that could happen. Are you available, Deanne?

34

35

36

37

MS. KOSBRUK: Hi, yeah. Can you hear me?

38

39

40

41

42

43

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, go ahead. You have the floor.

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MS. KOSBRUK: For the record, my name is Deanne Kosbruk, I work for Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The AITRC Fish and Wildlife Committee supports proposal WP26-25/26. I'm sorry. I'm driving. Are there any questions?

MS. BURK: This is Eva. Hi, Deanne. You guys are asking for this monitoring and we want to be -- we want to say, hey yeah, that's a great idea, but it doesn't appear that anybody, like, is going to be responsible for that monitoring. So, the question we have is to increase the bears from take from 1 to 2, but



000129

1 we cannot enforce or ask for any monitoring. Are you  
2 aware of that?

3  
4 MS. KOSBURK: I've been listening and I  
5 do appreciate your guys' questions, and, to the state  
6 and federal on the monitoring and the conditions. And  
7 you guys have brought up good points. And I will also  
8 be mentioning that to our Fish and Wildlife Committee.  
9 And I appreciate Kim and her input, especially with the  
10 -- there, you know, we could look for more funding. Our  
11 Wildlife Biologist, Sterling Spillaneek, he was -- he  
12 did complete a bear research in our game management unit.  
13 We're still waiting on the data to be completed and --  
14 so he can report on that. But as they have drafted that  
15 the tribal engagement and data collection, AITRC  
16 encourages greater inclusion of local tribal observers  
17 and hunters in monitoring brown bear harvests to better  
18 understand local population trends and ensure  
19 sustainable use. Let me make sure I'm on the right one.  
20 I'm sorry. Oh, and.....

21  
22 (Simultaneous speech)

23  
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT Please drive  
25 carefully.

26  
27 MS. KOSBURK: The cultural protocols and  
28 education. Thanks, I've pulled over. Cultural protocols  
29 and education as harvest opportunities increases AITRC  
30 supports outreach efforts to ensure respectful and  
31 complete use of harvested bears in line with the Ahtna  
32 values in gratitude and conservation. Given the size of  
33 Game Management Unit 13 and the low percentage of federal  
34 lands, we view this proposal as a reasonable adjustment  
35 that enhances food security while respecting the balance  
36 of human and ecological needs. We request continued  
37 coordination between federal managers, AITRC and Ahtna  
38 communities to ensure long-term success.

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We'd like to hear  
41 that report also going forward if possible. Thank you.  
42 Very good.

43  
44 MS. KOSBURK: Yes, thank you.

45  
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?  
47 Yes. Thank you so much. Where were we at? So, we're  
48 looking for agency and tribal comments ADF&G.

49  
50

000130

1 MR. POETTER: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
2 No formal comments at this time. As previously noted,  
3 the harvest limit was increased recently in Unit 13.  
4 Should be noted that outs -- all of -- within all of  
5 Unit 13 outside of Denali State Park, there's no closed  
6 season under state regulations for brown bears. Again,  
7 we also don't anticipate harvest increasing dramatically  
8 with this liberalization as non-residents still have the  
9 guide requirement and we didn't see a sharp increase in  
10 hunters stealing more than one bear in adjoining units  
11 where the limit is also two. So outside of that, we  
12 don't have any conservation concerns related to this  
13 proposal or this opportunity, as the state's already  
14 providing it in more liberal fashion. That being said  
15 last comment is I have some pre-existing commitments,  
16 so I'm gonna [sic] have to sign off after this proposal.  
17 So. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Thank you  
20 so much. We have one question.

21  
22 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. This is Sue. And  
23 I'm wondering, a lot of -- you may have listened to --  
24 can you -- about this monitoring and all of this keeping  
25 track of -- the bears. I mean, doesn't Fish and Game  
26 already do that?

27  
28 MR. POETTER: Yeah thanks. Good question.  
29 You know, I'm not sure what we've -- I don't know what  
30 we've got as far as active monitoring of let's just say  
31 live bears, collaring and those types of projects.  
32 Sealing is required. So, we're going to continue to get  
33 the, you know, harvest age, sex, demographic type  
34 information from hunter harvest that are reported and  
35 sealed. So, yeah, outside of that I'm not sure what  
36 we've got for active projects, though, as far as you  
37 know collars, camera collars, those types of things,  
38 etc..

39  
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you so  
41 much. Any more questions?

42  
43 (No response)

44  
45 All right. Thank you so much. We'll be  
46 moving down the line to federal agencies. Tribes and  
47 ANCSA corporations.

48  
49 (No comments)

50

000131

1                   Okay. Advisory group comments, other  
2   RACs.

3  
4                   (No comments)

5  
6                   Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

7  
8                   (No comments)

9  
10                  I see we have a Subsistence Resource  
11   Commission.

12  
13                  MS. JOCHUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just  
14   wanted to remind you the comment I read on -- I read in  
15   the record on the WP26-24, is the same that applies to  
16   25-26. Thanks.

17  
18                  CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
19   Other written public comments.

20  
21                  MS. MCDAVID: None.

22  
23                  CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Public testimony.

24  
25                  (No comments)

26  
27                  Down to Council motion.

28  
29                  MR. WOODRUFF: I'll make a motion,  
30   Charlie.

31  
32                  MS. MCDAVID: Oh. Well, just for the  
33   record, I did want to remind the Council. Even though  
34   you put in this proposal, you don't actually have C&T  
35   for this region or for this unit. So, whatever you  
36   decide, if you decide to you want to support it or  
37   anything along those lines, it would only be a comment  
38   to the Board. It wouldn't be a full recommendation, but  
39   you could also decide to take no action if you wanted.

40  
41                  MR. WOODRUFF: My proposal is for WP26-  
42   25/26, that we'd take no action and include our comments  
43   about monitoring because it's very vague how Fish and  
44   Game monitors them, except by sealing of the harvest.  
45   Thank you.

46  
47                  MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

48  
49                  CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.  
50   Okay, Sue, thank you. Any more discussion?

000132

1  
2 MS. BURK: This is Eva. There's not a lot  
3 of federal lands in 13 and there's a lot of state land.  
4 And so, it's a little concerning to see the increase  
5 with not a lot of monitoring. And that's what the local  
6 folks are asking for. So, I'm going to support this  
7 motion to take no action. And I would like to hear more  
8 from the local folks and get more understanding of how  
9 you -- we people could start monitoring programs and  
10 keep those funded. So -- and I look forward to hearing  
11 Ahtna's report by Sterling.  
12

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Eva, we've gone over like  
14 4 or 5 of these bear issues. And I'm curious, do you  
15 have a clue about how bear monitoring or bear surveys  
16 are done? And if you do, you could share that with the  
17 Council because from what I understand, it's near  
18 impossible to do a survey of brown bears.  
19

20 MS. BURK: Yeah. And I don't have like a  
21 certain -- like great knowledge on the survey. But what  
22 I've been hearing in the Ahtna Region, I don't know if  
23 it's specific to black and brown, but I thought it was  
24 both. Yeah. Any kind that they're putting down these  
25 wires and that they know that the bears are going in  
26 through and their hair is getting collected on these  
27 different, like, little wires. Yeah. And then they're  
28 doing DNA testing to say, we know that there are at  
29 least how many number of bears based on different DNAs  
30 of that hair. That's my general understanding. Again,  
31 Deanne, if you're on the line, if you have any more  
32 insight, that's the my basic understanding. And I think  
33 that's really novel and that I believe the state of  
34 Alaska is using a similar approach. I believe somebody  
35 just testified saying the state of Alaska is doing that.  
36 Yeah.  
37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: When I we take bears in  
39 to get sealed - grizzly, they wanted the hair samples  
40 of Unit 13 to help with that survey that Ahtna is doing.  
41 So, they were doing a -- adding to the information for  
42 more bears. And who knows, maybe 1 or 2 of them might  
43 be the same bear because they collected the hair through  
44 this barbed wire system that they put up. And they  
45 probably aren't getting all their bears, you know,  
46 they're they did what they could. I heard all of their  
47 report and at the SRC meetings and just talking to the  
48 people and helping we -- my family's actually helped  
49 Ahtna where we can for more information. So, they're  
50 doing the best they can and bear -- just doing aerial

000133

1 survey is not going to happen, that's not going to happen  
2 for bears. But this is all good, new, information.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: From what I heard  
5 that, they counted way more bears with their system,  
6 Ahtna, than anybody expected. Yeah, it was a that would  
7 be in that area. There was way more than anybody done.

8  
9 MS. ENTSMINGER: And close to the road.

10  
11 MR. WOODRUFF: I'm curious how many miles  
12 of wire they put out.

13  
14 MS. ENTSMINGER: That's not how they did  
15 it. They put, like a square or a circle. Yeah.

16  
17 MS. MCDAVID: Just to interject, this is  
18 Brooke. I think we're -- we'll hopefully get a report  
19 and update for them at our March meeting about some more  
20 -- we didn't have time at this meeting to take up some  
21 of those organization and tribal reports. So, we'll look  
22 forward to learning more about that.

23  
24 MS. SHOCKLEY: Excuse me. I have a  
25 question.

26  
27 MS. KOSBRUK: Excuse me.

28  
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Deanne.

30  
31 MS. KOSBRUK: Sorry, Chair and Council  
32 and Brooke. I just wanted to update you on that. That  
33 report was supposed to be done by the end of this year.  
34 Sterling is currently out of the office, so I'm unable  
35 to ask him. But we are hoping by March we he will be  
36 able to present his report to the Councils. So, thank  
37 you.

38  
39 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much  
40 for that update. Can we reinstate the final motion,  
41 please?

42  
43 MS. SHOCKLEY: I have a question though.

44  
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, go ahead.  
46 Another question.

47  
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: Excuse me. So  
49 traditionally, how did we figure out, I guess, if there  
50 are a lot of bears or not a lot? I mean, what was the

000134

1 system? Do you know Gerald or Charlie?

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think it's a good  
4 idea. If you lived on the land that you'd be running  
5 into them, if there was a lot of them and you wouldn't  
6 see them if there wasn't. Yeah, just visual for all --  
7 or what I know. Yeah, and you see them right away. If  
8 I'm spending a lot of time out on the river, I'd see a  
9 lot of them. And if there ain't -- not a lot of them  
10 around, you don't see their tracks or you don't see  
11 them.

12

13 MS. ENTSMINGER: And I might add that in  
14 the fall time, there's a lot of concentration of bears  
15 on the rivers and on the hills and we have a lot of  
16 mountains where we are -- and they're out in the  
17 blueberry patches. And they're finding them on kills so,  
18 and there's been incidences of people that got their  
19 moose and -- they're actually, there was a guy killed  
20 on the Wrangell-St. Elias. He was killed by a bear but  
21 his buddy had the gun and he was back and the other guy  
22 was at the bear and he didn't have a gun, so he was  
23 killed. So, people were actually having incidences  
24 [sic], it shows that there's a lot of bears out there.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I've had it happen  
27 to me. We killed a moose back in the lake and the bear  
28 will be shaking the trees and hollering away, trying to  
29 scare you away. So, you gotta [sic] have somebody ready  
30 with a gun all the time. Because even wolves do that to  
31 us down in the Nowitna. They'll snap their teeth when  
32 you're carrying the moose meat from the lake to the  
33 boat, through the timber and it's getting a little late  
34 in the evening. The kids ask me, I hear something going  
35 through the boat, and I said, what do you hear? And they  
36 said, it sounds like teeth snapping, and the wolves are  
37 snapping their teeth. So, when they got close to them,  
38 they're mad because we're stealing their meat.

39

40 MS. SHOCKLEY: I appreciate that. I mean,  
41 you know, in the early 60s, I think in Manley at one  
42 summer there were like 8 to 14 bears killed in the  
43 community. So, I assume when there's a lot like you say,  
44 you'll see them, right? And so, is that what's happening  
45 here?

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I haven't the  
48 slightest idea, but I know that when I was growing up  
49 in Rampart, when there was a lot of fish, there was a  
50 lot of bears. We'd kill over a dozen of them near our

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1 smokehouse in one summer. And that's not the only  
2 smokehouse in town that was getting visited.

3  
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: How many bears are you  
5 seeing now?

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: None. No, just brown  
8 bear tracks. No black bear coming to town. I think one  
9 in the last 3 or 4 years. Came in, shot it up on top of  
10 the hill and on 3rd Street. But all we see is big brown  
11 bear trail now. Big brown bear tracks along the river  
12 and along the banks going into all the creeks. I think  
13 they're eating them. Okay, go ahead, Andy.

14  
15 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
16 I just wanted to point out that that oftentimes in my  
17 experience you tend to see more bears when there's less  
18 for them to eat. And that might needs to be factored  
19 into the equation if you're trying to just quantify bear  
20 numbers by sightings. Bears are drawn into closer into  
21 communities and areas where people have either meat  
22 hanging or fish hanging or that sort of thing. I do know  
23 -- I think this -- Don could probably -- has more  
24 information, but I know that there is a grizzly bear  
25 hanging around Eagle which is relatively uncommon. It  
26 does happen, but it's rather uncommon. But hanging  
27 around an area where a person had brought in hatchery  
28 fish for their dogs and had it all stockpiled. And I  
29 don't know if the bear got harvested. I'm guessing it  
30 probably did. But the point I'm trying to make is that  
31 simply because people see a lot of them doesn't  
32 necessarily mean there are a lot of them. It could also  
33 be that there's not enough other food out there  
34 for them. And so, they're being drawn into areas where  
35 humans might be more active and have potential food  
36 sources for them.

37  
38 So just wanted to point that out. I  
39 think it's a really tough question to answer. We it --  
40 it's -- I think one of the things that I'm, I'm thinking  
41 about our previous conversations today, and I find it a  
42 little bit ironic that -- I really like what Eva is  
43 talking about and that is trying to quantify things and  
44 having more data there. I know she's very data driven,  
45 and I, I agree with that. I think it's just one of the  
46 things I'd like to flag is that we have a tendency in  
47 this process to want to align regulations, but who's  
48 checking on whether the regulations by the state are  
49 good for wildlife and long-term sustainable systems. So  
50 just because the state makes a hunting regulation or a

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1 bag limit or something like that doesn't necessarily  
2 mean that it's good for the animals or good for  
3 subsistence people long-term. Just trying to point that  
4 out. I -- my personal feeling is that the greater the  
5 ease of access, the more hunting pressure and the more  
6 potential for overharvest occurs. The more remote you  
7 get, the less impact those are. And so, just thinking  
8 about our conversations today I just want to point that  
9 out. Moving down the line. Thank you.

10  
11 MR. WOODRUFF: At the end of November  
12 this year a big grizzly bear swam across the Yukon. It  
13 wasn't even running ice yet. And walked through the edge  
14 of town and kept on going up into the hills. If I wasn't  
15 so sick, I'd go after him.

16  
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

18  
19 MS. BURK: Yeah. Thank you for this  
20 discussion from all of our RAC members. I really  
21 appreciate it. And it is -- it's, you know, you're  
22 looking at how do you find data there's a lot of  
23 unknowns. And that's just the thing, I think with  
24 everything else crashing around and so much unknown that  
25 my first instinct is to be a little more conservative.  
26 And that's just -- that's just what I think. And then  
27 also, like, if we're looking at like, food security and  
28 what people need and also predator control, can all of  
29 those be met under current regulation without increasing  
30 the limit for bears? I see that it can. I believe that  
31 from what I'm looking at, when you look at the number  
32 of bears that are actually harvested or reported, right?  
33 Things could be harvested and they're not reported. So  
34 that's what -- I'm not a big favor of increasing  
35 everything is because I believe the food security,  
36 access to subsistence to federally qualified subsistence  
37 users, all of those things to me, I feel can be met  
38 under current regulation and we don't need the increase.  
39 I see a lot of talk about we need the increase because  
40 there's -- we need to reduce predators on the moose. I  
41 see that coming up as rationale a lot. And while I agree  
42 with some of that, I'm also concerned about the long-  
43 term sustainability of that. And I think we've seen that  
44 similar argument made for Fortymile that, oh, there's  
45 too many animals on the ground, there's too this, this  
46 land can't support on this fraction of animals that it  
47 used to support for millennia. You know that -- and then  
48 you and then a few years later after and harvest is  
49 liberalized, then the population decreases. And you  
50 don't see that for a few years. And with these huge



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1 climate change events, you know, wiping out things that  
2 are already stressed out, like, that's why I'm providing  
3 like more comment about being conservative. So again,  
4 I'm inclined to just take no action.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Can you  
7 reinstate the motion, please?

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: I will do my best. So, the  
10 motion part is easy. You guys' said take no action but  
11 you also wanted to include a comment. So that's the part  
12 that I want to make sure we clarify. And the comment, I  
13 will try to just sum it up at a high level. And we can  
14 wordsmith it later. Is basically to highlight the need  
15 for more data and monitoring. Reference, AITRC'S  
16 comments and support working with AITRC and local  
17 collaboration for monitoring. Is that about it, or is  
18 there anything that I missed?

19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Did you say  
21 collaboration with local residents or...?

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Yes.

24

25 MS. ENTSMINGER: Oh, thank you.

26

27 CHAIRPERSON: Okay, we're going to do a  
28 vote. We don't need to do a roll call on this one. We'll  
29 just do all in favor, please signify by saying aye.

30

31 IN UNISON: Aye.

32

33 All against, again same sign.

34

35 (No response)

36

37 Hearing none, passes. Thank you.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: So, I'll just say, for  
40 process sake. There's a couple more crossover proposals,  
41 four more. You guys can decide if you want to consider  
42 them or not. If you don't want to consider them, that's  
43 okay. We don't have to go any further.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We didn't have  
46 nothing to do with writing these other four proposals.  
47 So, we can defer them back to their area and just call  
48 it a day and come back in the morning. Do we have to do  
49 a vote? Okay.

50

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2

MS. MCDAVID: We'll be back at 9am

3 tomorrow morning. We'll be meeting with the Western

4 Interior Council, so we will be shuffling a few seats

5 around. So, if you have items you want to consolidate

6 into a nice little pile, we'll keep it together for you.

7 And then tomorrow, as a reminder to folks, we'll be

8 talking about the North Pacific chum bycatch DEIS, in

9 the morning Alaska Board of Fishery proposals for the

10 Alaska Peninsula and statewide meetings. And then after

11 lunch, we'll be diving right into the Secretarial Review

12 of the federal subsistence program. Thank you. Have a

13 good evening and thanks to everyone who stuck around

14 with us today.

15

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(Off record)

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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 138 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 16th day of December;

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 20th day of January 2025.

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Rafael Morel  
Chief Project Manager