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EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME III

WEDGEWOOD RESORT, GAZEBO ROOM
Fairbanks, Alaska
December 18, 2025

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Robert Wright, Chair
Dorothy Shockley
Linda Evans
Andrew Bassich
Donald Woodrff
Susan Entsminger
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 - 12/18/25)

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(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good morning. So,
8 what do we have? We're going to start with the
9 invocation. Please stand.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: First time had spoken to
12 a mic for prayer. Heavenly father, we just thank you for
13 this day. We thank you for being able to come together
14 and meet on these subsistence issues that need to be
15 resolved around the state. We ask you to watch over our
16 families. Keep them safe. We ask you to clear our minds
17 and help us to be mindful of the needs of others. In
18 Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm calling the
21 meeting to order at 9:22. Please establish quorum.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll
24 help with the roll call. This is Brooke, Council
25 Coordinator, for the record. Sue Entsminger.

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(No response)

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Sue's not yet here. She'll be joining
30 us in a little bit, hopefully. Dorothy Shockley.

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Here.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Linda Evans.

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MS. EVANS: Here.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Eva Burk.

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MS. BURK: Here.

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MS. MCDAVID: Eva's online. She'll be
43 joining us in person in a little bit. Andy Bassich.

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MR. BASSICH. Present, online.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Chair
48 Charlie Wright.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Here.

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MS. MCDAVID: Member Galen Gilbert is
absent and excused. Donald Woodruff.

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MR. WOODRUFF: Here.

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MS. MCDAVID: And Gerald Alexander.
Gerald will be joining us in a little bit. With six of
nine members present, we have quorum. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. We can
move right on down into meeting announcements. Thank
you, Brooke.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Welcome, everyone, to day three of the Eastern Interior
Regional Advisory Council meeting. Once again, we have
a very full agenda today. So just be mindful of that.
This morning we're going to be hearing updates about
Fortymile Caribou and the Wood Bison Restoration Project
and hopefully try to get into the statewide delegated
authority proposal and the wood bison C&T proposal
before lunch. That might be a big lift, but we're going
to try. After lunch, we'll continue on with the rest of
the remaining wildlife proposals. And your last action
item will be to identify issues for your FY25 Annual
Report. Just to maybe help us save time later for that
discussion of the annual report, if there's any topics
that come up in discussion that you want to flag to add
throughout the day, just say so. And got a whiteboard
up here, I'll make some notes. So just keep that in mind
throughout the day.

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Announcement about public comments. We
will have comment opportunity on non-agenda items this
morning. We just ask if you have non-agenda items,
comments to please limit them to about 3 to 5 minutes
because of time. If you're online and would like to
comment, you can press star five, I guess if you're on
the phone. And if you're online, you can use the raise
hand feature on Teams, and we'll call on you when it's
your time to comment. If you're here in the room, we do
have green comment cards on the back table with all the
other information. Feel free to fill one of those out
and you can pass it to me. And I will make sure that
Chair Wright is aware and he'll call on you when it's
time to comment. That also goes for agenda items. We
take comments on agenda items when those agenda items
come up. So, same process applies for commenting on
agenda items. Green cards, if you're here. Raise your

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1 hand or press star five if you're online or on the phone.
2 I did want to make sure that, especially folks online,
3 know that this is the Eastern Interior meeting. There's
4 a separate meeting link for the Western Interior meeting
5 today, and you can find that on their webpage. The
6 meeting materials are online at www.doi.gov/subsistence
7 and you can navigate to the Regions tab and then to the
8 Eastern Interior and click on Meeting Materials. The
9 most recent copy of the agenda is also on there. And
10 lastly, Mr. Chair, I wanted to let you and the Council
11 know we did have a request from Carly Knight with
12 Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, to give a real brief update about
13 Fortymile Caribou on the Canadian side after our Alaska
14 managers present, if that's okay with you. Okay, sounds
15 great. And that's all for my announcements. Thanks,
16 everyone.

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18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I've been seeing
19 many faces for days here and I see some new ones. If
20 you're new here today, please come up to the mic and
21 introduce yourself. So, everybody that I've met and
22 learned by vision and name, I can know you too. Thank
23 you.

24
25 MR. GROSS: Oh, it's gotta [sic] turn
26 red, this high-tech stuff, Charlie. For the record, my
27 name is Jeff Gross. I'm the Area Wildlife Biologist based
28 in Tok for Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the
29 Fortymile Caribou Herd State Manager.

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31 MR. ROGERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
32 the RAC Board. My name is Luke Rogers. I work with the
33 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Bison Restoration
34 Project as a biologist.

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36 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Good morning. My name
37 is Jordan Pruszenski. I'm the Assistant Area Biologist
38 for the Northeast with the Alaska Department of Fish and
39 Game. Thank you.

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41 MR. NELSON: And good morning. Mark
42 Nelson, Area Biologist for Northeast Alaska Department
43 of Fish and Game. And today I have some information
44 about 25E moose I'll be sharing.

45
46 MR. CARMERON: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
47 members of the Council. My name is Matt Cameron. I'm a
48 Wildlife Biologist with the Park Service for Yukon-
49 Charley Rivers. Thanks for your time and being flexible
50 and rescheduling the meeting. And thank you.

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MS. JOCHUM: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
members of the Council. Kim Jochum, National Park
Service Regional Subsistence Program and Interagency
Staff Committee member. Thanks for having us.

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MR. CUTTING: Good morning. My name is
Kyle Cutting. I'm a Wildlife Biologist at Wrangell-St.
Elias National Park and Preserve.

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MS. YEMMA: Good morning. My name is
Angela Yemma. I am over at the Bureau of Land Management
Eastern Interior Field office. I am an assistant field
manager. And Tim Hammond, who you all probably knew. He
retired in the spring, so I've been filling the acting
field manager role since then. So, I work with Claire
Montgomery, who I believe introduced herself at some
point earlier in the meeting. So good to be here. And
thank you guys for getting this scheduled.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
for being here. Who's that guy in the back right there?

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(Pause)

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Thank you for coming and joining us this
morning, Manny. Okay. Anybody online now we got a lot
of people online. Go ahead and do that.

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MS. MCDAVID: Sure. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
If folks online could please introduce yourselves. We'll
start with anyone representing a tribe, First Nation
government or tribal organization.

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MS. KOSBRUK: Good morning. This is
Deanna Kosbruk calling from Ahtna Intertribal Resource
Commission. I also have Dr. Jim Simon in the room. Thank
you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Good
morning.

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MS. NICHOLAS: Good morning. This is
Kimberly Nicholas, TRS TCC Coordinator.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

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MS. KNIGHT: (In Navite) Karlie Knight,
Fish and Wildlife Manager, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Dawson
City, (indiscernible), Canada. Thanks for having me.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Karlie. Next.

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(Pause)

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All right. Do we have any new folks? Oh,
I see Serena. Go ahead, Serena.

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MS. ALSTROM: Good morning. My name is
Serena Alstrom. I'm Executive Director of the Yukon
River Drainage Fisheries Association. Good morning.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Serena. We'll move
on to agency folks. Are there any new state or federal
agency representatives joining us today?

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(No response)

And this is if you haven't.....

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MS. PATTON: Good morning.

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MS. PATTON: Well, good morning,
everyone. This is Eva Patton, Subsistence Program
Manager with the National Park Service in Anchorage.
Good morning.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Eva. And then,
do we have any members of the public who haven't yet
introduced themselves to the meeting.

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MS. GORDON: Good morning. My name is
Chaya Gordon. I'm a PhD student, a new student at UAF
studying wildlife and conservation biology with a soft
concentration in indigenous studies. Nice to meet you
all.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for joining us.
All right and I do see. Oh, go ahead. Leonardo.

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MR. WASSILIE: Hi, Leonardo Wessilie. I
live in Nenana, Alaska. I'm having a meeting going on
here at the tribal office in the background but I'm here
in my own capacity, though, so. But good to see you all.
Thanks.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And then I see
2 Rose Bennette and Robin Hagglund. Could you both
3 introduce yourselves please.
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5 MS. HAGLIN: Good morning. This is Robin
6 Haglin. I'm with TCC Tribal Resource Stewardship
7 Department. Thank you.
8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And are you
10 there, Rose? Are you able to introduce yourself? Okay.
11 She said she's not able to unmute, but Rose is with
12 Calista Corporation. Thank you. And I think that's all,
13 Mr. Chair.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, so much
16 for that. And thank you all for joining us today. So,
17 next on the agenda is Public and Tribal Comment on Non-
18 agenda Items. Okay. Go ahead and go back.
19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Sorry. It looks like we
21 have one person with their hand raised. Was that to
22 introduce yourself or for a comment? And you might have
23 to press star six to unmute yourself if you're on the
24 phone.
25

26 MR. ERVIN: Hi, can you hear me?
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28 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we can hear you now.
29 Please go ahead and introduce yourself.
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31 MR. ERVIN: (In Native). Bruce Ervin, UAF
32 professor, Northway tribal member. Good morning,
33 everyone.
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35 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks so much for joining
36 us, Bruce.
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38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We can
39 continue with public comments. How you want to start?
40 Olivia Irwin, thanks for being with us this morning.
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42 MS. IRWIN: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
43 members of the Council. I will be giving an oral report,
44 a brief report of for the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
45 Association this morning. And I recognize that you're
46 on wildlife and have other agenda items, so I'm going
47 to keep it short. But let you know that in your packets,
48 you also have our full report on page 359. And I'll be
49 around if you happen to take a look at it today and have
50 additional questions for us. Serena Alstrom is also

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1 online if we have questions.

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3 So we would like to provide you with a
4 brief update on activities and accomplishments since
5 last year. This summer YRDFA traveled to multiple
6 communities throughout the river hosting community
7 meetings, a bio technician training camp, Ruby culture
8 camp and continued our survey and community monitoring
9 programs, even launching a new digital app for our
10 surveyors. Our travels included Saint Mary's, Huslia,
11 Ruby, Beaver, and Eagle with the help of Tanana Chiefs
12 Conference and the Yukon River Inter Tribal Fish
13 Commission, YRDFA was able to again offer the in-season
14 teleconference this past summer. Keeping fishermen
15 connected to each other and management throughout the
16 season. We will be actively seeking funding before next
17 season to ensure we will be able to offer the
18 teleconference again in 2026. YRDFA has transitioned out
19 of our summer season and is engaging in winter meetings,
20 while developing plans for the implementation of the
21 2026 summer programs with another bio technician camp
22 in Saint Mary's and the Educational Exchange, where we
23 will be hosting a group of Canadians. Due to other
24 important programs, the Communication Committee at the
25 Yukon River panel decided to hold off on hosting the
26 educational exchange in 2025. YRDFA is engaged at the
27 North Pacific Fishery Management Council, paying
28 attention to the chum bycatch issues that will be
29 discussed in February. We are actively seeking funding
30 to help support travel to the chum bycatch EIS meeting
31 in Anchorage and continue to work with partner
32 organizations and tribes to uplift the voices of the
33 river. Also, this spring, there will be the area M Board
34 of Fish Meeting, Yukon River panel, Statewide Board of
35 Fish Meetings, and the Yukon River Science Symposium.
36 So, we'll be keeping users informed about other
37 important work being done on the Yukon as well. We had
38 a great summer season and we look forward to continuing
39 our good work throughout the winter. I'd like to leave
40 you with the dates for YRDFA annual preseason meeting,
41 which will be held April 21st and 22nd in Anchorage and
42 location is to be determined. That's April 21st and 22nd.
43 So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

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45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any
46 questions for Olivia? Go ahead, Eva.

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48 MS. BURK: Thank you. Through the Chair.
49 This is Eva. You said there's a bio technician training
50 camp in Saint Mary's like this coming summer?

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MS. IRWIN: Yes.

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MS. BURK: Okay. And is that open to, like, other folks from other fisheries, orgs?

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MS. IRWIN: Yes. The application -- as far as I'm aware, the application is open to anybody interested in the in the bio technician training camp. So, there is a vast array of individuals that attended the Eagle one this summer. And so, we'll be doing something similar in Saint Mary's.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you so much for your update, Olivia. I just wanted to make sure you and Serena are aware that the Federal Subsistence Board is meeting that same week, so it might be tough for our Chair to attend the YRDFA preseason meeting, but I know it's always hard to avoid overlapping meetings. So thank you.

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MS. IRWIN: Thanks for letting us know, Brooke.

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(Pause)

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MS. MCDAVID: Let the record reflect that member Gerald Alexander has joined us. And do we have any comments on non-agenda items from folks online? If you would like to comment, please raise your hand or press star five.

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(No response)

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And I'm not seeing any Mr. Chair, so please proceed.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you. Moving down the list. Action items. Fortymile Caribou Herd management updates ADF&G and BLM. You have the floor. Maybe.

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MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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MS. MCDAVID: And if you guys could please just remember to say your name for the record. Thank you.

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MR. GROSS: For the record, my name is Jeff Gross. Area Biologist for Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Tok.

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MS. YEMMA: And I am Angela Yemma. I am acting as the Field Manager for the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office. And real quick, just want to make sure everyone has our handouts, (indiscernible) Claire's going to bring the fed one around. I don't know if I have to say.

MR. GROSS: Oh, you do.

MS. YEMMA: Okay. Yeah, I have there.

MR. GROSS: We work for the government.

MS. YEMMA: Yes.

MR. GROSS: Bear with us please.

MS. YEMMA: A lot of papers going on here. Yes.

(Pause)

MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy Bassich. I'm wondering if there's electronic copies of those handout handouts that could be sent to me. I don't see them.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. Andy. Yeah, I forwarded you the ones from Fish and Game this morning and I can send the federal one right now.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have the floor.

MS. YEMMA: All right. Want to go first, Jeff?

MR. GROSS: Oh, I don't care. Brooke, do they have, like, the status? They have all that stuff? Okay. Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Myself and Angela are the -- and Claire, are the kind of joint biologists with the Alaska Department Fish and Game and BLM that are in charge of managing the state and federal hunts. It -- the Fortymile Caribou Herd is, well, it's a -- let's see, I guess, the Fortymile Caribou Herd if you want to, I can give like a biological update to start with. We're primarily here to discuss the Fortymile Caribou harvest plan revision that's currently in process. And chat with you a little bit about the about the hunts this year. But if you'd like, I can give you a biological update on

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1 the herd.

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3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd appreciate a
4 quick one. Okay, thank you.

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6 MR. GROSS: Everybody should have a
7 handout that's entitled "Fortymile Caribou Herd Status".
8 And there's a lot of information in here from all of our
9 different surveys. So, I'll try to keep it fairly brief,
10 but folks can certainly ask any questions. The Fortymile
11 Caribou Herd is, as folks here know, is the largest road
12 accessible herd in the state other than maybe the Central
13 Arctic. But you gotta [sic] -- they make you walk like
14 five miles to get to their herd, so. Anyway, it's always
15 been an important subsistence herd. It extends from
16 roughly Fairbanks east, well into Canada all the way to
17 Dawson and historically likely encompass areas further
18 west and further east than its current range. The herd
19 recently went through a peak in has since been going
20 through a decline for about the last 8 or 9 years. It
21 peaked out in 2017 at about 80,000 caribou. Current
22 estimates are around 26,000, give or take a 1000-1500.
23 We did not get a photo census this summer. We did try
24 and we were very close but they're difficult to
25 photograph. And it just didn't come together this year.
26 But we did get a census last year. And what we found
27 over time is we can -- our models, population models
28 work pretty well a year out. So, we're pretty confident
29 we know that the herd is in the mid-20s right now. So,
30 it's not -- that's exactly correct. But we don't have
31 80,000. We don't have 10,000. That's roughly what we
32 have. We utilize that model estimate to develop the
33 harvest quota, looking at harvestable surplus. And of
34 course, that's divided up in a lot of different ways.

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36 The herd -- the last couple years, the
37 herd has started to finally show signs of improved
38 nutrition. Back in 2018, there were in very poor
39 nutrition, and we lost a lot of animals. We ended up
40 having some large hunts in 2020 and 2021 to try to
41 intentionally reduce the herd to a lower level where
42 hopefully nutrition would be adequate for the remaining
43 animals. In the literature, generally, this is very
44 general, the best we can glean is we expected the decline
45 to continue for roughly ten years, give or take a couple
46 years. So, we're kind of coming up on that. Survival
47 rates finally increased this last year. Our adult
48 survival rate was up at 88%, which is pretty close to
49 long term average. We generally see about a 10% mortality
50 in adult cows over time. And then our reproduction this

1 last year was better. We're waiting to see how the winter
2 plays out to determine what the survival is going to be
3 over the winter, especially for the calves, which that
4 -- then, of course in the spring. But if it makes the
5 spring are considered recruited into the population. So,
6 until we see that we won't have an idea for this next
7 fall. Calf weights are up. Last couple years, our fall
8 calf weights that we collect in October during fall
9 captures have been right about at the long-term average.
10 I could go more in depth on some of the different metrics
11 that we measure if folks would like or if they want to
12 take a look through this. I'll also be back at your next
13 meeting, and we can certainly talk about it more then
14 as well. And I do apologize; we had a regional meeting
15 the last two days where I would have been here. But
16 unfortunately, they like to pile meetings on you. So
17 anyway, I don't know if you want me to get into any more
18 specifics on the status of the herd right now.

19
20 So, the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest
21 Management Plan is a publicly driven document or
22 publicly developed document that's been developed or
23 it's been used to help guide the management of the
24 Fortymile Caribou Herd, specifically harvest management
25 since 2001. We're currently on about the fifth
26 iteration, I would say of this plan. Last February
27 representatives from the Fairbanks, Eagle, Central,
28 Upper Tanana in Tok, Delta, Anchorage and Mat Valley.
29 Fish and Game advisory committees and Don with the RAC
30 got together in Fairbanks along with one of the biologist
31 Mike Suiter in -- from Yukon to develop the latest
32 revision of the harvest management plan. As you know,
33 this is an international herd. There's been a long-
34 standing relationship between Alaska and Yukon are
35 working on this herd. It's -- it was a lot easier when
36 the herd was growing and everybody was happy. Lots of
37 animals to harvest as you get -- but during the decline
38 here things have obviously gotten more difficult. But
39 we continue to engage and work with them to manage the
40 herd. This latest iteration of the of the Fortymile
41 Caribou Herd is a fair bit different than previous
42 versions, because we are in a decline and the folks had
43 to think a little bit more outside the box and consider
44 the changes in the reproduction, survival etc., all the
45 biology of the herd and take that into account to -- and
46 try to come up with ideas of how to continue to hunt
47 this herd with out conservation concerns, and without
48 impacting the herd or resulting in more of a decline
49 than we have to see. The -- I think everybody's got
50 a copy of it. The first sections of the plan are our

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1 background. If you go down to page 7, though.

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MS. MCDAVID: Jeff, I'm just going to stop you so I can direct them where it's at. Council members, you have -- it's in the last part of your little folder with the clear cover on it. Yeah. And did you say page 7, Jeff?

MR. GROSS: Page 7, yeah. I assume folks online or Andy and other members online have a copy hopefully or can see the screen.

(Pause)

So, on page 7, this is the section on the recommendations that the Harvest Management Coalition came up with. The goals are still fairly simple, basically to encourage recovery of the herd without -- taking into consideration nutrition and allowing for some harvest without compromising the conservation of the herd. It discusses some of the herd health habitat monitoring we do, and we always try to discuss this at length with the Harvest Management Coalition so folks have the current picture of the status of the herd. At the bottom, you'll see the beginning of the objectives. One thing I'll say is we're -- every caribou herd is different. So, we're kind of in, you know, we've gone through an increase and a peak and now a decline. And now we get a kind of feel our way through managing this herd as it kind of reaches the bottom end of its -- of this cycle and stabilizes and begins to recover. I think the main sentiment of the folks on the committee was want to see, they'd like to see harvest, but they don't want to -- but they want to prioritize making sure, you know, conservation of the herd, making sure that, you know, do no more harm basically, than has already occurred through the natural cycle. We've learned a lot in this past 20 years. And everybody always wants -- has always asked, you know, how many caribou can you have out there? So, the population objective as of now, they landed on 30- to 50,000, which is considerably less than the old intense management objective of 50- to 100,000. And we're basing this on, on nutritional indices as we saw the herd come up. We started seeing a lot -- signs of nutritional limitation as we approach and exceeded 50,000 caribou. And keep in mind, when we were collecting that data several decades ago now, the range was in a lot better condition. It hadn't had 80,000 caribou on it in many decades. So, now we're in a situation where 50,000 may not even be

1 feasible anymore because of the impact of the rain. So,
2 over time here, we're -- we just need to monitor
3 nutritional indices and, and kind of see, see what the
4 caribou tell us. As far as how they react to the range
5 now as they begin to increase again.

6
7 There are several other objectives, you
8 go to page 8, including both call ratios, which the
9 committee agreed that in order to allow some additional
10 harvest, that temporarily, the bull cow ratio objective
11 should be reduced to 25 versus 35. You get much below
12 25 and it's not a biological concern that can still do
13 the breeding. But hunters on the landscape just start
14 having a harder and harder time finding a legal bull to
15 harvest if you get your bull-cow ratio down to low. So,
16 it's kind of a balance. Again, they recommend a few
17 other things there. Based on nutrition kind of bigger
18 picture trend of the herd, either slow growth or
19 stabilization or when to reduce the population. It's a
20 little more -- it's not super specific primarily because
21 I think our intent going forward is to really monitor
22 the nutritional indices in the herd and kind of, again,
23 let the let the caribou tell us when maybe they start
24 reaching a, you know, an upper end again, when their
25 reproduction maybe starts slowing down, survival starts
26 going down. Those different indices I talked about
27 earlier.

28
29 Historically, there's always been a
30 section about a harvest across the border and how the
31 harvestable surplus would be divided. We don't have
32 wording in this one yet, about that. We're continuing
33 to work with Yukon, and I know Mike Suiter is meeting
34 with a lot of folks with First Nations and other groups
35 as we are on this side of the border. So that's yet to
36 come. Then below that is a breakdown of the of the of
37 the Alaska Harvest Management details. And there's quite
38 a few here. Probably too many to go through today. What
39 I'm really hoping for is that folks can take this harvest
40 plan and the information that BLM and Fish and Game
41 provide today. Go back to your folks, go over it talk
42 amongst yourself and provide some input to Don and Andy
43 as well. Andy technically is Eagle State AC
44 representative on the Harvest Management Coalition but
45 of course he's on the RAC, so but Don is the official
46 representative from the Eastern Interior RAC, so it'll
47 be important when we go back into probably just one more
48 meeting to finalize this, that Don can carry any message
49 that the Eastern Interior RAC would like to see. And
50 obviously federal subsistence is a huge part of this

1 herd. So, there's -- again, there's a bunch of
2 information in here about the hunt zones and how the
3 allocation -- how the harvest quota is allocated. Season
4 dates, recommendations for road crossings, which is
5 always a challenge. And then on page 12, there's actually
6 a set of proposals that will likely be put into the
7 Board of Game and kind of switching more over to the
8 federal side of things now. It'll also be important for
9 BLM and the federal managers to work with you to develop
10 any kind of sister proposals for the Federal Subsistence
11 Board.

12
13 This plan doesn't have a lot in it about
14 the federal management, the nuances of the federal
15 management. It doesn't at this time identify any
16 specific division of the quota between state and federal
17 hunters. But you know that's something that we'll talk
18 more about with you today. Hopefully we can just kind
19 of talk through it and give you whatever information you
20 need. And that may be something that ultimately Don will
21 maybe come to the HMC with a message of some additional
22 wording. I don't anticipate at this point finalizing
23 this before your next meeting. At first, I was hoping
24 to get it done this winter, but it just doesn't make
25 sense. We're going to try to let the ACs take this. The
26 State ACs and Yukon take this, to all their folks, digest
27 it and come back to another official meeting. So that'll
28 be kind of the plan is we'll come back and well, I will
29 I mean, come January, I don't know what's going on. No,
30 I'm just kidding. Hopefully we hopefully we don't have
31 to reschedule or whatever, and things work out and we'll
32 be here in March.

33
34 A couple of the things that are in the
35 plan or in these proposals, I mean, there's a number of
36 things that -- extending a couple season dates and just
37 changing around zone descriptions a little bit, state
38 proxy hunting. None of that stuff really is a is a big
39 thing. I'm happy to talk about any of it. But probably
40 the other -- the thing that is probably more interest
41 [sic] is, there is a section on trying to figure out how
42 to deal with non-residents, non-resident harvest. And
43 there is sort of a formula in here that they developed,
44 of recommendations of when to and not to allow non-
45 resident harvest in portions or all of the hunt area.
46 And -- then in addition to that let's see, there are
47 some recommendations that they had written in here for
48 federal managers. And if you look at the middle of page
49 12. There's some of that. Again, that's really not my
50 purview. So, Angela's here, and it's kind of what I had

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1 for an introduction. And then we'd like to talk to you
2 a little bit about this fall's harvest, the lower quotas,
3 and how that all went this year. But is are there any
4 questions so far?

5

6 MR. WOODRUFF: Jeff, could you reiterate
7 a little bit about the Canadian harvest in the past? It
8 was like 3%?

9

10 MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Woodruff. In
11 the past, it was -- the harvest was set at -- or the
12 quota was set based on a 3% harvest rate of the herd,
13 with 2% going to Alaska, 1% going to Yukon, so a third.
14 Over time up once the caribou really started, especially
15 congregating near the Top of the World Highway, and even
16 got over right to Dawson in the gold fields and so on.
17 We did see annual harvest as high as about 60, when
18 First Nations and some permitted hunting took place.
19 That's about the highest harvest we've seen there. So,
20 but historically, there was a written percentage that
21 was allocated. Yes.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

24

25 MS. SHOCKLEY: Tell me again, the
26 percentage 2% went to Canada or Alaska. Alaska.

27

28 MR. GROSS: During the previous plans,
29 it was a 3% total harvest, 2% to Alaska, 1% to Yukon. I
30 think the way it was phrased was 35% to Yukon, 65% to
31 Alaska, so.

32

33 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay.

34

35 MR. GROSS: But it was a 3% harvest over
36 time.

37

38 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. I have a question
39 in regards to -- can you briefly tell us the migration
40 route and where these caribou are calfting [sic]?

41

42 MR. GROSS: Are calving?

43

44 MS. SHOCKLEY: Mh-hmm.

45

46 MR. GROSS: So, the Fortymile caribou is
47 -- it, I would say the more bounce around like a pinball.
48 They just kind of go back and forth a lot. There are
49 some seasonal -- there's some portions of their range
50 they do use seasonally though. But it's not a real

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1 predictable migration. They really don't have
2 predictable migration other than congregating in certain
3 areas. So, during calving season, the -- they primarily
4 use a contiguous block of uplands that include the Yukon-
5 Charley and the Upper Middle Fork of the Fortymile
6 primarily, some of the upper ends of the Salcha and
7 Goodpaster. So basically, between the Taylor Highway
8 that goes to Eagle and Fairbanks about, I don't know,
9 more a little closer to the Taylor side but out well
10 away, mostly away from the from the Road System right
11 in the center there. More towards the northern end of
12 their range is where the calving occurs and that's
13 consistent. During the post-calving period in June and
14 into early July, they expand the range a little bit but
15 they're still kind of in that same area. They'll be kind
16 of from about the Taylor Highway west, getting closer
17 to the Steese Highway but not quite there. Then in late
18 June, as they move into a summer pattern and things get
19 hotter, more insects and we get closer to our photo
20 census period, which is generally the last two weeks in
21 June. first two weeks in July. They really congregate
22 tightly. The bulls come in with the cows and calves. And
23 the last five years, I'd say, six years. The whole herd
24 has gone right over on -- just across the border into
25 Canada and just south of the Top of the World Highway.
26 There's some high areas there, which I name years ago,
27 I've named a big hill. So, they go over the big hill and
28 it's a big hill. And they congregate there and we've
29 been able to photograph them there. And then every year
30 they've been about the very end of June, beginning of
31 July, they squirted back east into Alaska and started
32 moving more into a summer pattern. They could go clear
33 over the Steese Highway at that point by the end of
34 July, which unfortunately, they love to go stand on the
35 Steese Highway in the fall. We've tried to talk to them
36 but they just won't listen to us. Angela's going to go
37 up there this fall and try to wave them down. But then
38 they really expand that late summer and really could be
39 anywhere in the range. And then in the fall, again, they
40 come together for the rut. But that can occur, that
41 congregation can occur just about anywhere. And then in
42 the winter, they'll generally spread out. Sometimes
43 they'll be -- some winters they're more concentrated
44 than others. This year they're stretched from Dawson all
45 the way, not to Livengood, but up into the White
46 Mountains. So, they're just not very predictable in the
47 winter either. So, does that kind of answer your
48 question? Okay. In the spring, then they start all coming
49 back from the winter range back to that center -- central
50 area in the spring and April and May to give birth, so.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Hey, Jeff, could you maybe let the Council know about timing when you think the Harvest Management Coalition could possibly be meeting again, and then ultimately when you might try to present the plan to the FSB and the Board of Game? Thank you.

MR. GROSS: Sure. Thank you. Thank you, Brooke. As of now, it's -- it really is kind of up in the air. It'll depend on how this stuff goes, filters through the different committees. As of now, though, I am hoping to have a Harvest Management Coalition meeting sometime this winter. We may -- very well may just wait till end of March, beginning of April. So, maybe like a teleconferencing for, you know, folks like Andy and some other folks that are dealing with a breakup or whatever, but try to get a meeting though, for sure, before folks start getting into their spring activities. And there could be more than one meeting, but yeah, roughly, that's -- and then after that, however, it falls going to the Federal Subsistence Board and the Board of Game. We'll just deal with it when we get it written.

MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for that update, Jeff. This is Donald Woodruff for the record. I might not be available in the spring, so we'll have to have an alternate.

MR. GROSS: Okay.

MR. WOODRUFF: My health is declining pretty rapidly.

MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Woodruff. I'm sorry to hear that. That's -- that would be great if folks can discuss that this meeting maybe.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, I got a couple questions myself. You do? I'll wait till after you. Go ahead first.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy Shockley. I was just looking at the makeup of the coalition and I'm surprised. But I guess just with Anchorage being on there, and is it just because of the hunting? Is that their reason for being on there?

MR. GROSS: Member Shockley, the Chair. Yes. Yeah, that's the reason. And it's, it is a harvest

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1 plan. And it's intended to try to capture strategies for
2 all kinds of hunting. But yes, that's the reason.

3
4 MS. ENTSMINGER: But that -- they weren't
5 on originally, they complained till they got on. I will
6 say that, but yeah. Oh, I better say my name, this is
7 Sue. Yeah, I just wanted to mention that. And I just
8 want to -- for you, Dorothy that -- the caribou herd, I
9 forget which date it was, Jeff, it might have been during
10 the 18 high. The caribou went across the Taylor Highway,
11 and we were up there hunting and they went across to
12 Canada and they turned around and come back. So, my
13 husband's favorite saying is, even the caribou don't
14 know what they're doing. So, thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I have a couple
17 questions for you. In the calving grounds that you --
18 oh, Andy first, and then I'll speak up. Go ahead. Andy,
19 I almost forgot.

20
21 MR. BASSICH: Just real briefly. Yeah,
22 just real briefly. Thank you for the presentation, Jeff.
23 In regards to a face to face meeting, I would strongly
24 request to have it no later than the second week of
25 March. These this is a really important resource to the
26 people in Eagle and with Don possibly not being there
27 and his long-term involvement and knowledge and me not
28 being there face to face, I feel it would really
29 misrepresent the Eagle population who depends on this
30 herd dramatically. So, just a I just want to get that
31 on the record. And I realize, you know, meeting virtually
32 works, but it's marginal. And this is a really important
33 resource. So just want to put that request in. It either
34 has to be well before breakup mid-March or after breakup
35 sometime in mid-June to July. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.
38 This is Charlie. I have a couple questions. I -- you
39 were talking about where the herd calves and some of
40 those places are really close to the highway. And I
41 noticed when I fly over there, there's these ATV tracks
42 everywhere and trails. Does that concern you with the
43 trails being all over the calving ground and degrading
44 the food when it's already low and, you know, low
45 density, that food? I think that that needs to be thought
46 about. That is, you understand what I'm saying? Yeah.
47 You're running over all the food that's left and they
48 don't have enough. So that might contribute to the past
49 years of the low weight on the calves, you know, to a
50 certain extent. So, that's just another uncertainty,

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1 just like climate. I always bring that up. And you know
2 that because we do have rain on snow events that are
3 really drastic and fell in line with the years that we
4 had huge declines. So, I know that I wanted to bring
5 that up again. And yeah, I don't historically, there's
6 caribou around where I grew up. But I just want to know
7 if you know from your experience what number would
8 trigger or would tell you that you need to stop the
9 hunts or stop ATVs running over that ground. I'd just
10 like to know what number would be, you know, when would
11 you stop hunting to try to give a moratorium or something
12 to help those animals come back so that we don't lose
13 them. You hear the concerns of the people from the areas
14 where those caribou migrate through, that they are
15 having a hard time getting them. They have concerns of
16 all the hunting near the road. It's -- they don't --
17 they're scared to go hunting and ATVs are going on
18 private property, you know. Just all kind of different
19 things that you hear about the pressure on them on the
20 road and they just don't get a break. So, we got to
21 start thinking proactively on how to do best for them
22 calves and to help them gain weight. I don't know what
23 contributes to them having a better weight now than a
24 few years ago if the food is going down. So, it kind of
25 contradicts in my mind that what's, you know, how can
26 they be getting healthier and doing better when there's
27 low food and the continuous four wheelers and ATVs riding
28 on it in snow machines. So that's just a couple questions
29 I had. Thank you.

30
31 MR. GROSS: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 Most of the -- there's actually very little the calving
33 range that actually spills on to anywhere with ATV
34 trails, at least any numbers. On the eastern edge,
35 sometimes I get up close to American summit, but we have
36 glacier control use area up there. So, it's definitely
37 more pristine than a lot of other areas. When you get
38 over to the Steese side, that's really where the bulk
39 of the trails are. There and Chicken Ridge and some
40 places near Chicken. And they really don't get into those
41 areas until the summer. But summer forage is very
42 important. And we've heard this concern and in the scheme
43 of things when you look at it from a landscape scale and
44 you look at the, you know, number of acres that are
45 impacted directly, physically impacted by the ATVs, it's
46 actually small enough that it's unlikely. It's an
47 impact, but it's not something to just blow off either.
48 So, because there's other ramifications, you have people
49 recreating along those trails that can disturb caribou
50 at certain times of the year so there is an impact. And,

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1 you know, there could be invasives brought in, etc.. You
2 know, there's -- there are a lot of reasons to keep an
3 eye on that though. So, I do appreciate that.

4
5 The question of recovery. Caribou are
6 weird. I could say it. I kind of look at them sort of
7 like, hares. You know, hares they get to a point -- they
8 did an experiment over near Destruction Bay a number of
9 years ago, I mean, decades ago. And they tried to keep
10 the hares alive. They put a pen up and they fed them and
11 so on. Well, they made it about another year, but then
12 they're like, nope, I'm done. They just died. They had
13 all the resources they need. And wildlife populations
14 have certain mechanisms we just don't understand. And
15 there's certainly something to do from a density
16 dependent standpoint with caribou where it's not even,
17 I'm guessing not 100%, even what they put in their
18 stomach, there's some mechanisms there that they just
19 don't -- they don't do as well they move around maybe
20 more. And for whatever reason they -- when they started
21 to decline, they just keep declining. And we've seen
22 good, fat calves the last few years and we've still seen
23 some declines. And fewer animals on the landscape
24 certainly equates to less impact to vegetation. That's
25 like annual vegetation and things other than lichen,
26 really. Lichen is a is obviously a very slow growing
27 plant. But there's a lot of mechanisms I think we don't
28 understand. So, I'm with you. It's like what? You know,
29 what are you doing here? Are you going to start surviving
30 or not? You know, and so, yeah, I guess, you know, we
31 taught science as being, you know, something that's all
32 knowing. But the fact is, there's a lot of things we
33 just won't ever understand.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I appreciate
36 that. And I do and have been taught, as with from my
37 elders, about animals and, and their cycles. So, I
38 understand what you're saying, I appreciate that. Thank
39 you. Any more questions? Go ahead, Don.

40
41 MR. WOODRUFF: When the Council sent me
42 to the Ungulate conference or the caribou conference in
43 Anchorage about three years ago, there was a guy there
44 that did a presentation. His name was Jim Dau, he was
45 retiring from Fish and Game. And he worked with the
46 Western Arctic Herd for his whole life, basically. And
47 after his presentation, he said, we still don't
48 understand what the Caribou do. So that sort of
49 corresponds with Jeff was saying they just do what they
50 do. And it changes all the time. It's not repetitive.

1 So, I would suggest that fires deflect them away from
2 areas around Eagle in particular. We had 5 million acres
3 burned in 2005. And we're still feeling the impact from
4 that. Although fires are very healthy for moose, you
5 know, so it's a two-edged sword, so to speak. Thank you.
6 That's Don Woodruff.

7
8 MS. BURK: That was the comment that I
9 needed. This is Eva. Thank you, Don, because I was just
10 in my head. I was like, do you guys map all these
11 different things? Like, do you have like a GIS powerhouse
12 that's bringing in fire layers and all of that stuff?
13 Cause [sic] one thing that we noticed in our area a lot,
14 and we just bought that -- some of the ag. land in
15 Nenana, and that's a big fire scar, too. And when I
16 talked to the people that travel the land versus -- on
17 snow machines, on boats, walking, hunting, they all say
18 the land is brushing up and they all -- then after the
19 fire scar, like, things are come in and they're the
20 little saplings are all juicy and good but then there's
21 parts of it that become toxic. And then I can see on my
22 land just how many little shoots per square foot. And
23 it's impossible to get through that. And it's impossible
24 to -- I think it's affecting the ability to forage. And
25 I think there's an element of land stewardship with
26 controlled burns to increase browse that seems to be
27 missing from a lot of fish and wildlife management,
28 period. And those are things that I know we we've used
29 to do as native people. Even my dad told me that they
30 used to burn around lakes. I've heard it from many elders
31 in many different regions.

32
33 So, it's just kind of a comment and I
34 don't know how you can assess that because I work with
35 the university. And when you take a satellite image after
36 a fire scar, you can't distinguish what plant is what.
37 And you -- and the -- you can't really tell if there's
38 moving water underground, if there's a wetland drying
39 up. And so, what I'm seeing from the fires is, it's
40 thawing out everything and then it's drying everything
41 out. It's just crunchy in there because on our land too,
42 we have lichen that's mixed in with the trees. And so,
43 it just, it's like another, like tinder box, but it's
44 kind of hard to explain. So, you're out there, but the
45 ground feels very dry and crunchy because it's burned.
46 The water is draining out and then these brushy things
47 are just sucking the water out of the ground. And so, I
48 just think it would behoove all of us if we could start
49 thinking about directing money to more stewardship. And
50 I don't know if this comment is for you, but it just has

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1 me thinking about some of the stuff that I'm seeing at
2 home and elders comments and a general change in browse
3 and habitat in the Interior. Thank you.

4

5 MR. GROSS: Was there -- would you like
6 me to address it a little bit?

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah.

9

10 MR. GROSS: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. In both --
11 I think Angela could maybe speak to some of the things
12 that the BLM is doing, but we're certainly -- yeah,
13 everything's changing. So, it's you know, it's going to
14 be something we're just, like I said, going to have to
15 kind of continue to adapt to. And you know, the Fortymile
16 Herd, for instance, in the -- at the turn of the century
17 was thought to have been huge. And it certainly habitat
18 change over the last hundred plus years is something
19 that's playing a role. I always like to think about,
20 well, the good old days. Well, the good old days for
21 caribou were a lot less vegetated brush and trees and a
22 lot more open country than there is now. So, you know,
23 all those things play a play a factor. But I think BLM
24 is doing some work.

25

26 MS. YEMMA: Yeah. This is Angela with BLM
27 for the record. Yes, totally. We do keep track of all
28 that data. We have it in GIS. So, we have the burn scars
29 by year. We went -- I think we mentioned it back in the
30 spring. What BLM and the State and Fish and Wildlife
31 did, as we change one of the fire management options.
32 So, like in the Steese area where there's that prime,
33 like, lichen cover, you know, prime habitat a lot of
34 that's been burning hot big fires. And so how those were
35 being managed was just limited. Don't put resources to
36 suppress it. We went through a process in the spring to
37 try to catch them before July 10th. So, it's called a
38 modified status. And see if we can catch the fires before
39 they take off it. It depends on how it works, because
40 you're always kind of fighting for the resources.
41 Firefighters have to go to other fires and whatnot. So,
42 we went through our first year of it last summer. We'll
43 see how it goes this year. But it kind of stemmed from
44 all the big burns that have occurred in the Steese, how
45 it's changing the cover out there, you know, losing
46 lichen. And, you know, you can look at the caribou data
47 and the fires and they're kind of avoiding those really
48 hot burned areas. So just the loss of the habitat. So
49 especially when that American fire reared back up last
50 summer, it had started early. It didn't catch it. And

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1 then it popped back up in August. So, we'll see how that
2 goes, you know, and you can debate how to manage those
3 and so on and so forth. And then we also have a fuels
4 program. So those guys have been planting different
5 fuels treatments. I don't think there's any in the Steese
6 at the moment. There's a -- one we're looking at for the
7 White Mountains but certainly working with them on, you
8 know, changes that we can make. And then we do -- when
9 we have a project come in -- we don't have a whole lot
10 of projects in Eastern Interior right now, but we'll go
11 through that NEPA process where we will look at hey,
12 what are the impacts from the proposal, whatever that
13 proposal might be to, you know, caribou habitat,
14 wildlife, vegetation, so on and so forth. So, we do have
15 that data. But nope, totally agree, we haven't a lot of
16 changes on the landscape. So, but we can certainly talk
17 about more ideas too.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that
20 answer. I appreciate that.

21
22 MS. YEMMA: Yeah.

23
24 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie, this
25 is Don speaking. A couple things for you, Charlie. Is
26 that during the management plan meeting, we talked about
27 alternatives for the caribou when they're crossing the
28 Steese in big numbers. And one of those was a walk-in
29 hunt and I mentioned that and Fish and Game immediately
30 says we can't do that. And I got my hackles up when they
31 said that, because there are things that are difficult
32 and close to impossible, but we can make an effort. And
33 another thing that we talked about was Elder Hunt. To
34 make more opportunity when the caribou are congregated
35 around the Steese Highway and 12-mile crossing and I
36 volunteered to write up a little walk-in hunt thing.
37 I've never hunted the Steese so it was a little difficult
38 for me to conceptualize that. But I did submit it to the
39 Fish and Game, and I hope that they take that under
40 consideration. And I think that Andy volunteered to do
41 some work, you know, outside of the meeting, and maybe
42 he can comment on that.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

45
46 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I wanted
47 to address a couple of the issues that you have just
48 spoken about. In regards to the fires he -- Don brought
49 up the fires in 2005. It was actually 2004 and 2005. We
50 had very hot fires in the migration routes of the caribou

1 and that had me very concerned, and about future
2 productivity of the herd, which, as it turns out, ended
3 up being exactly the case. And we had quite a few
4 presentations on habitat recovery after fires. Most of
5 them were showing it takes about 50 years from what I'm
6 remembering. That was quite a while ago we had those
7 reports, but I think it was some estimated to be about
8 50 years for habitat rebuilding naturally when the
9 lichen burns like that because of the slow growth. So,
10 to me, that just reaffirmed at that point in time that
11 we were probably into some pretty tough times for caribou
12 moving forward, which seems to be playing out and might
13 still be playing out to a certain effect.

14
15 The other comment I just wanted to make
16 was all of these things, Eva brought up some really
17 great points, and I think the takeaway for me in the
18 harvest plan is the need to be very conservative at this
19 point in time for harvest. And I'm also concerned about
20 bull-cow, ratio numbers. I think you know, when
21 productivity is great, well, that's great for
22 everything. But there are so many unknowns that we have
23 and it's such an incredibly large area, and as has been
24 pointed out, caribou, they're kind of like ghosts. They
25 just show up wherever they're going to show up. And as
26 we all have heard, they do what they're going to do. All
27 of those factors to me show me that we need to be very,
28 very cautious in our harvest plan until we see all of
29 the factors coming back up for productivity and health
30 of the herd.

31
32 I am a little concerned after the
33 meeting that we had this past fall on or spring, whatever
34 it was on the Fortymile Caribou. I'm -- I was reflecting
35 about it and I'm a little concerned about some of the
36 aspects of the plan in regards to harvest and harvest
37 numbers. I kind of feel like they're a little bit on the
38 high side for herd that's in decline or stagnant. I
39 think the rationale was this plan is for four years. So,
40 let's you know, everybody had their fingers crossed that
41 things were going to get better. But that that's a
42 challenge with this plan. It's not something that's
43 reviewed annually or biannually. It's, you know, 4 to 5
44 years at a time. So that's a challenge. I just wanted
45 to bring these topics up. And certainly, we'll bring
46 them up when the coalition meets again. But just wanted
47 to get those out on the table for consideration. And I
48 think the coalition works really well. It's a lot of
49 people that have been there for quite a while but I'm a
50 little concerned about the strong harvest mentalities

1 from some of the different participants in it. And I
2 just wanted to point out I was just looking at some of
3 the numbers for harvest this fall, on zone three, which
4 is Eagle, which the caribou never really showed up there
5 much. And that's reflective of it. But I see it looks
6 like it's six. And as I mentioned earlier in this meeting
7 here, caribou and salmon are what people in Eagle have
8 lived on, and we've lost salmon. And so, caribou is
9 being elevated as a super high importance. And as I
10 mentioned earlier in the meeting, moose, there were only
11 two harvested in Eagle, Eagle Village this year. So, to
12 my knowledge. So, I'm just trying to emphasize how
13 important the Caribou are.

14
15 The last thing I wanted to say is the
16 one concern I brought up many, many times at the
17 coalition meetings is the impacts of the Taylor Highway.
18 The Taylor Highway is essentially a moat that the caribou
19 have to cross to get over into Canada. And so having
20 harvesters, having hunters out along that highway when
21 caribou are trying to do their migration into Canada is
22 very disruptive to their patterns. So, I'm really
23 concerned about that. And I guess the question I would
24 have for you, Jeff, is, I know caribou really vary from
25 year to year. Have you looked at long term trends on
26 dates of migration in this eastern section of the herd?
27 Are they moving earlier? Are they moving later? If
28 they're moving a little bit later in the season and then
29 we do have seasons open, how is that going to be
30 impacting the continuation of their migration into
31 Canada? And then, the last thing I wanted to just bring
32 up, and maybe Karlie Knight will speak to this, when she
33 has the opportunity. I'm really -- I was a little
34 concerned and a little disappointed in in the coalition
35 members and their seemingly lack of consideration for
36 the Canadian component of the harvest plan. The
37 sentiment I got and maybe I'm wrong, but what I walked
38 away with was, well, they're not going into Canada, so
39 why should we even give that a harvest quota? And I
40 found that very disturbing. Caribou don't know where the
41 borders are. And I think the Canadians have always
42 participated in a very meaningful way to this plan. It's
43 an important resource for them. If they choose not to
44 harvest and they want that those numbers go back into
45 the herd growth that should be respected. It shouldn't
46 just be, oh, well, they're not going to harvest so we
47 can harvest those animals. And that was the mentality I
48 heard at the coalition meeting, which I was, I found
49 very disturbing. So, I just wanted to bring that
50 attention of this RAC. And hopefully, you know, when we

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1 have our next coalition meeting, we can begin to address
2 some of those topics. I'll leave it at that. Thank you
3 very much. I really appreciate the comments I've heard
4 and the reports. Thank you.

5
6 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We
7 just got a notification from Karlie Knight, that she'll
8 have to leave soon. So, if you guys would be willing to
9 accommodate letting her give her quick presentation. And
10 then we could continue with the fall season update, if
11 that sounds okay. Thank you so much, Karlie. If you're
12 if you're able, you're you have the floor and you're
13 welcome to share your slides. Thank you.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, thank you
16 for being flexible. Thank you so much.

17
18 (Pause)

19
20 MS. KNIGHT: Oh, here I am talking, but
21 I didn't unmute myself. But can you see my screen, okay?

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, we can. Thank you so
24 much.

25
26 MS. KNIGHT: Okay, great. It's just going
27 to be really brief. And thank you very much for having
28 me. Just for everyone's awareness, my name is Karlie
29 Knight. I'm the Fish and Wildlife Manager for Tr'ondëk
30 Hwëch'in, First Nation government in Dawson City, Yukon.
31 So, you're probably feeling the cold snap like we are
32 here as well. Just a quick overview of this presentation.
33 It's going to be really short. We're just going to have
34 a brief history of.....

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Karlie, sorry. Could I stop
39 you for a second? Is there -- is it possible to zoom in
40 a little with your -- I don't know if it's possible, but
41 the. It's showing up very small for us.

42
43 MS. KNIGHT: Might just have to leave it
44 out of presentation mode. And then I can share.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: If not.....

47
48 (Simultaneous speech)

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50 MS. KNIGHT: Is this better?

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MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, that's way better.
Thank you so much.

MS. KNIGHT: Not going to be as pretty because it won't be in presenter mode, but that's okay. So yeah, it's just going to be a very brief presentation. History of let's say, Yukon harvest decision making, Yukon Harvest Management framework, summer access and winter access to the herd for Canada. A quick review timeline of the draft plan that Alaska prepared and then an overview of our comments. So, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in people, people of Dawson City have relied on two annual migrations of the Fortymile Herd into Canada for food and other resources. Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in used a variety of hunting methods, including bow and arrow spears and caribou fences. As we know, the Fortymile Herd declined from an estimated high of about half a million animals in 1920 to a low of about 5000 in the 70s. And due to cooperative efforts between Alaska and Yukon, this herd did rebound. And we're fortunate enough to be in a situation where we can hunt again. Yukon harvest decision making and range decisions in Yukon are made collaboratively between Yukon government, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Dawson District Renewable Resources Council, and I do apologize for the amount of acronyms. I think it's true on both sides of the border that we love our acronyms in Fish and Wildlife management.

All of these decisions are guided by treaty obligations under chapter 16 of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in final agreement, of which TH, Yukon Government and Government of Canada are parties. Yukon Harvest Management Framework is guided through the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management plan that was signed in November 2020, on this side of the border and annual range wide harvest rates, which include conversations between technical staff in Alaska and Yukon. Consider population status, biological assessments, indicators of the herd condition and various management goals and objectives.

We're talking about access to the herd and possibly why we're seeing some low numbers in Canada. It's important to note that the Fortymile Caribou Herd Management Plan wasn't signed until 2020, in Canada. And up until then, resident harvest was on pause until an agreement could be made between TH and Yukon government. And so, ironically, that same year the Fortymile Herd

1 kind of changed their migration pattern in the summer.
2 Previously it was mid-July with caribou staying into
3 August. And then since 2020, the herd has come late June
4 and left just before July. Essentially, it's been too
5 hot to harvest in July in recent years and there's been
6 a lot of concerns and discomfort around meat spoilage
7 or potential for that. So, there's not really been a lot
8 of access to the herd in the summer. Additionally, in
9 the winter, the conditions have not been favorable along
10 the Top of the World Highway. For instance, in the past
11 couple of years, we've had about 150 to 200% snow density
12 and snowpack in the area, making travel virtually
13 impossible. You may know, but the Top of the World
14 Highway is only accessible in the summer via ferry from
15 Dawson or in the winter from the ice bridge. And
16 ironically, about five minutes ago, Yukon government
17 just approved the ice bridge crossing. So, although the
18 bridge is in now, the road across the highway is not
19 maintained and so it would be snowmachine access only.

20
21 We had an opportunity and an invitation
22 to review the draft plan proposed by Alaska. So, in
23 February 2025, the Harvest Coalition meeting happened.
24 Mike Suiter attended in person and I attended a portion
25 of it virtually. And then in April, the Canadian parties
26 conducted a review and submitted joint comments in July.
27 And then, of course, today I'm here at this meeting. So,
28 thanks for having me again. And then briefly, this is
29 just an overview of the comments from the Canadian
30 parties. And as a reminder, I'm working for Tr'ondëk
31 Hwëch'in, Mike Suiter works for Yukon government and we
32 also have the Dawson District Renewable Resources
33 Council and Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.
34 So, we submitted joint comments.

35
36 Regarding harvest allocation, we are
37 asking that harvest allocation remain at 65% to Alaska
38 and 35% to Yukon. And I know Jeff spoke to this earlier
39 about the divvy up of the harvest quota but it is not
40 explicitly stated in this iteration of the plan. Parties
41 retain the right to fully manage or harvest their
42 allocations as they so choose, and they may assign
43 allocation between jurisdictions based on discussions
44 between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and YG,
45 that consider herd distribution, in-season harvest
46 projections, new relevant biological information,
47 describing the population status or range condition.
48 We're also asking for a memorandum of understanding that
49 details an overall 65/35 harvest allocation split with
50 pre-hunt population size, harvest sharing between

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1 jurisdictions and more to ensure clarity, due process
2 and timeliness of annual harvest decisions. Technical
3 information will be provided collaboratively by
4 technical staff from each respective jurisdiction and
5 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and YG. And this is
6 a really cute photo from two years ago in a game camera
7 on the Top of the World, close to Dawson. Mahsi' cho.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
10 for being here with us today, very important. Appreciate
11 your presentation. Dorothy has a question for you. Hold
12 on.

13
14 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Thank you, Karlie.
15 What was the harvest numbers for this year?

16
17 MS. KNIGHT: We do harvest reporting a
18 little bit differently than Alaska and so unfortunately,
19 I don't have them as YG would be the people that have
20 the resident hunters. For TH though, it's been very
21 minimal, likely due to access to the herd. And I did
22 forget to mention that the 65/35 split that we're talking
23 about with the harvest quota actually dates back to 2001.
24 So, there's a bit of a precedent set already between
25 various agreements. And this is the first iteration of
26 the management plan that we've seen without that
27 explicitly stated.

28
29 MS. BURK: Thank you, can you -- thanks,
30 Karlie, this is Eva. Can you -- are you saying that in
31 this Draft Plan Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan 2025
32 to 2030, your concern, because you're not seeing the
33 65/35 between Canada and Alaska within this harvest
34 plan? Is that what you just said? Thanks.

35
36 MS. KNIGHT: That's correct. And Jeff
37 spoke to this in his overview as well, that there isn't
38 any wording in there currently about the Yukon harvest
39 allocation. And there's a highlighted section saying
40 that there's going to be wording inputted and we've
41 provided comments as for in the summer, as for all of
42 the parties in the Yukon. And one of the big asks is to
43 explicitly state the 65/35 harvest quota split again.

44
45 MS. BURK: Go ahead, Don.

46
47 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for your
48 presentation. You're aware that Eagle does not maintain,
49 or the Taylor Highway is not maintained in the winter.
50 And this winter we have at least 2 and a half feet of

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1 snow on the ground. I don't know what you have in Dawson,
2 but it's incredible what we've gotten. Thank you.

3

4 MS. KNIGHT: I think we're quite similar
5 to Eagle specifically in the last few years with the
6 snow density.

7

8 MS. BURK: Go ahead, Dorothy.

9

10 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you again, Karlie.
11 So, can you tell me what the harvest has been in the
12 past couple of years?

13

14 MS. KNIGHT: Yeah, sorry about that. I'm
15 going to divert the question maybe to Jeff. I think he
16 has a better idea because he works with Mike wery often
17 on the technical side of things, I actually don't manage
18 harvest numbers for Yukon. So, that's why I'm diverting
19 the question.

20

21 MR. GROSS: Member Shockley, through the
22 board -- through the Chair. Yeah, Mike might provide
23 this with estimates of harvest in the Yukon. And I'll
24 say since the peak, since the caribou really utilize
25 Yukon a little bit more, they did have a year or two
26 that they were up to about 60 total harvested between
27 TH and the licensed hunt. Most of the time it's been
28 about 20 to 30 and for primarily for the reasons that
29 Karlie lined out, they've showed up in July when it's
30 really hot or showed up in the winter. And not only has
31 it been difficult for hunters out of Dawson to get up
32 there, it's been difficult on the caribou when they do
33 move into that country or in recent years.
34 Unfortunately, they the some of the highest mortality
35 occurred right there because of those darn heavy snow
36 years. And anyway, thanks.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anymore -- go ahead,
39 Don. Thank you.

40

41 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Charlie, this
42 is Don speaking. Eva, as far as habitat is concerned
43 when the Council elected me to go to the caribou
44 conference and I was just energized by all the
45 presentations. I began reading a lot more about the
46 historical research on caribou, especially in Canada and
47 the barren-ground caribou. And it turns out that, of
48 course, you probably know that the Canadians harvest a
49 lot of their timber. And the caribou have an affinity
50 for boreal lichen, which it just shocked me that the --

1 that was one of their, like, ice cream. Thank you.

2

3 MS. BURK: Well, the Nenana people, they
4 are a bedzeyh caribou clan people. And, you know, that's
5 exactly what burnt up in the fire was beautiful boreal
6 forest. And then there was lichen mixed in there on the
7 floor. So, I think -- I do think as stewards of the land
8 that we have to get together and start doing some
9 restoration and that's exactly what we're doing on our
10 farm. We're working with the university, and we've sent
11 people over to Finland, where they do large scale
12 peatland restoration because we're like, Alaska's huge,
13 we can't do this by hand, although there is some delicate
14 winter work that needs to be done because you're
15 restoring sensitive habitat and you might want to be
16 pulling some of that brush out, clearing that brush in
17 the wintertime, because it's a little easier. So, I --
18 and I think as far as like -- and then we're planning
19 cover crops in different grasses in the place to try to
20 keep the brush from moving back in on us and trying to
21 also plant or replant, I should say, aquatic plants
22 within that restoration so that they store and hold and
23 slow the water. So, we're trying -- this is all in the
24 design phase right now. And we're going to start doing
25 a little plot testing. So, I don't know if you guys work
26 on stuff like that but I just wanted to share some of
27 our plans and our neighborhood. Thanks.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sorry to interrupt,
30 but Karlie needs to go. And we really appreciate you,
31 Karlie. We need to -- we look forward to seeing you at
32 future meetings. Appreciate your time today.

33

34 MS. KNIGHT: Thanks, Charlie. I do see
35 Andy's hand up, if that's okay.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, if you got
38 time. Andy, please go ahead.

39

40 MR. BASSICH: Thank you very much. Two
41 things I wanted to point out. The observations that you
42 have with the woodland aspects of their habitat is spot
43 on. That also impacts the relatively low harvest rates
44 in Canada. When the caribou move into that country, there
45 are, other than the Taylor Highway, there's very few
46 roads, a little bit of road access for the people in the
47 mining district around there. But generally speaking,
48 it's really hard to get to them where they're at. And
49 in anybody that's hunting caribou, once they're in the
50 woods, it's pretty hard to hunt them when they're out

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1 in the open. Yeah, but once they're in the woods, it's
2 virtually impossible. So, the point I'm trying to make
3 is that the Canadian harvest, even when it has been
4 fully allocated and everything, it's from what I
5 remember, of all the records, it's very rarely even
6 achieved. And also, most of the people from the Dawson
7 region and Yukon territory concentrate more heavily on
8 the Porcupine Herd, which is a much larger herd and is
9 more, not only resilient, but they travel quite a bit
10 more into the region with the Dempster Highway access.
11 And it's all mostly open tundra country. So, the
12 opportunities are there. All that said you know,
13 speaking about the RAC here and recommendations, the
14 things that I would like to see the rack recommend is
15 that the quota allowances between Alaska and Canada be
16 written into the document. I think that's an important
17 factor that's missing from the draft. And then the
18 concern for potential bull-cow ratios, you know, we're
19 right at the bottom end of -- in the recommendations in
20 the draft, we're at the bottom end of where it becomes
21 potentially a problem. And so, I think speaking to my
22 earlier comments on being conservative in our management
23 and in our harvest, I think we have to relook at some
24 of those numbers. Those are the two things that I think
25 the RAC should have brought to their attention for
26 comment to the draft. Thank you. And thank you very
27 much, it's great seeing you, Karlie. I'm really happy
28 to see you participate in our process over here.

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Karlie, thank
31 you so much for your time again. If you got anything
32 else to add before you. Yeah. Got anything else to add
33 before you go then go right ahead.

34
35 MS. KNIGHT: No, I appreciate you having
36 me. And I apologize that I have to run, but the time
37 change is two hours in the winter because we don't do
38 daylight savings. So, it's 1:00 and I have to run, so
39 take care.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yep. Thank you. See
42 you. Talk to you later. Thank you for being so flexible
43 for us today. Go ahead.

44
45 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don speaking.
46 Andy, probably, as you know, that I drive or I travel
47 to Fairbanks every six weeks for treatment. In the past
48 five years, the caribou have crossed extensively in July
49 to Canada and not in the wintertime. That's what I've
50 observed. Thank you. And so, there is no harvest on the

1 Taylor in July or very little. Thank you.

2

3 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Mr. Chair, I can
4 respond to that. I can confirm that, I witnessed that
5 as well. Driving to Fairbanks during that time frame.
6 And the other thing I wanted to point out is that the
7 Canadian seasons are much earlier than the Alaska
8 seasons are. Generally speaking, they open things up in
9 August for moose and caribou and such. So, that's also
10 a difference that when we just think of our traditional
11 times for opening up hunting season and everything. It's
12 about almost a month earlier in the Yukon territory, in
13 some areas and many of the species. So, just wanted to
14 also offer that. Thank you. Thank you, Don.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you for
17 that, Don and Andy. And you now have the floor. Thank
18 you.

19

20 MS. YEMMA: Alright. Hello. This is
21 Angela Yemma again with the BLM. I'm going to go through
22 what happened with the fall Fortymile federal hunt here
23 and then, Jeff, hop in if I miss anything and Claire
24 too. So, do you all have your handout? This is the BLM
25 one. Hopefully. Yeah, there's one for that. And then
26 Jeff has one. And Andy's got it online hopefully. Okay.
27 Alright. Yeah. We'll just run through this. Really, the
28 first page is a summary of what happened, and then the
29 next couple of pages will be really a comparison of what
30 happened this fall, kind of compared to what numbers
31 have been for the last five years. So, as you all know
32 right now there's a current letter of delegation to the
33 BLM field manager. So, I was acting in that role to set
34 the harvest limits and the season dates for the federal
35 hunt in consultation with ADF&G, the Park Service and
36 the Fish and Wildlife Service, so. And eastern interior
37 RAC Chair. So, we set those in July, I believe. And what
38 we went with was a subsistence hunt date opening of
39 August 5th. And as you kind of look down in the table
40 here, what ended up happening was the state did not open
41 up zones one and four. And so, in this table, you'll see
42 the state and then the federal and then a total
43 combination. And so, obviously the state was one bull
44 bag limit. We did a two-bull bag limit. And then the top
45 line is the quotas by zone, and then when they closed.

46

47 So basically, we started having -- this
48 was a very different year than in the past and caught
49 us off guard but had a lot of harvest very quickly up
50 in zones one and four on the Steese Highway. So, as we

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1 got the numbers in and again, this is a joint permit
2 with the state, of course, RC860. So, talking to each
3 other, getting the harvest reports from the state. We
4 were up to 84, was the total -- the total number for
5 qualified users, and there were two in there, that I'll
6 point out a little bit later that were not federally
7 qualified, but we went on and lumped them into the 86
8 because that occurred during the federal season. And so
9 really, we ended up not ideal but did a special action
10 to close it just because it was so much, so quickly. And
11 with the harvest, with the state quota being so low and
12 the herd numbers too. So, when we close the hunt, we
13 called everybody, discussed it and then consulted with
14 OSM. And so, part of that too is the current delegation
15 of authority, we don't have the ability to manage by
16 zone like the state does for the feds. And we don't have
17 an annual harvest quota. So, that was kind of
18 conversations we had during the closure also. So, just
19 looking at this table here, what happened this year was
20 really the federal only harvest was about 40% of what
21 the fall harvest overall was with that state hunt too.
22 And so, all of that really was in zones one and four.
23 If a subsistence hunter harvested in zone two and three,
24 that was it -- yeah, that's the 86 right there is out
25 of the total 213. So, for everything. Yeah, yeah. So,
26 that 86 is as what was harvested overall with both the
27 state and the feds was about 40% this year. And again,
28 two of those were non-federally qualified hunters.

29
30 So, going here to the second page, we
31 have just a kind of a comparison of the last five years,
32 2020 through 2025. Again, kind of like I stated, the
33 federal bag limits been two bulls for the last five
34 years. In the past it, hasn't been very many -- have
35 harvested. And that was kind of went into our decision
36 making on doing two bulls this year is because it had
37 only been about 6 to 7 individuals this year it was 20.
38 So, it's over double almost 2 to 3 times what had
39 occurred. And then the whole opening dates, kind of like
40 I noted there, usually, the federal hunts been about ten
41 days earlier. We were August 5th and it varied, but we
42 were, what 5 days ahead in zone two and then 15 days
43 ahead in zone three. And then of course, the state didn't
44 open in zones one and four. And then again, kind of the
45 percentage of the total harvest there. Overall, the
46 subsistence harvest, the last actually seven years here
47 has been kind of anywhere from about 1% up to about 10%.
48 So, 10% or less this year, again this fall, it was 40%.
49 Other things that happened just working with ADF&G, we
50 found out that there were, like I noted, two residents

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1 that weren't qualified that harvested, there was a cow
2 that was harvested, and then it looks like there was
3 about 47 hunters out who were not qualified users. They
4 didn't report any harvest but there were folks out there
5 in zones one and four when the state season was closed.
6 So, I think we can talk more about that, but it might
7 be indicative of maybe needing some more outreach. So,
8 folks know when you're qualified or not and what's going
9 on.

10
11 Table 2 here kind of shows that overall
12 trend for just the federal portion of it that kind of
13 been small, went down a bit, and then we went up a lot
14 here in 2025. Next page is kind of the same thing.
15 Basically, as you all know, the state harvest quota has
16 decreased since 22, and then federal subsistence has
17 increased as a proportion of that total harvest just the
18 last three years. So, showing that chart there, you know,
19 and when the -- earlier years it was a little harder to
20 tell. But we were definitely the highest that we've been,
21 in 2025. And then on the last page just kind of a
22 breakdown by community. We had -- and this is all from
23 working with the state from when folks report, 11
24 communities reporting harvest. Tok, the numbers have
25 ranged from 1 to 24. I actually have that printed out.
26 I can give you an average if you need them. But this
27 year it was 24 harvest numbers. Delta had a big increase,
28 so there was 45 out of Delta, so about 50% of what was
29 harvested this year. And as a note, Fort Greely right
30 now is included in that, as the Delta folks. So, a spike
31 in Delta this year, and then the other communities
32 combined were about 15. So, this chart 2 just shows that
33 kind of that breakdown of how those communities, again,
34 lumping the non-Tok non-Delta into one for this chart
35 here of kind of the changes that have been occurring.

36
37 So, that's a synopsis of the fall hunt.
38 Definitely conversations about how to manage this going
39 forward. And you know, maybe some more tools in the
40 toolbox to adapt to, you know, we have some changing
41 conditions out there. And then just a really quick update
42 on the winter hunt. We went on and opened it as one bull
43 on 1027. And the state -- you guys had zones one and
44 four closed till I think November 17th, but there wasn't
45 any federal harvest reported during that time, so. Just
46 -- and two and three opened normally. So that is my
47 synopsis of the Fall Hunt. And then also I really
48 appreciate it was great working with the Chair. Jeff,
49 everyone at ADF&G, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife
50 Service, so, and OSM helping with guide us through this.

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1 So, that's the synopsis. If. Did I miss anything Claire?
2 Nope. Jeff? All right.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a quick question.

5

6 (Simultaneous speech)

7

8 MR. GROSS: One thing I would add is --
9 and Claire mentioned several, or Angela mentioned it
10 several times too. Claire did too, I know, but the state
11 did not open the hunt this fall and in part it was after
12 the first 15 days of the state of the federal season,
13 that the level of quota that remained was a factor,
14 although I don't think it was the main driving factor.
15 There were just too many caribou there for us to open
16 the state hunt. But there's just some of the challenges,
17 you know, when as this quota gets smaller and smaller
18 and smaller, it's just getting more difficult to figure
19 out how to provide opportunity without overshooting. So,
20 Thanks.

21

22 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. This is Sue.
23 Through the Chair. Fort Greely, are there people living
24 there? And what's the population? And are they new
25 residents to Alaska?

26

27 MR. GROSS: There's -- I don't know for
28 sure how many there are I would guess, you know, 1500
29 to 2000, maybe a little bit more. And yeah, the vast
30 majority of them are only here for a few years and then
31 they move away again. So, it's -- it is a mostly
32 transient population. And it wasn't, Fort Greely, I'm
33 not sure why it, you know, the C&T was different between
34 the Nelchina and the Fortymile. But I believe Nelchina
35 did not have Fort Greely as part of the C&T for Delta.
36 But the Fortymile Caribou Herd has for some reason.
37 Thanks.

38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think that's an
40 oversight is -- do you have the number difference of the
41 Delta residents that were Fort Greely versus Delta? So,
42 as she's looking that up, I would suggest we look at
43 that in the future for a C&T. They don't have C&T for
44 Nelchina, but they have C&T for the Fortymile. It might
45 not be a good thing.

46

47 MS. YEMMA: Hey sorry, this is Angela. I
48 don't have the Fort Greely proportion on my scribbled
49 piece of paper right here, but ADF&G does have it. I
50 don't think it was very high this year. I think it was

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1 a pretty small part of that delta for this year. But,
2 you know, one of those things, thinking about the future
3 options, so on and so forth.

4

5 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

6

7 MR. GROSS: Yeah. The Delta harvest was
8 almost entirely by folks living off the base. So it's -
9 - that's kind of how (indiscernible) put it together,
10 kind of looked at that and the only way you can really
11 tell for sure from their addresses or is to use their
12 address if it says Fort Greely or not. There are some
13 people in Fort that work on Fort Greely or military that
14 do live off the base but most of it is captured by the
15 address. Just a little bit more of a side note on
16 observations from our Delta Fish and Game offices. Yeah,
17 basically the word got out. And just about everybody
18 that walked into the office in late July or early August,
19 we're asking, how do I get these subsistence permits?
20 And there was -- there's some large -- there are a lot
21 of large families in Delta. And there were people coming
22 in four, five, six people in the household. They're all
23 getting two permits. There was even one family that did
24 that and then got a -- some designated hunter permits
25 as well, and they could have potentially gone up and
26 shot 14 or 15 caribou in one shot. So that it's kind of
27 unusual for the federal side. Generally, you think of
28 there being far fewer federal hunters. But again, with
29 the quota being so small, it's unfortunate the timing,
30 I guess. I mean, it's not necessarily unfortunate but
31 it's a new challenge that we're going to be facing now.
32 And I would anticipate next year they'll -- there would
33 be if everything remains the same, very possibly, you
34 see, double or triple the number of hunters
35 participating and their success rate this year was very
36 high. So anyway, kind of the challenge that we're here
37 to talk to you about and face and the Fortymile Caribou
38 Hunt has been a joint state federal hunt for a long time
39 and it's worked really well. Having one permit is easier
40 on hunters. It's easier to track data. We have shorter
41 reporting periods, etc. to lose that would be
42 unfortunate, I think. But trying to figure out how to
43 go forward, providing federal harvest. Providing state
44 harvest. That balance is going to be the challenge that
45 sets of regulations are going to have to have to figure
46 out here.

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48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I have a few
49 things to say. When they start getting tickets in August,
50 you guys can kind of tell what's going on. You could see

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1 that. And then the out-of-state hunter killed a number
2 of caribou that were killed just about doubles the
3 federally qualified users. And then you got out of area
4 people killing 50% plus of the resource. So, the people
5 that really rely on it in that area are not they're not
6 getting it. You know, they're getting squeezed out, and
7 you got the airplane hunt that's taking a bunch and
8 being prioritized. So, it seems like the commercial and
9 outer area people are getting treated better than the
10 subsistence people for some reason. And that's got to
11 be addressed, it has too. You know, there's ways to do
12 it. We can even make a hunt for the locals -- federally
13 qualified hunters, first, if we have to, to make sure
14 that they get food. They're limited with all their
15 resources now, along the river. Eagle and Central, the
16 people along the highway, they rely on fish that they
17 share with people, with meat and they're not getting it.
18 That sharing and that food chain is being cut off. So,
19 it's causing harm. It's pushing people to no other means
20 in these areas where the resources are lacking. So, we
21 really need to start thinking about the people that live
22 in that area first, if we're not going to be able to
23 manage it properly. And just my comments and
24 recommendations, that we start thinking about locals
25 first.

26
27 MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. A couple
28 things that aren't in the -- aren't clearly defined in
29 the management plan that I would like to see in there
30 is delegation of authority by the feds to have a zone
31 by zone, opening and closing bag limit. And that five-
32 day window has been decreased since the past and I would
33 like to see that increased a little bit back to its
34 normal sort of, I think it was ten days in the past. So
35 that's a big heartburn for me. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy was next. I've
38 been passing him up for a long time. Then Dorothy's
39 after him. I've had it down here

40
41 (Simultaneous speech)

42
43 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT:for a while.
46 I'm sorry.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: It's okay. No. No worries.
49 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Great discussion here. I just want
50 to say I think this year was a pretty good example of

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1 management both on the fed and the state side being
2 cautious. I think what the state did, not to open up
3 when the caribou are there, was a very responsible
4 management action. So, I just want to recognize that,
5 it is extremely challenging. I think with the issue of
6 the increasing, if you look at that, that chart, it's
7 showing Delta, increasing harvest over a period of time.
8 It's not just this year. It's been a slow, gradual one.
9 And that's a demographics, from my understanding of
10 looking at it, it's the way the demographics are changing
11 in that region and they are federally qualified. So, if
12 you have a two bull limit and it's federally qualified
13 and the people have learned that this is a great place
14 to go and get meat in a large amount, then that's what
15 they do. And in fact, I think at the coalition meeting,
16 the guy from Delta was kind of bragging up how successful
17 they were in previous years, both on the Fortymile and
18 the Nelchina Herd. So that's something that -- it's one
19 of those cases, I think that sometimes you have people
20 that are, I'm not going to I don't want to really use
21 the word bad players, but they've learned to maximize
22 an opportunity. And then that shows up, and
23 unfortunately, sometimes that leads to changes that
24 inhibit other people more greatly or impact them more
25 greatly to account for that. I think that's one of the
26 challenges that maybe Jeff is talking about a little
27 bit. So demographic changes is certainly one of those
28 slow creep type things that happens, that it's kind of
29 hard to address exactly in the plan.

30
31 Getting off my soapbox, I would just
32 like to ask Angela, from the federal perspective side,
33 since we're here at an EIRAC meeting, are there things
34 in the current draft plan that you would like to flag
35 as -- from your perspective as a federal entity in this
36 process that you would like to flag for maybe
37 reconsideration or modification or additions or
38 deletions? And if you have any of those to share, that
39 would be great. If you want to just share them with Don
40 and myself at a later time, that's fine too. I'm just
41 trying to stay ahead in my mind of what we need to talk
42 about at the coalition meeting. But I think if there's
43 actions that need to happen through this RAC currently
44 at this meeting, as far as recommendations that could
45 be done. We will be meeting hopefully if the federal
46 government isn't shut down in maybe late February or
47 March. So, I think there's still time for this for our
48 RAC, but it might be good to highlight some of those
49 either now or post meeting here for us to consider.
50 Thank you.

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MS. YEMMA: Hi. Thank you, Andy. Yep. This is Angela. Yeah. Nothing at the moment specifically but the feds have been talking and talking with Jeff. We're going to get together and make a working group, basically Park Service, Matt is here too. I won't speak for him, Fish and Wildlife. And just give some feedback, go through that, and we'll be working on that after the holidays and we can update the EIRAC representatives on that. Oh, go ahead.

MR. WOODRUFF: I'd like to respond to Andy's comment. And I think as Chair of the Eagle AC and me as the Vice Chair of the AC, we can have a couple meetings and hash out some of this stuff that we can bring back to the harvest management plan. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. And just for process, too. It sounds like it'll be a little bit before the final plan is ready for, like, your guys' final comments to the Federal Subsistence Board. So, there's definitely time. You don't necessarily have to take action today to submit formal final comments or anything.

MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm just going to follow up a little bit on Andy with Delta and just try to provide, you know, the information that I have. It's actually -- so one big change with folks from Delta is a couple years ago there was a, you know, five, I think it was called review done for the Nelchina hunt -- for the federal Nelchina hunt. And one thing that came out of that was Delta was eliminated from the C&T for hunting the Nelchina Herd. Delta was -- did I say that, right? Delta was eliminated from the C&T for the Nelchina Herd. Historically, Delta harvested a lot of Nelchina Caribou under that federal hunt. So that opportunity for them went away. And so, I think that was part of why suddenly now people have found out about the Fortymile hunt and started going to the Steese Highway. Considerably further away than where they were going, they were just going down by Paxson, which real easy. But it really was this year a real spike. And we saw -- what we saw folks coming through the door to get permits was up until this year, there was a handful of people that knew about the hunt and were participating in the hunt on this -- for the Fortymile herd, the same people each year. This year there's a lot of new faces. And again, some of these big families and historically out of Delta, there's with the big families, there's just

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1 kind of played itself out a number of times. Once some
2 of those folks start finding out about things that they
3 -- that harvest can increase pretty exponentially for a
4 while. And no judgment, it's just a reality of, you
5 know, how many people are there and how, you know that
6 they do, in fact, participate in the harvest of natural
7 resources. Most of them do, so. Anyway, I don't know
8 that there was so much of a change per se, but more
9 rather, people can kind of come out of the woodwork, so.
10 Yeah. Thanks.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
13 Dorothy.

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15 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Dorothy Shockley. Overall, I just wanted to say I'm just
17 very concerned about the harvest. But, you know, just,
18 you know, hearing about the Fort Greely Delta harvest
19 numbers going up. So, in regards to policy, what do we
20 need to do or what would you suggest? Is it the policy
21 on the state side? Policy on the federal side? I mean,
22 what can we do?

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: I think -- this is Brooke,
25 I think Lisa Grediagin has a clarification about like
26 804 and other stuff. Thank you.

27
28 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin, for
29 the record. I just wanted to clarify for the record,
30 Delta Junction was not eliminated from the C&T for the
31 Nelchina Caribou, the 804 restriction was enacted and
32 so it's kind of two different things. And so, the
33 Nelchina has been closed for years, but when it's finally
34 reopened, it'll be only open to a subset of qualified
35 users. So, I just wanted to clarify that for the record.
36 Thanks.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: And if I could provide
39 further reminder and clarification. So, what an 804 user
40 prioritization is, is prioritizing among federally
41 qualified users. So, if there's not enough resources to
42 go around for all federally qualified users, you can
43 request through a proposal or that an 804 analysis be
44 done. And then to try to identify the communities with
45 the greatest need and historical use of that resource.
46 Thank you.

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48 MS. BURK: I want to have this 804 done
49 for this if we can. That's going to say that right now.
50 And I also think we're all freaking out and drawing a

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1 lot of attention to this increase in Delta. But I want
2 to bring us back to the overharvest in zone two by non-
3 residents. That's quite much more caribou taken out of
4 the whole thing than even these residents. So, in my
5 mind, when I'm weighing, who are we getting food to
6 federally qualified subsistence users, I realize this
7 is the state harvest like, but how do you balance that
8 between your guys' co-management? And I think I'm going
9 to start -- I haven't had as much time because I do
10 fisheries a lot but I'm -- I think I'm really getting
11 interested in this caribou. So.

12
13 MR. GROSS: Yeah, I can address that.
14 Member Burk, through the Chair. Be careful, caribou will
15 drive you crazy. I always joke that the day I retire,
16 my present is going to be a straight jacket, so.

17
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, we -- this is Sue.
19 That this has -- I've -- I am on the Subsistence Resource
20 Commission for the Park, and we take up the Nelchina
21 Caribou. So, I have a long -- a history of what happens
22 and we're getting the cart ahead of the horse here. You
23 have to do step one first. And I think, truthfully, I
24 don't think we want to be running down this 804 for this
25 herd. Let the Advisory Committees and the working group
26 get together there. And one of the big things I think
27 needs to happen is go from 2 to 1. And that just has to
28 happen. And then, I don't even remember that -- what the
29 situation is on cows. Maybe that the cow harvest needs
30 to be addressed also and go back to bulls only? Yeah.

31
32 MS. YEMMA: It's been bulls only. This
33 is Angela.

34
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: It is, now?

36
37 MS. YEMMA: Yeah. This is all bulls only.
38 Yep. Cow harvest has.....

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40 (Simultaneous speech)

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42 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, just making sure.

43
44 MS. YEMMA:(indiscernible) several
45 years.

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47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Because I've been
48 through a lot of stuff.

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50 MS. YEMMA: Yeah, yeah.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: And the-- yeah. Well, I guess the other thing, you know, just at this meeting, I think we should consider suggesting go to one bull and also consider getting the 65/35 for Canada in the -- is our suggestion. And if there -- if anyone else has more suggestions, I think that's what we're doing. And it's all going to come up at your next meeting and I won't be here, but I might call in.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That is your suggestion.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Alright, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And Eva, didn't finish. We cut her off. So, I'll let you finish. Yeah.

MR. GROSS: Darn it, I was hoping to get away with that. Member Burk, through the Chair. So, that revelation this year of the percentage of the harvest in zone two that was by non-residents, was pretty shocking to everybody, including myself. It, again, throughout the state the Nelchina Herd some of the other northern herds, the Mulchatna, there -- it's just, caribou are in pretty poor shape right now. And it's really drawn a lot more attention or the Fortymile herd has drawn a lot more attention because of that, because it does allow non-resident harvest and the herd is generally easier to get to than some of the North Slope herds. So, there is wording in the plan about this, restricting non-residents. In addition to that, I presented this data about non-residents in zone two to some -- a couple of ACs. And there's interest in likely moving forward with additional restrictions in zone two. The reality of it this year was we ended up closing the season on September 5th because the quota of 100 was met. And when we broke it down and saw that it was 70%, non-residents, had the non-residents been restricted, more say they had a quota of 25, just example, the season likely would have stayed open until the end of September for residents. So, there's already movement on the state side as well to do something about that. And so, I do anticipate with the Harvest Management Coalition, I think, you know, Don and Andy, have heard this and you know, I'm sure they plan to look into that.

The state also -- so, this 804, I mean, it'll be up to you guys whether you want to ask for it or not. I think there's a potential hunt management

1 options that could slow things down a little bit and
2 still provide opportunity but the state as well going
3 to be in a similar boat and we are going to go to the
4 Board of Game this year or this next year with a proposal
5 for a Tier II hunt, which is similar to your 804. So,
6 if the herd continues to decline because they are
7 caribou, we don't know, you know, those sorts of
8 precautions may very well become necessary. For sure on
9 the state side. And it may be something that, you know,
10 I guess I don't know that it would be so bad to do it,
11 but that's your call entirely. It would be one mechanism
12 that could allow for, you know, the co-management
13 between the state and the federal folks continue.
14 Otherwise, it really could -- this is really delicate
15 right now at this harvest level or this herd size. And
16 again, hate to see that go away, but there are different
17 mandates. So, thank you.

18
19 MS. BURK: Thank you that was very
20 helpful. And I -- this is Eva. I agree, I don't think
21 it hurts to do the 804 and to have a tool in the toolbox,
22 in case you have to act quickly. And here's my rationale,
23 Karlle Kight was the only one who showed historical
24 population size. And I remember from her slide that it
25 was 568,000. And now you're telling me with your data
26 that the herd's at 26,000, give or take 1500 and you
27 didn't get a photo count in this past year. That's a
28 fraction. This is the problem with the management that
29 keeps coming up in every, every arena fish and wildlife,
30 is the take, the historical size and what we're on now
31 in our in our actual understanding of that prior biomass.
32 That's so concerning to me. And I think we're in a more
33 dire situation than people want to admit. The 804 is
34 overdue in my mind, and I'm just going to leave it at
35 that. Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, before we go
38 any further, I want to, before we run too far away from
39 the Canadians report, I want to ask a question. Is there
40 a MO --, they talked about an MOU. Is there one in place
41 at this time with the Canadians? No. Okay. Thank you.
42 And my other question was, should Delta be changed to
43 non-rural? Is that possible? Or I heard you talk about
44 a Tier II and that's another way to do it, I guess. But
45 I'm just trying to find out what the options are. Thank
46 you.

47
48 MS. YEMMA: Hi, this is Angela. That
49 would not be BLM. I think that's OSM would be working
50 through that. Yeah.

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3 MS. MCDAVID: As we learned yesterday,
4 when we were going through the Secretarial Review, the
5 process for non-rural determinations is to submit a
6 proposal. It is a tool in the toolbox. But just remember
7 if you did change Delta to non-rural, they wouldn't be
8 qualified for any other resources as well, so under the
9 federal program, if they became part of the Fairbanks
10 non-rural area. So just keep that in mind. That would
11 probably be the most extreme solution. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead.

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. Yeah, I
was just going to follow up with Brooke. To clarify, if
you really mean change Delta Junction from rural and
non-rural or conduct an 804 analysis to limit the number
of users eligible to harvest Fortymile Caribou. And I
mean, an additional option would be to submit a proposal
to get them out of the C&T. But I think in this case,
the most appropriate thing to do would be an 804
analysis.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, I don't want
to take food away from nobody, and that's what my concern
here about the rural residents that are not being treated
equally. So that's why I'm asking all these questions
and I appreciate that. Thank you. Dorothy. And then Andy.
And then we're going to have to kind of finalize things
and move forward here before we're here at midnight.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. I mean, originally
when I was looking at these harvest numbers, I was very
concerned, you know, with 30/70. And so, you know, a lot
of things happened between then and there, but yeah, I
like I said, I am totally concerned about the harvest
and the numbers. I mean, like, I mean, yeah, I mean,
they're declining and, you know. I mean, yeah, I mean,
you know, like I've said before, you know, since so-
called management has been, you know, on the state and
federal side. I mean, my grandparents, we've only gone
through three generations. Well, four now, I guess, but
my grandparents were able to feed themselves. And then
once management, so-called managements came into play,
my parents at times weren't able to feed us. And now I'm
not able to feed my family, and my children are not. So,
in just a very short time, you know, we've gone -- and
that is so discerning, its concerning. I mean, we have
to do something. And if I can make a motion to implement,
how do we do this? 804 status? I mean, I don't know. But

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1 what are our options? And you know. I mean, harvest, you
2 know, from 2 to 1. But, you know, as far as these
3 families are concerned, these large families, I know
4 that that has been growing. I mean, when we were in the
5 state senate, I mean, we heard a lot of concerns in
6 regards to, you know, the large families moving into
7 Delta. And so, you know, do we put a limit on families?
8 You know, that I know has happened before of households
9 you know, not getting, I mean we do that with fish,
10 right? Household can't get more than so many. I mean,
11 you know, we have to look at our options and take action.
12 Thank you.

13

14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Next will be Andy
15 Bassich.

16

17 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Andy
18 Bassich for the record. I -- great discussion. Two things
19 I want to point out. First thing is, the Fortymile
20 Coalition is a huge success. It's a great organization.
21 It's shown that it's very good at setting harvest plans.
22 There are a lot of tools in the toolbox for both the
23 federal and the state managers to try and prosecute
24 harvest -- the harvest plan with a lot of flexibility.
25 So, I'm a little concerned about just throwing the baby
26 out with the bathwater on this. I think everything's in
27 place. We just need to do a little bit more work. So, I
28 would caution about going to any extreme at this point.
29 I think our managers are capable of doing this. We just
30 need to tweak things instead of do massive changes. So,
31 that's my recommendation to the RAC.

32

33 The second thing is, I think at this
34 point in time, I'm hearing people talking about 804. I
35 think before we shut down this aspect, Mr. Chair, if we
36 could get a very, very brief update or analysis, not
37 analysis, a description of what it takes to do the 804
38 and the timelines involved in that. By, say, Lisa or
39 whomever from OSM, they could address that in a
40 relatively short time right now before we leave this
41 topic. That would leave us with something to think about
42 and possibly act on in our winter meeting. Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,
45 Lisa.

46

47 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, again.
48 And currently, the option for doing an 804 would be to
49 submit a Special Action Request. And you guys could do
50 it for two years. So, I mean, you could specify whether

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1 you would just want to do it for one year or the full
2 regulatory cycle. Because to submit it as a proposal,
3 the window's not open until next year. And so, if you
4 submit a special action today at this meeting, the likely
5 timeline would -- for that to be analyzed by OSM, acted
6 on by the Board by July 1st, when the new regulatory
7 year starts, and then it'd be a two-year cycle for that
8 special action to be in effect. And then next year, I
9 guess, I mean, maybe depending on the new photo census
10 or the outcome of the special action, you could submit
11 a proposal to do that 804 for analysis to put that in
12 codified regulations but it wouldn't be codified
13 regulations until 2028.

14

15 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva.

16

17 MR. BASSICH: Follow up, Mr. Chair.

18

19 MS. BURK: Oh, go ahead, Andy.

20

21 MR. BASSICH: Sorry. Well, thank you. I
22 was just curious. Once an 804 is enacted, is it possible
23 to do an 804 for a set period of time, or is it something
24 that would then have to be taken off the books at a
25 later date? I'm not really sure on the flexibility of
26 that over a period of years, if you could speak to that.
27 Thank you.

28

29 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. This is Lisa
30 Grediagin and obviously for the special action that
31 would only be effective for 1 or 2 years. And then for
32 the codified regulations, we've never done an 804 to
33 like sunset after a number of years. It may be possible
34 to write some sort of population threshold into the 804.
35 We've done that with closures to non-federally qualified
36 users, for example, on the Nushagak Caribou herd, it's
37 closed to non-qualified users when the population is
38 below 600 caribou, but it's open to everyone under state
39 regulations when the population is over 600, so -- or
40 maybe it's 900. But hypothetically, maybe that could be
41 done with the 804. And currently what's in place for
42 Nelchina is, there's an 804 in codified regulations, but
43 the season is may be announced. And so, the intent there
44 is to not announce the season when the herd is so low
45 that it would create a conservation concern, you know,
46 to have any harvest at all. But when there is a
47 harvestable surplus, then that management flexibility
48 is there to open a season, you know, in a much more
49 quick, responsive, timely manner, than going through the
50 whole regulatory cycle. So, I guess a short direct answer

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1 to your question is, maybe. I mean, it's never been done
2 before, but yeah, it's -- we'd have to -- it'd be
3 something we'd look at in the analysis, if we're able
4 to put it in, at a time period or it might be more
5 appropriate as like a population status of the herd.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
8 for that information. That answer your question, Andy?

9

10 MR. BASSICH: Yes, sir. Thank you very
11 much, Lisa.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. I was going
14 to ask you a question that again, that you didn't answer.
15 What's that number? What's that number that's going to
16 tell us when we need to be going to a management concern
17 like she just talked about. I want to know what would
18 be that number on the Fortymile Herd population
19 threshold. Yeah.

20

21 MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess
22 I kind of start with you know, to come up with an actual
23 number is, I mean, in reality, we could manage this herd
24 all the way down to, you know, 500 caribou or something.
25 As long as, you know, and still have harvest, as long
26 as we're trying to take advantage of sort of, what you
27 call surplus animals. And what I mean by that, primarily
28 is bulls that can be harvested without driving your bull-
29 call ratio down below a desired level. And one thing we
30 saw this year was even at this level right now anyway,
31 our harvest strategy has -- seems to be working. We had
32 27 bulls per 100 cows in October during our composition
33 survey. Last year, I think it was 25 bulls per 100 or
34 26 bulls per 100. So, it means the harvest that did
35 occur this year didn't have enough impact to overcome
36 or to drive the bull-cow ratio down further. I mean, we
37 got enough recruitment coming in to replace the bulls
38 that are being shot. That as of right now the strategy
39 is working fine. And we will continue to look at that.

40

41 As far as an actual number, it's a hard
42 question to answer. I think the way I would answer it
43 isn't so much biologically but from a harvest
44 perspective. With different mandates, with the state and
45 federal managers, we -- once we get much lower than
46 where we're at now, we really are going to get into
47 these situations where there's going to be a Tier II on
48 the state side, and I suppose in 804 on the federal
49 side. So, if you know, if there was a way -- we can't
50 predict the next few years, but if there was a way during

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1 the life of this plan to potentially have, you know, a
2 quota on the federal side, and I say that from a state
3 perspective, I have no idea if you guys can even do that
4 with your mandate. And then otherwise a little more
5 conservative bag limit down to one bull, like Angela
6 said. And I realize that there's going to be some kind
7 of preference and that's, I think what your job is and
8 what you're going to want to do, if you could drop it
9 down to like a five day head start, ten day at most, to
10 still give that opportunity and then have a fallback of
11 like a quota. Those things may kind of slow things down
12 a little bit. The people that really want to participate
13 and get out there and do it, they're going to do it.
14 What we kind of saw this year is, it's just this trickle
15 thing. The longer the season went, more and more people
16 came in. Oh, we'll go try this, you know. I don't know,
17 I mean, I'm not going to say that they didn't need meat
18 in the freezer as much as anybody else but I'm just
19 trying to think outside the box of how to keep this
20 whole deck, this whole house of cards from falling down
21 right now. But basically, to answer your question, we're
22 kind of there with harvest. So, biologically they're
23 going to do what they're going to do. We could, you
24 know, a moratorium could be put in place. But the fact
25 is, because it's bulls only and a small enough harvest
26 right now because it's a quota we're really not affecting
27 population trend with the harvest right now. Yeah.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I appreciate your
30 willingness and your patience to educate us today. Thank
31 you so much.

32
33 MR. GROSS: Yeah. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

36
37 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. I forgot
38 in regards to the 804 restriction, you know, per ANILCA
39 non-subsistence uses are restricted before subsistence
40 uses. And so, if you guys do opt to submit a proposal
41 special action for an 804, I would highly recommend to
42 also close to non-federally qualified users because I
43 mean that's pretty much -- we've had this issue before
44 where you kind of have to restrict the non-subsistence
45 uses. So close to non-qualified users is the first step.
46 And then an 804 is kind of the second step after that.
47 Thanks.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
50 for that. And I think we got plenty of information for

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1 our coalition to go forward. And we can make some
2 recommendations at another time. We really appreciate
3 you for coming and educating us and giving this report
4 today. It means a lot. And thank you for being patient.
5 Yeah. Appreciate you so much.

6
7 MS. YEMMA: Thank you.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke, for the
10 record. Council members, I just wanted you to be aware
11 that we will be taking up the issue of the delegated
12 authority for Fortymile Caribou when we look at
13 statewide proposal WP26-01. And prior to this meeting,
14 the Chair and our Fortymile representatives had a
15 discussion and Angela too, about what would be nice to
16 modify about that delegated authority. So that Angela
17 has more tools similar to the state to set quotas and
18 harvest zones and things like that. So, when that comes
19 up on the agenda, we'll review what those suggestions
20 are. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

23
24 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Thank you,
25 Jeff. Thank you. I just wanted to say before you leave,
26 I'm just very passionate about this. And one of the
27 reasons, my clan is the (In Native), the caribou clan.
28 So, thank you so much. Appreciate it.

29
30 (Pause)

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Is Leonardo still
33 on? He had -- a he was the one that signed up for public
34 testimony. But I don't know if we still have him. He
35 might have went to lunch or something already. Leonardo,
36 are you still on?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 All right. I don't think we have any
41 other public comments at this time.

42
43 (Simultaneous speech)

44
45 MR. WASSILIE: Oh, hey.

46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody online?
47 There he is. Okay. Go ahead.

48
49 MR. WASSILIE: Hi there.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have the floor.

2
3 MR. WASSILIE: Perfect. Sorry, guys. I
4 stepped away for a sec., but I'm back. So, I just wanted
5 to do a quick comment on the things I've learned about
6 you know, permafrost effect on caribou herd. My grandpa
7 used to sit on, like the ICC, the inner -- the Inuit
8 Circumpolar Conference. And one of the things we learned
9 at those conferences is when the permafrost melts, it
10 creates sinkholes. And those sinkholes accumulate like
11 water. And when mosquitoes go and use that water, and
12 what happens is it creates like infestations of those
13 mosquitoes in those areas. And they're typically
14 starting to show up more in the wooded areas. So as
15 those -- when they're out in the open, you know, the
16 mosquitoes have a harder time to like breed and infest,
17 you know, the areas including the caribou herds. So, the
18 wind and things help keep that, both the moisture down
19 and the insects from like causing the caribou to become
20 like, you know, go insane and things like that and cause
21 them disease and things. So -- but -- so as you know,
22 the permafrost creeps into, you know, circumpolar arctic
23 and into the areas of the Interior we're in, those
24 instances are more like -- so the caribou are moving
25 away from there, and you know, for one. And I just wanted
26 to highlight like some of the that -- that migration
27 pattern is significantly affected by climate change and
28 the permafrost that melts and so. And then once it melts,
29 you know, it creates that soil. And so, all those like,
30 growth and that those new shoots and things like that,
31 like, you know, the greening of, like the permafrost and
32 the greening of the tundra, you know, that's -- it's
33 definitely correlated. I just wanted to take that
34 opportunity to provide that. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
37 for that. Any questions?

38
39 MS. BURK: Thank you, Leo. This is Eva.
40 Thank you for calling in about that. Do you have any
41 more like, reports or information on this? Cause I know
42 there are, like, the sinkholes on the North Slope, is
43 quite a big issue, and I think sometimes I forget about
44 that as I've moved back down into the Interior. So, I
45 was just looking for like any reports, recordings,
46 information, if you have that.

47
48 MR. WASSILIE: I can certainly reach out
49 to some of the like, I know with -- I think it's Patricia
50 Cochran in permafrost (indiscernible) like some of that

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1 research has been like, accumulated and I think can reach
2 back out and see what is available for sure.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I myself have a
5 little information on that. I go to Stebbins and Saint
6 Michaels, and I chase reindeer a little bit with the
7 Katcheak out there and they have a corral in front of
8 the community where the cows and come down to calve in
9 the springtime. And since the like you said, the ice is
10 melting out between the tussocks. Those cows -- is so
11 deep now that a man can get stuck in there, a short man
12 and cows actually get stuck in it. They don't want to
13 go through it, so they don't stop coming down to the
14 village to have their calves. So, there is some effect,
15 you know, just in certain places, I'm sure, but not
16 everywhere. But that does affect the caribou and
17 reindeer. Thank you.

18

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Eva in the past Yukon
20 Flats Refuge has done some really interesting studies
21 on this. I thought I'd reference that. This was Don.

22

23 MS. BURK: Thank you for that. Charlie
24 just stepped out for a moment, and I think -- is there
25 any more public comments on this agenda item?

26

27 (No response)

28

29 Do we have written submitted comments?

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Eva. There was
32 one comment that came in from the Community of Central.
33 There's actually a handout. Yeah, thank you so much,
34 Lisa. It's at the bottom of this sheet that Lisa's
35 helping pass out. It came in with a comment on one of
36 the wildlife proposals that we're going to take up later
37 today. But this is what they commented about Fortymile
38 Caribou. Participants were in favor of permits being
39 distributed -- oh, no. Sorry, that's about the proposal.
40 Okay. The group had comments about fall Fortymile
41 Caribou Hunt. Please note we did not review the new
42 draft management plan at this meeting. Meeting attendees
43 agreed that in previous years, many community members
44 have taken part in the fall federal subsistence hunt.
45 This year, however, most chose not to participate due
46 to a seemingly high number of federal subsistence
47 hunters coming from other areas of Alaska. It is the
48 first time we've seen such a large presence of non-local
49 hunters in the area during the federal subsistence
50 season. Several people also pointed out that the role

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1 influence of social media, specifically the Fortymile
2 Caribou Hunting Facebook page -- it's real fun one if
3 you haven't visited it -- has increased visibility of
4 the hunt within Alaska. End of comment.

5
6 MS. BURK: Thank you. That was very
7 helpful. I think we're next on tribal and ANCSA
8 Corporation. Oh, we have one more signed up. Yay!

9
10 (Pause)

11
12 Okay. Sarah, are you in the room? Hi,
13 Sarah, good morning. Now, here's somebody that probably
14 understands caribou.

15
16 MS. JAMES: Thank you. I try to make it
17 brief. I am an elder but that is hard to do. I am from
18 Arctic Village. I deal with Porcupine Caribou. We've
19 been fighting that, and we've been doing good. And our
20 caribou is increasing, but we don't have -- they haven't
21 make account for a while yet. They need to do that.
22 Well, anyway to Fortymile Herd. My father was a Fortymile
23 Herd originally and moved to Arctic Village because he
24 got married to my mother's. So, I do have relatives in
25 Birch Creek, and we do have visitors from other places
26 that used to have Fortymile Herd. We got a visitor from
27 Nenana, Demientieff, when he was a Chief of TCC. He was
28 so happy to be in caribou country. He said he is a
29 caribou people too. And I seen Circle, I've been to
30 Circles many times. I see caribou there. And just this
31 fall, this summer I got, we got, I got I didn't get it,
32 but it was on the Facebook. One of my relatives, now, I
33 know he -- she's my relative and she knew she's my
34 relative by going to Gwich'in gather, emergency Gwich'in
35 gather, we just had an Arctic Village. And that's how
36 we got to know each other by just having gather. And
37 then there was Circle at Gwich'in gather. And Circle is
38 very important to us because our Chief is resting there.
39 And we got the Chief for the whole Gwich'in nation is
40 resting there. So, that's important to us. So, we had a
41 Gwich'in gather there. And this fall or last, I don't
42 know when that happened, but she put it on the Facebook
43 that she's really feeling sick to her stomach because
44 she is very upset. Because along the highway and other
45 places, these -- they see caribou just antler been taken
46 and everything is going to waste there. And that is very
47 alarming and sad to them, and I could understand that.
48 So, I get a lot of phone calls and a lot of letters and
49 a lot of people that talks to me on the street. Tell me
50 about their caribou, how it's threatened. And only -- I

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1 only can help them in a way that I know about Porcupine
2 Caribou. And I know my history through my father, and I
3 am originally from Birch Creek and Arctic Village, so I
4 am dealing directly to Fortymiles and I respect that.
5 Because that's how we are as indigenous people. We're
6 not rural. We're -- we got our blood all over the place.
7 And that's how we recognize ourselves from where we are
8 and how -- where we cover us traditional ground. And
9 that's who we are.

10
11 Well, anyway I get a lot of calls
12 because they think I know about caribou, and I know how
13 to stand with the caribou, but it's very hard. And it's
14 threatened big time right now, but we can still do it.
15 And this Fortymile used to be 800,000 caribou. And it's
16 not 1920. It's not 1930 or '40. That's when they
17 slaughter it, to feed the army, to -- afraid that they
18 come in from Korea and Japan. And then they have to
19 build railroad. They have to build a highway, so they
20 fed the caribou to them. So, it's a wood chopper, for
21 steamboat. At that time, I just -- in their definition
22 bag limit. I'm really upset over bag limit when I talk
23 about bag limit. That's when the bag limit came about.
24 It's a hind quarter. It fits just right in Safeway or
25 Fred shopping bag. The meaty part that's edible for sport
26 hunting. We see -- they see that in Circle all the time.
27 They carry three bags of Safeway bag, I mean four to
28 make it even, they got the edible part and they left
29 everything else behind. And that's still in place in
30 state law, state regulation. And I just can't -- we see
31 that in Arctic Village because so many hunters go through
32 Arctic Village because they had to go out with small
33 airplane from Arctic Village airport. We see hunters
34 come in with those four bags and the antlers and that -
35 - they're clear, you know, they did their part. And
36 where is the rest? And when those people saw the gut
37 just got thrown away and just the meaty part is gone
38 from the hind quarter. That's it. And that's really,
39 really disturbing for me. Thank you for listening to me
40 today. And I have more to say on the other things, and
41 I just want to cover that. Thank you very much, again.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
44 for that history and great comments. Appreciate you,
45 Sarah. Go ahead, Eva.

46
47 MS. BURK: Thanks. I always have to ask
48 a question. It's Eva.

49
50 MS. JAMES: Thank you.

1
2 MS. BURK: I read this old report about
3 the Yukon River commercial fishing first time. And they
4 referenced what you're talking about, how they
5 overharvested caribou for the boats and the army, and
6 it was causing a real hardship along the river. And
7 that's why they did this report, because there was also
8 a hardship of salmon all around, like 1920. So, thank
9 you for bringing that up. And then also, letting us know
10 the historical size of the herd. I think only you and
11 Canadian people provide information on the how big the
12 herd used to be. And you're mentioning like the caribou
13 are, are threatened big time right now. And then I --
14 you you're mentioning wanton waste and the and not
15 bringing all parts of the caribou out. Do you know if
16 on the highway that those wanton waste was from this
17 past year, 2025?

18
19 MS. JAMES: Say that again.

20
21 MS. BURK: Do you know if the lady who
22 posted stuff on Facebook or told you she saw lots of
23 waste along the highway?

24
25 MS. JAMES: A lot of people report that
26 on Facebook. Yeah.

27
28 MS. BURK: So, like this past year?

29
30 MS. JAMES: This past year, last few
31 years. It's been like that for a while now. So -- nd
32 they're pretty upset about it. I could understand why
33 they are upset. And you said that, you know, in Salish
34 Tribe in Washington you know, they're not rural. They
35 go fishing right outside in the middle of the city
36 because I've seen that. I don't know why we can't and
37 do that, it's already in place. And another thing is
38 that the caribou, they got their own area. They got
39 their own caribou they mate with they don't mate with
40 other caribou or reindeer that are introduced to them.
41 So, that's how important caribou is to -- how much
42 caribou is important to, how keen they are. Because
43 that's how -- why we're so proud to be caribou. We got
44 many, many story in our culture. And one time and this
45 guy that fixed everything and animal ways and means.
46 Because they started depending on human for food, and
47 he went around and corrected everything, like Eagle used
48 to be -- the Eagle led the way we got, we see it today
49 and he told him, this is going to be your food, this is
50 going to be your way of life, you know, and that's how

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1 Eagle is today. And when it came to caribou, he didn't
2 have to change them. He stayed with them for one whole
3 week, but they seemed to be well organized, clean. They
4 got their own food, they got their, well organized and
5 he didn't have to change them. So, that's how important
6 caribou is to us. So, that goes for all the other
7 caribou, because they all got same characteristic to
8 survive. And but they got their own area and they got
9 their own breed. Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
12 Sarah. Go ahead, Don.

13
14 MR. WOODRUFF: One thing I would like to
15 Council to be aware of is hunter deflection from one
16 area to another when there's closures. And we are now
17 experiencing around Eagle, the sheep hunters are
18 deflecting over into the Ogilvie Mountains. Because of
19 the Park Service has that Yukon-Charley closed to the
20 south. And that hasn't happened in the past. And it's
21 becoming very obvious to the sheep hunters around Eagle
22 that it's being heavily used by airplanes. Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that
25 very much, Don. Good to get that on the record. Okay.
26 We thank you. Any more questions for Sarah?

27
28 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you, Sarah. I really
29 appreciate your history. And you know, in talking to
30 people, like around Mentasta, Chistochina, those areas,
31 too. I think that, I mean, they had historically, they
32 have stories and I've heard, you know, people in Tanana
33 talk about you know, herds that used to go through there.
34 I mean, you know, historically, I mean, that's what we
35 ate, was caribou. And because of their migration away
36 or whatever, you know, I mean, so many things have
37 happened, and so of course, then we went to moose, but
38 you know. My -- our elders used to tell us, you know,
39 to watch the animals and pay attention because they're
40 telling us things. And I, you know, I truly believe
41 that. And, you know, we really need to pay attention to
42 what they're telling us instead of vice versa. So, thank
43 you so much. I really appreciate this.

44
45 MS. JAMES: You're welcome, thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I got one question
48 for you, Sarah. Through all your experience, tell me
49 what's making the Forty Mile Caribou Herd decline. What
50 do you think is the cause?

1

2

3 MS. JAMES: I think it's that highway and
4 how they allow those hunters to come in and take caribou
5 the way they taken it. And I think that's it. And like
6 Arctic Village -- Circle is one of the Gwich'in Village
7 and we all related somehow or another and we tell each
8 other's stories. And the only way they could get their
9 caribou is unless it's in their own ground or they happen
10 to be. You know, we even Arctic Village, you know we
11 don't get caribou sometime. One time we didn't have any
12 caribou. We got no food. That was -- well, anyway. So
13 we had National Guard in the village then. They asked
14 the National Guard if we could get some caribou somewhere
15 and bring it in for us, and they did. And another thing
16 is that one time again after 1988, when we made a
17 position on caribou, we got to know Canada more and more
18 because we got separated for 150 years. And then we
19 again, we didn't have no caribou. And they're organized
20 on the other side. They went out hunting. They even --
21 they already got some dry meats. They charter plane in
22 from over there. And we had dry meat and fresh caribou.
23 So, I don't see why we can't do that. And another thing
24 is that, I think I got away from your question. Okay.
25 Another time is that Bettles. Bettles bring us some
26 caribou meat, and I think we can do that. And now, the
27 only way, like when, Dementieff, Mitch Dementieff went
28 up there, he was happy to be in caribou country. He was
29 happy to eat caribou. And I don't know why we can do --
30 we can't do that. So, the government help us at one
31 time, which is National Guard, and of course, that's
32 National Guard were they were very active then in Arctic
33 Village. So, I just thought I'd bring that up. Thank
34 you.

34

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
Thank you so much for being with us today. And yeah,
look forward to hearing more from you. Yeah. Okay. I
think that -- hold on one second.

(Pause)

Mr. Luke. You have the floor, sir.

(Pause)

MR. ROGERS: Right. Yeah.

(Pause)

1 All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
2 thank you to the Council for having me here. Thanks for
3 being accommodating. Sorry that my timeline is a little
4 short. It's a meeting season, as you know, and I'm just
5 leaving this meeting to go to another meeting that'll
6 have to be running. That's why I'm short on time. For
7 the record, my name is Luke Rogers. I'm with the Alaska
8 Department of Fish and Game Wood Bison Restoration
9 Project. I'm going to provide a quick update on the
10 Lower Tanana Herd, and then after that, I'll provide an
11 update on the Yukon Flats very briefly if you would like
12 it. But I think the focus of this is the Lower Tanana.
13 So, I guess the first thing to express about the Lower
14 Tanana Herd is that that is our newest wood bison herd
15 in Alaska in the United States. It's the second
16 experimental population that was established. This May
17 is when they were released and that's the culmination
18 of a yearlong effort of field work and several years of
19 outreach and planning and lots of legal things and lots
20 of meetings just like this. But the field effort of that
21 took place from May 2024 to May 2025. I should also
22 mention that this is the first wood bison herd in the
23 EIRAC region, Eastern Interior region. There's also wood
24 bison herd in the Western Interior region as well in the
25 lower Innoko River valley.

26
27 So, as I mentioned, that herd was
28 released in May of this year. We released 61 animals.
29 We brought 60 animals to the pen there. And before they
30 were released this May, there was one calf that was born
31 in the pen. Since their release, there's been three
32 additional calves that have been born. One thing that's
33 interesting about that is several of those cows went
34 back to the soft release pen where we held them
35 temporarily last winter to have their calf, which
36 indicates to us that they felt comfortable and at home
37 there, to go back and revisit that area. All of that
38 effort was in an effort to anchor them to this area and
39 have them establish that as part of their core home
40 range. I'll be discussing that in just a second. But the
41 bright thing is that we've had four calves so far. We've
42 had three mortalities in this population. And while
43 we're still investigating each one of those for their
44 specific reasons, what I can say for now is that these
45 were the three of the smallest, youngest animals, the
46 least developed ones and they likely were unable to make
47 the adjustment to the wild, which is something that often
48 happens in releases. A portion of the animals aren't
49 able to make the transition. With that being the case,
50 we still have 61 animals with -- within the herd out there.

1
2 Study that we're doing currently, right
3 now. Our biggest study for the population, which I think
4 folks in this room would be interested in is a diet
5 comparison analysis between moose and bison in the area
6 where they've been released, the 20C area of the Minto
7 Flats State Game Refuge south of the river. Literature
8 for bison and moose has shown that they don't tend to
9 have a very large overlap in their diet. There's some
10 overlap, but they have a niche partitioning where bison,
11 you know, are short and stocky and are meant to eat
12 ground level foods and maybe very low-level browsing.
13 And moose are tall and lengthy and are much more suited
14 for browsing from about the waist high to higher than
15 that. But just because it was something that was a
16 concern and interest of the planning team for this area,
17 we're doing a diet comparison analysis where we collect
18 fresh moose and bison feces each month and are going to
19 be able to show what the diet is composed of, during
20 each of those months for both species.

21
22 One of the handouts you guys received,
23 and I apologize for the online folks. This is just fresh
24 off the press this week, is a map of the Lower Tanana
25 wood bison population. And I'll have extra copies of
26 this for the folks in the back, if you'd like to see it,
27 too. I'll just describe it to you really quickly. This
28 map is illustrating the core utilization areas of this
29 bison herd since their release. Goes from May 14th, which
30 was their release date until December 14th. The first
31 thing I'll point out is the red circle that you see,
32 which is the core utilization distribution area. That's
33 where the majority of radio locations, all of this is
34 based off of radio collar locations that the animals
35 have on them, that are collected every two hours. Most
36 of the animals time has been spent very, very close to
37 the soft release pen within just a few miles. The green
38 circle polygon that you see is the 95% utilization
39 distribution, which means that 95% of all radio collar
40 locations from all animals are contained within those.
41 And so that shows you generally where the bison have
42 been spending most of their time since release. I think
43 two other things to point out on here. The blue polygon
44 is the phase one of the Nenana-Totchaket Agricultural
45 Project and the light red polygon within that is the
46 section that has currently been cleared and is actively
47 being used and developed for agriculture. As you can see
48 from the core utilization distributions that they do not
49 overlap with the first phase or the cleared area of the
50 NTAP. However, it is worth bringing up since I think

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1 many folks are aware of it if you're not, that there has
2 been a group of nine bison that has been reported near
3 the edge of the Nenana-Totchaket AG Project, the portion
4 that has been cleared. They've been there since
5 approximately the 7th of December, so just over a week
6 now. They're hanging out essentially more or less going
7 from the lakes that are nearby in that area into kind
8 of just hanging out on the side of the road in some of
9 the areas in there. That's nine bison. They're all young
10 animals. It's six females and three males. These are
11 essentially the wandering group of the main herd. The
12 other 52 animals have stayed much closer to the release
13 site than this population. But this population of nine
14 animals has been at times going south. They are the ones
15 that were spotted near Dune Lake. If you saw that earlier
16 on this summer. They've gone up north to the edge of the
17 Tanana. A few of them crossed over to the north side of
18 the Tanana this summer, and then back down south. And
19 then if you see that green polygon off by itself at the
20 bottom of this map, that's kind of their main area.
21 They've been hanging out near the Teklanika Channel.
22 Slough Lake, I believe, is what that's called. Those
23 animals are as we expected exploring their habitat,
24 which is not something that we're against. We expected
25 that they would do that. However, it's been certainly a
26 point of the planning team and the public that bison and
27 the Nenana-Totchaket AG Project is not something that
28 they would like to see spending a lot of time around one
29 another. And so, as part of our effort with the Alaska
30 Department of Fish and Game to respond to that, we are
31 actively discouraging those bison to establish a pattern
32 of use on the Nenana-Totchaket Ag Project.

33
34 I guess I'll speak a little bit more
35 about that. And if you want in the management plan,
36 there's a whole section about agriculture in the Nenana
37 Totchaket AG Project. But what we're currently doing
38 with those animals is there, are bison guardians that
39 are trained in each of the communities. So, Nenana, Minto
40 and Manley are the three closest communities to this
41 release site. And I spent time last spring going to
42 those communities and hiring locals from the communities
43 to essentially be the guardians of these animals and
44 help train them not to associate human infrastructure
45 as part of their habitat. Some examples of people that
46 are in positions of leadership in those communities is
47 -- the Second Chief of Manley is one of our guardians.
48 The First Chief of Nenana and his grandson are both
49 guardians and the teacher in Minto is also one of our
50 guardians. But we average around 5 to 6 people per

1 village. I'd also point out that I'm more than happy to
2 go back and have another clinic to teach about
3 guardianship of bison. It's a paid event. It was about
4 two hours, is what it takes to do the basics of it and
5 then a little bit after that. And I know that folks on
6 the Council and maybe in this room are local to this
7 area, and so I'd be more than happy to hire you as well,
8 if you're interested to be a bison guardian, or folks
9 that you think would be really good candidates for this.
10 So, there's much opportunity still to get involved in
11 that part of the process.

12
13 What they're currently using for
14 techniques, and it describes this more in the management
15 plan. But the three main ones that we use as tools at
16 the moment is bison can be non-lethal and safely hazed
17 away from human infrastructure. That's currently what
18 our guardians are employing right now, down near Nenana
19 and the Totchaket Ag Project. Private landowners can
20 always fence their private land to exclude bison or moose
21 or other wildlife from them. And that's something that's
22 been employed in a lot of other agricultural projects
23 around the state. We can also try to lead the bison away
24 from human infrastructure. And I'm going down again
25 tomorrow to work with the guardians on that to try to
26 employ one or more of those methods to help encourage
27 them to go back to the West, with the rest of the herd.
28 So that's in regards to the Nenana area and the Lower
29 Tanana Wood Bison Herd. I do have an update on another
30 area that's of part of the eastern interior, the Yukon
31 Flats. But perhaps for now we can talk a little bit more
32 about the Lower Tanana. I know there's probably some
33 comments or questions I'd be more than happy to answer
34 for you all right now.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, you report that
37 you've just lost minimum animals. And I think that's
38 amazing. And they're pretty strong towards predation
39 obviously and aren't able to protect themselves in some
40 way. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

41
42 MR. ROGERS: Sure. Yeah. Thank you, Mr.
43 Chair.

44
45 (Simultaneous speech)

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I did hear the ones
48 that are close to Nenana have wolves right behind them.
49 Yeah, they see the tracks. Okay, thank you.

1 MR. ROGERS: Yeah, sure. As you know,
2 probably spending lots of time out there, there's quite
3 a few wolves and bears out there, and there have been
4 times when we've been radio tracking them where we've
5 seen either evidence of wolves coming in to check out
6 the population or being nearby. And so very certainly
7 there are wolves that have seen these bison and have
8 been around them. But there's no documented wolf
9 predation or even attempts at it or anything like that.
10 Bison are actually very resilient to predation. In fact,
11 when it comes to bear predation, it's almost unheard of
12 in bison. And you can think if you're a bear looking for
13 an easy meal, a cow moose with two calves is a much
14 easier target than a herd of bison, where the biggest
15 and strongest ones come to meet the threat. So, bear
16 predation is not very common in bison. Wolf predation
17 can happen. It's at a much lower density than we tend
18 to see with other ungulates like moose and caribou, but
19 it can happen as well. I think the one thing that's
20 important to say about predation with bison is that we
21 don't see it as a limiting factor for any of our bison
22 populations. Those populations are not controlled by how
23 much predation happens to them. Thank you for your
24 question.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I did -- sorry, I
27 did see a video of Yellowstone area where the herd was
28 being harassed by a pack of wolves and one of the bigger
29 bulls actually tripped one of the young ones and let the
30 wolves have him. It was pretty crazy, and they talked
31 quite a bit about it in the video that they had just to
32 take the pressure off the herd, they sacrificed.

33
34 MR. ROGERS: Sure. Yeah. I know which
35 video you're talking about, Mr. Chair, that's quite an
36 interesting one to see, isn't it?

37
38 MS. BURK: This is Eva. What do you mean
39 by non-lethally and safely hazed? Because I talked to
40 some of the trained guardians in -- I think there's
41 people moving the animals that aren't trained guardians.
42 And so, I have some concerns about that. So, before I
43 probably have a little follow up.

44
45 MR. ROGERS: Yeah. No, thank you. Through
46 the Chair. Thank you, member Burke, for your point there.
47 When we are trying to teach and train these wood bison
48 not to associate human infrastructure with habitat that
49 they can spend a lot of time on, we're trying to do it
50 as safely for both the humans and for the bison as

1 possible. You know, bison are wild animals. They're very
2 large wild animals. They're generally, in my experience,
3 around them, they're generally very docile and they're
4 not dangerous or aggressive. But, you know, anyone, any
5 animal or any person that's pushed or stressed, they
6 have that opportunity to become defensive or potentially
7 dangerous. And so, from a human perspective, to start
8 with, we teach them how to recognize the signs that a
9 bison is agitated and might decide to defend itself. And
10 for your sake's, in case you're not familiar, those three
11 signs are one: it's got its head down, it's pawing at
12 the ground. Two, it's got its tail right up, straight
13 up. They have a much bigger tail than we have seen with
14 our other ungulates, but it's a very clear indicator
15 when it's straight up. It's akin to, like a moose having
16 its hackles up. It's a sign that they're definitely
17 agitated. And then the third one would be that if they're
18 looking intently at you or coming in your direction with
19 a really clear focus that they're focused on you. So we
20 teach the guardians that if you see these behaviors that
21 bison is getting stressed and you need to back off and
22 give it some time to relax and we don't want to continue
23 to push it because we don't want that animal to get into
24 a defensive situation where potentially it could injure
25 a human.

26
27 On the animal side of things.
28 Obviously, these animals just got released. We all want
29 to see them be successful in being a wild population out
30 there and free ranging in the Minto Flats State Game
31 Refuge. We don't necessarily want to see them hanging
32 out on the Road System. So, when we are teaching our
33 bison guardians to haze the animals, we also don't want
34 them to get in a stampede or get in a situation where
35 an animal could trip or hurt itself, break a leg. It
36 could hurt another animal. We wouldn't want to see a
37 situation like Charlie mentioned, where one bison trips
38 another one and offers it as a sacrifice. Although I
39 don't think that's exactly what happened. But you
40 understand the concept there. And so really what we've
41 been encouraging our bison guardians to do is just take
42 your time with it. This isn't something that we have to
43 rush. We don't have to force them way off in a big
44 stampede into some other direction. Take your time.
45 Assess the animals. Are they calm? Are they comfortable?
46 Where do does it look like they're going? Where have
47 they been? Where could you potentially lead them to? To
48 bring them to a safe direction where you would like to
49 bring them, which in general is out west towards the
50 rest of the population, towards the Kantishna and

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1 towards the Tanana. And then to just take a very short
2 or sorry, I guess I should say, to describe the bison
3 themselves and their zones of awareness. A bison and
4 really any animal that you go up to when you first
5 approach them, you'll enter their zone of awareness
6 where that animal is like, okay, I see this person or
7 this car or whatever, and I'm aware of its existence
8 now. Once you get a little bit closer than that, you'll
9 get into a situation where the animal decides, okay,
10 this person or this car or whatever it is, is coming a
11 little bit too close to me, and I'm starting to feel a
12 little nervous about that. And generally, that's the
13 point where if you're doing all of this in a very calm
14 scenario, you approach an animal, it becomes aware of
15 you. You become a little bit closer in a very gentle
16 way. You generally reach that point where they're just
17 like, okay, this person's too close to me. I'm just
18 going to gently walk the other direction. And so that's
19 the strategy that we try to employ. What you don't want
20 to do is approach the animal really quickly, in a really
21 short amount of time, at a really fast speed, because
22 that's when you go immediately into a defensive -- a
23 defense like, a defensive reaction essentially from it.
24 And to your point, I think Member Burk, that it sounds
25 like I've heard at least a few reports of maybe some
26 folks that are not trained by us have been attempting
27 to do things that maybe are more on the aggressive side
28 of herding and hazing. And I would just point out to
29 this Council and to the general public that hazing and
30 harassing animals is not legal under state law, except
31 in this situation where they are trained, hired and
32 allowed by us at Fish and Game to haze these animals in
33 the manners that we allow them to employ. So, I it could
34 be possible that some of our guardians are using more
35 aggressive hazing methods than we had taught them to do.
36 And so that's certainly possible. But it is also
37 certainly possible that there could be some folks in
38 town that are also doing some hazing that they're not
39 allowed to. So, if you have any suggestions on how I can
40 address that or maybe avoid doing that, I think that'd
41 be really valuable for me to learn. Thank you.

42
43 MS. BURK: Yeah. This is Eva. Yeah, this
44 is definitely harassment then, what we're having, I have
45 videos, I've been saving multiple videos and they're
46 definitely chasing the animals with snow machines and
47 vehicles. And they are running. They're like, they're
48 not running, like, a little bit. They're running.
49 They're in a full run. And I did see a big building in
50 the background, so I think they're actually in Nenana.

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1 Yeah, I think they've moved back, gone back across, but
2 they were in Nenana. And so, I think there's a couple
3 of things I think about animal behavior. Yeah. Animals
4 are -- they're in this foreign country, they're dropped
5 off. And, you know, I think it's -- this isn't there
6 isn't no human infrastructure. The funny thing about all
7 this is you literally drop the bison off three miles
8 from our fish camp, from our -- one of our main cabins,
9 and then our trapping cabin is pretty close to that. So,
10 it's within another few miles. And then, we're also the
11 ag. owner of this -- one of the ag. owners in this little
12 red square. So now I'm like, maybe these bison are
13 obsessed with us and just want to hang out on our land.
14 But I think there's a couple of things going on here.
15 One is the young ones might be exploring, right? They
16 might be collecting information to bring it back, to
17 inform other people, to show them the way where there
18 might be other food right there. I could just imagine
19 that that's part of what's going on. The other thing is
20 dominance and like the own, like herd organizing itself.
21 And there's a subgroup that's like we're going to
22 actually, we don't want to be part of this larger group.
23 We're going to be our own group now. So, there could be
24 a -- I think maybe a couple things going on and only
25 time will tell. I'm really interested in how we could
26 work with the Village Corporation, which has land north
27 of the ag. sale or maybe no, the Village Corporation has
28 its north end east of -- yeah, it's right up adjacent
29 to the ag. sale, the Village Corporation. I'm just
30 wondering if there's ways that it seems like you might
31 need to almost. I want to say bait. I hate to use that
32 word here, but like, entice them into an area that would
33 have more favorable feeding conditions. And you may need
34 some human help with that, right, because they are just
35 getting established. Yeah. And I don't think the guards
36 like, I know these folks. I think it's going to take a
37 little bit more of an effort because I think, they're
38 not leaving, they've been around for days and days and
39 days. There's something about Nenana that's very
40 interesting to them. There might be something about the
41 new ag. land, like you said, with the clearing that's
42 very interesting to them. And I don't, do you know how
43 much fence costs per mile? And now all of these new ag.
44 landowners, including myself, are going to have to worry
45 about fencing our land, maybe even early on as we're
46 clearing ground and planting cover crops, that they
47 could come in and just tear it up. And so that's a huge
48 cost to all of us that we didn't plan or budget for and
49 that I very much have commented quite a several times,
50 that I didn't see how all of these land uses could exist

1 without having issues. And here we are in year one and
2 already having a pretty significant issue in my mind.
3 And I just -- I think the solution is getting a team.
4 But also, there's this other side of me that's very
5 compassionate and concerned about the bison health, the
6 productivity. They're already there, kind of want to see
7 them succeed but also very concerned about their
8 encroachment on our new ag. land. And the cost that's
9 going to cost us. And I think we have very well, very
10 good information from Delta folks that fences don't
11 work. So, I'm not sure if that's the case with if there's
12 a difference between plains and wood bison and their
13 ability to get over fences. But in this area, I think
14 the bigger issue is that the snow blows into these drifts
15 and packs down. And so, in Delta, they were able to
16 actually get over a fence because of a blown snow drift,
17 which is a very similar situation on our land. It is
18 windy. And I've always said -- and I know that there's
19 a lot of snow drifts on the road that they opened up.
20 So, I think there's there needs to be more dedicated
21 teamwork with the locals and Nenana and maybe another
22 community meeting, I don't know.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I was just going to
25 say that you got the Chief and his son on your payroll
26 and then have them have a little awareness and at the
27 next meeting or something. And I see Dorothy stretching
28 her arm over here. And I see you, you're next. Go ahead.

29
30 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you, thank you.
31 Luke, good to see you. Just a couple of things. For the
32 record, you know, we the other day, we were talking
33 about I guess government to government consultations and
34 how, you know, there's a call for concellation [sic].
35 Or is that the word? Consultations, sorry, and nobody
36 shows up. So, in this case, you know, early on, we worked
37 together. I was with the village corp., yeah, Manley
38 Village Corporation, and we had some really good
39 meetings. We were going to set a precedent where we were
40 all going to work together and come up with a plan that
41 we all agreed on. And so, we were on that road. And then
42 the governor stepped in and said, I don't care. We are
43 going to put these bison on the ground this year. And
44 so, all of our planning, all of our work, you know, went
45 out the window. And so then, you know, the decision was,
46 well, where are we going to put them? You know, if
47 they're going to be on the ground, where? And of course,
48 you wanted it as fairly close to the highway as possible
49 because you know, there was a group of people who paid
50 or gave money, donated money to this and you know, are

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1 known to be sport hunters, big game sport hunters.
2 Anyway, you know, I just want to make that point that,
3 you know, no matter how or what we want sometimes, you
4 know, a lot of times, unfortunately, the government or
5 whoever is in charge, administration will step in and
6 say, oh, well, thank you, but this is what we're going
7 to do. And, you know, in regards to wanting or saying,
8 these are wild animals, I mean. You know, you put them
9 down and instead of letting them go wherever they want,
10 you know, to be wild, then you're starting to want them
11 to be herded in this area that you want them to be in.
12 And so that just doesn't make sense to me. But yeah,
13 other than that, you know, it's like yeah. And, you
14 know, I know there's a proposal for -- to put more in
15 the Yukon Flats area. And, you know, I know that there's
16 been meetings. And you know, because I was in the
17 original meetings and, you know, like I said, we were
18 working together on that. But, you know, it's just really
19 discouraging to ask for input and then it just being
20 disregarded. So, thank you so much. Appreciate it.
21 Appreciate it, Luke.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Bruce Ervin, still
24 with us?

25
26 MR. ERVIN: Yes, sir.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have the floor.

29
30 MR. ERVIN: Oh, thank you, Chair. Through
31 the Board. Thank you, Board members. Thank you, Luke,
32 for the great presentation. I just had a few questions
33 for you. Sorry. I'm trying to time it with the echo. I
34 was just wondering, what's the future plans for the wood
35 bison? And I was kind of curious if rural residents
36 would be able to harvest the wood bison in the future.
37 Or will they -- will they be offered to anyone through
38 like a permit hunt?

39
40 MR. ROGERS: Yeah, through the Chair.
41 Thank you for your question. I assume that's specific
42 to just this Lower Tanana herd and not wood bison
43 statewide. So, I'll try to answer that to the best of
44 my ability. In terms of harvest for wood bison in the
45 Lower Tanana population. You know, this population just
46 started in May. And so, they're very, very new. And this
47 is an experiment at the end of the day to see how well
48 these bison really can do. Can they, can they survive?
49 Can they reproduce? Can they establish a home range that
50 is acceptable to the public? And we need to see that

1 really come to fruition, potentially over decades here
2 before we can really see what might be a harvestable
3 population someday in the future. What also might never
4 be harvestable population, if this population doesn't
5 succeed. So, I think that for the state's perspective
6 is kind of where we're maintaining this at the moment
7 is it's too early to talk about harvest because we don't
8 even really know if this is going to be harvestable
9 population. However, to your point, there is already
10 movement being done in terms of harvest. And in fact, I
11 would mention that the only harvest for wood bison that
12 has been approved through the Board of Game was this
13 spring. The Minto-Nenana AC, the local AC to this area,
14 submitted a proposal to list wood bison under the
15 Cultural and Educational Hunt permit and that was
16 accepted by the Board of Game I think that's a permit
17 that knowing the traditional side of many of the folks
18 in this in this meeting right now is something that's
19 very of interest to them. However, you know, we're not
20 going to be harvesting bison through Cultural and
21 Educational Permit, at least not anytime soon. It's on
22 the books right now. And I know for this group, the
23 eastern interior rack, there's a proposal that would
24 designate wood bison essentially in all of Eastern
25 Interior as a customary and traditional use species. And
26 there could be future hunting implications involved in
27 that as well. So, I think the groups that are interested
28 in hunting are already making moves to try to set up a
29 future where hunting meets their needs. But I'd also
30 maintain that right now, we're really just in phase one
31 of how are these bison going to do and is there a future
32 where we could even see harvest of these animals. Thank
33 you again for your question.

34
35 MS. SHOCKLEY: Again. Dorothy Shockley.
36 I have a comment in regards to that because, you know,
37 the state's argument was that, you know, it would be a
38 resource for us to eat. Yeah. But, you know, through the
39 meetings, of course, we found out that there would not
40 be any rural preference because of the state law. Right?

41
42 MR. ROGERS: Just to respond to that one
43 member, Shockley, through the Chair. Yeah. You're
44 correct that through state law, all of Alaskans are
45 considered eligible subsistence hunters. Just to answer
46 that one question there.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, at this time,
49 we might want to start a working group to help assist
50 and maybe make recommendations going into the future. I

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1 think we need a -- we can entertain a motion to do that.
2 We can put some of us from here on that. If it comes up
3 through that. Dorothy would be a good one, I think,
4 because she's asking most of the questions. I'm volun-
5 tending [sic] you. Go ahead.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, this is Brooke. Just
8 for the Council's awareness, the Board -- the Federal
9 Subsistence Board, is asking for your comments on the
10 draft or the plan for the Lower Tanana Herd. And so, if
11 a small group could get together before our next meeting
12 in March and just talk about a few suggestions or
13 comments you'd like to make then that would be formulated
14 in time for the Board meeting in April. Thanks.

15
16 MS. BURK: Hey Luke, if we're going to
17 be on -- this is Eva. If Charlie and I are going to be
18 part of any planning groups or are working meetings. We
19 sit on every Subsistence Council Advisory Committee that
20 we can, that we have to. And it would be really great,
21 like you're having your planning meeting today at one.
22 So, that's why we're trying to get you out of here. We
23 know you got to go. It would be really great to check
24 our meeting dates. Check North Pacific Board of Fish.
25 And just make sure you're not holding these important
26 big meetings that have a big-time conflict with people
27 that really should not be there. So. Thanks. And we do.
28 Even though we're in Nenana, we're not on -- we're right
29 next to the Denali National Park, and he's part of the
30 Subsistence Resource Commission. So, it's all important
31 that we stay in the loop here at the EIRAC. Thanks.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. We
34 appreciate that. And you keep us in that loop and we'd
35 accommodate you. And likewise, I hope.

36
37 MR. ROGERS: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Yeah, I'll be happy to do that. And just so you know,
39 the meeting this afternoon, it's just a virtual update
40 to members of the planning team and the public that are
41 interested. It's going to be very similar, like showing
42 this map that I talked about, maybe just slightly more
43 in depth about like movements and talking a bit more.
44 But it's a very similar conversation to what we're having
45 right now. It's always hard to plan meetings and I
46 recognize that I seem to have a very good job of planning
47 a meeting over another meeting, something I'm working
48 towards, and I can certainly improve on. So, thank you
49 for your comment on that member Burk.

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I just like to add
2 one more thing before you go, or we cut you loose. I'm
3 living in the woods all my life and paying attention,
4 watching videos, watching hunting videos. Predators like
5 to single out animals from herds. And then follow them
6 until they wear them out and get on them. So that could
7 be why you're a little herd is going in that direction
8 and being chased by wolves. That might be part of that.
9 Yeah. Just an idea. Thank you for your presentation, and
10 we appreciate you and your willingness to teach us and
11 talk with us. We appreciate that very much. Look forward
12 to more in the future.

13
14 MR. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
15 thank you to the Council for having me.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Now I want to make
18 a motion to create a working group to help and work with
19 the bison group going forward.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER Go ahead.

22
23 MS. BURK: Oh, you gonna a second?
24 This.....

25
26 (Simultaneous speech)

27
28 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'll second.....

29
30 MS. BURK:is Eva.

31
32 MS. ENTSMINGER: But I -- can the Chair
33 do that?

34
35 MS. BURK: I can. I'll -- this -- you
36 want me to make it?

37
38 MS. ENTSMINGER: We're going to relax
39 Robert's Rules.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah.

42
43 MS. BURK: So, moved. I make this motion
44 for working group.

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: I second it.

47
48 MS. BURK: This is Eva, for making the
49 motion. Sorry. Notes.

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. Just
2 to help speed things along, this would be to review the
3 Lower Tanana Wood Bison Plan, make some comments that
4 we'd bring back to the RAC in March. And then at that
5 meeting vote to send comments to the Federal Subsistence
6 Board. And it sounded like Charlie, Eva and Dorothy are
7 being voluntold and then others could join in, if you
8 wish.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very good.

11
12 MS. SHOCKLEY: I have a question.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Linda had her hand
15 up first. Go ahead, Linda.

16
17 MS. EVANS: I'd like to be involved in
18 this committee. I've attended, I think 2 or 3 of these
19 planning meetings with the bison and been pretty
20 involved in it, so. Thank you. I volunteered my time.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Very well. I
23 think it's the past -- oh okay. You first. Then we're
24 going to lunch after that. So, no more hands.

25
26 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay, so the purpose, I
27 mean, why do what is the purpose of the Board wanting
28 information?

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. So, the state brought
31 this Wood Bison Management Plan for the Lower Tanana to
32 the Federal Subsistence Board last year. And the board
33 said that they wanted the EIRAC to review and make any
34 comments on it before the board was comfortable
35 endorsing the plan. So, that's our job to review this
36 and make any comments to the Federal Subsistence Board
37 so they can make their decision to endorse the plan or
38 not. Yeah, it's a big, it's a big plan. So, it's hard
39 to take up during a meeting. I think a working group is
40 a good approach. We could, you know, have a call or meet
41 together in Fairbanks, to go over it before the March
42 meeting. And if there's no more discussion.....

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

45
46 MS. BURK: Question.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Questions been
49 called. I'll ask for unanimous consent. All against,
50 please signify by saying aye.

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1

2

(No response)

3

4

5

Hearing none passes. Enjoy your lunch.
Well see you in an hour unless you have something to
say. At 2:00, please. Let's come back at 2:00. Thank
you.

6

7

8

(Off record)

9

10

(On record)

11

12

13

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We're going to start
up here in a minute. If any of my Council members can
hear me. Glen, Manny, come on up.

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MR. CARLO: Thank you for letting me
speak. My name is Glenn Carlo. I represent the Fairbanks
Native Elders. I've been with Denakkanaaga since 2002
and I retired about three years ago and now I'm a board
member. I wanted to say that at a meeting Denakkanaaga,
we have an annual meeting every year in one of the 42
villages. In that year was in Nulato. And Benedict Jones
is the one who sponsored an agreement with all the other
villages to not fish that year. And so, everybody agreed
that no one would fish and so we could save it for the
next generation. And then the next year is when the
state started the restrictions. But Denakkanaaga and the
other villages were -- on their own voted to not fish.

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And another thing I wanted to say was
about the caribou. You know, our culture, we start young
and it's taught to the young, the ones who get their
first caribou, first moose they have a potluch and they
give it away, give that moose, so everybody shares,
everybody gets some of that. And that's why potluch are
so important to us. You know, that's how they survive
for so many centuries. And I've seen it in Galena when
they used to have the Air Force Base there that they --
which is probably happening in Greely, where they all
they have to do is check out the fancy boat, four
wheelers and then they get to use those, servicemen. So,
that's probably, maybe they could start a class. But, I
don't know how you teach somebody that old about our
culture and how we do things because we're taught to
respect that animal. And once you do get it down, you
give your thanks and you know how to -- you're taught
to keep it clean and use all of it, you know. Don't get
-- don't even get twigs on it, you know, cut it up right
on the hide, you know.

1
2 About the buffalo, don't make sense to
3 me where you can have these buffalo, the state said we
4 were going to do it and it just, where's the respect
5 when you using somebody's land and the landowners are
6 right there providing feed for them and you don't even
7 give them an opportunity to harvest the first buffalo
8 and throw a big potluch for it and honor that buffalo,
9 you know, that's supposed to bring you good luck. So to
10 me to say that, oh, it's everybody's, you know, that's
11 just a cop-out, you know, and I, I believe the state has
12 bigger, more money intentions. And every time you
13 involve money, it doesn't lead to no good. Anyways,
14 that's all I had to say. Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
17 Manny. Any questions for Glenn?

18
19 (No response)

20
21 We appreciate you -- your testimony, and
22 we hear you loud and clear. Thank you.

23
24 MR. CARLO: Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Going down the
27 agenda. We are at OSM Wildlife Statewide proposals. I'm
28 sorry. Statewide. WP, we're at WP26-01.

29
30 (Pause)

31
32 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
33 of the Council. For the record, my name is Tom Plank,
34 Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence
35 Management, and I will be presenting a summary of
36 wildlife proposal WP26-01. And this is regarding
37 delegation of authority letters statewide and it starts
38 on page 29 of your books. This proposal from the Office
39 of Subsistence Management seeks to move authority for
40 managing federal hunts out of delegation of authority
41 letters and into unit specific regulations. If adopted,
42 the 61 delegation of authority letters currently in use
43 across Alaska would be rescinded. Delegation of
44 authority letters were originally meant to provide
45 management flexibility, but over time they've created
46 inefficiencies. In -- any action taken under a
47 delegation of authority letter counts as a special
48 action which triggers requirements for public hearings,
49 tribal consultations and Regional Advisory Council
50 recommendations. These processes are important for

1 unusual or emergency situations, but they add
2 unnecessary burdens when applied to routine in-season
3 management actions such as closing a hunt when a quota
4 is met. As a result, federal in-season managers and OSM
5 staff spend significant time on procedural requirements
6 for decisions that are already expected every year. High
7 staff turnover also makes consistency difficult, and on
8 top of that, OSM must maintain 61 delegation of authority
9 letters, some of which overlap, conflict or contain
10 outdated guidance.

11
12 By moving the authorities into
13 regulations, in-season management actions would no
14 longer trigger the special action process. Approximately
15 four pages of boilerplate delegation of authority letter
16 requirements would be replaced with one clear paragraph
17 in regulations. Public transparency improves since
18 changes to delegated authority would go through the
19 standard regulatory proposal process. Oversight becomes
20 simpler with clear responsibilities and reduce
21 administrative workload. And importantly, the Board
22 retains authority over emergency closures and broader
23 decisions but in-season managers would be able to act
24 quickly within the parameters set by the Board. This
25 proposal is not expected to affect wildlife populations
26 or subsistence opportunities. It is primarily an
27 administrative, streamlining how reoccurring decisions
28 are made. It increases efficiency, strengthens
29 coordination with the state and local users and makes
30 the process more transparent for the public.

31
32 Now, one alternative to consider is
33 replacing the phrase "coordination" with and
34 "regulation" with "seeking input and considering
35 feedback from". This clarifies the expectations for in-
36 season managers to communicate their actions and
37 consider feedback without adding the confusion that has
38 developed around the word coordinate. The OSM's
39 preliminary conclusion is to adopt WP26-01 with
40 modification to replace "coordination" with "seeking
41 input and considering feedback from" and to modify,
42 WP26-01a and WP26-01b with region specific regulations.
43 Adopting these changes would reduce administrative
44 burden, resolve inconsistencies and improve efficiencies
45 while maintaining transparency and accountability of
46 federal subsistence management.

47
48 And to kind of give you an example of
49 what this means, Brooke, could you go to slide 2? If you
50 look on the board currently, that's the way our

1 regulations are. A good example would be the Chisana
2 caribou hunt. If you go into regulations for Unit 12,
3 you'll see that little exclamation point and they're on
4 the regulations, it kind of tells you about that hunt.
5 And then you got to go to the back of the book and
6 underneath the section of delegations of authority and
7 then go down the line for Wrangell-St. Elias to see that
8 they have and what they have to be able to, delegation
9 of authority of over with this change of this proposal
10 -- Brooke, go ahead and slide 3. All of this will be put
11 into regulations to look like that. So, you'll have that
12 regulation above. And then to highlight the bold print
13 is what will be added to the regulation, letting you
14 know that know that Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and
15 Preserve, what they have delegation of authority of and
16 who they need to reach out to. And, you know, that's
17 kind of thought behind it to simplify how these are for
18 the users. With that, if I y'all have any questions,
19 I'll be here and help.

20
21 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. I just
22 wanted to clarify that the paper I just handed out was
23 the delegation of authority letter for the Fortymile
24 Caribou Herd. And so similar to what Tom was explaining,
25 currently we have this four-page letter with, you know,
26 all sorts of boilerplate language and additional
27 requirements. Because currently, when in-season
28 management actions are taken, they're considered special
29 actions. And so, they're subject to all the, you know,
30 regulations that concern special actions. And that's not
31 really appropriate for these routine management actions
32 that happen every year. You know, special actions are
33 meant for emergency situations. So anyway, we have 60
34 plus of these letters now for wildlife in OSM. And so,
35 it's taking these four pages and just putting it in that
36 paragraph, that's actually in codified regulation. So,
37 I just passed that out. So, you can kind of see an
38 example of what these letters currently look like.
39 Thanks.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: And through the chair Lisa
42 before you leave, could you also just let the council
43 know kind of about process about how we might approach
44 this proposal and then like the sub proposal for the
45 Eastern Interior. Thank you.

46
47 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. So, this is a
48 statewide proposal because it's kind of like a process
49 change that OSM suggesting. You know, for all the
50 delegation of authority across the state. To move them

1 out of these four-page letters and put them in to the
2 codified regulations. But then we separated it out
3 region by region, so that, you know, you're just looking
4 at what the delegation authority is for Eastern Interior
5 specific delegated authority. And so, the suggestion is
6 to do two separate votes, one on like the concept
7 statewide to move them from letters into unit specific
8 regulations. And then if there's any region-specific
9 modifications to like the Eastern Interior, you know,
10 Fortymile -- you pretty much just have the Fortymile
11 Caribou and the Chisana Caribou. And those are the only
12 delegated authorities in the Eastern Interior region.
13 But if there's any modifications to those delegated
14 authorities, which we kind of heard earlier during the
15 Fortymile presentation, that BLM is interested in
16 additional delegated authority of harvest quotas and
17 setting harvest zones, that would be a modification that
18 you could make. And kind of a separate motion just for
19 your Eastern Interior specific delegated authority.

20
21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Just a quick question.
22 Are we to take up the statewide separately to the ones
23 for the Eastern Interior?

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: And I'll just ask Lisa --
26 this is Brooke. Lisa for confirmation. Do you think it's
27 okay that we go through the procedures? Kind of for both
28 of them, just as one. And then when we get to Council
29 motion, we'll just do the statewide and then the Eastern
30 Interior. Does that sound okay to everybody?

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.
33 I'm sorry.

34
35 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
36 Shockley. So, I'm new to this. Who is the delegate? I
37 mean, when you say delegates, who are the delegates?

38
39 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Thank you,
40 Shockley. It depends on the particular letter in
41 question. Like the one that I showed you up there. The
42 Wrangell-St. Elias has delegation from the board to make
43 these decisions. And that's what the letter gives them.
44 Now, with the Fortymile, you know, of course it has, I
45 think it's off the top of my head I don't remember
46 exactly because I didn't read that one, but I know this
47 one because I read it. She does. So, each letter is
48 different. Did that answer your question? Okay.

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1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Sorry. So, Sue said
2 whoever owns the land are the delegates. And so
3 specifically who delegates? I guess.

4
5 MR. PLANK: Through Chair. Tom Plank,
6 OSM. So, it's whoever is managing that particular land
7 where the decisions are being made. So, if the hunt unit
8 is up, say like, again, I will use this example because
9 I have it up on the board. This is for Unit 12. And that
10 description puts it squarely in Wrangell-St. Elias Park.
11 So, management decisions for that area would be made by
12 that superintendent. So that's why that delegation of
13 authority is for that superintendent to make those
14 management on behalf of the Board. Is that or am I doing
15 it wrong?

16
17 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, in that case it's just
18 one person then making the decision. Right?

19
20 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. The --
21 yeah. So, it's the Board delegates authority to one
22 federal -- one federal manager for a particular hunt.
23 And so, it depends on the hunt area. You know, what
24 federal lands are in that hunt area. And so generally,
25 if there's multiple federal lands in one hunt area. The
26 Board delegates authority to the manager that has the
27 most lands in that area. And so, I mean this one, I
28 think, you know, you can see Tetlin National Wildlife
29 Refuge is required to be coordinated with because I think
30 there's a little bit of Tetlin Refuge in that hunt area,
31 but the vast majority of its Wrangell-St. Elias National
32 Park. So, the Board delegates authority to the park,
33 because they're the primary land -- has the majority of
34 the land in that hunt area. And so similarly, like with
35 the Fortymile Herd, you know, this -- that herd we heard
36 ranges all over, you know, 20E, 25C, 20F and so the
37 Board just delegated authority to the BLM to manage the
38 Fortymile Herd across all those hunt areas. You know,
39 instead of saying, well, in 20E, it can be Yukon-charley
40 and 20 BLM, and 20, you know, like so it's trying to
41 like, I guess just yeah, streamline management but still
42 require coordination with the other land managers and
43 you know, ADF&G and OSM and the Chair of the Council's
44 are always required to.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Explain what's
47 changing so people understand please.

48
49 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. So, Lisa Grediagin,
50 it's primarily an administrative change. Like there's

1 no functional on the ground change for wildlife or
2 management. It's mostly taking this four-page letter
3 that's administratively delegated by the Board and
4 putting it in one paragraph in regulation. And the reason
5 OSM supports this is because, a: there's 60 of these
6 letters now and trying to maintain 60 of these and like
7 every cycle we get more, you know last cycle I think we
8 got, you know, like 5 new letters. And then we had to
9 revise 10 other ones and like, update hunt area
10 descriptors and things like that. So, it's just
11 untenable for OSM to accurately maintain 60 of these
12 letters that keep increasing every year. And the other
13 thing is, as I mentioned earlier, when it's in a letter,
14 when it's administratively delegated through a letter,
15 there -- any in-season management action is a special
16 action. And so, the in-season manager is beholden to all
17 requirements of special actions, mainly public hearings.
18 So, like every time a actions over 60 days, you're
19 supposed to be having a public hearing. Frankly, that's
20 not happening. So, it's kind of telling these in-season
21 managers to do all this -- these extra steps and putting
22 a lot more burden on them when it's just not happening,
23 like they're not doing all the requirements. And then
24 similarly like, special actions are meant for emergency
25 situations. They're not meant for these routine actions
26 that happen every year like a harvest quota is met.
27 We're closing the season. Like, do we really need to
28 have a public hearing to say the quota is met, the season
29 is closed. Like it just will allow the in-season manager
30 to coordinate with those people and submit a, you know,
31 issue a press release a lot sooner and it also is a
32 little more transparent, I think, to the public to know
33 what the delegations of authorities are, because it's
34 right there in regulation versus now. No one can see
35 these letters and what's on these letters unless they
36 specifically request a copy of them. And there is a
37 table in the back of the regulation booklet that just
38 says what the authority is. So, but not all the
39 additional requirements to go along with that.

40
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is Sue. My question
42 is in the delegation, this letter, there's a scope of
43 delegation and effective periods and all of that. Is
44 that in the back of the book, or will that just be in
45 each manager's office?

46
47 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, so if 26-
48 01 is adopted by the Board, these letters will just go
49 away. Like we won't have these letters anymore. But
50 primarily what is going into regulation from these

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1 letters is that scope of delegation. I mean, that's kind
2 of like the key part of this -- of these letters is.

3

4 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, is that going to be
5 in the regulation book?

6

7 MS. GREDIAGIN: Correct, yes.

8

9 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank you.

10

11 (Pause)

12

13 So just to help, I think I see that it's
14 just a house cleaning to.....

15

16 (Pause)

17

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Charlie, can I ask a
19 question?

20

21 (Simultaneous speech)

22

23 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, Chair -- oh, go ahead.

24

25 MR. WOODRUFF: Is this -- this proposal
26 is subject to review by the tribes and just like any
27 other proposal. Correct? Okay. Thank you.

28

29 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. That's correct.

30

31 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, I have a question. So,
32 this letter is from the chair of subsistence, right. So,
33 whatever they're requesting, the Board, right. Instead
34 of having a letter, they'll just send a paragraph. Is
35 that what you're saying? Oh, okay.

36

37 MS. GREDIAGIN: And -- Lisa Grediagin.
38 And so, this is, like Sue said, mostly like an
39 administrative housekeeping thing. Like, it's a lot of
40 bureaucracy. Like, it's a lot of federal bureaucracy.
41 That's so confusing if you're not -- yeah. I mean, it's
42 still confusing to me. And I've done this for ten years.
43 Like, that's all I do. And it's still confusing. So, the
44 other thing is like delegate authority is still an
45 administrative function. And so just because this is
46 what's codified regulation, if there is an emergency
47 situation where additional delegated authority is needed
48 or, you know, some change modification outside of what's
49 in regulation, the Board can still issue a letter to
50 delegate authority to that land manager to address, you

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1 know, that situation in the moment, so.

2

3 MS. SHOCKLEY: And another question.
4 Sorry. So, this is going to all of the RACS, right? So,
5 let's say five agree and five don't. So, what happens?

6

7 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, I mean
8 obviously it's up to the Board what ultimately they
9 decide to do. But my assumption, you know my what I
10 would guess is they would adopt it region by region and
11 say, okay, you know, Kodiak Aleutians supported this
12 change will take away their letters and put them in, you
13 know, unit specific regulations. Eastern Interior didn't
14 support it, so we'll maintain their letters.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Maybe it
17 would be helpful. So, it's not really changing the
18 content of the delegated authority that the managers
19 have, is just changing, like where you reference it.
20 So, whether you look up that delegated authority in a
21 letter or in the book is kind of what the overall change
22 is, if that makes -- helps.

23

24 (Pause)

25

26 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, they want to have this
27 condensed little delegation of authority but then
28 they're still going to have to look in the book and go
29 through all this. What's the difference?

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, go ahead, Lisa.

32

33 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin. So,
34 I guess, again, I think for the users on the ground,
35 there's really not any difference. The difference is
36 more for the in-season managers and for OSM. And it just
37 makes it administratively easier. And for the federal
38 managers to announce in-season management actions. And
39 it makes it easier for OSM to, like, keep track of them
40 all and make sure they're all accurate and up to date.
41 I mean, I guess for users on the ground, the main
42 difference, like Brooke said, would be where you
43 reference it. And so, this would -- that language would
44 be in the CFR, it would be in, you know, the unit
45 specific regulations versus now they're all in a table
46 at the back of the regulation booklet. And so, there's
47 really not much difference for users on the ground. It's
48 more like federal administration streamlining, and yeah.
49 And again, it's just more appropriate for routine
50 actions that happen every single year to be in regulation

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1 versus a special action that's meant for emergency
2 situations. But again, that's a federal manager issue,
3 not really a subsistence user issue.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: It's so simple it's
6 complicated. Go ahead, Andy.

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 I'm in support of this. I understand it's basically, as
10 Lisa was saying, it's housekeeping, but it streamlines
11 everything. And the only place -- it doesn't really
12 impact anything, but the improvements is when it comes
13 to knowing who to -- for people like us who are a part
14 of the regulatory or making recommendations for seasons
15 and bag limits and all that, I think it helps us to know
16 the entity that we're going to be working with or if we
17 need to make some changes or modifications or whatever.
18 I see this as just a very much a simplification. I don't
19 think it impacts the hunter on the ground at all. And
20 I'm very much in favor of it. And anything we can do to
21 take the miscellaneous encumbrance workload away from
22 entities so that they can spend time doing meaningful
23 things, that's what I'm for. Thank you.

24
25 (Pause)

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: They said don't
28 move. Okay, we're going to go through this list right
29 here. We had -- public comments received during the open
30 comment period?

31
32 MR. PLANK: Through chair, Tom Plank,
33 OSM. We did have one public comment submitted during the
34 open period, and that's on page 243 of your books where
35 it starts. And that was from the Ahtna Inter-Tribal
36 Resource Commission. Their comment is in support of 26-
37 01, but only with conditions. They stated that
38 delegating authority to local managers makes sense for
39 timely decisions, but it must include mandatory tribal
40 consultation. Local knowledge is critical when actions
41 affect subsistence species, timing or access. They also
42 urge transparency, consistency across units and limits
43 on delegated scope. Most importantly, regulations for
44 Unit 11 and 12 must explicitly require consultation with
45 AITRCs. And as it -- it was a wait a minute. And then
46 with the conditions of -- bear with me, I'm trying to
47 condense down their comment. I'd recommend looking at
48 the full comment, because I'm just kind of summarizing
49 it.

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1 (Off-record conversation)

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4 And they may be online if they want to
5 -- they also called during the tribal consultation to
6 reiterate what they sent in in that letter that's in
7 your book.

8

9 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I
10 guess I'm a little mixed up on this consultation. And
11 then because AITRC is calling out things that they have
12 because of their agreement with the government, their
13 cooperative management agreement with the government.
14 Well, we don't quite have a cooperative management
15 agreement in the Tanana Chiefs region but there is a
16 historic memorandum of understanding that's been signed
17 by TCC and all of the federal agencies. And there's a
18 gravel to gravel one, too. So, there's like a separate
19 TCC MOU, and then there's a gravel-to-gravel MOU, which
20 includes like different fish commissions and stuff. And
21 so I'm I guess I'm a little -- you see the parallels
22 where AITRC is asking for specific consultation, and I
23 feel like I should be asking for specific consultation
24 in our region with like, Tanana Chiefs Conference and
25 with the Yukon River Fish Commission like, and I guess
26 I'm a little confused on how I would -- how does that
27 apply here? Because it would be they're looking at
28 specific units.

29

30 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. So, if
31 you turn around and look at the language on the screen,
32 you can see all those entities they're supposed to
33 coordinate with. So, coordination with ADF&G, OSM,
34 Tetlin and Chair the affected Councils. And so, what
35 we've done with. Yeah, like for example, Unit 13 caribou,
36 the Nelchina Caribou is we've added AITRC as one of the
37 entities required for coordination. And so, to that list
38 I mean, this is the perfect example, Chisana Caribou is
39 that we would add AITRC into that list. And I actually,
40 you know, their comments, it's just kind of the timing
41 of how all these things happen. But I actually have it
42 noted that, you know, OSM would probably revise our
43 recommendation for the Eastern Interior specific
44 proposals to add AITRC, you know, as a required entity
45 for consultation. And so, if you guys have additional
46 entities you'd want to require for consultation, you
47 could certainly request that as a modification. But
48 again, the only ones you for Eastern region are the Unit
49 12, Chisana Caribou and the Fortymile Caribou Herd.

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1 MS. ENTSMINGER: So, AITRC would be put
2 into Unit 12, but then the local communities and Native
3 communities in Unit 12 are not.

4
5 MS. GREDIAGIN: Well, it's just who's --
6 Lisa Grediagin, I mean, it'd be up to you guys to suggest
7 putting additional entities in there that are required
8 for coordination. I mean, some places require
9 coordination with an AC. I've seen that in other
10 delegation authorities. And AC, yeah. I don't know if
11 I've ever seen specific communities required because
12 it's like, who would you contact? I mean, I don't know,
13 a mayor of a.....

14
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: It would -- I'd have to
16 ask Bruce Ervin. There would be, you know, a TCC for
17 that region. I mean, I think if we're going to go down
18 that road and it happens, they actually need to look at
19 all the regions the same. That would be my suggestion.
20 All the regions should be the same. If they do it for
21 one region, it should be done for all. Because people
22 feel left out when that happens. I -- we went through
23 this a long time ago with Unit 12 when they started
24 doing C&Ts. The only people that got the first C&T was
25 Chistochina. And I forget the other village and it's
26 like, but wait, how about the people that live there?
27 So, and there -- and when they put that in, it was from
28 AITRC or Ahtna people and they were -- they thought,
29 well, they didn't understand the process. And they said
30 we want to make sure we're included. So, and it was
31 innocently done. But it you know, we don't want to
32 innocently exclude either. That's how I feel.

33
34 MS. SHOCKLEY: Again, how realistic.....

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 DR. SIMON: Mr. Chair.

39
40 MS. SHOCKLEY: I'm sorry. Oops.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We have somebody
43 speaking. Give us a minute.

44
45 MS. SHOCKLEY: Dorothy Shockley. So, how
46 realistic can you, I guess, guarantee that these
47 conditions would be met?

48
49 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. Which
50 conditions?

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, the ones that Ahtna saying.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Jim, if you're still there.

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DR. SIMON: Yes. Thank you very much. Can you hear me, Mr. Chair?

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. You have the floor.

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DR. SIMON: Yeah. Thank you. For the record, my name is Dr. Jim Simon. I'm the deputy director of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission based here in Glennallen, Alaska. We apologize that our budget doesn't allow us to travel to Fairbanks to be in person with you today. But I do want to clarify the -- some of the existing consultation coordination requirements with Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission by federal land managers relates to the 2016 memorandum of agreement negotiated between our eight member tribes and two Alaska Native regional corporations and AITRC leadership with the Secretary of the Department of the Interior. And which outlines a number of meaningful ways in which a federal partnership of and co-stewarding resources within the Ahtna traditional territory occur. And that's where in some of those delegations of authority that have recently been put into regulations like this proposal, WP26-01 would do throughout the federal system. It's just important that those kinds of elements from those delegated letters of authority from the Federal Subsistence Board to the individual federal in-season managers continue. And that that be reflected in

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1 the regulations. And we have written comments that that
2 have been submitted that are probably too lengthy to go
3 into right now, you can read them. But we believe that
4 it's important for all the federal land managers to
5 recognize their federal-Indian trust obligations as
6 federal employees and to appropriately consult with
7 tribes or inter-tribal commissions from -- that tribes
8 have delegated those kinds of consultation authorities
9 to. For example, I think Member Burk already mentioned
10 the historic tribal self-governance agreement that has
11 been negotiated with the Department of Interior and
12 Tanana Chiefs Conference on behalf of their 37
13 recognized tribes and other tribal communities, is very
14 similar in outlook and purpose and intent as the 2016
15 memorandum of agreement with the Department of Interior
16 that the Ahtna tribes and the ANCSA Corporations
17 negotiated. So, there are more specific details in our
18 written comments. And thank you, Mr. Chair, for the
19 opportunity to weigh in. I think it's important when any
20 tribal organization becomes a topic of conversation,
21 that representatives from that organization are provided
22 the opportunity to speak. And I'm happy to answer any
23 questions that you may have or others on the Council may
24 have. Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr.
27 Simon, appreciate that coming from you. I really
28 appreciate it.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: And thank you. Through the
31 Chair. Jim, and I want to apologize that I didn't see
32 your hand raised and your message in the chat as I had
33 a bunch of screens open, so I don't. I don't want you
34 to think we were. We were ignoring you. Thank you for
35 speaking up and letting us know that you were there.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions?

38
39 DR. SIMON: No problems, Brooke

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions for
42 Jim?

43
44 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I
45 really appreciate you being online and jumping in.
46 Because that's what I'm trying to figure out how to
47 acknowledge and include what I believe to be the right
48 thing to do for Tanana Chiefs recognizing that there,
49 you know, people might not realize that all of these
50 tribal orgs. and these fish commissions are in some ways

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1 duplicating the makeup of agency folks of fish and
2 wildlife because they need the capacity to engage in
3 resource decision making. And so, a lot of us are
4 building up scientific capacity within these inter-
5 tribal orgs. And so, it's not just about a user group,
6 it is about what Jim mentioned that tribal to tribal or
7 nation to nation, the federal trust responsibility of
8 the federal land managers. So, Jim, should I be thinking
9 about in -- for the language here, I guess I need to
10 take a look at the self-governance agreement with DOI
11 to see the kind of language so that we can have a better
12 idea of what the meaningful ways that consultation can
13 occur. So, am I looking to -- also for the TCC region,
14 would these be unit specific like with -- so the only
15 delegated authority that I understand right now was the
16 Fortymile. And then there was another one, Chisana. And
17 that for the units that that hunt occurs, then we would
18 want to have unit specific -- we got some language up
19 on the board that I don't know. You can see it, I think,
20 on your screen. So, then we would want to have Tanana
21 Chiefs Conference be listed as one of the entities to
22 coordinate with. And that would be in each of the units
23 that Fortymile Caribou hunt takes place. I'm kind of
24 fumbling this. I'm a little tired, but I hope that made
25 sense to you. Thanks.

26
27 DR. SIMON: Yeah. Through the Chair.
28 Member Burk, it made perfect sense to me, and I don't
29 want to overstep and speak for Tanana Chiefs Conference,
30 Dilool Erickson or Krystal Lapp may be in the room. I'm
31 not sure, but I was actually part of the tribal self-
32 governance negotiation team with the Department of
33 Interior and Tanana Chiefs Conference and this in there
34 -- this was specifically one of the goals is to
35 operationalize the government to government
36 consultations. And I believe that Tanana Chiefs
37 Conference is now in a position to be able to assist in
38 performing the federal functions of consultation with
39 these particular land managers. But again, I'm
40 overstepping and would defer to any Tanana Chiefs
41 Conference representative in the room to speak to that.

42
43 MS. LAPP: Through the Chair. I guess I
44 walked in right in time. I'm bouncing between the Western
45 and Eastern right now. And so, we're talking about Unit
46 12 caribou. Oh, sorry, Krystal Lapp, for the record,
47 it's been a day you guys. Unfortunately, I don't have
48 the TCC answers for those right now. I could probably
49 do some text messages but Charlie's got his hand up so
50 he might be able to help.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Could you
3 refreshing -- and let her know what we're talking about
4 and what we're doing? Really -- yeah.

5
6 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. No worries. Yeah,
7 yeah. You did walk in just at the perfect moment. So,
8 we're talking about delegated authority, where the Board
9 delegated authority to a federal manager to do various
10 in-season management actions, like announce a harvest
11 quota set, season dates or harvest limits, you know,
12 things like that. And so, then the federal season manager
13 before they make a final decision and announce an action
14 is required to coordinate with a number of entities like
15 OSM, ADF&G and the Chair of the Council. And what we're
16 discussing is to also require coordination with tribal
17 organizations. And so AITRC had submitted written
18 comments requesting that they are included to be
19 consulted with prior to in-season managers -- in-season
20 management actions that, you know, affect their areas.
21 And so, we did this with Unit 13, caribou with Nelchina
22 Caribou that AITRC was added to that list of entities
23 for coordination. And so, the question is whether TCC
24 would also like to be added to that list of entities for
25 in-season management actions that, you know, affect your
26 area, which I think for the Eastern Interior would only
27 be Fortymile Caribou.

28
29 MS. LAPP: Thank you for the
30 clarification and getting me up to speed. I won't say
31 with 100% certainty. I will definitely say that TCC is
32 always interested in being consulted. And I know that
33 we have our DOI self-gov agreement, that definitely puts
34 us. I just need to double check the scope of that work.
35 So, that would be my answer for right now. Yes,
36 definitely put us on the list and I will just double
37 check our scope of work.

38
39 MS. BURK: Thank you so much for that. I
40 know we thought this was going to be simple, but nothing
41 is. I -- I'm a little -- I want to support this and get
42 this through, but I feel like I've got some
43 modifications, so if you can help. I'm starting to go a
44 little brain dead.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
47 Brooke. Yeah, let's continue to go through the process.
48 And I think these modifications we're talking about,
49 since they are specific to the Eastern Interior. We'll
50 have those two different motions again. One is just kind

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1 of the moving them from the letter to the regs. That
2 doesn't change any of the content of the delegation. And
3 then when we bring up the Eastern Interior specific, we
4 can talk about modifications you all might like to see.
5 And if you want to add TCC to that list we can talk
6 about that when we get there.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Agency and
9 tribal comments. Go ahead, Bruce.

10

11 MR. ERVIN: I tried to wrap my head
12 around the conversations going on right now, and I think
13 the upper Tanana tribes would, you know, I can't really
14 speak for all of them, but I think it would be good for
15 them to know what's going on, too.

16

17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Bruce.

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: And just for -- this is
20 Brooke, for the record. For all the folks online and
21 listening in there will be additional tribal
22 consultations on all the federal wildlife proposals
23 after this meeting and before the Federal Subsistence
24 Board meeting. Those are going to happen in early
25 February -- the 19th and 20th of February. Sorry, I
26 misspoke. So, we'll definitely be doing outreach and
27 letting tribes know about that opportunity so we can get
28 additional comment. And then of course comment can also
29 be given during and right before the Federal Subsistence
30 Board meeting. Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Are you happy,
33 Bruce?

34

35 (No response)

36

37 MS. BURK: Thanks. Bruce, this is Eva.
38 So, you're clear on the conversation right now. Ahtna
39 had a -- AITRC, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission
40 submitted a comment letter and they support this
41 proposal 26-01 with modification. The Ahtna people are
42 asking to be on the list of folks who are coordinated
43 with when it comes to in-season management. And so, Ahtna
44 is listed for Unit 12. But the upper Tanana villages
45 were not, is -- do you think that we should be adding
46 the upper village Upper Tanana villages at this time or
47 do you do you need more time?

48

49 DR. SIMON: I think it would be great to
50 have them involved too. Especially, you know, Tetlin,

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1 Northway, I know those two for sure. You know, Tanacross
2 might be interested, too. Maybe Dot Lake, Healy Lake.
3 Maybe Eagle too, I'm not too sure. But it would be great
4 to have them involved with anything that has to do with
5 Unit 12.

6

7

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

8

9

10 I just checked our scope of work and that is within our
11 scope of work. So, yes, please add us.

12

13

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Okay.

14

15

16

17

18

MS. SHOCKLEY: So, I mean, if we're going
to start naming communities, I mean, could we just say
that we would consult all communities affected by a
certain action?

19

20

21

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm not that -- I'm
not the boss of that.

22

23

24

25

26

27

MS. ENTSMINGER: Shouldn't we just go
through the process now and then -- we're getting into
discussion and we probably shouldn't, we -- or we're
going to be here for another two days, I think.

28

29

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37

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm sorry to say
that we do that to every proposal. And then in the end
it gets explained going through the process. And then
you'll know more at the end when you've got discussion.
Yes. We keep getting off in the weeds and taking too
long. Yeah. We're going to be here at midnight because
we're not leaving until this list is done. I'll remind
you that. Okay, next step. Agencies and tribal comments.
Is there any more agencies or tribes out there that want
to comment at this time?

38

39

(No response)

40

41

ADF&G.

42

43

(No response)

44

45

Federal agencies.

46

47

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49

50

MS. YEMMA: Hi, this is Angela Yemma with
the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office. Yeah, I think
this proposal would be more efficient. It would have
consolidating it, the administrative burden and then

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1 just making it a little bit simpler for an in-season
2 manager to find everything, especially with transitions
3 and whatnot, so. Sorry. I'm confused. Are we talking
4 about Eastern Interior only now?

5

6 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, we're doing the
7 process together.

8

9 MS. YEMMA: Yeah, all of them.

10

11 MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay.

12

13 MS. YEMMA: Okay, cool. Okay. The first
14 one. Yes, on the general proposal, just what I said. And
15 then for the Eastern Interior specific delegation, that
16 conversation earlier about if there would be interest
17 in adding the ability to establish an annual quota, a
18 harvest quota and or by zone, and then also be able to
19 manage by the state defined zones would be helpful, along
20 with the other authorities that already exist with the
21 bag limit and the season dates. Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
24 Going on. Tribes and ANCSA Corporations. Do you have a
25 question? Okay, go ahead.

26

27 MS. BURK: Can we just want to make sure
28 we have it clear on the quota, like the adding the quota
29 language and your ability now to set quotas.

30

31 MS. YEMMA: Yes. If you could add the
32 ability to set an annual quota or as Don mentioned
33 earlier, maybe by zone. We would be supportive of that.

34

35 MR. MAYO: Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Go ahead,
38 Randy.

39

40 MR. MAYO: Yes. For the record, Randy
41 Mayo and rural tribal member of Stevens Village, former
42 first chief for many years, former EIRAC Board member
43 and former Village Corporation board president.
44 Currently (distortion) appointed member of Yukon River
45 Inter Tribal Fish Commission and employed by the tribe
46 as the tribal buffalo herd manager. And I just want to
47 make comment and follow in the discussion and reasoning
48 here that you know, follow on AITRC's lead that -- it's
49 very important that on the ground, the federal managers
50 realize the trust responsibility of the federal

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1 management agencies in these units and that, you know,
2 means whether it's the tribes and the affected area or
3 tribal consortia needs to be added to this list here on
4 this amendments. And just real quickly that Stevens
5 Village is located in 25D West, Yukon Flats Wildlife
6 Refuge. And, you know, not only is there tribal
7 consortia, but in individual tribes, but Stevens Village
8 has a traditional land use plan. It is a legal document.
9 The Secretary of Interior relying on that document added
10 it to the Reorganization Act federal charter of Stevens
11 Village as the traditional territory. So, in further
12 proposals, I can now speak to that background a little
13 bit, but just, you know, wanted to really mention that
14 this is very important discussion. And I'm glad that
15 AITRC raised the government-to-government issue with
16 their comment. So, thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
19 Randy. I don't see any questions for you. I appreciate
20 your time. Any other tribes in ANCSA Corporations?

21
22 (No response)

23
24 Advisory group comments, other RACs.

25
26 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. And,
27 yeah, I'll do the other Council recommendations here.
28 So, the Southeast Council supported 26-01 is modified
29 by OSM. The Kodiak Aleutians Council also supported as
30 modified by OSM, the Western Interior supported as
31 modified by OSM and the North Slope support as modified
32 by OSM. So, all councils that have met to date have all
33 supported 26-01 as modified by OSM.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

36
37 MS. JOHCUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 Council. I'm Kim Jochum, I'm reading the comment from
39 the Subsistence Resource Commissioner of Wrangell-St.
40 Elias National Park. They responded to 26-01 and then
41 specific addendums of 2601b, which is Southcentral and
42 as well as 26-01i, which is Eastern Interior. So, the
43 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource
44 Commission supported with modification, moving delegated
45 authorities in the Southcentral and Eastern Interior
46 regions into unit specific regulations. So, the
47 modification adds the Ahtna Intertribal Resource
48 Commission, AITRC, as a consulting body for Unit 11
49 winter moose hunt and Unit 12 Chisana caribou hunt. AITRC
50 has been conducting research that would benefit federal

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1 in-season managers with a decision making for these
2 species. It is a way to increase working together and
3 supporting more effective management decisions. The
4 Subsistence Resource Commission believes moving delegate
5 authority into unit specific regulations would be a
6 better and more efficient system. Thank you.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON: Thank you so much. Okay,
9 Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

10
11 (No response)

12
13 Now, I'm down to Subsistence Resource
14 Commissions. Okay, other written public comments. None.
15 Public testimony. Come on up, Pam. Thank you, Pam.

16
17 MS. MILLER: Hello, I'm Pamela A. Miller.
18 I'm speaking for myself. This is a lot to take in but I
19 read the proponents statement, and I was troubled by the
20 current -- where it says, the current approach to in-
21 season management presents several operational
22 inefficiencies, one of the four -- public hearing I can
23 understand, public -- tribal consultation requirement.
24 That is not an inefficiency. That is a basic way that
25 the federal government should be doing business. And I
26 think there's a way to make this so that it's efficient
27 in that there's contact with the tribes, ANCSA
28 Corporations, whoever else is not currently listed on
29 this letter. So, that they know this situation is going
30 on, it could be as simple as the OSM Coordinator keeping
31 track of the current email addresses and proper people
32 in their proper jobs. That is a big job to keep track
33 of who is fulfilling the work. But it's a basic thing
34 about managing for subsistence and having the tribal
35 voice have its role recognized. So, I would submit that
36 in each of these lists of who should be coordinated with
37 it should say affected -- I don't know how you want to
38 treat corporations. I can't speak to that. But I think
39 that tribal government should be listed as an entity,
40 as a regular thing. And the current letters do list
41 federal managers expected to work with managers from
42 state and federal agencies, blah, blah, blah, local
43 tribes and ANCSA Corporations. And then later on, it
44 says for management decisions on special actions,
45 consultation is not always possible but to the extent
46 practicable, two-way communication will take place
47 before decisions are implemented. You may also establish
48 meaningful and timely opportunities for government-to-
49 government consultation. So, there is more that I think
50 you just don't want to pass by that by the time it gets

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1 into the federal regulations process by OSM, that puts
2 it in a much more political realm. And I think doing it
3 right at this stage is important. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
6 for that. Randy, are you still online? You have your
7 hand up. Oh, I'm sorry. We are almost to discussion.

8

9 (Off-record conversation)

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGH: Okay. Where -- would
12 you have something to say? Okay, we're back to the
13 internet, and I think Randy's hand was up. I don't know
14 whether he had it up again or it was from earlier. If
15 he's still on you, please let us know, Randy.

16

17 MR. MAYO: No, I'm done comment. And I'm
18 trying to take my hand down.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Okay. We're
21 We'll just check in with you. Alright. Thank you. Any
22 more public testimony?

23

24 (No response)

25

26 I don't see any. Okay, Council
27 discussion.

28

29 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Thank you for
30 your comments. And that she brought up a good point, and
31 I wanted to make sure that, you know, when you mentioned
32 -- when Sue mentioned that, or whoever that all
33 landowners are consulted. So, two of the most important
34 or very important landowners are the regional
35 corporations and the village corporations. So, I think
36 those -- they need to be in included. And if I don't
37 know if I need to make a motion or whatever, I could do
38 that.

39

40 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. I make a motion
41 to adopt 26-01, and -- with the modification from OSM.
42 Do I need to make that more specific? Okay. And.....

43

44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Open. Open for.....

45

46 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second that, thank
47 you.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I think
50 we're getting tired here. Yep. So, let's try to do the

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1 best we can I thank you. Okay.

2

3 MS. BURK: I -- This is Eva. I hope I
4 didn't confuse us. The reason why I called out AITRC and
5 really looked at this, is because of the capacity that
6 AITRC is building to weigh in on fish and wildlife
7 management and the in-season management capacity that
8 they have too, whereas each landowner and each tribal
9 government has all the opportunities to comment on
10 everything and anything that's happening here to the
11 managers. And so, this specific thing that I'm trying
12 to tease out here is really looking at the tribal orgs
13 who are building this specialized capacity to weigh in
14 on fish and wildlife management. It's not -- because we
15 all -- everything that we're asking for here tribal
16 consultation, consultation with landowners and ANCSA
17 Corporations, that's all still part of the process. And
18 we're not losing it. I'm just trying to make sure that
19 in-season management is coordinated with tribal orgs who
20 have that capacity.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, this is Sue. In
25 this -- the delegation authority letter, it specifically
26 says all of these landowners and does mention local
27 tribes and Native corporations. So, we don't need to get
28 into a giant explanation of how we're going to go about
29 it. We're just asking, to me, I feel like I'm just asking
30 that we're equal in the way we treat, you know, just a
31 phone call. That's all it takes. I'm texting Bruce and
32 Bruce is saying that they have -- let me tell you the
33 right words. It's called the Upper Tanana subregion. And
34 it includes all the villages. So, it's a one phone call.
35 And I think that's all we really want to get across to
36 OSM, just to include those one phone calls and not make
37 a big deal about how many villages you call or anything
38 like that, just make your one phone call because that's
39 all they're doing with the Chair. He's making one phone
40 call to the Chair and oh yeah, I like your idea of
41 perfect. We're good. It's usually -- it's not a big
42 deal. I've had a lot of those phone calls when I was a
43 Chair, so it's pretty simple. And I would like to keep
44 it simple. Thank you. So that's why I'm in favor of this
45 motion.

46

47 MS. BURK: And just really quick, even
48 more simple is the fact that the upper Tanana region
49 that you're talking about is within the Tanana Chiefs
50 collective of villages and the Tanana Chiefs Tribal

1 Resource Stewardship program, it's the equivalent of
2 AITRC in the Tanana Chiefs region. And so, the job and
3 that one phone call to eight or to our tribal resource
4 stewardship program would make sure that all of this
5 information is getting to Bruce immediately. So, I think
6 that's the only edit I have, is for TRSP to be somehow
7 called out in the way that AITRC is being called out and
8 I'm not even sure if we're there yet. So, I support this
9 general motion and I'm -- I think I'm getting my motions
10 mixed up now.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: To the Chair. Yes. We'll
13 move into the Eastern Interior specific motion after
14 this. So, the current motion on the table is to support
15 the statewide proposal 26-01 with the OSM modification,
16 to move delegated authority from the letters into the
17 unit specific regulations.

18
19 MS. BURK: Question.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, Andy, we
22 almost missed you. Go ahead.

23
24 MR. BASSICH: If questions have been
25 called, that's fine. I just wanted to call in and show
26 my support in the positive on this. And just to thank
27 Eva for clarifying. And, Sue, I am exactly in the same
28 mindset as what Sue just described. It's working and
29 it's simple. And as far as you know, Eagle in our area
30 and Eagle Village, who's not represented here right now,
31 but I have a lot of contact with them. They're always
32 involved in that, in the process with the BLM managers
33 in regards to the Fortymile Caribou Herd. So, the process
34 is working right now very well. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.
37 Question's been called. I'll ask for unanimous consent.
38 Any against, please signify by saying aye.

39
40 (No response)

41
42 Hearing none passes. Thank you.

43
44 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I just wanted
45 to congratulate our Council for finding at least one
46 thing to go down the rabbit hole in during our meeting.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.

49
50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Because we've been doing a
2 great job so far of avoiding the rabbit hole but that's
3 okay. Every meeting, we need one.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I like, yeah. I like
6 that.

7
8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, I think Charlie. One
9 minute, I mean, just yeah, at the end it was very simple,
10 I think. But I think what was confusing was the example
11 and not including, you know, the village corporations
12 and everybody else that were on there. Yeah. And
13 hopefully they include all those.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Moving on. WP26-01i
16 Eastern Interior Regional Specific Information, page 40
17 if you want to look at it. Yep.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you guys. If you want
20 to start with a motion that includes modifications that
21 you've brought up I've put a list on the screen behind
22 us, and I'll just read that, and then you can decide if
23 you want to incorporate them into the motion. So the
24 suggested modifications for WP26-01i, which is specific
25 to the Eastern Interior region would include modifying
26 delegated authority for Fortymile Caribou to include the
27 ability to set quotas, ability to designate harvest
28 areas or zones, and require consultations with EIRAC
29 members who serve on the Harvest Management Coalition
30 in addition to the EIRAC Chair, and also require
31 consultation with TCC Tribal Resource Stewardship. And
32 then I guess I didn't add you also want to require
33 consultation with TCC tribal for Chisana or I don't know
34 if that's in your region.

35
36 (Off-record conversation)

37
38 Okay. I don't I don't think we're making
39 it hard. I think let me just add one additional line to
40 the modification here.

41
42 MS. GREDIAGIN: Well, yeah. Lisa
43 Grediagin, Brooke, I think the intent is for the Chisana
44 one to add both TCC and AITRC. Correct? Okay.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, this is Brooke, for
47 the record. Please ignore any typos if you see them. I'm
48 putting them on, the additional modification for
49 Shoshana caribou to also require consultations with TCC,
50 Tribal Resource Stewardship, and AITRC.

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MS. BURK: This is Eva. So, moved.

MS. MCDAVID: Made me do all the work on
that one.

MS. ENTSMINGER: It's been moved and
second.

MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'll reference
my earlier comments and discussion with presenters and
with testifiers today. And I think that's good. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you.
Questions been called, I'll ask for unanimous consent
again. All those against, please signify by saying
aye.

(Off-record conversation)

I'm asking for unanimous consent. All
those against, please signify by saying aye. Okay, okay.

(No response)

Hearing none passes. Thank you.

(Pause)

Okay. Eastern Interior WP26-77. Who's
doing that? Liz. Yeap. That's next on the list. Make two
trips if you have to.

MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. For reference -- this
is Brooke. The next proposal, WP26-77 - to recognize the
customary and traditional use of wood bison in the
Eastern Interior region starts on page 163 of your
meeting books.

(Pause)

MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair
and members of the Council. This is Liz Williams,
Anthropologist with OSM. And this is WP26-77, which is
on page 163 in your book. And this proposal was submitted
by you, the Eastern Interior Regional Subsistence
Advisory Council. And you requested the recognition of
the customary and traditional use of wood bison in Units
12, 20 and 25 by the residents of all of those units.
And so, the proponent statement that you gave us is that

1 wood bison were traditionally harvested for subsistence
2 by Alaska Native people for thousands of years. Their
3 use was interrupted only because they ceased to exist
4 in Alaska, not because of a change in patterns of use.
5 Evidence of their traditional use in Northeast Alaska
6 exists in oral histories. The proponent continues that
7 wood bison are currently being reintroduced to the
8 Eastern Interior region and they are listed as an
9 experimental population under the Endangered Species
10 Act. So, the Council clearly acknowledged that although
11 no hunting can happen until the animals are delisted or
12 until there's a population that can sustain a hunt, the
13 council believes their customary and traditional use
14 should nevertheless be recognized. And the
15 reintroduction of wood bison provides a chance for
16 cultural practices and the use of wood bison to be
17 revitalized in the future.

18
19 So, I just want to make it very clear
20 on the record that, often when we do a customary and
21 traditional use analysis, it is followed by a proposal
22 for a season and a bag limit. And that is not the case
23 here because the wood bison populations are not there
24 yet. But we can definitely look at the customary
25 traditional uses according to the eight factors that
26 you're probably used to from your book. And it's
27 basically a holistic look at transmission of knowledge.
28 You can go to that page if you want, but the wood bison
29 reintroductions if you look on page 167, Fish and Game
30 has done a map and it comes from a paper that was written
31 in 2001 by a biologist, a couple of paleontologists,
32 some archaeologists. And so there have been no remains
33 of wood bison found with cultural materials like cooking
34 or, you know, remains of a village or anything but this
35 red zone that you see is where there have been either
36 oral histories or maybe a skull here and there that
37 indicate that wood bison had this range. Most of the
38 oral histories that were recorded all come from one
39 source, that 2001 paper I mentioned. And this started
40 with a unique biologist at Fish and Game who was in Fort
41 Yukon, and he just happened to hear somebody talking
42 about wood bison. An elder told him a story about wood
43 bison. And once he heard that one story, he and some
44 other researchers just sort of did what anthropologists
45 call a snowball survey. They asked the next person, do
46 you know anybody else that might know these stories? So,
47 these stories are documented in this paper.

48
49 Now, the one most of these to these
50 stories came from like Chalkyitsik, Yukon Flats,

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1 Venetie, Tanana, Fort Yukon, Beaver, Arctic Village. And
2 all of these stories are more memories or oral histories
3 that people heard from their grandparents. And some of
4 them may have seen a wood bison, and some of them may
5 have just heard about it. But from the anthropological
6 perspective, there's consistent number of stories with
7 similar themes, and those are within your book. And they
8 all have some very extensive information. There's
9 traditional knowledge, there's all kinds of uses, really
10 incredible information. So, in the first two units in
11 this proposal, this is where most of the ethnographic
12 evidence comes from. Now, Unit 12, we don't have as
13 much. There's one elder from Nabesna area that the
14 anthropologists at Wrangell-St. Elias talked to, who
15 said he remembers like a story, a story, a story about
16 a wood bison skull somebody had. But, you know, it could
17 have floated down the river. Whatever. But the other
18 thing we need to keep straight here, too, is that there's
19 a lot of bison populations in Alaska, and sometimes
20 people say, well, aren't those the ones in Delta Junction
21 or something like that, and Randy Mayo is on the phone
22 and he's the manager of the Stevens Village tribe's bison
23 herd. And those are definitely plains bison that are
24 imported to Alaska from the continental United States.
25 We're talking about wood bison, which are alive now. The
26 transplants have come from Canada and there is
27 traditional knowledge, you know, that spans across the
28 border. So, there's a lot of different opinions about
29 bringing wood bison back. Some people think that because
30 they eat sedges, like Luke was talking about sort of,
31 lower stuff, that they open up habitat for moose, other
32 people have different opinions, so it just probably
33 depends on where you are and what's happening. But those
34 are some of the concerns that people have mentioned about
35 wood bison. The other bison that we've had in Alaska is
36 steppe bison and those were Pleistocene megafauna. There
37 are a lot of fossils or paleontological remains of those,
38 but those are not the wood bison that are actually still
39 living today.

40
41 So, the state of Alaska has the primary
42 management authority for the reintroduction of the wood
43 bison, as you well know. But the Fish and Wildlife
44 Service has also worked with them on the federal level
45 to create the special listing for the non-essential
46 population. So, it's a slightly different Endangered
47 Species Act situation. Some of the other things -- there
48 are -- right now, there are no hunts at all. We're
49 waiting again for more wood bison to come. But there's
50 a real interesting corollary in the C&T history of

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1 subsistence division or sorry, Office of Subsistence
2 Management, when you look at this customary and
3 traditional use history of muskoxen in the North Slope,
4 it's almost identical to what we have with wood bison.
5 There's memories of memories because those were
6 extirpated or ceased to exist in the North Slope, South,
7 Northwest arctic region. They took probably about 20 or
8 30 years after introduction to have mature herds that
9 had a harvestable surplus. And the other thing is, is
10 that there's just a lot of ways to have a customary
11 traditional use determination. You can get it through
12 your oral histories, your paleontological and
13 archaeological or archival evidence. But you also,
14 everybody here knows, that people harvest what shows up
15 for them. And so, a lot of Alaskan wildlife has been
16 transplanted all over the state, like deer in Kodiak,
17 muskox reintroduced. Kodiak has had all sorts of
18 introductions. Some succeeded, some failed. But so,
19 there's two ways to get a C&T. So, I see this as a real
20 just viable option. And that's why OSM'S preliminary
21 conclusion is to support this proposal. Okay. Sue taught
22 me to be brief, hopefully.

23
24 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. I make
25 a motion to support. Oh. We do. Oh, yeah.

26
27 MR. WOODRUFF: Liz, I don't know if you
28 recall, but when Tom Seaton was here once before talking
29 about the wood bison, I testified that I found a half a
30 skull coming out of the cutbank in 1979, just across the
31 -- on the north shore, across from the Charley River.
32 And, of course, I surrendered that since it was on
33 federal land. I think Park Service has that now. So, I
34 just wanted to put that in your TEK. Okay. Thank you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Any public
37 comments received during the open comment period?

38
39 MS. WILLIAMS: I don't believe so.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Tribal and
42 ANCSA Corporation consultation report?

43
44 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Agency and tribal
47 comments. ADF&G.

48
49 (No response)

50

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1 Federal agencies.

2

3 MR. MAYO: Mr. Chair.

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5 MR. CARLO: Go ahead, Randy.

6

7 MR. MAYO: Mr. Chair.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

10

11 MR. MAYO: Yeah, yeah. Again, for the
12 record, Randy Mayo, Stevens Village. That you know, I
13 speak in full support of this C&T determination as the
14 first step in a very, very long process that Liz had,
15 you know, mentioned. And so, I just wanted to speak in
16 support of this. You know, seeking this determination.
17 So, thank you.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Randy.
20 Moving on. Federal agency -- Okay.

21

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chair. May I
23 interrupt? I misspoke earlier when you asked. We did get
24 a public comment from Ahtna Intertribal Resource
25 Commission in support of the wood bison customary and
26 traditional use determination. And they do have quite a
27 rationale. If you'd like, I'll read it out to you.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, please do.

30

31 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. The Ahtna
32 Intertribal Resource Commission supports WP26-77, which
33 seeks to recognize the customary and traditional use of
34 wood bison by residents of Units 12, 20 and 25. While
35 wood bison are currently listed as an experimental
36 population under the Endangered Species Act and are not
37 yet open to harvest, the recognition of their historic
38 and cultural significance to Alaska Native peoples is
39 both timely and necessary.

40

41 Documented traditional use. the
42 proposal appropriately cites both oral histories and
43 archaeological evidence demonstrating Alaska Native
44 reliance on wood bison for subsistence purposes prior
45 to their extirpation from the region. The interruption
46 was due to use of external ecological decline and not a
47 cultural shift and therefore should not invalidate long
48 standing relationships between communities and the
49 species. Next point is cultural revitalization.
50 Acknowledging customary and traditional use rights now

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1 ensures that Alaska Native and rural communities will
2 be eligible to participate in any future harvest as part
3 of cultural and nutritional revitalization efforts. This
4 is critical to preserving indigenous food systems, land-
5 based practices and language connected to bison hunting
6 and use.

7
8 Next point future proofing access.
9 Establishing a customary and traditional use
10 determinations ahead of the delisting process provides
11 a proactive framework that ensures rural and tribal
12 communities will not be excluded once harvest becomes
13 legally permissible. And the next point is respect for
14 regional sovereignty. The inclusion of Units 12, 20 and
15 25 reflects the geographic scope of traditional wood
16 bison range and use. AITRC encourages continued
17 collaboration with tribal organizations along these
18 units to guide any future management frameworks,
19 including education, ceremonial, harvest and
20 conservation-based stewardship. This proposal affirms
21 that wildlife policy can both honor the past and prepare
22 for a more inclusive future. We thank the Eastern
23 Interior Regional Advisory Council for subsistence --
24 for submitting this forward looking proposal and urge
25 the Federal Subsistence Board to adopt WP26-77. And that
26 concludes AITRC's comment.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
29 for that. At this time, I want to add that I did speak
30 with the Chief of Northway just for clarification about
31 this. And I know they said that they didn't want any
32 bison up in there and he was -- had concerns but I did
33 help him to understand what was going on and it was good
34 conversation. I thank you for reading that letter and
35 we're going to keep moving on. So, we're at -- down in
36 agency and tribal comments and I went past ADF&G and now
37 we got federal agencies.

38
39 (No response)

40
41 Hearing none. Tribes and ANCSA
42 Corporations.

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Advisory group comments, other RACs.

47
48 (No response)

49
50

000104

1 None. Fish and Game Advisory Councils.
2 Subsistence Resource Commission. Oh, there she is. Thank
3 you, you have the floor.

4
5 MS JOCHUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kim
6 Jochum for the record, National Park service. The -- I
7 have a comment from the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence
8 Research Commission for you. The Wrangell-St. Elias
9 National Park Subsistence Resource Commission opposed
10 establishing a customary and traditional use
11 determination for wood bison in Unit 12 and 20E. They
12 did not comment on Units 20A through -D and 25 due to
13 lack of familiarity with those areas. Oral histories
14 referenced in the OSM staff analysis lacked evidence of
15 a customary traditional pattern for use in the Upper
16 Tanana area, especially for Unit 12. The First Chief of
17 Northway village and two tribal council members strongly
18 opposed this proposal, the SRC felt it was important to
19 listen to the people in the area. They were concerned
20 that recognizing a C&T would then lead to the
21 reintroduction of wood bison. It is also imperative that
22 the Office of Subsistence Management conducts formal
23 tribal consultation and public outreach to inform tribes
24 and the public about these proposals. Thank you.

25
26 MS. ENSMINGER: Hey, Charlie. That
27 meeting was in October, and you spoke to the fellow from
28 Northway, when?

29
30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I talked to him
31 after that, but he didn't have no authority to talk
32 about everybody else's decision. But he understood what
33 I said. So, he didn't tell me that he could change that
34 at that time. So, I made him understand it. But still
35 it was -- yeah.

36
37 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yeah, they were at our
38 meeting, so they were pretty adamant at the time. Okay.
39 I just wanted to.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. He didn't
42 clarify that. He changed his mind, he couldn't.

43
44 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That'd be a hanging
47 offense.

48
49 MS. ENSMINGER: Oh, yeah. A lot of work
50 to be done. Okay. Thank you.

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CHIARPERSON WRIGHT: I think that maybe due to the lack of understanding that OSM could consultate [sic] with them a little bit more just to make sure that they understood properly. Just to be courteous. I think it'd be a good idea, because there was some misunderstanding there that I understood happened by that conversation that I had with him. Thank you. And going forward. Other written public comments and public testimony. Go ahead.

11

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MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. This is Brooke for the record. We had a comment from Bruce Ervin -- Ervin, sorry asking for clarification. If AITRC had withdrew their support. I wasn't sure if Jim Simon is still on if, if you're able to speak to that.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Jim Simon, are you still on the line?

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(No response)

I don't think he's there anymore.

MS. MCDAVID: Looks -- they might have -- he might stepped away.

DR. SIMON: Here. Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good, thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Jim, we just have a question from Bruce Ervin, if you could clarify, if AITRC had withdrew support for the wood bison C&T proposal. Thank you.

DR. SIMON: Yeah, thank you for the question. For the record, Jim Simon Deputy Director of Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. I have -- Deanna Kosbruk was at the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission and was just briefing me on the Chief of Northway's concerns about it after having learned from tribal leaders or First Nation leadership on the Canadian side about the impacts that they have observed in their territory of that -- the wood bison seem to have a negative impact on the presence of wild resources that they have been using. Deanna explained to me that, pardon me, and the first -- reportedly the First Nation leadership advised the Northway Tribal Council leadership to be opposed to would Bison reintroduction.

000106

1 I think there is a distinction and it's my understanding
2 from Deanna that Karen Linnell respected that decision
3 making. We believe that the reintroduction of wood bison
4 may happen whether or not the local tribes to the area
5 where they are being reintroduced -- whether or not they
6 support it or not. So, in that case, this is not a
7 proposal to support the reintroduction. This is a
8 proposal, as I understand it, that if they are
9 reintroduced that they should be recognized as a
10 customary and traditional resource because of the oral
11 histories that OSM Anthropologist Liz Williams so
12 expertly reviewed with your Council. So, it is my
13 understanding that we are not withdrawing our comments
14 in support of this. We feel that they should be
15 recognized as a customary and traditional resource in
16 the Eastern Interior, even if they are or are not
17 reintroduced. Hopefully that makes sense.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
20

21 DR. SIMON: This is not about hunting,
22 this is not about reintroducing them. This is
23 recognizing the historic relationship with wood bison
24 that is abundantly clear in north of the Ahtna territory,
25 in the Yukon Flats, etc., as Liz explained. Thank you.
26

27 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Thank you
28 so much for that clarification, Jim. And Chair Wright
29 has also requested OSM to reach out to the Upper Tanana
30 communities to hopefully do a little more outreach and
31 consultation opportunity to make sure that
32 distinguishment is clear between what C&T means versus,
33 yeah, reintroduction or hunting. So, thank you so much.
34

35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more public
36 testimony. Leonardo. Are you online, Leonardo?
37

38 MR. WASSILIE: Yep. I'm here. So, I just
39 thought I'd show you guys some of this stuff that, you
40 know, Ray found. Here's one of the horns that -- these
41 are all, like, artifacts, so I think they're bison. And
42 I'm pretty sure they had, like, we reached out, and I
43 think there's one of the signs -- is it Luke? I think
44 he was planning to come here, so. But yeah, that --
45 there's like a like a skull. That's pretty cool, you
46 know. And there's a bunch of other little stuff, but I
47 just definitely feel like these animals were here. And
48 like, if animals were here, people probably, like, did
49 things with them or ate food or -- but I just thought
50 I'd share that while the topic was fresh.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much, appreciate you. Yep. Send us a picture if you could. And okay, any questions for him? Just follow the rules here. Yep, I appreciate you so much, keep it coming. And now, on our public testimony sign up list is Olivia Irwin. You have the floor.

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MS. IRWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council members. I really -- am not going to belabor the point, but I just want to give some background history on where this came from. This was a proposal that I made the motion for while sitting on this Council. The idea came out of former -- I'm a former member of the Minto Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee. And for a few years now, there have been a plan to reintroduce the bison into that area. There was tribal discussion, discussion with tribes and public meeting sessions that took place. But the state does not have a formal consultation requirement and so, there were not formal tribal consultations. Whether or not we liked it, those bison were reintroduced to our traditional territories. There now are -- there are now nine in our traditional hunting grounds and territories. And I've taken a lot of time to understand this issue, speaking with Luke and others at the department. And that herd right now is at 60, and the idea that there will be a harvestable surplus isn't likely until over 400 animals are there, which is 20 to 25 years estimated roughly. And please correct me, the department if they or staff if they if that's different. So, the reason for this proposal is not for a hunt. This will not open hunts and this will not encourage continued reintroduction of bison because it's already happening. They are already looking to move another herd into the Minto -- into the Yukon Flats without proper tribal consultation. It's going to continue to happen. We have very little say in what's happening in our traditional hunting territories. It is coming in under the guise of food security. However, these herds will not be large enough to have a harvestable surplus for anybody to feed off of for multiple generations. The fear that I have is that this herd is going to get big enough to where they can open up a trophy or a single bison take hunt. If that happens, that animal should be going to the local communities in which that herd is present in. This past Statewide Board of Game meeting, the Minto Nenana Fish and Game Advisory Committee got wood bison added to the list of big game animals that can be taken for cultural and ceremonial use. That also does not allow for a hunt. It does not

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1 allow for us to take, until that herd is large enough,
2 and we're working with Luke to allow it. Now, what's
3 important in this is that this is starting to establish,
4 as Jim Simon mentioned, that pattern of customary and
5 traditional use. This is a proactive approach because
6 local individuals are constantly on the defensive
7 reacting to what managers are doing. This is an
8 opportunity for us to take a proactive approach and put
9 guidelines into regulation that allows for the time in
10 which these animals reach a harvestable surplus. Then,
11 and only then, could we have a C&T determination that
12 allows local communities to be the first ones to actually
13 harvest these animals for the purpose that the state
14 says they're for, which is for food security. So, that's
15 all I have. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead.

18
19 MR. WOODRUFF: Olivia, thank you for your
20 testimony. When Tom Seaton was here and he was telling
21 us about the wood bison and updates, and he said that -
22 - I asked him about hunt, and he said that it's not
23 going to be a trophy hunt. It's going to be a general
24 harvest. And he specified that on the record. So, I just
25 wanted to remember that. Thank you.

26
27 MS. IRWIN: Thank you, Don. I should also
28 mention that I'm speaking on behalf of myself. I'm sorry.

29
30 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, okay. Then you're
31 speaking for yourself. Would -- here's an example. Up
32 by Nome there's Muskox that were reintroduced and they
33 eventually got C&T for them and between the regular
34 general hunter and the for the C&T. Would you be opposed
35 to that, for you personally?

36
37 MS. IRWIN: That's too hypothetical for
38 me to understand right now, Sue. I'd have to understand
39 that better. And look at what's the what's actually being
40 -- what hunts are being given to what people. Because
41 those wood bison need to be going to local food security
42 because the salmon are running out, and the purpose of
43 this supposedly under the state is for food security
44 purposes for local community.

45
46 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

47
48 MS. BURK: Thank you. And this is kind
49 of bouncing off -- this is Eva. This is bouncing off
50 Sue's question, like with the Innoko management plan.

000109

1 Right, wasn't there was there concerns within that plan
2 about how allocation like how Sue's describing. Did you
3 review that and have...?

4

5 MS. IRWIN: I can't speak to the Innoko
6 Herd Management Plan. I'm sorry. Yeah.

7

8 MS. WILLIAMS: I've read the reports from
9 Fish and Games outreach projects or what do you call
10 them? Events. But there's -- the anthropologist may see
11 a real disconnect between what people's expectations are
12 when an animal is reintroduced and they just, you know
13 -- it started a long time ago, and when you read the old
14 transcripts from the 90s, the tribes talk about, they
15 think that these wood bison are going to be managed by
16 them for them for themselves. And Craig Fleener was
17 involved in a lot of that. You might remember, Sue. And
18 so, I'm not sure how the whole thing got where it is
19 now, but when I read the Alistair Bath reports about the
20 outreach events, you can definitely see the rural tribal
21 people thinking that it's going to be there for them.
22 And I should document that more here. It just was getting
23 so long. But we can get those reports to people if you
24 want to see them, because -- and Fish and Game is being
25 completely honest when they say it's going to, you know,
26 in these reports at least that, no it's not probably
27 there's -- they're not sure because they don't know what
28 the population is going to do. But as the anthropologist
29 for a subsistence constituency, I see a clear theme of
30 people thinking it will be there for the subsistence
31 harvest. Some people recognize that it will be later. I
32 and there is a good point in these reports about, you
33 know, when you start an introduction versus when you
34 actually get to a harvestable surplus, it's a long time.
35 It also depends on which lands the animals run around
36 on. I mean, right now they're in town. But, you know, I
37 mean, if they're on federal land at a sustainable -- I
38 mean, I don't even know if managers have really an idea
39 of how to manage what a healthy herd is. I mean, we have
40 information from Canada and we have goals and we have
41 knowledgeable people who are extremely dedicated
42 obviously, when we saw Luke to the health of the
43 population. But there's a definitely a theme in all those
44 outreach meetings in all three regions, that there is
45 an expectation that this is for subsistence use, even
46 though it's clarified it.....

47

48 That was Liz Williams, sorry.

49

50

1 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, for the
2 record. And since you guys are going down this rabbit
3 hole, I just wanted to clarify that the wood bison is a
4 listed species under the Endangered Species Act. The
5 Federal Board has no jurisdiction or authority over
6 listed species, so there's not going to be a federal
7 subsistence hunt on wood bison until it's delisted.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Booke, for the
10 record. We did go down that rabbit hole at our last
11 meeting. We had Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological
12 Services come and present and talked about the
13 Endangered Species Act. And if that's something you guys
14 want to revisit in the future that is outside the scope
15 of this proposal, I would recommend at this time just
16 to focus on C&T, and there is, of course, a lot to
17 discuss about wood bison. And, you know, we'll be
18 reviewing the Lower Tanana plan on our next meeting. So,
19 some of that discussion could come up in the working
20 group.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I just got a message
23 that the bison are lined up at subway in Nenana.

24
25 (Shared laughter)

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Bison subs for everybody.

28
29 MS. WILLIAMS: The papers I handed out
30 to the Council members are from the Fish and Wildlife
31 Service person that worked with the state on the
32 reintroduction and the 10(j) status, which is a very
33 unique status. And I know we don't want to deviate too
34 much from just C&T, but it's all explained very clearly
35 in there. It's an experimental population. It's not
36 necessarily the one that's going to make or break the
37 survival of the species. And they're looking at the whole
38 population of Canada and Alaska as one before they take
39 it out of the special status, but it probably is a very
40 long time.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
43 And we have one more testifier on our list, and that's
44 Sarah James.

45
46 MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. Sarah is going to
47 talk about something on page 173 of your analysis, and
48 it's related to an observation in Arctic Village.

000111

1 MS. JAMES: Thank you for giving me time.
2 I'll try to make it brief. I do know all these people
3 that gave a report on muskox. And they're not -- no
4 longer here with us that I see. I just want to mention
5 Moses Cruikshank, he's from Beaver. And he went around
6 and helped people built with heavy equipment, and that's
7 -- I know about him because he's been -- he did that in
8 Arctic Village. And when he did live in Arctic Village
9 until he got some housing going. I was there. Well,
10 anyway what I was -- he referred, I mean, the way he got
11 the story from Arctic Village that there is muskox in
12 that area, and they call it an animal with two extra
13 coat or extra shirt and with a horn in this way, that
14 way. Well, anyway my mom told me more about it and also
15 about muskox. And there is a mountain that's named after
16 bison that's in upper part of Sheenjek River, Salmon
17 River. And that's where most of the time we spend our
18 time out there when my father was a trapper. So, I never
19 saw the mountain because it's too far north. But at one
20 mountain from Salmon River, lower part of salmon River,
21 the first mountain, they call it a marker because you
22 could see it within -- from all around. And he sat on
23 it. That's the one that the mountain call. That's a guy
24 that earlier I was talking about with a caribou story,
25 he sat on it so, they called it he sat on it. But from
26 there, we were there at that one time because we were
27 not far to get some berries and caribou and all that
28 before we go back down lower part where our cabin is.
29 Well, anyway we could see it from there, from on top of
30 that mountain, we call it (In Native). Everybody talked
31 about (In Native). That means they used to have a muskox
32 there. And the reason they call it that it was because
33 rock -- one rock is there and another rock is on top of
34 it like a sandwich, I guess, because I didn't see it
35 that well. I just saw a mountain. It's so far from that
36 mountain. Well, anyway they call that a (In native)
37 because the rock on top of each other, it looks like an
38 animal with two coats, which is a muskox. So, we do have
39 a mountain called (In Native) and that referred to
40 Muskox. So, I believe that they went that far and they
41 depended on it. On muskox, they only did it for a coastal
42 plain, but they came down to our area a couple -- there
43 was various time and there -- we shot some and a hunter
44 got in trouble with the law. But this -- I bring this
45 up so it'll help this reintroduce [sic]. His -- for his
46 wedding and Fairbanks and he didn't get nothing. He went
47 out a couple times. He didn't get nothing for his
48 wedding, but he ran into muskox. So, he shot some the
49 muskox, and he took it to Fairbanks to have feast. Well,
50 anyway, they got in trouble about that because the only

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1 -- one reason they got out of it, because they only
2 pertained to coastal plain. But they did travel that far
3 in, and there was no regulation on it. So that's how
4 they got away. You know, the guy had -- don't have to
5 go to jail or nothing and that kind of stuff, so. Just
6 thought I'd bring that up, too. Just to show you, when
7 you do reintroduce, there's no one way to do it, if
8 unless you know the history. So, thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any
11 questions for Sarah? Yep. Thank you so much for that
12 information, Sarah. Okay. And next we have Bruce Ervin.

13
14 MR. ERVIN: Hi. Can you hear me? Okay.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. You got
17 the floor.

18
19 MR. ERVIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you,
20 Board members, for letting me speak today. I just wanted
21 to say thank you. Big thank you to Sue, for all your
22 service on the Board. And I know you're one of my elders
23 from a Upper Tanana and I really look up to you, too.
24 And I wanted to say thank you. Thank you, for everything
25 you've done. And we'll continue to do, I don't think
26 we're going to let you go.

27
28 Yeah, I know everybody's tired. I don't
29 want to drag this out anymore, but I just wanted to put
30 it on the record that, you know, I went to TCC's meeting.
31 They had Upper Tanana subregional meeting when Mr. Luke
32 was there trying to talk about reintroducing bison into
33 to Upper Tanana. And it was you know, all the tribes
34 that were there, you know, Eagle Tanacross, Tetlin,
35 Northway, Dot Lake, Healy Lake, sorry if I forget any
36 of any -- mentioning any of them, Tetlin. You know, did
37 they listen to Luke, and you know, he told them what he
38 needed to tell him, you know, doing his job. But, you
39 know, at the end of the day, they told him that they're
40 not interested. And I still believe that they still feel
41 the same way today, whether it's a C&T or whatever it
42 may be. I still think that they're not interested in it
43 at all. And I did have contact from one of my elders
44 today, Lorraine Titus. And she's still opposed to
45 anything to do with the wood bison. And she said to go
46 ahead and use her comments that she made at the Wrangell-
47 St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission meeting. And
48 just to, you know, I'm a Wrangell-St. Elias commission
49 member myself and I do remember that, you know Karen
50 Linnell did pull that letter after she heard from you

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1 know, Chief Chaaiy and our elder Lorraine and some of
2 our tribal members. And so, I just wanted to put that
3 on there to that, you know, that that did happen. I
4 don't know, it might have changed, like Jim was saying,
5 but that's something that did happen. You know, looking
6 back at TCC's resolution 20, 24, 27, you know, they have
7 some really good points in there. You know, some really
8 great things to think about. And you know it, it feels
9 like it did make a difference at all. You know, tribes
10 speak their mind, they speak what -- how they feel and
11 it doesn't get taken into consideration. It's like
12 you're taking the voice away from the tribe. And you
13 know, me being a tribal member, I have to follow the
14 lead of my elders. And that's where we stand today. So,
15 I'm going to keep fighting for that and keep going in
16 this direction. And I think the only, you know, possible
17 way where both sides could win was the idea that we came
18 up with at the Wrangell-St. Elias meeting. You know,
19 were, you know, leave Unit 12 out, leave Unit 20E out
20 of it, those our backyard, that's our backyard. That's
21 where our ancestors come from.

22
23 And I totally understand too, that, you
24 know, C&T is really big. And it feels like that's a lot
25 of tribes only -- they're only lifeline right now. So,
26 that was another reason we didn't comment on, you know,
27 the Lower Tanana. We understand that tribes around
28 there, you know, you might have a different intentions.
29 You know, you're being forced into this, and you know,
30 you're trying to make the best of it. So, that's one of
31 the reasons why we're trying to, you know, take out Unit
32 12 and Unit 20E because you know, that's where we --
33 that's our -- where we're from. And it really does feel
34 like, you know, the fox is guarding the henhouse when
35 you start letting little things happen, when you start
36 letting you know, give them a little inch, they're going
37 to take a mile. So, appreciate the opportunity to call
38 in today. And you know. I really wish there was more
39 people on here who could comment too. But I just wanted
40 to put that out there and thank all of you for, you
41 know, sometimes you have to make some really tough
42 decisions. You're faced with bleak situations. And it
43 really is true, too, that, you know, instead of putting
44 all this money into the bison, the wood bison, they
45 should be putting that money into helping our moose,
46 helping our caribou, helping our salmon. What about all
47 our wild relatives that are hurting right now? And we're
48 focusing on something that's new. Yeah. We all really
49 need to come together and we're all hurting. You know,
50 listening to this meeting from the last three days, it's

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1 the same story everywhere. We have less moose, we have
2 less caribou, we have less salmon. Everything's being
3 impacted. So, you know, it really does make me think
4 about what somebody said in the meeting too that. You
5 know, if we go to all these meetings, we speak our mind
6 but it doesn't really -- sometimes it doesn't matter.
7 You know, why should we keep coming here and keep
8 fighting when what we say it doesn't get through goes
9 through one ear and out the other. So, one of our, you
10 know, being Native to you don't give up. So, I don't
11 want anybody to give up no matter what. Keep going, keep
12 fighting. So, thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Bruce.
15 And out of respect, we will follow your recommendations.

16
17 MS. SHOCKLEY: If I can talk to Bruce for
18 a minute. Bruce, I really appreciate your comments. And
19 I just have to say that, you know, when the wood bison
20 were introduced into the Manley, Minto-Nenana, Tanana
21 area, I mean, your words were exactly what were said.
22 And unfortunately, they were -- nobody listened. And I
23 just commend you for continuing the fight. Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, I'm going to
26 finish now. I want to say that we could modify to exclude
27 Unit 12 and 20E, C&T for 20A, D, F and 25. Those one --
28 that's where they are already.

29
30 MS. SHOCKLEY: So, moved?. Can we take
31 that as a motion?

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That was my motion.
34 You can make.....

35
36 (Simultaneous speech)

37
38 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy Bassich.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

41
42 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Before you make that
43 motion and we go down another rabbit hole, I just want
44 to share that to my knowledge, there's been no
45 consultation or discussion on this topic with the
46 residents of Eagle or Eagle Village. Don Woodruff might
47 be able to shed further light on that with the
48 subsistence resource discussions in Eagle, which I was
49 not a part of recently. But we are a part of 20E and so
50 to try and exclude that, that would impact our community,

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1 and we have not spoken or deliberated or made any
2 recommendations. So, I just want you to keep that in
3 mind at this point in time for making motions. I also
4 want say that all of this -- I really want to thank
5 Olivia for being very proactive and thinking ahead. And
6 I respect that she is a younger person, heavily involved,
7 and quite frankly, by the time these animals might be
8 harvestable, she'll probably be sitting in an easy chair
9 like I am. So, I just want to give the perspective that
10 all that's taking place right now is, quite frankly,
11 decades down the line. So, I don't think we need to be
12 rushing into a lot of this. Personally, I do support C&T
13 for at least our communities within 20E. And the other
14 thing I wanted to point out is we have a lot of
15 speculation on where this is going to go and how it's
16 going to happen. But all we have to do is look across
17 the border into Canada and the reintroduction of bison
18 into there and where they're at with that now and I
19 think we could learn a lot from that. Because that's
20 eventually what's potentially going to happen. On our
21 side many decades down the line. So, I just wanted to
22 share those before a motion is made including 20E and --
23 -- which would impact us, and without having discussions
24 about it. And it's just one of those geographical things.
25 I definitely respect the Upper Tanana communities and
26 their decisions, but the boundaries don't bring that
27 into that light. So just a heads up. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

30
31 MS. ENTSMINGER: In light of the fact
32 that we didn't have as much interaction, I would say
33 that we should defer this to -- and there's no hurry to
34 get it done. So, I would like to defer the proposal. Do
35 you need a motion for that? Is that a yes?

36
37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Defer and have
38 consultation that's needed, where it's needed. I agree.

39
40 MS. ENTSMINGER: In a motion? Okay, I
41 make the motion that we defer it until further
42 consultation.

43
44 MS. BURK: This is Eva, I'll second it.
45 Can I have a comment? We're in discussion? I really
46 appreciate people calling in today. I appreciate the
47 letter from AITRC, all of the anthropological research.
48 That was great. Thank you. I agree that we should defer
49 it but I also I just want to reiterate some of the
50 comments, like in -- these animals were brought to Nenana

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1 and there was so many missteps and misleading by the
2 agency, it was really unfortunate. At one point, we were
3 telling them exactly why we did not want to have bison
4 reintroduced and all of our comments were relevant.
5 Majority of us were very concerned that one, exactly
6 what Bruce is mentioning, there is not enough work done
7 on habitat restoration for the existing animals for us
8 to be like, let's add a new animal. This whole idea of
9 like the vegetation -- I'm doing vegetation mapping, so
10 I know what technologies are out there. You -- the
11 vegetation mapping is, is not adequate. We need to do
12 better, more finer scaled, research with local
13 communities and indigenous knowledge when it comes to
14 the assessments of these land and where these animals
15 are being placed. It is really important. We were called
16 toddlers by the agency in a community meeting. We were
17 literally called toddlers by saying that we didn't have
18 any good reasons why we didn't want the bison there and
19 that -- we all had great reasons. We had excellent
20 reasons. Olivia and myself were, like, trained to
21 communicate between our people and the Western
22 scientists and fishery and game managers. That's our
23 job. It was really frustrating process. And so, at the
24 end of all of it, that's where -- why this proposal
25 materialized, this is happening to us anyway. And any
26 this harvest management plan that was done in Innoko,
27 it never actually happened. So, we didn't really have
28 anything to go off of as whether or not we were going
29 to have a local hunt. So, I just wanted to get on the
30 record that this process of the bison reintroduction and
31 I've told it to Luke a million times. That's why I didn't
32 reiterate it to him when he was here. But I just want
33 it on the record in this proposal that we're talking
34 about, and I'm glad that we're going to take it up again
35 that, you know, all the comments made by Bruce and
36 others, and Olivia today were spot on that this is only
37 a response to something that was forced upon us. We
38 never -- we were told we had influence on whether or not
39 they were going to be introduced. I think one time we
40 were actually told, it will only happen if you want it
41 to happen, if your communities want to be part of this.
42 Then the next year they're like, we got these bison and
43 they're coming. And we're like, what? Last like, just a
44 couple of months ago, you said we had a choice. And then
45 then here's these bison. We had wanted to set up capacity
46 at the local level to help and we're still doing that.
47 But it's all, again, we're trying to play catch up and
48 we're doing a million things, so I won't go on too much.
49 I know it's late, but I just wanted that to be on the
50 record. And I do support deferral.

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2 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Jim Simon, are you
3 still online.

4
5 MS. SHOCKLEY: Charlie.

6
7 DR. SIMON: Yes, yes.

8
9 MS. SHOCKLEY: Charlie, can I.

10
11 CHAIRMAN WRIGHT: Please, Jim.

12
13 DR. SIMON: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.
14 And I just want to clarify that we did just hear from
15 Karen after Bruce's testimony and she did confirm that
16 what Bruce said was correct. Unfortunately, that
17 information didn't trickle to AITRC staff. Otherwise,
18 we would have submitted additional comments withdrawing
19 our support in solidarity with the Northway Tribal
20 Council leadership. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that.
23 Dorothy.

24
25 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, I just want to put
26 on record, too, that like I mentioned to Luke, you know,
27 I was part of the original discussions in regards to the
28 wood bison and what Bruce said was exactly what we were
29 saying in Tanana, Rampart, Minto and Manley and or --
30 Nenana too. But yeah, I mean, we said no, there was
31 absolutely a vote that said, no, we do not want the
32 bison. And like Eva said, you know, the next year it was
33 like we're putting them down here. So, we have to
34 somehow, you know, figure out, you know, since they're
35 going to be here, you know, figure out something. But
36 the other thing is, they're saying that it's food
37 security but there is no rural -- what do you call it?
38 No rural preference, I mean, the state does not let you
39 do that. And as far as customary and traditional use, I
40 mean, you know, they've argued with us about what our -
41 - what resources we have right now. And so, I mean, it's
42 just really frustrating. And yeah, I mean, like I always
43 I said, you know, we show up and speak our -- or ask,
44 well, we speak up, we show up, we speak up and still
45 decisions are made. So, thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy Bassich.

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49 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy Bassich, I
50 call question.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oka. Thank you, Andy. Okay, I think we better do a roll call vote. Unless everybody wants to say anything else? Unanimous?

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, I'll restate the motion. For the record, this is Brooke. The motion is to defer WP26-77, to recognize the customary and traditional use of wood bison in Units 12, 20, and 25 by the residents of 12, 20 and 25, until further consultation with tribes and communities in the region.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All in favor of the motion, please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All those opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Hearing none. It passes. Thank you.

Don wants a break. So, we're standing down for ten minutes and ten minutes only. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: You'll hear the gavel in ten minutes. Thank you.

(On record)

(Off record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Getting started again here. 20 seconds. WCR26-22, Unit 25D west moose, closed to hunting except by 25D west residents. Page 43.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. This is Liz Williams, anthropologist with OSM. I know that you all know the story of Unit 25D west very well, but for the record I'll go over it briefly, unless you would like an extended version. But this closure review is one we do -- it reviews the closure to moose hunting on federal public lands and Unit 25D west, except by residents of Unit 25D west and Birch Creek under federal hunting regulations. And the closure policy of the Federal Subsistence Board is that federal public lands should

1 be reopened when the closures are no longer necessary,
2 and that closures will be reviewed at least once every
3 four years. The purpose of this review is to determine
4 if these closures are still warranted. So, we mentioned
5 this at the previous meeting so that the communities
6 affected and everybody else could think about it. As
7 everyone knows, we had a proposal very similar to this
8 in the previous wildlife cycle, where two other
9 communities asked to be added to the culture -- customary
10 and traditional use determination for Unit 25D west. And
11 that proposal was dropped. And the history of this
12 closure is extensive. It started before the federal
13 program began. It's an outgrowth of the cooperative
14 moose management group and one iteration. It also was
15 the plan of Fish and Game because the habitat differences
16 were so different between 25D west and 25D east, that
17 there were concerns about the moose population and a lot
18 of it is related to vegetation. There's a presentation
19 by Nicky Guldager, formerly of Fish and Wildlife
20 Service, and also Mark Burch, the current biologist, has
21 told me about the decadence or the decay of the willow
22 population in the Yukon Flats. There's old plants that
23 aren't really living. So, this customary traditional use
24 determination was agreed upon by a lot of the parties
25 before the federal program began. And it is based on
26 tribal governance that Randy Mayo has been generous
27 enough to teach me about. And the bottom line is that
28 the traditional territories of Unit 25D west, and we say
29 including Birch Creek because they're slightly outside
30 of the boundary, they're all part of this community hunt
31 area where they each hunt in their own place. And that
32 is why OSM supports retention of the closure. It has
33 been examined and reiterated over and over again. As I
34 said, it's part of a more recent cooperative moose
35 management plan. And that was affirmed with that
36 previous proposal that I described to you. So, this is
37 a long-standing customary traditional use determination
38 based on habitat for moose, as well as traditional tribal
39 governance and the cooperation of agencies and tribes.
40 That's the conclusion, OSM supports retention of the
41 closure.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Was there any
44 public comments received?

45
46 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. I'm not sure how to
47 categorize this one but Council of Athabaskan Tribal
48 Governments supported retention of the closure.

49
50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
2 Tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation report.

3
4 MS. WILLIAMS: Actually, I think that's
5 the one I just gave you.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, thank you.
8 Agency and tribal comments, ADF&G.

9
10 (No response)

11
12 None. Federal agencies.

13
14 (No response)

15
16 Tribes and ANCSA corporations. Randy.

17
18 MR. MAYO: Yes, Mr. Chair. Yeah, Randy
19 Mayo, I'm here, Stevens Village. I just wanted to follow
20 up on Liz's work and just, you know, a brief background,
21 you know, when she spoke of the tribal governance and
22 before the program started, Stevens Village Tribe and
23 Village Corporation requested that Unit 25D be split in
24 half and create 25D West. And again, you know, this was
25 just previous to this request that that was honored and
26 stood for all these years, you know, the allocated hunt
27 for the three tribes in 25D west, due to the low moose
28 population and other factors that Liz mentioned. The
29 environmental factors and whatnot and that, you know,
30 just before this (distortion) and that the Stevens
31 Village Tribe created the tribal boundary or 2 million
32 acres that had been requested to be put into trust lands
33 right after we were (distortion) became an IRA Council.
34 And so that didn't happen. The Secretary of Interior
35 signed off on putting that 2 million acres into our
36 tribal constitution. So, like I said, it is a legal
37 document not only on the federal lands but also on the
38 state lands. So, I just wanted to mention that real
39 quickly, when Liz mentioned tribal governance being
40 instrumental in creating and, you know, looking out for
41 our best interests despite what we originally wanted.
42 Went to plan B, so this is the result. So, I would just
43 urge the council to maintain the rural preference hunt
44 (distortion) for 25D west for all reasons given, low
45 moose population, degrade in habitat out there for moose
46 feed and. So just support this review here and action
47 the Board will take. So, thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
50 for that, Randy. Anybody else? Oh. Okay, yeah. Any more

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1 tribes or ANCSA Corporations?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Other RACs.

6

7 (No response)

8

9 Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

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11 (No response)

12

13 Subsistence Resource Commissions.

14

15 (No response)

16

17 Other written public comments.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 Public testimony. I see we have a green
22 card here. Got Carrie Stevens name on it. She in the
23 room? Oh, yeah. There you are. You have the floor.

24

25 MS. STEVENS: Thank you, Chair. Thank
26 you, Council and it's good to see you today, Don. And I
27 felt -- this is Carrie Stevens for the record. And
28 yesterday I just failed to acknowledge Sarah James. I
29 just want to acknowledge that she's my teacher and taught
30 me a lot of tribal governance and why I'm here. So, I
31 just wanted to mention that I forgot to yesterday. Sorry,
32 Sarah.

33

34 I know that -- I appreciate OSM's
35 recommendation and the Council. I just wanted to put a
36 few things on record very briefly. As you know this --
37 my family's traditional territory that I married into,
38 Stevens' family, between Stevens and Beaver. And I just
39 wanted to share a little bit about the hunting season
40 this year. We have seen a dramatic influx of outside
41 hunters, and I just want the Council to be aware that
42 there is a state Tier II permit in this area. We have a
43 lot of hunters that are from the valley, and I just
44 don't want it to be perceived that there are no outside
45 hunters because there are a lot and it continues to
46 increase. We face a lot of trespass. There's very little
47 enforcement in the area. The only enforcement that we
48 saw was during fishing, when ADF&G took nets and fish
49 from elders who had no food. I don't think that was also
50 clear at the Fairbanks AC meeting. But of course, under

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1 the tier two permit, as you can see on your maps, there
2 are no state lands in 25D west. So, these hunters have
3 to stay below the mean water line. But of course, they
4 don't. And many times, we see them harvesting on the
5 beach right where our family and other families harvest.
6 So, I do want you to understand that there is still a
7 drastic impact from non-federally qualified users who
8 are hunting in the area.

9
10 We also saw a tremendous amount of boats
11 taking non-federally qualified users into the area and
12 leaving with moose. We saw a lot of illegal take this
13 hunting season in 25D west. We continue to remain
14 extremely concerned about the impacts of the Doyon Oil
15 and Gas development in the Birch Creek area, and that
16 increased traffic from -- it significantly changed the
17 nature of the area, the increased traffic along the river
18 corridor between the Yukon River bridge and up to Birch
19 Creek. And I believe that, you know, they claim that
20 there are no employees from that area hunting in 25D
21 west but that's a great concern to the people. And I --
22 other than that, I just wanted to add that you know, as
23 it stated in the analysis, we really suffer from poor
24 habitat. And as the whole day's discussion around wood
25 bison, yet the state, you know, is really wanting to put
26 wood bison in the Yukon Flats. And we have a really poor
27 habitat, and I really appreciate Liz finding the Nicky
28 Guldager report. I always quote related to our really
29 poor moose grouse. And I think additionally, with that,
30 I also just wanted to note that, is a discussion that I
31 heard here I was listening to online today, that we
32 continue to see increased pressure across, you know, our
33 areas. And I know 25D east is really feeling it. 25D
34 remainder is really feeling it in in Gerald's area of
35 hunters coming from other regions like you were
36 discussing with Fortymile this morning. So, it's
37 increasing. It's not decreasing. And the one thing that
38 I didn't see mentioned in the analysis, I didn't read
39 it front to back but is at there is an extremely
40 increased reliance on moose because there is no salmon.
41 And I just wanted to make sure that this is all on record
42 for the future, that this is the primary food source of
43 the people of the region, along with whitefish and
44 migratory waterfowl, which we've also seen a drastic
45 change in migratory waterfowl patterns due to climate
46 change and because of the methods of hunting waterfowl.
47 Some years, you know, it may be hard to harvest any
48 before nesting, depending on ice and snow conditions and
49 the hunting patterns around Stevens Village in
50 particular. So, I just wanted to make sure that those

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1 are on record. And that again, we saw a lot of illegal
2 activity. And I'm not going to obviously sit here and
3 name names, but everyone locally is aware that there's
4 a lot of take in 25D west that is not Tier II or federally
5 qualified users, and that Tier II users are not sticking
6 below the high-water mark when they're harvesting moose
7 they are when they camp. But not when they hunt and
8 they're hunting right on top of traditional hunting
9 camps. So, I thank you. I really appreciate the
10 opportunity to comment. I just want to make sure that
11 was on record. And of course, continue to support the
12 closure.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any
15 questions for -- okay.

16
17 MS. BURK: We're only allowed to ask one
18 quick question. This is Eva. I'm looking at harvest
19 numbers that I have in front of me, like figure 5, page
20 60, figure 5, page 59. But it doesn't have harvest. For
21 2024 or 2025. So -- and I can see that the state harvest
22 went up in 2023. The state harvest has been higher.
23 2021, 2022, 2023. So, do you have any information if
24 your local people are actually successfully harvesting?

25
26 MS. STEVENS: I don't want to misspeak.
27 Of course, Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments used
28 to do those harvest surveys through agreement with U.S.
29 Fish and Wildlife Service and in conjunction with the
30 ADF&G. And I don't believe those have been occurring.
31 And I would really encourage this Council to really
32 encourage the continuation of that agreement and the
33 continuation of that work, given the dire circumstances
34 in the region. As far as take, you know, the only thing
35 I can add is kind of word of mouth. But I do know that,
36 sorry, I don't want to get upset because people are not
37 eating. In the Community of Beaver, I know that there
38 were very few people who got a moose. They got very few
39 moose and Beaver this year. Not enough families got meat,
40 they have no fish and most people did not get their
41 moose. So, I just know that from speaking with community
42 members and tribal leadership, particularly from Beaver,
43 they were really hard hit with really a lot of
44 unsuccessful hunts. So, the people are, you know, it's
45 not good out there in 25D west. So, I just want to make
46 sure that was on record. And I appreciate you all in the
47 work you do very much.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
50 Carrie.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke for the record. Since this is our only closure review for the day, I just wanted to remind the council that motions for closure reviews are slightly different than for proposals. So, if you want to look at your cheat sheet on the back of your name card for the closure review options. If you wanted to keep the closure in place or maintain the status quo, that would be the motion that you would make.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: No more public testimony so, we're down to a Council motion. Oh, go ahead.

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MR. WOODRUFF: I moved to adopt WCR26-22 to retain the closure. Thank you.

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MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'll second.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any discussion?

23

24

MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. Looking at there's the -- there hasn't been harvest surveys for a few years. The public comments that we did receive asked to retain the closure. And also, there was a note of an increase in non-federally qualified users in 25D west and also that local people, primarily in the Community of Beaver, and if we had the harvest surveys, we'd know more, but they're actually not successfully hunting moose so that makes me feel that there is not a not enough moose to go around. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

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MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd also like to add in that the habitat is in poor shape for moderate to high populations of moose or moose densities in the area. So, that's impacting the availability of moose in the region for federally qualified hunters. And I also want to reference the concerns with -- we have the same issues here with a lot of hunters coming into the area. And I want to reference the comments made about the lands are closed but the state waters are open and referenced that there just needs to be a lot more education and outreach at the points where people are putting boats in to these regions to educate the people about where they can and cannot hunt. Thank you. And it probably that kind of education

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1 needs to actually happen before they actually get there.
2 I think it's there's probably many cases where people
3 show up and they've already invested their time, energy
4 to do their hunt and so they're just going to make the
5 best of whatever they can do and they're not well
6 educated. Thank you. And I am in favor of this proposal.
7 Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I'd
10 like to add a little bit, too. We have problems with
11 trespass, where I hunt, and when we tell the troopers
12 about it, they tell us to take pictures. So, educate our
13 people to at least take a picture and a phone number.
14 And that way, at least you got some proof of what you're
15 trying to say. Thank you.

16
17 (Pause)

18
19 MS. BURK: I call question. This is Eva.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'd like to ask for
22 unanimous consent at this time. All those against,
23 please signify by saying aye.

24
25 (No response)

26
27 Hearing none. Passes. Thank you. Moving
28 on. WP26-70. Who's doing that?

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke.
31 Before we get into the analysis with our OSM staff, Mark
32 Nelson with Alaska Department of Fish and Game is going
33 to present some information that will be helpful to you
34 when you're considering this proposal.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. You have
37 the floor, Mark.

38
39 MR. NELSON: All right. Thank you, Mr.
40 Chair. And I have Jordan Pruszenski with me as well.
41 She's assistant for the area I think she's -- ran to the
42 bathroom, but she'll be back here in a minute. Before I
43 get going, Sue, I understand this might be your last
44 meeting. I just want you to know I really appreciate all
45 our interactions over the years, and you'll be missed
46 for sure. So, my goal here today is to try and just
47 bring some data for the discussion you guys are probably
48 going to have next on this closure. And so that's what
49 I'm really trying to do here. So, with that let's go
50 next slide. So, you've seen a couple maps of this. This

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1 is the map I use often for all of 25D there. And just
2 want to make sure we're being very clear. The western
3 portion is what you guys just voted on. And that's
4 different than the eastern or the remainder. And this
5 map really highlights the federal land that will be
6 affected by your proposal and then all of the other
7 land, either private, corporation all of that stuff is
8 all only under state regulations as well as the blue
9 there, which is actually state land. And like was
10 mentioned, all of the state land that lies below the
11 mean high-water mark of the Yukon and the Porcupine River
12 in this whole area. So, the next slide here shows 20
13 plus years of harvest data for this area. And it's
14 actually this area, which is the eastern, it's the blue
15 dots. The -- and this is by density because it's hard
16 to kind of compare numbers sometimes. But if you think
17 about this from density and then we can extrapolate to
18 how many moose are and things like that. So that's why
19 I broke it down by density. So, we can compare the east
20 and the west. The striking thing about this is this
21 population is very stable over time, you'll see starting
22 clear back in 2000, some of the lowest densities we've
23 observed there are under like 0.2 moose per square mile
24 and some of the highest are 0.3, you know, moose per
25 square mile. More recently, in 2015, we had a survey of
26 both the east and the west, the -- that population bumped
27 up a little bit to like 0.3 -- 0.5 or so for both areas.
28 Since 2015, we have not been able to get a survey in
29 the, the eastern portion, the remainder portion that
30 we're talking about. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
31 Service and I think Mark Birchum and Clayton Merrill will
32 talk about that in a little bit. They were able to get
33 one in 2018. That population actually bumped up even a
34 little bit more from there. Yeah, and Jordan has a little
35 information on surveys here, quick.

36
37 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Hello, through the
38 Chair. My name is Jordan Pruszenski. I'm the Assistant
39 Area Biologist for the Northeast under Mark. And so,
40 Mark and I are both relatively new. And so, for the past
41 three falls, we've been trying to do a fall survey,
42 because that does allow us to get composition of the
43 moose but Fort Yukon snow is coming so late that it hits
44 up against, we need enough daylight during the day to
45 actually go out and get a good day of flying and we just
46 have -- the past three falls, we've just hit the point
47 at which it's just going to be too dark for us to get a
48 good day's work in. So we have -- we decided to switch
49 and do our surveys in the spring. And so, that'll allow
50 us to get a population. But it will mean that we don't

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1 necessarily have the composition data. So, that is
2 something that will be new. And it does mean that now -
3 - it sort of means that we will be starting over. That
4 spring count will not be comparable to fall counts. Just
5 it's like comparing apples and oranges. Just enough has
6 happened, enough moose have died over that course of
7 time that you really can't necessarily compare. And so,
8 yeah. So, we'll be getting that done, but and having
9 that population but remembering all of those caveats,
10 so.

11
12 MR. NELSON: All right. Thanks, Jordan.
13 And Jordan's taking over that survey. So that's why I
14 wanted her to talk about it. So, if you have questions
15 about the survey itself, we'll direct them to Jordan.
16 Before we move on, I just kind of want to highlight, you
17 know, the -- this population is at a very low density,
18 but it's at a very stable density. And it has not changed
19 all that much in over 20 years. I'm really looking
20 forward to getting a population estimate. I'd highly be
21 -- I'd be highly surprised if it was outside the range
22 of what you see on this figure. Now with that said,
23 let's go to the next slide.

24
25 So, I said, we take those densities and
26 we can extrapolate it to the rest of the unit. These
27 surveys are done in fairly small areas compared to the
28 rest of the area. So, 25D remainder or 25D east or
29 whatever -- however you want to call it is about a little
30 over 11,000 square miles. And so, if you take like that
31 2004 estimate the density is about 0.26 Moose per square
32 mile. Multiply that you get, you know, 2900 moose or
33 something like that. And applying a 5% harvest rate,
34 which is appropriate for bulls only in an area like this
35 you'd have a harvestable surplus of around 144 moose.
36 And so, doing that throughout all the years, you can see
37 the years we have for this 25D remainder up to 2015. The
38 range of that harvestable surplus each year is somewhere
39 between 110 and 200 moose. And that's being fairly
40 conservative. But that's how I come up with the
41 harvestable surplus. And so, I just wanted to make that
42 part kind of clear to folks.

43
44 So, then the next slide. So, there's a
45 lot on this slide here. On the -- up in the vertical
46 axis, there is a number of moose harvested. And so, this
47 is 25D remainder moose harvest by residency on this
48 figure. So, you know, years are on the bottom. The
49 different colored bars -- let's look just at the bottom
50 for now, kind of ignore all that stuff above it. The

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1 white like boxes, basically, the white bars are local
2 harvest. So like, people who live in Unit 25. The black
3 ones are non-local. So like Alaska residents but who
4 don't live in Unit 25. And then the cross-hatched are
5 nonresident harvest, which is, you know, very little 1
6 or 2 animals. Let's go up to the top. And you see those
7 two dashed lines, those were the ranges of that
8 harvestable surplus from the figure before. So, when I
9 look at is our harvest getting up into our harvestable
10 surplus? This is kind of how I have to do that, right?
11 So, I look at the harvest and I compare it to what I
12 think harvest will surplus is that year. And you can see
13 from my reported harvest, it's nowhere near I mean, it's
14 not even close like we are way below harvestable surplus.
15 However, we know there's unreported harvest out there.
16 It was mentioned earlier. CATG has done surveys in the
17 past. Our own Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division
18 of Subsistence has also done surveys. Those estimates
19 could be 100 moose from locals. It could be more than
20 that, a few years we're closer to 200 moose. Those
21 surveys get complicated because it's hard to know if it
22 was from 25D remainder, a different part of 25D or 25A
23 or B, which are border units here. And it's hard to know
24 how much of that harvest is already reported versus how
25 much isn't. My point kind of here is when I go through
26 this exercise to try and figure out how close we are in
27 harvestable surplus, if I don't have good harvest data,
28 if people aren't reporting the harvest, I don't have
29 very much to bring to you. And yeah, it's just really -
30 - it's really hard. So, that's why I wanted you to see
31 how far away we are from reported harvest. And when I
32 look at that, there is no problem here. But if there's
33 actually 200 moose getting harvested out there every
34 year that I don't know about, that's a problem. So, that
35 that's an issue, and I just wanted to highlight that.

36
37 Going to the next slide. So, this is
38 just hunters, hunters by residency. And again, the like
39 number of hunters is on the vertical axis years on the
40 bottom. Those same colors apply. So, the crosshatch
41 there on the bottom are the number of -- go ahead, Eva.
42 Member Burk.

43
44 MS. BURK: Thank you. I don't know if I'm
45 tired and I'm reading this wrong, but should this graph
46 right here, like, if we look at 2024, for example, you're
47 saying that the total harvest was just over 60?

48
49 MR. NELSON: So, on this graph it's
50 hunters, has nothing to do with harvest.

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(Simultaneous speech)

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MS. BURK: Hunters.

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MR. NELSON: Yeah.

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MS. BURK: Okay, I know I was reading something wrong. Thank you.

10

11

MR. NELSON: Yeah. So, total hunters was just over 60. Yep.

12

13

14

MS. BURK: Okay. Thank you. That's why.....

15

16

17

MR. NELSON: Yeah.

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19

MS. BURK: Thank you.

20

21

MR. NELSON: Yeah. And so, and you can see there's not that many non-residents that hunt here one, two, three or four year. And then local residents that are reported hunting there are the white bars and then the black bars are the Alaska residents who don't live in Unit 25. So, any questions on that one?

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(No response)

29

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All right. So the next slide, I just wanted to highlight the current hunt structure. And the number of days that each type of user and on which type of land you can hunt. So, on the top line -- and these are current seasons, some of these have been changed over the years. But this is where we are right now today for, for hunting seasons in that 25D remainder. So, from the 25th of August to the 9th of September, it's 16 days of hunting. That's only on federal land and only for federally qualified hunters. On average, over the last 20 years, there's a few moose that get taken there. It's like five per year on average that are reported. Most people, though, hunt that next season. So, on the next line, 10th to the 20th of September is -- it's on the books for both state and federal so it's technically both. All lands are open during that period to all user types. It's an 11-day season, and that's where the bulk of the harvest comes from, 16 on average per year. The -- after that 20th of September, right. When moose hunting gets really good. 21st of September to the 15th of October is a -- the next federal season. So again,

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1 that's federally qualified only on federal -- only on
2 federal lands. There's an X -- there's another 25 days
3 there for only federally qualified hunters. And only --
4 I only get two reported harvests per year from that,
5 that hunt. And then there's two winter hunts, one for
6 the federal and one for the state. First, the 20th of
7 December is a federal hunt, 20 days again, federal lands
8 only federally qualified. And then 18th to the 28th of
9 February is a state hunt. It's only on state books. It
10 includes all lands. It's 11-day season. And for neither
11 of those, I actually -- I think one of those there might
12 be a couple moose harvested over 20 years, but very
13 little harvest during the winter hunts. Go ahead, Mr.
14 Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I only have a little
17 question on that graph, is that it don't say cow or bull
18 hunting like on your winter hunts. Are they all bull or
19 cow? That's my question.

20
21 MR NELSON: Yeah. They're all bull hunts
22 in this area. Yep. So overall, if you're a federally
23 qualified user in Unit 25D, you have about 83 days to
24 hunt. If you're not, you have 22, and 11 of those are
25 in the winter. See no more questions there. So, my final
26 slide if you want to go and this there's a lot on here.
27 And I'm going to go through each of these. So, currently
28 with all the data I have I see no biological reason to
29 restrict users. We're a longways from harvestable
30 surplus, even if we add a lot of unreported harvest.
31 Currently, the regulations provide 61 days of federally
32 qualified only hunting in this area. And an important
33 thing is a lot of the folks that come into this area,
34 like was mentioned earlier, do hunt state lands which
35 below the high-water mark and that would remain
36 unchanged. That will not -- would not be changed by this
37 proposal.

38
39 And this next bullet, the 4th bullet
40 down. This is an issue that I kind of deal with all the
41 time. I get a lot of calls every year from folks who,
42 like, grew up in Beaver who have moved away, who don't
43 live in Beaver anymore and they want to go home and
44 hunt, and they can't on federal land because they're no
45 longer residents of the unit. In -- around Beaver, though
46 luckily, if they put in for our tier two permit because
47 they have a long history of hunting there, they're almost
48 guaranteed a permit. And so, there are able to hunt under
49 state regulations. And that's the only way a lot of those
50 folks can go back home and hunt, which is really important.

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1
2 Yeah, and just to reiterate, anything
3 that's not federal land and that includes state lands,
4 tribal lands, village lands, any private lands,
5 corporation lands, that's only under state regulations.
6 That's the only way that you can hunt on those lands.
7 And just -- and then the unreported harvest -- the
8 reported harvest I have is, I know is not capturing all
9 of the local harvest, that continues to be an issue. And
10 if you guys have ways to help me get that data, to help
11 me get folks to fill out harvest reports, I would love
12 it. And I could bring a much better analysis for you to
13 consider. And finally, both OSM and Fish and Game because
14 of these reasons, are opposed to this proposal. And
15 that's all I have for you today. Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead.

18
19 MR. WOODRUFF: Mark. Has this been a
20 long-standing issue of not reporting harvest?

21
22 MR. NELSON: Through the Chair. Member
23 Woodruff. Yeah, absolutely. And that that's what spurred
24 those CATG harvest surveys. That's what spurred the
25 Division of Subsistence. So, we do have, like, estimates
26 of that unreported harvest. It snapshots throughout
27 time. But it's like was mentioned, it's been a long time
28 since those were done. And the only real way to do it
29 in a timely manner where I can include it in stuff like
30 this and where it actually really makes sense is through
31 our harvest reporting system, our harvest ticket system.

32
33 MR. WOODRUFF: What about the surveys
34 like they do for fisheries? You could do village wide
35 surveys of harvest.

36
37 MR. NELSON: That's true. We could, we
38 could. We don't have a good mechanism to do that every
39 single year. Fisheries does have a system that works.
40 That's not something wildlife has done. So, that would
41 be pretty unusual for kind of the way we usually do it.

42
43 MR. WOODRUFF: Well, you don't have to
44 reinvent the wheel if the -- if they're doing it for
45 fisheries.

46
47 MR. NELSON: Yeap.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Rhonda, You online?

50

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1 MS. PITKA: Yes, I am.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You have the floor?

4

5 MS. PITKA: Okay, so this is 25D
6 remainder, right?

7

8 MR. NELSON: Correct.

9

10 MS. PITKA: Okay, so this is part of the
11 permit hunt for the state of Alaska, or is this the
12 federally qualified permit hunt?

13

14 MR. NELSON: Through the Chair, to Rhonda
15 there. This area is east of the, like, TM940 area that
16 that I think you might be thinking of. So, like, east
17 of Birch Creek, basically, and the whole rest of 25D,
18 that's not included in that. What is currently closed
19 federally and with the state permit, Tier II permit.

20

21 MS. PITKA: Oh, okay. I see, I see on the
22 map now. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah. So, I submitted
23 comments earlier today on behalf of the Council of
24 Athabascan Tribal Governments that we support the
25 proposal to keep this area closed. So in in your last
26 slide, I got on very, very late. I've had two power
27 outages today. And a water leak. Super fun day. And it's
28 -50. But -- so, I saw it in the in the last slide that
29 you did, it said that there is no biological need to
30 restrict users under current system. So, I don't believe
31 that that's true. There is incredible conservation
32 concern for the population of moose in the entire Yukon
33 Flats. There's -- it's been low moose density for like
34 a million years. We've had very little luck trying to
35 get those numbers up. So, so what's the -- so when it
36 says no biological need to restrict users, what does
37 that mean?

38

39 MR. NELSON: That's a great.....

40

41 (Simultaneous speech)

42

43 MS. PITKA: Especially in an area with
44 this with this density.

45

46 MR. NELSON: Yeah, that's a great
47 question, Rhonda. And maybe if Brooke can go back to a
48 couple of slides that we had already gone through. I
49 don't know if, when you got on. Go one more back. Did
50 you see this one, Rhonda? So, this is a population

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1 overtime. And yes, you're absolutely right. It is at a
2 very low density and has remained at that very low
3 density. It's also been very stable over time. And this
4 is moose densities and so on the next slide, if Brett
5 can go forward one. The next slide is where I use those
6 densities that are very low. But calculate the number
7 of moose, and this is just for remainder, this is not
8 for the TM940 area. And from -- so, I take the moose
9 density, I multiply it by the area which is over 11,000
10 square miles. I come up with -- and then you can come
11 up with an estimate of number of moose for the area and
12 then apply a 5% harvest rate, which is -- because this
13 is a bull only hunt area, that's a very conservative
14 harvest rate. Our bull-cow ratios are usually really
15 high in this area. So, although there's not a lot of
16 moose 5% at bull only is typically considered fairly
17 conservative. Anyway, the harvestable surplus based on
18 all of those population estimates we have done over the
19 last 20 years show between like 110 to 290 moose, would
20 be a harvestable surplus. That would be a reasonable
21 harvest for that area. And then the next slide, Brooke.
22 This compares the actual harvest data I have, which are
23 the bars on the bottom by all the different user groups.
24 And then that harvestable surplus range is on the top
25 between those dotted lines. And you can see those bars
26 don't get anywhere near the top. And I did talk about
27 unreported harvest in this area. We know it exists. CATG
28 and Division of Subsistence have done some surveys in
29 the past. Their estimates have been, you know, 100,
30 couple of them did suggest potentially 200. Some of that
31 harvest is reported. Some of that harvest is from
32 different subunits so it's hard to know exactly. When
33 it's when surveys are done like that. And that's why
34 that box is there with the question mark. I don't know
35 exactly what the harvest is, but it's probably not over
36 that harvestable surplus range. And so, that's -- when
37 I when I have to evaluate a population and then evaluate
38 the level of harvest that occurs in that population,
39 this is how I go through that process. And so, right
40 now, until those bars go all the way up into that dotted
41 line, you know, like another 100 to 200 moose per year
42 beyond what's already reported, I don't see a biological
43 concern here. Absolutely, there's a user conflict
44 concern and that's a whole different thing. And I'm not
45 talking about that at all. That -- that's very real. It
46 is an issue and that, you know, that is from like a
47 public, you know, working with hunters out there,
48 talking with people, talking with you. Yeah. So, that -
49 - I'm not talking about user conflict here. I'm simply
50 talking about the biology of the moose in that eastern

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1 portion.

2

3 MS. PITKA: No, I am too. I'm
4 specifically talking about the biology of the moose
5 population. In the fact that if there's this big zero
6 number here that you don't know what's going on and
7 you're still reporting a harvestable surplus, it's a
8 problem. Especially for these moose that have had
9 considerable low density for such a long period of time.
10 If there were 100 harvestable surplus in that area, then
11 people in Fort Yukon would have been eating. People in
12 Beaver would have been eating. There isn't that
13 harvestable surplus. And these numbers over here towards
14 the end, you can't see me pointing to my screen, sorry.
15 But they're all based on an estimate past. I think the
16 last year that you were able to do one of these fly
17 surveys was maybe 2018 or 2019. So, that's all based on
18 just numbers that you're -- that sound a little made up,
19 honestly. They don't sound right to me, and I don't
20 think that they sound right to the people in the area
21 too, who've had trouble harvesting moose. Thank you.
22 Sorry about that.

23

24 MS. BURK: Thank you and -- thank you,
25 this is Eva. Thank you, Chief Rhonda, for joining us and
26 asking those questions because I was -- now you helped
27 me think of my question, which was the issue that I see
28 with the way that you extrapolate was there was no
29 consideration of high- or low-quality habitat and so
30 that's a blanket sweep calculation. And nowhere in my
31 engineering mathematics would we ever do that. We would
32 be much more careful and look at the ground and we would
33 exclude areas. And so that 11,000 whatever square miles
34 that you're -- would significantly be reduced, which I
35 think is what Rhonda's getting at, is if you brought it
36 down to like two thirds, there's -- we're making up
37 numbers here all day anyway. So, I'm gonna [sic] make
38 up a number. Two thirds of the land is habitable for
39 moose, has browse, right? You could even say half because
40 there's water. Whatever. And then that brings your
41 number way down. So, I think that's the issue that a lot
42 of people in this room is that don't -- they're not --
43 that's not part of their everyday job to do statistics
44 or extrapolate numbers or to quantify and assess quality
45 of habitat on this huge map. So, I'm really seeing this
46 huge disconnect once again between number of animals and
47 not looking at what do they eat, what eats them, and how
48 does this all fit into a larger picture. So maybe you
49 could share with me a little bit more on -- do you
50 account for any of that? Because I know we've talked

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1 about this before. Yeah.

2

3 MR. NELSON: Yeah, absolutely and that's
4 a really good point. You know, not everything is moose
5 habitat. You know, giant mountains and big river, swaths
6 and things like that moose just don't live in. This
7 11,000 is the part of the remainder of 25D that we would
8 consider moose habitat. And so, it's area that, you know,
9 is actual land is actual -- has bushes on it and things
10 like that, that moose eat. The survey area itself is, I
11 mean, it's not that whole area, right. But it's 1000
12 square miles. I believe it's that close. It's in that
13 range. But it covers a whole bunch of areas that for
14 that area would be considered, you know, better habitat
15 and maybe not as good habitat. And so, we can use that
16 survey, it's designed in a way, so it is able to be
17 extrapolated to the rest of the Unit. It's really the
18 best way we have. And when it comes to habitat, I need
19 to push back a little bit on what Liz said earlier.
20 There's actually really good moose habitat in this area.
21 It's really good. This is a predator pit. This is --
22 bear densities in this area. Black bear densities have
23 been documented as the highest in the state. There's
24 really high brown bear densities. There's just -- it's
25 just, the system is built right now to just hold that
26 moose population where it is and that's why it's been
27 so stable over that period for so long. And we -- other
28 like the Yukon Flats AC has put in many, many proposals
29 over the years to do some kind of predator control or
30 something like that. But this area has so much federal
31 land and we can't do predator control on that so, we
32 just, there's just no way we can, like, deal with the
33 predators on the predator end. We're just in this
34 situation where there actually is really good moose
35 habitat out there. There's just no way to get the moose
36 over the hump of all the bears. So, the bears are really
37 holding the moose population where it is.

38

39 MS. BURK: Thank you for that. How -- I
40 have a couple questions. How much square miles is in all
41 of Remainder, the east Remainder, do you know?

42

43 MR. NELSON: I don't know. It's going to
44 be close to that 11,000 and it -- that whole area is
45 pretty much moose habitat to be honest. Like, there's
46 not a bunch of big mountains. It's all pretty flat
47 country. It's, you know, 25B has big mountains, 25A has
48 big mountains and things. I don't know exactly off the
49 top of my head.

50

000136

1 MS. BURK: There's been a lot of talk
2 about habitat changing in here, and so I'm just pushing
3 back on this stuff a little bit because I think it's
4 important when we talk about biology, how we're coming
5 up with these assessments. I think I don't totally agree
6 with the way that -- what you guys are saying is good
7 habitat. How are you able -- are you taking a satellite
8 image? How are you able to know what kind of trees you
9 have where? And also, are you looking at how wildfires
10 might change the browse to make it actually harder to
11 walk through?

12
13 MR. NELSON: Yeah. More great questions.
14 We have done browse surveys out there in the past. Part
15 of that was -- we did a full feasibility assessment on
16 the predator control aspect, and part of that was okay,
17 if we remove bears, do we even like what's going to
18 happen? And so that's where a lot of that stuff comes
19 from. It's old for sure and that's definitely an a
20 something that we should think about. There have been
21 some big burns in the area. There are a lot -- most of
22 them are pretty old now. And any, you know, expected
23 bump in density from those burns is kind of -- we're on
24 the tail end of that. And they haven't produced enough
25 of a bump to kind of bump them over that hump where
26 they're at. So yeah, we're always in support of bigger
27 burns to create more moose habitat. And we work with our
28 fire agencies and on the state side and stuff to try and
29 promote fires to burn. That's a really hard thing. I've
30 been in so many meetings, and it's just a really hard
31 thing to do, because when there's a fire, people want
32 to put it out and people get paid to put it out, and
33 it's a hard thing to compete with. But we have changed
34 some areas from full suppression to, you know, mid --
35 whatever the next step down. But yeah, we always work
36 on that. But it doesn't always help.

37
38 MS. BURK: Just -- we gotta go. So, I'm
39 getting -- I think you misunderstand me a little bit.
40 What I'm saying is that the landscape changes after a
41 burn and it's brushing up, which makes it much harder
42 to -- for a moose to get through that thick brush and
43 you're actually like, go out there in these fire scars,
44 it's impossible. So, I think -- I question, and I want
45 the room to not I question the assessments of the
46 vegetation and habitat. I stand by that. Thanks.

47
48 MR. NELSON: Gotcha. I understand now.
49 Thanks.
50

000137

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy, you're online
2 still?

3
4 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you, I -- yeah,
5 thank you very much. I just want to share a different -
6 - slightly different perspective on some of the
7 disconnects. This area is a huge geographic area and
8 throughout that entire geographic area, you have a
9 pretty low moose density population. But when you start
10 looking at harvest, from what I understand of a lot of
11 this area, a lot of its pretty tough area to get into
12 unless you're potentially using a Super Cub or something
13 like that. Most of the access from my experience, at
14 least in our area, is going to be strictly by boat. And
15 so, the area that is accessible for most hunters,
16 especially local hunters, is a relatively small area in
17 comparison to the overall assessment. And I think where
18 the disconnect happens is that there is a lot of hunting
19 pressure along the river corridors, but those corridors
20 can only support a relatively low moose population
21 density. And so, I just want to point that out, because
22 I think the reason why the closure maybe is being put
23 in place is to try and provide for local harvest. And
24 if local harvesters are having a hard time because of
25 competition or just simply access, and the relationship
26 between access and the number of moose in that accessible
27 area, that's where I think there's a disconnect. And I
28 think that's where some of this data might be a little
29 misleading for the assessment by OSM. So that's one of
30 the things when people live on the land and they
31 understand what it takes to hunt on certain types of
32 land, that can really change how you would want to manage
33 that land or what that land is able to produce for human
34 harvest. So, I just want to point that out because I
35 think that might be the case here. I don't know these
36 lands real well because they're not in my backyard, but
37 I'm just using my life experiences living here around
38 Yukon-Charley and looking at where the hunting pressure
39 is and the moose population densities along the river
40 corridor, what it can support, which is very, very low.
41 But if you address the whole area, it looks like, oh,
42 the -- if you -- you could take a lot more moose. So, I
43 just want to point that out. And I'm also kind of curious
44 about the increasing non-local impacts to the moose
45 hunting because most of that I'm assuming is going to
46 be either jet boat on the river system and the growing
47 groups of people with Super Cubs and other equipment
48 that can get into the more remote areas. So just wanted
49 to share those perspectives. Thank you.
50

000138

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Gerald.
2 You had something to say?

3
4 MR. ALEXANDER: Yeah. My name is Gerald
5 Alexander. This is directed to Jordan, is it? Yeah. Your
6 aerial survey. You said you didn't have enough daylight.
7 I've done that aerial survey before. I've done this whole
8 25D remainder. I've done it in a week. Well, actually,
9 I didn't fly. I mean, you know, I was sat in the back
10 and counting all moose and whatnot, but I think I've
11 done it, somewhere in the end of October, November, just
12 after freeze up so you get a better view, and you can
13 still count the -- you know, they're still carrying their
14 antlers. They don't -- the bulls don't shed their antlers
15 till December. Right, Charlie? Charlie?

16
17 Okay. Anyway, and back to one of
18 Charlie's comments on bear dens. There is numerous bears
19 up there, but we manage them. We -- I think we had a
20 bear derby back in the day where we were allowed to take
21 five. We get the biggest skull, you get bragging rights,
22 plus you get to eat, you know. But anyway, that's my
23 comment on your -- so, you know, if you want to check
24 into that, there's I think it was 29 -- 2009 I did this.
25 So, it's -- you get you get eight hours of daylight all
26 day. Only thing is you can't (distortion).

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. No more
29 comments?

30
31 (No comment)

32
33 We can move on.

34
35 MR. NELSON Thank you.

36
37 MS. PRUSZENSKI: Thank you.

38
39 (Pause)

40
41 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
42 of the Council. And for the record, my name is Tom Plank,
43 Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management and
44 I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for
45 wildlife proposal WP26-75 and this is starting on page
46 145 in your books. The proposal WP26-75 was submitted
47 by this RAC, and it requests closing of moose hunting
48 and Unit 25D remainder to non-federally qualified users.
49 Proponents state that the moose density in this area is
50 very sparse, and there are conservation concerns for

1 moose. No aerial surveys for moose have been done in
2 Unit 25D remainder since 2015, and the proponent also
3 notes that there are concerns about the ability of
4 federally qualified subsistence users to meet their
5 needs for moose due to the low number and competition
6 with non-federally qualified users. Proponent wants to
7 ensure that the moose population can remain at a stable
8 level for harvest by federally qualified subsistence
9 users, and the closure and -- closure and neighborhood
10 -- the neighbouring Unit 25D west, has been working well
11 for local residents and the proponent feels replicating
12 this in Unit 25D remainder would also help residents of
13 that portion of the unit to be more likely to meet their
14 subsistence needs.

15
16 Unit 25D has been divided into unit 25D
17 west and 25D remainder since the early '80s to allow for
18 regulatory schemes that reflected different status of
19 moose population. The seasons in Unit 25D remainder has
20 been extended several times in 1990, '91, 2010 and then
21 again last year. Last year the Board extended the fall
22 moose season and Units 25B, 25C and 25DrRemainder to
23 close October 15th and the Unit 25D remainder this --
24 extended the season by 14 days, giving a total of 25
25 days increased opportunity for federally qualified
26 subsistence users after the state season had closed.

27
28 As -- they were very nice to go over
29 everything for you on the most recent biological data,
30 which unfortunately was 2015. And as he showed during
31 that time, the estimated moose density was 0.34 moose
32 per square mile and the bull-cow ratios averaged about
33 64 bulls per 100 cows. And then in 2015, the cow --
34 calf-cow ratios were extremely high 80 calves per 100
35 cows. Again, as Mark pointed out, the habitat is not
36 considered a limiting factor. Unit 25 as a whole contains
37 excellent moose habitat that has been maintained by
38 wildfires. Predation by wolves and bears may be a
39 limiting factor for the Unit 25 moose population. Moose
40 harvest and Unit 25D remainder, primarily occurs by
41 harvest ticket under state and federal regulations, as
42 harvest tickets do not have a strict reporting
43 requirement and can be used for general season hunts
44 across the state, reported harvest should be considered
45 a minimum. The average annual reported harvest in Unit
46 25D remainder from 2015 to 2024 was 27 moose. The total
47 number of reported hunters during that same time period
48 averaged 80 a year, with 74 of them being residents.
49 Most of the reported moose harvest in 25D remainder
50 occurs during the second and third weeks of September,

000140

1 and any harvest reported after September 20th is by
2 federally qualified subsistence users since the state
3 season is closed.

4
5 And one alternative that we considered
6 was to establish a winter moose season of February 18th
7 to 28th to align with the state regulations. Currently,
8 federal regulations have a December moose season, and
9 while state regulations have a February moose season in
10 Unit 25D remainder, establishing a February season under
11 federal regulations would provide additional opportunity
12 for federally qualified subsistence users and would
13 reduce regulatory complexity by aligning state and
14 federal winter seasons. However, this modification is
15 outside the scope of this proposal.

16
17 If wildlife proposal WP2675 is adopted,
18 federal Public Lands and Unit 25D remainder will be
19 closed to the harvest of moose by non-federally
20 qualified users and all users that live in Unit 25D west
21 and outside Unit 25. Only federally qualified
22 subsistence users, those with a customary and
23 traditional use determination for moose in Unit 25D
24 remainder would be able to harvest moose on federal
25 public lands in Unit 25D remainder. This would decrease
26 competition between user groups and could provide more
27 opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users
28 to harvest moose in Unit 25D remainder and possibly
29 enhancing the chances of successful hunts. However,
30 information on the number of moose harvested by
31 federally qualified subsistence users versus non-
32 federally qualified Subsistence users in Unit 25D
33 remainder is unknown. While the majority of moose
34 harvested in Unit 25D remainder occurs by Alaska
35 residents, OSM is unaware how many of those are by rural
36 versus non-rural hunters. And additionally, non-
37 federally qualified users would still be able to harvest
38 moose on non-federal lands in Unit 25D remainder which
39 notably occur mostly around the villages in the area.
40 Therefore, closure of federal lands may worsen any
41 existing user conflicts or competition issues by
42 concentrating non-federally qualified subsistence users
43 on the non-federal lands close to villages. And then
44 furthermore, adoption of this proposal would close
45 federal lands during the state federal moose hunt, as
46 there is no corresponding federal hunt under federal
47 regulations. This would reduce opportunity for federally
48 qualified subsistence users to harvest a moose from
49 federal public lands during February. Federally
50 qualified subsistence users already have an additional

1 three and a half weeks of hunting opportunity in late
2 September and early October when the state seasons have
3 closed, and an additional two weeks of hunting
4 opportunity in late August and early September before
5 the state season opens. Although this early season
6 opportunity is not very meaningful due to the warmer
7 falls, delayed rut, and concerns about meat spoilage.
8 Federally qualified subsistence users also have a ten
9 days of additional opportunity in December when the
10 seasons are closed.

11
12 Impacts to the moose population and
13 conservation concerns are uncertain due to the lack of
14 data, as the most recent biological data is now over ten
15 years old. OSM's preliminary conclusion is to oppose
16 proposal WP16-75. Federally qualified subsistence users
17 already have a federal priority for moose in Unit 25D
18 remainder although -- through a substantially longer
19 fall season as well as a December season. The Unit 25D
20 remainder moose season was recently extended to close
21 October 15th last year to account for shift in weather
22 patterns and delayed cooler weather conditions. The
23 federal fall moose season is currently 51 days, and
24 federally qualified users only compete with non-
25 federally qualified users during 11 of those days, from
26 September 10th to September 20th. There has not been
27 enough time since the October season extension last year
28 to fully understand the impact it will have on the moose
29 population and the ability of users to meet their
30 subsistence needs in Unit 25D remainder. Adoption of
31 this proposal may concentrate non-federally qualified
32 users on non-federal lands around communities during the
33 state September and February hunts. It would also reduce
34 opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users
35 to hunt federally -- federal public lands in February
36 under state regulations. And I think Liz had one thing
37 to add.

38
39 MS. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chair and members of
40 the Council, this is Liz Williams, Anthropologist at
41 OSM. When Tom mentions the federally qualified users in
42 this proposal, he's talking about the communities of the
43 -- the communities that have customary and traditional
44 use if this would pass, Arctic Village, Venetie,
45 Chalkyitsik, Fort Yukon, Circle and I neglected to
46 include the Community of Central in the analysis. So, I
47 apologize to Central and they are -- will be included
48 in the next version.

49
50

000142

1 MR. PLANK: Other than that, we're --
2 thank you, Mr. Chair, ,embers of the Council. Be happy
3 to answer any questions.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any -- go ahead,
6 Sue.

7
8 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is Sue. This map
9 that's provided here. Is that supposed to be the black
10 line around those that qualify?

11
12 MR. PLANK: Through Chair. Tom Plank,
13 OSM. Yes, ma'am. That is the folks that have C&T for 25D
14 remainder.

15
16 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. And then this map,
17 the other one, it has all the hashtag. Why did you
18 hashtag the state land, that wouldn't close it to state
19 land, would it?

20
21 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom, OSM.
22 That map just shows you the difference between 25D
23 remainder and 25D west.

24
25 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. It's the way you
26 phrased it at the bottom. Federal public lands close to
27 taking a moose except by federally qualified users. I
28 see what you're doing it. A little confusing. Thank you.
29 One more question. Do you have -- on page 156, you have
30 hunters and the graft [sic] and then the yellow line,
31 take. Is there any way of knowing the people that had
32 C&T in that -- the harvest? Do you know what I'm asking?
33 How much of it was just the federally qualified
34 subsistence users, or are you unable to pull that
35 information?

36
37 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
38 OSM. Unfortunately, I was not able to determine which
39 ones had C&T and which ones didn't. That's part of the
40 conclusion that OSM just doesn't have the data to be
41 able to know how much -- how many people would be -- how
42 much that may change with the closure.

43
44 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Mark, on your
49 graph, isn't that kind of what yours is? Okay. Can
50 you -- yeah. You want to walk us through a little bit?

000143

1 Everybody's getting a little tired. Thank you.

2

3

4 MR. NELSON: Yeah. No, that's no problem.
5 Mark Nelson from Fish and Game. So on -- hat's what I
6 tried to do on that. But it's Unit 25, so it's all --
7 it would only include, I guess, Birch Creek, Beaver and
8 Stevens, almost none of who actually hunt except for
9 Birch Creek. But I don't think very many people from
10 Beaver hunt other side of Fort Yukon, basically. And
11 maybe Chief Ronda can correct me on that, but yeah,
12 that's why I did it that way.

12

13

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: No more questions?

14

15

(No response)

16

17

Okay. Public comments received.

18

19

20

21

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Chair. Tom Plank,
OSM. There were no written public comments during the
open period.

22

23

24

25

26

MS. MCDAVID: And, Mr. Chair, this is
Brooke. We do have some written public comments that
I'll reference when we get down to the next one. I know
folks are waiting for those.

27

28

29

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

30

31

32

33

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom
Plank, OSM. We did have somebody call in and in support
of this closure.

34

35

36

37

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Agency and tribal
comments, ADF&G. Already heard from you. Thank you.
Federal agencies.

38

39

(No comment)

40

41

Okay.

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. BERTRAM: Through the Chair. I'm Mark
Bertram. I'm a Wildlife Biologist and right now Acting
Manager for Yukon Flats Refuge. Jimmy Fox is gone. He
retired back in April, April-May. So, I'm the acting
manager right now. Joining me is Clayton Merrill, who's
our Subsistence Coordinator. And I'm not going to go
back over all the information that you've just been
given. I've reviewed Mark's presentation before he

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1 brought it here today. I reviewed the OSM presentation.
2 So, I'm familiar with all that. I've contributed to it.
3 I don't have any other comments contrary to anything
4 that was presented to you. If you have any questions for
5 myself or Clayton, we're happy to answer them right now.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any questions? Sue
8 and Eva.

9
10 MR. ENTSMINGER: So, you would agree that
11 there -- how do I ask this in a way that isn't -- Eva,
12 you go first. I'll think of my question.

13
14 MS. BURK: I'm curious because we got
15 some testimony about some of the hunting being from fly-
16 ing folks, hunting pressure, some of the hunting
17 pressure being -- seem like people who might be involved
18 in the oil and gas exploration are beginning to want to
19 hunt in that area as they get more familiar with it. Are
20 you having anybody come into the office from the
21 communities here and comment to you about that? Because
22 I think we had mentioned stuff to Jimmy before he left.
23 And I think there was a word we had asked for something
24 from Jimmy to look at these impacts, and I.....

25
26 MR. BERTRAM: What I can tell you -- Mark
27 Bertram, to the Chair. What I can tell you is that our
28 LE presence was suppressed this year. We had a -- we did
29 have a employee who retired in or who left in in June.
30 We did have some presence out there through the fall for
31 the hunting season by Cody Smith. There were some
32 incidents that he acted on. Let me know if I'm getting
33 at your question. Trying to -- I don't recall having any
34 discussions with Jimmy before he left about the
35 specifics of what you just asked me about. But I do know
36 that we responded to a couple of incidents in the fall
37 up on the Hodzana River. There were multiple rafts up
38 there that were investigated unsuccessfully. People had
39 already left. And I guess the other thing that's
40 unrelated to this in some way that I'd like to mention
41 while we're talking about LE, is that we do have a new
42 person named Bill Cato who's on, he'll be starting later
43 on in the winter. And Bill will be much more active up
44 there next fall. So, I guess what I'm trying to say is
45 we didn't have a lot of presence out there this past
46 fall with documenting all the different you know, users
47 that were out there this year.

48
49 MS. ENTSMINGER: You helped me remember
50 some, but I mean, would you agree that probably closing

000145

1 it now is too early?

2

3 MR. BERTRAM: My perspective on this is
4 that you've got two things going on here. You've got a
5 -- I think we've -- I think the biological concerns here
6 are alleviated and that there's -- I think there is a
7 harvestable surplus. I'm -- I -- we use the same moose
8 survey methods that Mark uses. And I'm confident that
9 we're getting a -- we're not -- we don't have all the
10 information. Obviously, there's some big holes in there.
11 But the area is large. It's got a lot of above average
12 habitat in it. Moose move around and they backfill the
13 areas that are impacted the river system. So, there's a
14 lot of area for those non-local moose off the river
15 system to come in and use those areas. And I think that's
16 largely what keeps the riverine corridor high density
17 so that hunters have a reasonable chance of harvesting
18 a moose. The other part of this is you've got a user
19 conflict here, and I don't think that this proposal is
20 really going to address that user conflict. I don't think
21 that -- I think that the user conflict will probably
22 continue on in different forms. I think that people who
23 are using that area will probably go upstream above
24 Circle. Non-local hunters that are coming in, I think
25 that that part of it will probably shift upstream, is
26 my guess. And also, you know, the people who are coming
27 in, they're hunting below the mean high-water mark, I
28 think are still going to be in that area. I'm not sure
29 how that's going to play out. You know, it might take a
30 year or so for that to decrease if it does. A lot of
31 those area -- a lot of those hunters, though, I think
32 are going to go farther upstream. So, I guess I see this
33 proposal not really addressing the problem and it's
34 trying to address. So that's my -- it's my perspective
35 on it.

36

37 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. If I might add
38 that it's the domino effect. Once you shut something
39 down, they're going to go somewhere else. And I see this
40 as there's a lot of areas -- I might be wrong. I don't
41 know the area, but I imagine that there's probably people
42 with airplanes that can go places where the local people
43 can't get in unless they do the same thing, and that
44 would create the domino effect even worse, I would think.
45 Is that correct?

46

47 MR. BERTRAM: Yes. Yes, it could be
48 aircraft, or it could be boats. Boats coming up the road
49 to Circle. Yeah.

50

1 MR. MERRILL: This is Clayton Merrill,
2 Subsistence Coordinator for the record. I agree with
3 Mark. The -- this would push anyone who's hunting, any
4 non-federally qualified user who's hunting off the river
5 right to the river. And I hear -- I've only been coming
6 to these RAC meetings since last April because that's
7 how long I've been here. But at almost every RAC meeting
8 I've heard about conflicts right along the river
9 corridors as non-local hunters, either setting up camps,
10 blocking trailheads, hunting right along the river
11 corridor. And this would potentially push everyone, all
12 those non-local hunters, right to the area of highest
13 conflict. I also wanted to add just a brief comment
14 about the administrative burden that this might add to
15 the federally qualified subsistence hunters in that
16 area. For the 25D west moose hunt, we issue a maximum
17 of 60 permits. Typically, 40 of those actually get
18 issued. In my first year administering those permits for
19 that hunt, I had 10 hunters contact me with questions
20 about where they could hunt, which permits they need,
21 10 out of 40, you know, 25%, ten out of 60, 16%. That's
22 a significant amount of confusion to those -- to the
23 federally qualified subsistence hunters. If the
24 biological reasons for closing the hunt aren't there,
25 this adds an extra burden to the people who we should
26 be removing burdens from for hunting. Thank you.

27
28 MS. BURK: Thank you. Okay. Just for the
29 record, and to make sure that I got it clear, there
30 hasn't been a survey since 2015. There was a little bit
31 of something done in 2018 as far as data collection?

32
33 MR. BERTRAM: The 2018 survey was
34 actually in 25D west. So, the area that we're talking
35 about has not been surveyed since 2015.

36
37 MS. BURK: Okay. So, it hasn't been
38 surveyed since 2015. So that would have missed the years
39 where we had incredible amounts of rain on snow events.
40 And in my region, we lost a lot of moose, and it affected
41 caribou and other regions. So that data point and little
42 story is missing from the data here. And then as I'm
43 looking at Mark's presentation, these two graphs right
44 here, I noticed that there's a increase in the black,
45 right. The non-local residents. But there's an overall
46 increase in the number of hunters. But there isn't what
47 you would think in this corresponding increase in the
48 harvest from this increase in hunters and without
49 biological data of survey data, I'm going to say they're
50 not successful. And I'm going to say that there's an

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1 issue with the moose population because I have all the
2 local people reporting that. So that's kind of where I'm
3 at with the data. And I'm like, you're still comfortable
4 with all of this information saying there's no need to
5 limit to this hunt in any way?

6
7 MR. BERTRAM: I guess the one thing --
8 this is Mark Bertram. I guess the one thing I would add
9 to that is that, you know, we do have information from
10 25D west. So, we did do a survey there in 2018 and then
11 again in 2023. And the Yukon Flats Basin as a whole has
12 got -- it's got differences, but it's pretty homogenous.
13 And it's you know, it varies across the region but there
14 aren't stark differences. We have a high black bear
15 predation on the western half of the refuge, just like
16 we do on the eastern half. Habitat is probably somewhat
17 similar. It's a little -- it's actually probably richer
18 on the east side because we've got smaller rivers that
19 would -- up on the Porcupine, the Sheenjek, Colleen, the
20 Black River. There's actually probably more riparian
21 habitats on that half compared to the to the western
22 half. So, it's based on the feeling of the whole system
23 of the Yukon Flats is why I'm not expecting to be --
24 there to be a huge fluctuation. We've also had -- we've
25 been conducting moose surveys over the whole area since
26 1992, and during that whole time, as Mark described,
27 it's really -- it's a low-density population, but it's
28 been stable, unusually stable, you know, despite all the
29 black bear predation. That's just part of the system.
30 It's just a -- it's just highly predated, lightly
31 harvested overall. And so, yeah, that's where my comfort
32 is coming in on the eastern, even though we haven't done
33 a survey in 10 years, I'm going to be surprised if
34 there's a major fluctuation, just based on what I've
35 seen for the last 35 years. Yeah.

36
37 MS. BURK: Thank you for that. This is
38 Eva. And the other thing that we're looking for, that
39 we spoke with Jimmy Fox and this was from the
40 testimonies, was a compatibility determination for the
41 oil and gas exploration that's happening.

42
43 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. That's -- there's a
44 draft prepared. Not -- it's not been internally acted
45 on yet, so -- but yeah, we did take action on that. I
46 worked with him for the last year and a half on that.
47 And so, we've got something ready to go. You know, that's
48 a highly politically sensitive topic. And you know,
49 whenever we've got the ability to finalize that and share
50 it with the public, we will. It's a high priority for us.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Just a quick question of Eva and the biologist. Would it -- seems like the rain on snow wouldn't affect the moose as much because it's willows above that -- they're browsers, so. Okay, I don't want to go down a bag of worms here. I just -- the thought came to me when I -- and I'm sure it's snow level, so. Yeah. Okay. We don't need to answer that. Yeah, okay. Like they just said. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Any more questions?

(No response)

Hearing and seeing none. Thank you. Tribes and ANCSA Corporations. Go ahead.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Mr. Chair, this is Brooke. I just wanted to remind you all what Rhonda mentioned earlier, that CATG passed a resolution in support of WP26-75. And it was passed with a 7 to 0 vote. One person was absent and Chief Rhonda Pitka was excused from voting since she serves on the Federal Subsistence Board. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Advisory Group comments

(No comments)

Other RACs.

(No comments)

Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

(No comments)

Subsistence Resource Commissions.

(No comments)

Other written public comments.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke. We do have three written public comments that were submitted for this. And we have one person online, Charlie Jagow, who submitted a written comment. So perhaps I'll present the other two and then if he would

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1 like to speak to his, or I could read it on his behalf.
2 The first comment that I'll present was sent by the
3 Community of Central. They had a community meeting to
4 discuss this proposal WP26-75. There were ten people
5 present in person, and two folks were unable to attend
6 but provided some personal comments. And I'll summarize.
7 I'll read a little and then summarize the rest. So,
8 community members and attendance at the meeting
9 expressed support for the proposal, primarily due to
10 agreement with the proponents reasoning. Specifically,
11 they felt that implementation would increase the
12 likelihood of residents in our community meeting
13 subsistence needs. The group acknowledged that although
14 moose density in the area is generally low, Central
15 residents have observed a notable decline in moose
16 numbers compared to previous years. The two community
17 members who were not able to attend the meeting provided
18 written feedback. They opposed the proposal.
19 Specifically, they said, number one, we already have
20 priority. Number two, there is no evidence that there
21 is more hunting pressure than before, nor less moose in
22 the area. The Yukon Flats has never been known for a
23 high density of moose compared to other areas. So, to
24 summarize, the ten folks in person supported and two
25 folks opposed.

26
27 They also noted -- the folks that were
28 there and present at the community meeting did want to
29 point out that there hadn't been survey data since 2015,
30 which seems like a long time ago. And they have observed
31 lower numbers of moose compared to like the 1990s. If
32 this closure were to be implemented, participants at the
33 meeting said they were in favor of permits being
34 distributed similarly to how they're done for Fortymile
35 Caribou with a joint state-federal registration system.
36 We would not like to see a limited number of permits
37 issued per community. That is, anyone from the community
38 should be able to hunt. And that concludes the comments
39 from the Central Community meeting.

40
41 Okay. The next public comment was
42 submitted by Tylor Selden. Tyler Selden. My name is Tyler
43 Selden. I live with my wife, Ashley, and our two young
44 children, Sidney and Blaze, on the Middle Sheenjek River
45 for the fall and winter months. This is me and Ashley's
46 18th year trapping on the Sheenjek and yes, we're still
47 married. We trap up here for a significant portion of
48 our living and of course, the ability to continue hunting
49 moose where we live is crucial to our ability to feed
50 ourselves. Not to state the obvious, but there aren't

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1 many Fred Meyer stores along the Sheenjek River. Our
2 meat comes from the land, or it doesn't come. At the
3 conclusion of the trapping season, we head back to town,
4 Fairbanks, in our case. This is where we receive our
5 mail and therefore to the federal government's way of
6 seeing things, it's considered our primary residence.
7 So, we've never qualified to hunt the federal moose
8 seasons. As a result, though, we live on the Yukon Flats
9 for half the year. During part of fall federal moose
10 season, we still don't qualify to hunt during most of
11 that season. So, we've always been restricted to hunting
12 off a harvest ticket during the much shorter state moose
13 season. Which is fine. We've always managed okay. But I
14 mean to emphasize how crucial that 11-day state season
15 is to us. To clarify, the purpose of my comment isn't
16 to whine about the irony of our family's legitimate
17 dependence on subsistence resources, particularly moose
18 meat, and yet still somehow not qualifying for the
19 federal subsistence seasons, but instead to ask the
20 Committee or Council to carefully consider what the
21 passing of these further, more onerous restrictions on
22 our opportunity to hunt during the existing state season
23 September 10th through 20th would do to our ability to
24 secure our winter's meat supply. It would mean we
25 couldn't hunt moose anymore, period. That doesn't seem
26 right. Whether or not the federal qualifications used
27 to determine if a person or family is dependent on
28 subsistence resources recognizes us as subsistence users
29 hardly matters. Anybody that takes an honest look at how
30 our family is living out here would have a hard time
31 saying we didn't deserve a chance. Even an already
32 limited one like the current state season to hunt for
33 moose. Please consider our family's situation here on
34 the Sheenjek and the detrimental impact it would have
35 to us, and our ability to continue our lifestyle whenever
36 you take up this proposal. Thank you for hearing me out.

37
38 And Mr. Chair, the next written comment
39 we received was from former Council member Charlie
40 Jagow, and he is on the phone with us this evening and
41 I'd be happy to read his comment for him, or if we would
42 want him to speak on his behalf, he could. Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We can leave that
45 up to him.

46
47 MR. JAGOW: Yeah. Mr. Chair. Can I speak?

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

50

1 MR. JAGOW: Okay. So, for the record, is
2 Charlie Jagow here. So first off, I just want to say it
3 is relevant to point out how important the subsistence
4 moose harvest is for federally qualified users in 25D
5 remainder when discussing this proposal. With the
6 current salmon fishing closures in the region, this is
7 especially true. It is also important to acknowledge how
8 frustrating it can be to have lots of outside hunting
9 pressure in your home region. Unfortunately, isolated
10 events of conflict can pit different user groups against
11 each other, especially in high-hunting pressure areas.
12 But with this being said, conflict should not be a reason
13 for closure. There are other tools available to deal
14 with these problems. In fact, closures benefiting one
15 user group completely over the other will do nothing but
16 widen this divide. Largely, closures as a whole should
17 be based on true population concerns. Currently, there
18 has been no moose count 25D remainder since 2015, and
19 there seems to be no data demonstrating that there is
20 an over harvest concern. The reported moose harvest has
21 remained stable, and additionally there is an estimated
22 harvestable surplus of 110 to 200 bulls, while the
23 reported moose harvest is well below this number. The
24 reality is, because the number of moose harvested on the
25 state season is so low, if those closures occur, the
26 moose population will hardly see any increase.

27
28 As pointed out in Mark's presentation,
29 the moose numbers are low in this area because of not
30 because of hunter harvest. Under current regulations,
31 those hunting under the state law would only have 11
32 days in the fall and 11 days during the winter to harvest
33 bulls in 25D remainder versus 51 days in the federal
34 subsistence regulation. Additionally, it's worth noting
35 there's nearly no reported harvest moose during the
36 state winter hunt. So, as it stands, and reasonably so,
37 there's already a much greater opportunity for harvest
38 for the federal subsistence users. The reality of hunt
39 closure is a population of hunters won't simply cease
40 to exist but rather displace to other areas. In my
41 opinion, those hunting and 25D remainder under the state
42 regulation will move to 25B and 20E, which is the Yukon
43 River upriver from Circle and the Kanuk River. This will
44 have a negative impact on subsistence users in the Circle
45 region that depend on moose in that area. So, most
46 hunters going into 25D under state regulation access
47 area starting in Circle. In my opinion, if the closure
48 were to occur, most of the hunters would simply hunt
49 upriver from Circle rather than dispersing in both
50 directions. And ultimately the result they would

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1 probably simply move the burden of sharing resources
2 simply to the folks of Circle.

3
4 I believe that if this closure was to
5 occur, it will likely cause a lot of confusion and
6 conflict. Nearly all the non-federally qualified users
7 hunting in 25D remainder or hunting along the Yukon,
8 Porcupine, Sheenjek and Draanjik drainages. As this
9 closure only applies to federal lands, this could cause
10 confusion surrounding what is truly federal lands and
11 what is deemed state land below the high-water mark. I
12 do have a personal interest in matter, and that if there
13 is a closure in 25D remainder it will have a negative
14 impact on my family. I grew up on my family's trapline
15 in Unit 25B and still spent over half the year there
16 every season. In addition to trapping, they have worked
17 as a hunting guide and a rafting guide in the area to
18 earn a living as a small guide operator. I depend on the
19 state season in 25D remainder. Over the last eight years
20 of operating as a registered guide, I have taken one or
21 less moose annually in 25D. All of our hunting camps are
22 only accessible via float plane to avoid competing with
23 subsistence hunters, and all the moose we have taken in
24 25B are over ten miles from the nearest boat accessible
25 location. As a small operation, the loss of one moose
26 hunt annually would have a large impact on my ability
27 to generate sustainable living. While I know I'm only
28 one user in an area with many hunters, I believe it is
29 unfortunate that I would be limited by a blanket closure
30 while we have always prioritized running our hunts with
31 no impact to non-commercial users. I also employ several
32 assistant guides who live in the area as well. Our guided
33 trips allow these folks the opportunity to generate some
34 income and thus support their lifestyles in the bush.
35 Continued closures to non-federally qualified users,
36 such as my hunting clients, and make it difficult to
37 continue to generate work for these individuals. Again,
38 thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my
39 opinions and position.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much
42 for your testimony today. Any questions?

43
44 (No response)

45
46 Hearing or seeing none. I thank you, and
47 happy holidays.

48
49 MR. JAGOW: You as well. Thank you.

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1 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

4

5 MR. BASSICH: Quick question for Charlie.
6 Charlie, how reliable are caribou up in your region and
7 in recent years and up on the Sheenjek region?

8

9 MR. JAGOW: I would say the Sheenjek,
10 it's been fairly reliable. The Porcupine is a totally
11 different aspect. It was a very consistent migration
12 right by the Canadian border until 2008. And then we had
13 a bunch of wildfires. And for whatever reason, since
14 then they've completely changed their pattern coming
15 through there in September. So, it has not been reliant
16 by any means.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

19

20 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Charlie, this is
21 Sue. I'm sure you spend some time in the air in the
22 area. Do you see a significant change in the moose
23 numbers?

24

25 MR. JAGOW: No. Well, litely, I -- you
26 know, in my opinion, of course, I'm just a pilot, I'm
27 not a biologist. But I do spend a tremendous amount of
28 time scouting every season. And this season in
29 particular, I spent about 15 days just, essentially
30 surveying on the ground, and I believe it's slowly
31 climbing. I will say it was very hard to find a cow
32 without a calf this fall, and that's kind of been the
33 case for the last 3 or 4 years. So, it does seem like
34 it's a slow increase. It's -- there aren't a lot of
35 moose. It is low density population. But it you know,
36 in my opinion, it certainly isn't decreasing. And it
37 seems to be on the very slow rise.

38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Thank you
42 very much. No more questions?

43

44 (No response)

45

46 Appreciate your testimony. Thank you so
47 much. Any more public testimony at this time?

48

49 (No response)

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1 Anybody online?

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Anybody in that room?

6

7 (No response)

8

9 Okay. Moving down to Council motion.

10

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Move to adopt the WP26-

12 75.

13

14 MR. BASSICH: This is Andy. I'll second.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.

17

18 MS. ENTSMINGER: I'm just going to.....

19

20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

21

22 MS. ENTSMINGER: This is Sue. I'm going
23 to be opposed to this because I think it's going to
24 create more problems than it is meant to solve. And I
25 can see that it's a mixed match of landownership between
26 federal and state, and I can just see this domino effect
27 happening and making it way harder on the people. I
28 think there's got to be, you know, for hunters, there's
29 got to be a different way of managing it than to
30 completely close it down, because there's going to be
31 areas that the locals don't get to. And I think that it
32 would be nice that people could spread out their hunting,
33 but it's pretty tough on moose. So, I'm against doing
34 this right now.

35

36 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

39

40 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, this
41 is a really tough one for me. I think there's a lot of
42 good arguments in both ways. I really wish I had a little
43 bit more input from the people from Circle. The -- a lot
44 of the speculations on what this might do as far as
45 transferring hunting pressure, I'm really not as
46 concerned with that as far as them moving upriver.
47 There's very few people that live or almost nobody that
48 lives upriver between Circle and Eagle that would be
49 impacted by this. There is limited moose. It's the same
50 situation, limited moose populations in those areas. So,

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1 what I've noticed is there's kind of a boom bust cycle
2 that takes place. A lot of people show up, only a handful
3 of people get moose, and then people get discouraged and
4 say, this country sucks for moose hunting and they don't
5 show up again. And then 1 or 2 hunters get lucky a year
6 or two later, and then there's another boom for a year
7 or two. That seems to be the cycle that I see in our
8 region and down in the Circle region as well, I think.

9
10 The argument for the longer hunting
11 season for federally qualified people, in my opinion,
12 is not that great because it's at the end of the season.
13 And if there's a low moose population density, those
14 moose that are readily available early in the season are
15 taken during the early part of the hunt. And so, what
16 I'm finding in my area locally is that there's not much
17 left out there after the heavy influx of hunters come
18 through. So, although it looks like it is on paper, you
19 can hunt longer when you're in low moose population
20 density areas, the positive effects for that for
21 federally qualified people is not what it looks like on
22 paper. That's my personal experience with that. And I'm
23 looking at Central, and I'm seeing an 8 to 2 in favor
24 of it. And I also hear from Fort Yukon that they are in
25 favor of that -- supporting this proposal as well. So,
26 for those reasons, I think, and the ones I stated and
27 my earlier comments about the corridors and the pressure
28 on those corridors and limited, I think at this point
29 in time I'm going to support the proposal. However, I
30 do want the rest of the council members to know, I think
31 there is a lot of good argument for trying to come up
32 with methodologies to spread the harvest out and get
33 more hunters off the river systems. I think that's where
34 the issue is. So maybe, this closure could take place
35 in my mind at this point in time. And then try and put
36 our heads together and try and come up with other types
37 of systems and hunts that might encourage people to hunt
38 in those areas and take some of the pressure off the
39 river systems. That seems to be the problem from my
40 perspective. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Any
43 more comments? Okay. Go ahead.

44
45 MS. BURK: Thank you. And thank you for
46 your comments, Andy. I'm also going to support, I asked
47 a lot of questions to biologists. I've already stated
48 my reasons. Especially the increase in hunters and not
49 seeing an increase in harvest. So, either it's under
50 reported, not reported harvest or they're just not

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1 successful. So, either way it's not good. And the other
2 thing exactly to your comment, Andy, about the earlier
3 and later seasons, if you go earlier, the moose are not
4 moving, it's too warm. If you go later, you're picking
5 up exactly what Andy said. There's not a lot left. And
6 it says that specifically in the document that most of
7 the hunting -- the takes are during the second and third
8 week of September. So that's during the state hunt, from
9 what I can gather. And there's been a lot of, I mean,
10 just the fact that Council of Athabaskan Tribal
11 Government submitted a resolution and they have seven
12 sovereign nations, and they're all from this area, Chief
13 Rhonda Pitka got online and commented, you do see that
14 harvest for local residences doesn't look very good. So,
15 for those reasons, I'm going to have to support at this
16 time, I do appreciate folks call. I was touched by some
17 of the public comments that came in. And I think closures
18 are really hard. I think it's not an easy thing to deal
19 with. I think limiting users and trying to navigate user
20 conflicts is tough work. But I also want to -- like I
21 lean on the side of conservation, especially in the
22 changing climate that we're in, and especially with
23 increased people on the ground from oil and gas. We
24 don't even know what that future looks like yet. And I
25 think it's really important to get ahead of it while we
26 actually have this stable moose population that y'all
27 keep referring to. I'd hate to see it become unstable.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Dorothy.

30
31 MS. SHOCKELY: Yes. Dorothy Shockley. I
32 too am going to support this. I mean, it's hard to hear,
33 you know, of people's livelihood, but at the -- still,
34 you know, I don't feel there's enough evidence in regards
35 to, you know, the population. And, you know, again, I
36 think this is a good opportunity to really rely on local
37 knowledge when we can't get, you know state or feds to
38 be out there counting moose. We really need to rely on
39 local knowledge. And I again, appreciate everyone who
40 testified but -- thank you. Appreciate it.

41
42 (Pause)

43
44 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Charlie
45 Wright. I think about -- when I look at this, I do think
46 about those families up there, and then I think -- I
47 look at all the villages inside of this and all the
48 whole amount of people that's going to be affected. And
49 this right here is effect of a highway, the road, exactly
50 the way that Rampart has been affected by our winter

1 road or mining road and the way that it's been affected
2 from the Haul Road and the Yukon River Bridge, and Beaver
3 is not having -- harvesting good enough in my mind.
4 Rampart only got a couple moose for I don't know how
5 many years, 2 or 3 moose and Tanana is the same way. And
6 it's all the way down the corridor until you get down
7 to the lower part of the -- the middle part of the Yukon,
8 where they have a stronger moose population. So, some
9 of those villages are in the -- no other means right
10 now. They don't have no salmon, they have no store and
11 they have no moose. So this seems -- the salmon problem
12 started in excuse me, but it is I'm going to lead to
13 something here. It started in Canada and it worked his
14 way all the way down. So, the same thing is happening
15 to the river corridor with moose. It's been really hard
16 for the people to find moose. So, I can't support this
17 because of that. There's not been a count in since 2015.
18 That's the big -- one of the bigger flags for me right
19 there. Things could change a lot. We heard Gerald over
20 here say that you could do it a little bit different,
21 your moose counts. And you could try to change things
22 up. So, you can't just say that. Oh, the weather wasn't
23 good when we went and we didn't do it. We tried once or
24 twice. So maybe we should stretch that out and try some
25 more times, you know, to get a better count. That way
26 you'll, you'll get a better result if you have a better
27 count and fresher counts and more proof. But for those
28 reasons, I couldn't support it either.

29

(Whispered conversation)

31

32 I support the closure. Excuse me. I'm
33 half asleep here. Yeah, yeah. Excuse me. I'm sorry. Thank
34 you for that. Yeah. This is a really tough one for me.
35 And, like was said earlier, there is -- there's a really
36 good argument on both sides, but there's just so many
37 people that are going to be affected right here and are
38 being affected, so that's where I get my decision from.
39 Thank you. Anybody else? Maybe -- Gerald lives there.
40 You want to say a few words?

41

42 MR. ALEXANDER: Actually, this is Gerald
43 Alexander, I'm kind of iffy on this question. I'm in
44 this, too. So, I know these people up there. Charlie,
45 Heimo Korth, Tyler. I met them, I know -- I, you know,
46 I actually sat down with them, and I feel for them, and
47 I'm kind of in leaning with Charlie there so, you guys
48 know my vote there.

49

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Any more
2 comments? We haven't heard from Linda.

3
4 MR. BASSICH: I call question, Mr.
5 Chair.

6
7 Did you want to say something first,
8 Linda? Okay. Thank you, Andy.

9
10 MS. EVANS: I'm going to oppose this
11 because I think about the people in Beaver who are our
12 relatives along the Yukon, and they can't get a moose,
13 you know, so I guess that I changed my wording here. I
14 think I have to support it because it's -- this is
15 supporting a closure in that area.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yep. Appreciate you
18 now, Andy. Yeah. He called the question. Okay.

19
20 MR. BASSICH: Yes, I called question, Mr.
21 Chair.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, sir. Roll
24 call vote.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the
27 record. The motion on the floor is to support WP26-75
28 to close 25D west moose hunting to non-federally
29 qualified subsistence users, not west. Sorry. Misspoke.
30 remainder or east. We're all getting tired here. Thanks
31 for bearing with me. Okay, so just to repeat, so it's
32 crystal clear. This -- support for this proposal would
33 close 25D east or remainder moose hunting by non-
34 federally qualified users. And I go down the list here.
35 Andy Bassich.

36
37 MR. BASSICH: Support.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.

40
41 MR. ALEXANDER: I support.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

44
45 MS. BURK: Yes, support.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Sue Entsminger.

48
49 MS. ENTSMINGER: No.

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

2

3 MS. EVANS: Yes.

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Dorothy Shockley.

6

7 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Donald Woodruff.

10

11 MR. WOODRUFF: No.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: Charlie Wright.

14

15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes.

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: Motion passes 6-2.

18

19 (Pause)

20

21 MR. WOODRUFF: I voted no because the
22 public comment from the folks that live on the Sheenjek
23 and trapped on the Sheenjek touched my heart. Because I
24 wouldn't want to be cut off with -- once you're on the
25 trap line. You got nothing to eat except martin.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you guys. That was a
28 heavy lift, a lot of good discussion. We have two
29 proposals remaining. We skipped over WP26-70 and then
30 there's WP26-78.

31

32 (Pause)

33

34 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy Bassich. I
35 have a question.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, sir.

38

39 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. On this proposal,
40 WP26-78, that's what we were going to address next. Is
41 that correct?

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Andy, this is Brooke. We
44 have WP26-70 and -78. Those are two proposals and we
45 haven't settled on order. I think there's some
46 discussion on the table about.....

47

48 MR. BASSICH: Okay.

49

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID:what we're going to
2 do next.

3
4 MR. BASSICH: Thank. Thank you. I wanted
5 that's what I was wondering. This is our proposal, 70 -
6 - 26-78 is our proposal and I'm wondering if we have any
7 record of when we supported this proposal, whether we
8 were unanimous or not in that vote to create this
9 proposal. And the reason why I'm saying that is that
10 obviously, we would need to officially go through the
11 entire process for reviewing this and our support. But
12 I'm just getting to the point that if we unanimously
13 supported it to make it happen it might be something in
14 the -- if we are concerned about time that would go on
15 the record. Thank you. I'm not sure if that's
16 appropriate, but I just wanted to offer that up for
17 time's sake.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Andy. I would have
20 to dig pretty hard to find the actual vote on those, but
21 they were -- the two remaining proposals were both
22 submitted by the Council, and I don't recall any
23 opposition. Oh, it says in the book, submitted by Eastern
24 Interior Council under general description.

25
26 Alright. Don says keep going. So, we're
27 going. Never give up. I like that spirit.

28
29 MS. BURK: I work later when I do culture
30 camp for the kids, we could do it.

31
32 MS. MCDAVID: Alright. It looks like
33 we're going to move into -78. It should be a cut and dry
34 one. It's about a administrative boundary alignment.
35 Let's go, Tom.

36
37 MR. PLANK: No problem. So, thank you,
38 Mr. Chair, Members of the Council. My name is Tom Plank,
39 and I am a Wildlife Biologist, OSM. And I am presenting
40 the Summary of Analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP2678
41 starting on page 181 in your books. Wildlife proposal
42 WP26-78 was apparently submitted by this RAC. And it
43 requests changing the boundaries between 25C and 25D.
44 Brooke, could you put that map up, please? Anyway, so
45 if you look at that map 2000 -- just March.....

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: It's on the screen, FYI.

48
49 MR. PLANK: It's on the screen there.
50 March 2 -- of this year, the Board of Game adopted a

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1 proposal that moved the boundary to the -- closer to the
2 Steese Highway. And this proposal is to match what the
3 state did. This will have no effect on wildlife
4 populations or federally qualified subsistence users
5 because the affected area has no federal public lands.
6 OSM's preliminary conclusions to support this proposal,
7 simply because this proposal just maintains alignment
8 with state subunit boundaries, reducing regulatory
9 complexity and potential. And that was under two
10 minutes.

11
12 MS. BURK: Thank you. This is Eva. Do we
13 have any questions?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 I have a quick question. How come the
18 state of Alaska is changing all these boundaries for
19 user ease? Because this happened, right in Nenana too.
20 And I'm like, what is this?

21
22 MR. PLANK: Through the Chair. Tom Plank,
23 OSM. This one I can actually answer. So, if you look at
24 the boundary, now it's just along the highway. So, it's
25 very easy to know which Unit you're in, whether you're
26 in D or C, where before it was along the watershed. So
27 that line is kind of hard to tell when you're on the
28 ground. Where now you got a highway that tells you
29 exactly where it's at.

30
31 MS. BURK: Thank you for that. Any public
32 comments received?

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: No public comments. And I'm
35 going to guess we probably don't have anyone that wants
36 to comment, but we could call for that. Does anyone
37 online want to comment on the boundary change or anyone
38 in the room?

39
40 MS. LAPP: For the record, this is
41 Krystal Lapp and I am on my own accord, so not TCC, no
42 other hats. So, the reason for this boundary change, I
43 lived out there for ten plus years, hunted that area for
44 a long time. We would have a lot of confusion from people
45 coming up from Fairbanks and then hunting on the wrong
46 side. And then there was a lot of disputes with
47 enforcement. So, we got that changed from the state side.
48 And this one just makes it to where it's the same. Yeah.

49
50

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1 MS. BURK: Do you know why they changed
2 the ones in Nenana? Because it had to do with the river.
3 Okay, off topic. They said I can't ask after
4 (distortion).

5
6 (Pause)

7
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Tribal -- and
9 now two people are telling me something. Now, where were
10 you?

11
12 MS. BURK: I was at number two.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Agency and
15 tribal comments next, ADF&G.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 Federal agencies.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 Tribes and ANCSA Corporations.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 Advisory Group comments, other RACs.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 Fish and Game Advisory Councils.

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 Subsistence Resource Commissions.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 Any other written public comments?

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 Any public testimony?

44
45 (No comments)

46
47 Okay. We're down to Council motion.

48
49 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I make a motion
50 to adopt this proposal -- support this proposal WP26-78.

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2

MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second. This is Don.

3

4

5

MS. ENTSMINGER: Speaking to the motion. That's a clean-up. And that is, I would just make it easier for everybody. It's the same in the state and same in the federal.

6

7

8

9

MS. BURK: This is Eva, call question.

10

11

12

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. All those against please signify by saying aye.

13

14

15

(No response)

16

17

18

Hearing or seeing none, passes. Thank you. Whoa! That was some kind of record! Okay.

19

20

21

Okay. We're moving to WP26-70. You have the floor.

22

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MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening, Mr. Chair, Members of the council. This is Liz Williams, Cultural Anthropologist with OSM. What's so funny? Oh, okay. Well, you submitted this. Do I even have to say anything? No, I'm kidding. So, this was submitted by the Council, and the intent is to expand how much of the non-edible parts of a black bear that you can use for handicrafts. And so, there are no changes or harvest limits or anything, and it's adding three units to an existing list of people that use more than just the claws and the fur of a black bear only. So that's the really most important thing. So, for these units there's Units 1, 2, 3, 4, where they specifically asked to sell handicrafts, articles made from the skin, hide, pelt, fur, claws, bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls of a black bear taken from their units. This is another one of those where people just ask for what they wanted. And because bears are so sensitive and regarded so differently in different cultures, different units picked -- or different RACs picked different preferences. So, I think Andy was the main proponent. And you have to be a little careful with this one because I don't think the state allows the sale of skulls. Yeah. But -- and -- so we'll get some clarification on that. And if you're going to sell it out of State, even if you're a unit where you don't have to get a bear seal, you should probably get it sealed. And then the other thing is defense of life and property bears, you can't

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1 use to make handicrafts. You have to turn that in. And
2 you know, a lot of this is sensitive also because of the
3 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species,
4 because black bears are in decline in the lower 48, so
5 they're still going to be highly regulated if you sell
6 outside of your unit or Alaska. So, and of course,
7 gallbladders are always no. So, the main thing that
8 you're doing here is just adding the inedible parts or
9 non-edible parts of a black bear that you harvest under
10 federal subsistence regulations, which means that you're
11 still harvesting it to eat the meat. So, there's no new
12 opportunity. There's just expansion of what you can do
13 under the current subsistence regulations as far as
14 harvest. But the number of items you can use to make a
15 handicraft are expanded. So OSM's preliminary conclusion
16 is to support this proposal.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Is there any
19 public comments?

20
21 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Tribal and ANCSA
24 Corporation consultation report?

25
26 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Agency and tribal
29 comments ADF&G, federal agencies?

30
31 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Tribes and ANCSA
34 corporations?

35
36 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Advisory Group
39 comments, other RACs.

40
41 MS. WILLIAMS: No

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Fish and Game
44 Advisory Councils.

45
46 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Subsistence
49 Resource Commissions.

50

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1 MS. WILLIAMS: I don't know because they
2 read them themselves and they left.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: But there -- there's no SRC
5 in that area.

6
7 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Other written
10 public comments.

11
12 MS. WILLIAMS: No.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Public testimony.

15
16 (No comments)

17
18 Council motion.

19
20 MS. SHOCKLEY: I move to adopt.

21
22 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second. Sue, second.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue.

25
26 MS. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Andy, speak to
27 the motion.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy. Go
30 ahead.

31
32 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I wanted
33 to just point out the -- I agree with the analysis. This
34 is already taking place in Units 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, and
35 it's just going to be expanded to allow 20E, 25A and 25B
36 to do the same thing. There's no conservation concern.
37 And the reasoning for this is that for people who live
38 remotely, utilizing everything you possibly can from any
39 animal you take, whether it's a moose or a bear or
40 whatever, is a pretty natural thing to try and do, and
41 it's a respectful thing to do for the animal. And I
42 think that's the main reason why I wanted to do this.
43 The secondary aspect of it is that the more remote you
44 live, the more you don't have other economic means. So
45 being able to create a few small handicrafts from an
46 item that you're harvesting for food to be able to help
47 in your economic aspects of life. It's not cheap to live
48 out in the bush. And so, I think this is just an extra
49 little bonus to help people economically that are taking
50 a resource to help them fully utilize that in every way

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1 possible. That's the reasoning behind it. And so, I'm
2 going to be in support of this. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, sir.

5

6 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question.

7

8 MS. MCDAVID: Wow. Look at you guys
9 getting this process down so good.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, question has
12 been called I'm going to ask for unanimous consent. All
13 those against please signify by saying aye.

14

15 (No response)

16

17 Hearing none, it passes. Thank you. Wow.

18

19 MR BASSICH: Mr. Chair, this is Andy.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

22

23 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I just wanted to say
24 maybe what we need to do in the future for our meetings
25 is always start our meetings at 4:00 on the last day.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: We could start earlier, but
28 we have trouble being here at nine, so.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah, I'll have a
31 comment on that before we leave here today.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you, Mr.
34 Chair. This is Brooke, for the record. We're going to
35 continue on with the agenda. And the next item is Annual
36 Report. I'll just direct you to page 257 of your meeting
37 book. This is your annual report that you submitted to
38 the federal -- or the replies from the Federal
39 Subsistence Board for your FY2024 Annual Report. The
40 Board reviewed this report at their summer work session.
41 That was in July or August, I can't remember at this
42 point. Chair Wright was unable to make it to that
43 meeting. But I was there and the Board did discuss the
44 topics, the first six topics in your report. And some
45 of them were similar to some of the big issues, cross
46 regional issues like the salmon crisis. And at that work
47 session, the Board did vote to forward on a couple of
48 topics to the Secretaries, that included ones that
49 weren't in the report. Also, the three were the salmon
50 crisis and the need for inter-jurisdictional salmon

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1 management, the D(1) lands issue and then the issue of
2 council member compensation. To my knowledge, at this
3 time, those letters have still not been elevated to the
4 Secretary's Office. So, I just wanted to make you aware
5 of that. In regards -- I'll let you read through the
6 details of the replies. But go ahead, Dorothy.

7
8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yeah. I mean, I again read
9 this and it's like, what are they saying? But my point
10 or comment is, you know, the new administration was sworn
11 in January, and this letter was written in August, and
12 their Board still plans to or the Board plans to request
13 a meeting with the new administration. I mean, you know,
14 that is just troublesome.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for that,
17 Dorothy. You'd be welcome to write to the Board and
18 express those concerns. You could also include them in
19 your annual report for this coming year.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, if none of these
22 were elevated, then are we just going to resend with a
23 letter? What's the procedure here?

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Well, not all topics in
26 your annual report were requested to be elevated. But I
27 did want to make you aware because those were some big
28 issues. There are some more smaller issues that OSM can
29 potentially address, or Alaska agencies can address. And
30 you brought up wanting to include Native land map on the
31 maps so corp village or regional corporation lands. And
32 OSM noted that although it couldn't probably be fit into
33 the regulation books. They do plan on making additional
34 maps to have at our meetings and to have online that
35 depict all land ownership, not just the federal and state
36 lands.

37
38 MS. BURK: Thank you. I was thinking
39 about something last night in that handy dandy book with
40 the Secretarial Review that this comment belongs there
41 to about lands that if they are to make a handy dandy
42 that we need to have Native lands in that new book. If
43 they make one book with state and federal regs, then we
44 need to have our -- they're going to make new map, and
45 they need to put our lands on there. So that occurred
46 to me.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Member Burk. Is
49 that something that you would -- the Council would like
50 added to the comments that you made yesterday during the

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1 Secretarial Review discussion?

2

3 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Yeah, I think it
4 should go there. Yeah.

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And I think we would
7 need a motion for that if you want to make that motion.

8

9 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I want to make a
10 motion to add comments to the Secretarial Review. I'm
11 so tired. Include Native lands on any maps that they
12 include in They called it a handy dandy combining the
13 state and federal regulations into one book. If they
14 have new maps to include Native lands. Thank you.

15

16 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second. This is Don.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Second.

19

20 MS. BURK: And this is Eva. I'll speak
21 to the motion. We have a lot of trespass issues. We have
22 tons of people who come and comment about trespass. I
23 know in my own village corporation, we actually hire
24 folks and I -- when I look at ADNR mapper and several
25 mapping technologies in our lands are not even on that
26 state mapping software. Some of them, not all of them.
27 And it's really important, especially in hunting and
28 fishing books, to have Native lands in there. Thank you.

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: Please use your mic.

31

32 MS. SHOCKLEY: Sorry. Yeah. We basically
33 ask almost every year to include, you know, corporation
34 lands and. We asked just in the past six months, I think,
35 and I can't remember exactly the response we got, but I
36 think it has to do with private lands. But, yeah, I
37 mean, it just doesn't make sense. And, you know, if we
38 can just continue to push them to do that. That would
39 be great.

40

41 MS. BURK: This is Eva. And one more
42 quick comment. The Native lands are much -- we're the
43 third largest landowner in Alaska. So, it's not like
44 individual private parcels. So, it's a lot different
45 large, intact pieces of land.

46

47 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. We can ask for
50 unanimous consent.

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2

MS. EVANS: Could you repeat the motion
that we're working on?

4

5

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We're going to
resend it right now.

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MR. WOODRUFF: This is Don. I think we
can wait and see what's going to happen in the future.

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1 But my relationship with Park Service and public use
2 cabins is very good. Thank you.

3

4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

5

6 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

9

10 MR BASSICH: Yeah, I'm fine with
11 deferring this to a later date. And this was in regards
12 to BLM lands. And this was, if I remember correctly,
13 this was driven pretty hard by Amanda Pope a former RAC
14 member. So, it was basically her baby and I'm fine with
15 just giving this a little bit of time to flesh out with
16 new staff and maybe some new policies. Thank you.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. The next up,
19 number 5, was about developing federal subsistence use
20 amounts. In short, this has been determined in court
21 that providing a reasonable opportunity to meet needs
22 through ANS is inconsistent with ANILCA. So that's why
23 we don't have ANS under the federal program, it only
24 exists under the state. And I think that could lead us
25 down a rabbit hole. That's a very high-level policy
26 discussion. But if you guys would like more information
27 on that in the future, I think we could have a
28 presentation about that.

29

30 So ANS stands for amounts reasonable for
31 subsistence -- necessary. Sorry. Amounts necessary for
32 subsistence. And that's a metric that the state uses to
33 determine whether they're meeting reasonable opportunity
34 for subsistence. The last topic, last year you requested
35 better technology at Council meetings. I hope that
36 you've been happy to see the use of more presentations
37 and sharing those online and we have the camera at this
38 meeting. We'll look forward to feedback about how that
39 went. We are working with new AV support who's been
40 really wonderful, Talking Circle media. They're used to
41 working in rural communities. They have starlink's
42 available that we can rent from them. If we do meet in
43 rural locations or places without good internet. So, if
44 you have any additional feedback on that please let us
45 know.

46

47 MR BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

50

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1 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I'll just
2 give my feedback right now since I'm online and
3 participating through this. A marked improvement. I
4 think it's really good. Connections were good, and it's
5 been really good following the meeting, the only
6 suggestion I would make is that the potentially what
7 would be really nice would be able to zoom in on either
8 the person speaking to the Council or at times, various
9 council members. I don't know if that -- if you're using
10 an owl or whatever it is, but that would be the only
11 improvement I would see as far as participating from the
12 outside looking in. That just enhances the testimony
13 that someone gives, and it just makes it a little bit
14 more pleasurable to be a part of the process as opposed
15 to just a big wide screen of a big white table with a
16 bunch of little blurbs behind it. Thank you though. Great
17 improvement to the process. Thank you.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Andy. We'll chat
20 with our AV support about other potential equipment. We
21 could maybe trial. This is kind of a trial and error.
22 So that's helpful feedback. Thank you.

23
24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I would just have to
25 say I'd recommend everybody wear red like Sue because
26 she shows up really good.

27
28 MS. ENTSMINGER: It's pink.

29
30 MR. BASSICH: Okay, well, on my screen
31 it looks red. Maybe it's just my eyes are red from this
32 long meeting.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah, we're all seeing red
35 at this point. That's why I'm going to try to wrap up
36 here quickly with last year's annual report. You'll see
37 on page 265, there were quite a number of other topics
38 that you included in your annual report. Those were
39 topics that were informational to the Board. They're
40 outside the Board's jurisdiction. And so, the Board did
41 not provide replies, but they appreciated the
42 information. And then we can entertain any more
43 questions about last year's annual report, but I believe
44 next up is to move into developing topics for this year's
45 annual report. And I think our LT member might want to
46 say a brief message before we dive in. Thank you.

47
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: I have a question. I know
49 we just kind of flew by one and two of the reports, and
50 I made, you know, I commented that, you know, they've

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1 had a year. Well, the letter was written in August, but
2 eight months to talk to the new administration. But are
3 we just going to resubmit these or what are we doing
4 with...?

5
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We can also send a
7 letter along with them to make sure to ask that they go
8 through and be sent forward. We're going to have to say
9 that, because we're putting them in again for the second
10 time. So, we will -- I think we did that before didn't
11 we? Yeah. Yep. And we'll try to include that in the
12 Secretarial Review, comments also Dorothy so that they
13 get it twice because it's important that it's kind of
14 breaking the whole process here. If it's not going all
15 the way to where it needs to be going and we're actually
16 doing all this for nothing if it doesn't.

17
18 MS SHOCKLEY: I know. And these are so
19 critical that, you know, to wait, you know, a whole year
20 and then, you know, I mean, in some of their comments
21 about, you know, too, you know, it just doesn't make
22 sense. So, we just need to continue to push them, I
23 think.

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: And could I suggest a path
26 forward? Perhaps someone would like to make a motion to
27 write a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board
28 expressing your concerns about the delays in elevation
29 to the Secretaries of issues that you have previously
30 raised and to also include that as a comment in the
31 Secretarial Review about how this annual report process
32 has been going.

33
34 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, I so move.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: So moved. Member Bassich.

37
38 MS. SHOCKLEY: But I would also add, I
39 would add that especially with the salmon crisis, those
40 are critical that they talk with the Secretary and those.
41 And, yeah. The North Pacific Fisheries Management
42 Council action as well.

43
44 MS. BURK: Need a second. Andy or Dorothy
45 -- to Dorothy.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Andy made it.

48
49 MS. BURK: Okay.

50

1 MS. EVANS: I'll second the motion.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. We're going with
4 Dorothy made the motion, and Linda seconded. Is there
5 any more discussion on that letter to the Board and
6 comments of the Secretary?

7

8 MS. BURK: I don't know if -- are we
9 adding new topics like what if I want to -- I want
10 something -- I need something to go to the secretary
11 through the Board. Is that -- do I add it to the annual
12 report?

13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. No, that would be a
15 letter, and I would suggest that you separate topics.
16 But not send one letter with like 20 different topics
17 in it.

18

19 MS. BURK: Okay. This one's easy then.
20 Okay. So, I don't know if you guys are aware of the
21 United States Department of Agriculture purchasing
22 pollock. 100 million dollars of pollock is being
23 purchased. Huge requests for proposals are going out to
24 people to fill those orders. At one point, they were
25 using this surplus program. It's like Section 32 or
26 something of the United States Department of
27 Agriculture, where it can dedicate -- if you have a
28 surplus of agriculture, which would be like a surplus
29 of fish, then you can use USDA funding to buy that
30 surplus of fish. And then that is -- then that fish that
31 they're buying is then getting distributed to like
32 school programs and stuff like that. But I think when
33 you have people coming into these North Pacific
34 meetings, hundreds of tribal members, hundreds of
35 federally qualified subsistence users are testifying and
36 asking for less pollock to be caught, for asking for
37 less bycatch. It's really sending a horrible message to
38 us in Alaska that it's okay for the federal government
39 to subsidize an industry that is by -- that just in this
40 last year caught 150,000 chum salmon as bycatch in their
41 Bering Sea Pollock Fishery. And I was limited at our
42 culture camp for a community of 500 people to 25 fall
43 chum, and there's no cap on chum in the Bering Sea. And
44 so, I have a real issue with the USDA, United States
45 Department of Agriculture, continuing to purchase this
46 pollock without truly understanding the sustainability
47 of the fishery and the effects of this particular fishery
48 on the Yukon River people.

49

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Can I ask a clarifying
2 question? Okay. Do we want to send a letter to the Board
3 and request that they -- specifically about fisheries
4 issues and elevate that to the Secretaries because --
5 or do you want to just say there's these issues that
6 we've asked to be elevated that haven't been elevated.
7 I don't -- I'm just trying to figure out the approach
8 because we haven't -- we have this motion on the floor
9 for a letter to elevate the ones that haven't been. And
10 you know, to tell the Board about our frustrations with
11 one motion. Okay.

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

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir. Andy.

16
17 MR BASSICH: I would like to see two
18 different letters. I think one is the focal point is the
19 fact that twice now we've asked for letters to be
20 elevated through the process and they haven't been. So
21 that's one. This one that Eva brings up is a maybe a new
22 topic and I just want to pile on with that. The other
23 thing that's happening through the US government that a
24 lot of people don't realize is they're also buying up
25 pink salmon, canned pink salmon from the hatcheries. And
26 you know, you all know me. I'm on the bang the hatcheries
27 back down a little bit. And it just really pissed me off
28 when I found out last week that the federal government
29 is buying surplus canned pink salmon from Alaska
30 processors to distribute or to sell cheaply. So, it's
31 not just pollock and both of those two things, we've
32 identified as the largest concerns for wild stocks in
33 Alaskan waters. So anyway, I think it needs two
34 completely different things. I don't want to see it get
35 diluted into one. Thank you.

36
37 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I agree with you,
38 Andy. It's got to be two separate things. I got a little
39 mixed up in the process. I'm a little tired. Sorry.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so the motion on the
42 floor -- and I made notes about the next letter. So, the
43 first letter that you're going to vote on is to send a
44 letter to the Board expressing, for lack of better words,
45 frustration with previous issues not being elevated and
46 also through the annual report process. So, you want to
47 vote on that one first?

48
49 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, did you
50 also want to include those comments in the Secretary

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1 Review?

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, sorry. Thank you for
4 that, Lisa. I have that on here. I just didn't read it.

5

6 MS. SHOCKLEY: Salmon crisis, right? I
7 mean.....

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: That'll be the next letter.
10 But one of those letters that wasn't elevated was about
11 the salmon crisis. So, you'll be covered on salmon.

12

13 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. So, the first one
14 that I made the motion on was what you just read, right?
15 Okay.

16

17 MR. BASSICH: I call question.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Alrighty, now we
20 gotta go through this list. Any public comment?

21

22 (Talking, laughter)

23

24 Okay. I'm going to run -- I was running
25 it through that list and I'm just trained. Okay.
26 Unanimous -- I'll call for unanimous consent. All
27 against, please signify by saying aye.

28

29 (No response)

30

31 Hearing none, passes. Thank you.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 And moving on to the second letter that was brought up.
35 We don't have a motion on the floor, but perhaps Eva or
36 Andy, since they spoke to that would be willing to
37 entertain them or give us a motion.

38

39 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'll make a motion
40 that we send a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board
41 to be elevated to Secretary that we have great concerns
42 for the federal government's funding of pollock excess
43 or additional pollock bycatch and pink salmon excess
44 produced through the processors.

45

46 MS. SHOCKLEY: Can I speak to that,
47 please? From what I understand, they're also
48 subsidizing, right? Oh.

49

50

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1 MS. MCDAVID: We need a second. And then
2 hold that.....

3
4 MS. SHOCKLEY: Second. I'll second it.

5
6 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Dorothy.

7
8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay, then can I...? Okay,
9 so I also heard they're subsidizing the -- yeah. I mean,
10 but is it the same thing? I mean, is that the same?
11 Okay. So yeah, I mean, I agree and I think I don't know
12 if we can do this, but I think USDA should be -- we
13 should do a review of some sort. Can we do that or ask
14 for one on some of these subsidies that they're doing
15 that really hurt, you know...?

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: I think you could -- this
18 is Brooke, potentially ask the Secretary to the liaise
19 with their counterpart in Department of Agriculture to
20 review some of these things that you're bringing up.
21 That might be the only avenue, since you can't write --
22 or maybe Eva has, go ahead.

23
24 MS. BURK: The one place that within the
25 Department of Agriculture there, and I'm not sure -- we
26 have a Tribal Advisory Committee, and I just testified
27 to the Tribal Advisory Committee about this issue, and
28 I know that they're working on it. And so I'm not sure
29 it might be part if you want to include that in the
30 letter.

31
32 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I would recommend
37 that we vote to send the letter, and then I'd be happy
38 to volunteer. I think Eva would be a great asset to this
39 and we could kind of pull our heads together on the best
40 strategy for getting this noticed and maybe addressed
41 in the future. This goes to all of the work that we're
42 trying to do in the marine life stages of salmon which
43 is the majority of what our issues are with salmon, wild
44 salmon stocks in Alaska. And so, it's a small part of a
45 much bigger picture. Thank you.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
48 just remembered -- its so late in the day. We're also
49 part -- we're not part of Department of Agriculture, but
50 the Federal Subsistence Management Program is USDA and

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1 DOI. So, you can write to USDA. You might want to address
2 it to both secretaries so they're aware. So just a point
3 of clarification how you guys would like the letter
4 addressed, please. Thank you.

5
6 MS. SHOCKLEY: And the word I think I
7 think it was.....

8
9 (Simultaneous speech)

10
11 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair.

12
13 MS. SHOCKLEY:investigate but I'm
14 not sure if that we could do that.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

17
18 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I was just going to
19 say this needs to also be elevated to our senator and
20 congressman from Alaska, because this is something that
21 is federal funding through Congress, in the Senate. So,
22 it's eventually, if we're going to make any progress on
23 this, it's at that level that it's going to probably
24 need to be addressed because it is a federal expenditure.
25 It's -- the agencies are the ones prosecuting it through
26 their agencies. But the federal funding of it is through
27 the legislation, is my understanding. So just maybe
28 informational at this point in time. The important thing
29 is to begin to work on this aspect of marine life stages
30 because, well, I'll just leave it at that. It's getting
31 late. Thank you.

32
33 MS. BURK: Yeah, that's why -- exactly
34 why I brought this up about the USDA is because of that
35 oversight, the -- yeah.

36
37 MR. WOODRUFF: If I might say something.
38 One of the major issues in rebuilding our salmon
39 population is the ethical inhumanity to the people that
40 are going hungry, and this is directly related to this
41 government buying all this bycatch. It's ridiculous. And
42 I wanted to get that on the record that I think it's
43 inhumane. Thank you.

44
45 MS. BURK: I'm not sure if you need more
46 justification. This is Eva. These tribal members have
47 all been going in and asking for reductions in fishing.
48 They're asking for less hatchery releases, so there
49 isn't -- there should not be a surplus if. The fishery
50 was sustainable, it wouldn't be fishing at the level it

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1 is. To continue to have a surplus when they know they
2 cannot sell the surplus.

3

4

5 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thank you, guys, for
6 that discussion. It sounds like this letter. Oh, go
7 ahead.

8

9 MR. BASSICH: Can I add one more quick
10 thing, Brooke?

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: Sure.

13

14 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Yeah. Thank you.
15 The other aspect of this is that the food industry --
16 the fishing industry, commercial fishing industry within
17 Alaska is on a major campaign right now promoting the
18 fact that Alaska's fisheries feeds the world. But the
19 Alaska fisheries is basically taking away the food from
20 the Alaskan people. That's the key issue right here with
21 this topic, in my view. Thank you.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Okay, so
24 just to recap this letter will be going to the
25 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture and also
26 requesting the Board forward it to the Alaska
27 delegation, our senators and congress person.

28

29 MS. ENTSINGER: I'm going to butt in. I
30 thought we weren't allowed to do that.

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: The Council can request
33 that the Board forward it. We can't write, we can request
34 the Board. The Board may say no, but. I will also note,
35 just so you guys know, that Senator Murkowski did attend
36 one of the Yukon Delta RAC meetings at a previous -- so
37 I don't know if there's potential opportunity for
38 discussion there in the future. But the other thing I
39 wanted to bring up, I know we're on this letter, but you
40 guys, to Andy's point about hatcheries, you all also
41 wrote a letter in the past to the department asking --
42 no to someone in the State Department about
43 international hatcheries issues, because you do keep
44 bringing up, it's both domestic and international. And
45 I'm just flagging that for discussion. If you want to
46 resend or do something about that in the future. But the
47 letter on the table now is to both Secretaries and,
48 well, you -- the Board, you'd have to send it to the
49 Board with a request to elevate to the Secretary's and
50 potentially Alaska delegation.

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MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair for Andy, real quickly to address Brooke. The pink salmon issue that we're talking about in this letter is a direct result of the hatchery production, so that it can be incorporated into that -- under that mechanism. Thank you.

MS. BURK: Question. This is Eva.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. I will ask for unanimous consent again. All those against please signify by saying aye.

(No response)

Hearing none, passes. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Now, I believe Lisa Grediagin is going to walk us into this year's annual report that you guys need to develop.

MS. GREDIAGIN: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Members of the Council, Lisa Grediagin for the record, and just really quickly, before I delve into my spiel on the annual report, I just wanted to respond to a question Dorothy raised, I don't know how many topics that go about why the regulation booklets only depict federal subsistence lands and not other land uses. And I mean, it's just that's the purpose of those maps, and it's to depict federal lands and people know where the regulations apply only to those lands. And so, if the Council feel -- and we also want to be consistent across regions. So, I guess if the Council feels strongly enough that it would actually be easier for users to understand where the federal regulations apply, if all land uses are included on the maps, not just federal lands, we'd want to get buy-in from other regions. You know, we can't just unilaterally say Eastern Interior Council did this, so then we're going to do this for all regions. So anyway, that's just why it's kind of the purpose of those maps, but again, potential to put them on the website and bring them to meetings with all land uses. So, annual reports. Just a few reminders when you guys are starting to develop.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Can you hold up a second?

MS. GREDIAGIN: Oh, yeah.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You got something to say?

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MS. SHOCKLEY: So, what do we need to do to ask that all lands be put in the handbooks?

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MS. GREDIAGIN: I would recommend starting, like making a request for it to come up to all Councils, and I mean, actually -- and it might also be nice, you know, because OSM is already intending to develop these maps for posting on the website. And maybe once these maps are developed, it'd be easier to, you know, look at them side by side and be like, oh, this one actually makes way more sense, or no, this one is more, you know, direct or less confusing. So yeah, I guess you could -- I mean, those are just my initial thoughts at, you know, 8 pm on the third day of this meeting is to bring it up to the other Councils and or maybe just wait and, you know, another meeting or two until those maps are actually developed.

22

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MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, I would like to request that all lands be included. Do I need to make a motion?

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MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Dorothy for process, I might suggest let's let Lisa give us the introduction about the annual report that we're going to develop for this year. That sounds like it could be a topic that you suggest be included for this year's annual report, if that is okay with you.

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MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, I -- my mistake. I just, I was asking for that I mean. All right. Lisa Grediagin for the record. So first of all, Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Councils to submit annual reports. I mean, you guys probably know this, that this is a statutory requirement to submit an annual report. And so, per ANILCA, the annual reports submitted to the Board shall contain an identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region, an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations from public lands within the region. A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region, and then recommendations concerning policy, standards, guidelines and regulations to implement the strategy. So just per ANILCA, there are certain things that are

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1 expected to be in this annual report. And it's not to
2 say you can't include other topics, but part of the
3 frustration I think you're all feeling from the Board's
4 responses to these annual report topics is the Board
5 lacks authority to do anything about it. You know that
6 the Board's authority is pretty narrow over the take of
7 Fish and Wildlife on federal public lands. And so, I
8 think that's why we're trying to direct Council to like,
9 maybe write a letter to a certain agency instead of just
10 put it in an annual report, because the Board just
11 doesn't have authority to do anything over that. So,
12 yeah, I guess number one is they're required by ANILCA,
13 but there are certain things in ANILCA that should be
14 in the annual report. The Board's authority is limited,
15 but the Board is also per statute required by ANILCA to
16 consider the reports from the Councils when making their
17 determinations on the take of fish and Wildlife. So to
18 be frank with you, OSM needs to do a better job on like
19 incorporating annual report topics into analyses so that
20 then the Board is considering those when they're
21 deliberating on proposals.

22
23 And then yeah, I also mentioned you
24 know, annual reported letter and also just an FYI that
25 all topics you identify now are for the Fiscal Year '25
26 report, and no additional topics can be added during the
27 winter 2026 meeting. And lastly, that, just to emphasize
28 that Council Chairs or a council representative is
29 invited to attend the Board's summer work session to
30 directly communicate with the Board, because I think
31 that's probably much more effective to have a Council
32 member expressing your concerns directly to the board
33 and having that conversation with them versus just OSM
34 trying to communicate them and the Board, you know,
35 having a written response on a paper you don't
36 understand. So, I think those are the main points I was
37 trying to make on that annual report.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: And Council members, that
40 in a report briefing is on page 255 of your meeting
41 books that kind of outlines the parameters for your
42 annual report, as stated in ANILCA.

43
44 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. And I guess just
45 one more point is being really clear on what your
46 expectation from the Board is. You know, in the past,
47 we've gotten some topics that are so broad, it's kind
48 of like, what are we supposed to do with this? So, some
49 Councils have started, you know, writing informational
50 only item, which isn't to indicate it's not an important

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1 topic, but just recognizing this is for the Boards
2 information. You're not really expecting the Board to
3 do anything because you probably recognize they have no
4 authority over it, but you want them to be aware of it.
5 But then if you are wanting a certain action or response,
6 you make that very clear and explicit in your report
7 that, you know, this is the issue and this is the
8 request. Thanks.

9

10 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. Thanks, Lisa,
11 for that overview. I think now the floor is open for
12 Council members to suggest topics for FY25 Annual
13 Report. And just keep in mind some of the things that
14 Lisa said. Be very clear on what you want the Board to
15 do. And reminder, if it is something that's outside of
16 the Board's jurisdiction, it might be beneficial to send
17 a letter to an agency or request elevation outside of
18 the annual report. Thanks.

19

20 MS. SHOCKLEY: Do -- I would like to --
21 and I'm not sure, you know, where this would go. But in
22 regards to policies, I would like to add local knowledge
23 to our reports along with state and federal. Include
24 local knowledge due to, you know, cuts in the federal
25 and state abilities to give us current and accurate
26 harvest or number, how do you call it? Accurate numbers
27 of population, I guess. I mean, people know what's
28 happening, and so if somehow we could include local
29 knowledge in the reports.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: If I could ask a clarifying
32 question. Dorothy thank you for raising that topic.
33 Could you maybe just expand a little bit about what
34 reports you're referring to? Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And I have a
37 question. Isn't this local knowledge right here that
38 we're, us people here are given? I'm just trying to --
39 have you clarify it to me so I can understand what you
40 mean. Thank you.

41

42 MS. SHOCKLEY: Well, for example, you
43 know I guess, you know, they could expand on their
44 reports, for one thing. Include conditions, weather
45 conditions or whatever is happening, you know, in their
46 reports. But a point is, you know, we see numbers going
47 up, we see numbers going down, you know, so we need more
48 information on why that's happening. But we also, you
49 know, there's years, I mean, some ten years we don't
50 have, you know, population numbers. And so, in that case,

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1 you know, we have natural resource people, whether it's
2 TCC or CATG or Ahtna telling us, you know, this is what
3 we're seeing. And, you know, in Don's case, he flies
4 over this country every six weeks and he sees what's
5 happening. So -- and I know the anthropologist said that
6 they want to call and ask what is happening, but for
7 some reason they're not allowed, or they can't put it
8 in the report.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. That's helpful
11 clarification. That is correct. What Brent Vickers, the
12 Anthropology Division Supervisor, did say is that OSM
13 is not allowed to collect primary research. That means
14 we can't go out and do research. We have to rely on the
15 existing research and the information and local
16 knowledge that we received through these meetings. So
17 that would be a major policy change, and I don't think
18 that's something that OSM could decide on their own. I
19 think maybe that could be something if you wanted to
20 see, would need to go into the Secretary Review comments.
21 If that makes sense.

22
23 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes, please.

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, maybe we'll make a
26 little side note of the other things we might like to
27 include in the Secretary Review comments and vote on
28 that at the end.

29
30 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Andy.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, sir.

33
34 MR. BASSICH: I need a little bit of
35 clarification. I, you know, I probably should know this
36 a little bit better, but on page 255 under the report
37 contents, it says identification of current and
38 anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife
39 populations within a region. And then it says an
40 elevation of current and anticipated subsistence needs
41 for fish and wildlife populations within the region. I
42 don't -- I guess I'm having a really hard time defining
43 what the heck that even means. Identification and
44 evaluation -- I'm sorry, not elevation -- evaluation,
45 because most of the issues that we're dealing with and
46 I'm going to speak mainly towards fisheries right now,
47 OSM or the Federal Subsistence Board doesn't have
48 jurisdiction where we're having these issues. We brought
49 this up before. What we're trying to do as a people in
50 this region is develop a new -- maybe modify the

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1 management system through co-management of the system.
2 And so, what that's going to take is going to take inter,
3 it's going to take all the agencies and all the
4 regulatory bodies to start communicating more directly.
5 They may not have a vote in each other's arenas, but
6 what we're trying to do is create a system moving forward
7 that the concerns that one regulatory entity has that
8 they need to bring to the other regulatory bodies so
9 that we can work in concert together to solve these
10 problems. That's the fundamental problem with why we're
11 failing in the fisheries right now. And I'm not really
12 sure how to convey that to Subsistence Board, because
13 it's such a -- all of these agencies are such a
14 bureaucratic locked down, we can't do this and we can't
15 do that. And that's why we're in this problem. And so
16 that's what we need to address. I don't know how to
17 communicate that to the Federal Subsistence Board. But
18 that's where we need assistance as Indigenous and non-
19 Indigenous people living a subsistence lifestyle. And
20 so, you know, we can work on that on our own. But if we
21 don't have the regulatory bodies making an attempt to
22 cross the table to the some of these other regulatory
23 bodies, we're all spitting into a hurricane. So, I don't,
24 you know, I don't know how to really address that through
25 this annual report. But maybe asking the Federal
26 Subsistence Board to start considering creating more
27 liaisons or having cross regulatory meetings so that
28 including Indigenous people in that process so that we
29 can have truly co-management of all entities. I hope I
30 can -- I'm making myself kind of clear. But you know the
31 word -- I'm just struggling with the wording because it
32 doesn't really apply to the problems that we're having
33 in our fisheries. We can't fix our fisheries in-river
34 right now. We're doing everything we can. We're not
35 fishing. The problem lies elsewhere, and I'm using that
36 as the example. But you know that -- anyway, I'll just
37 shut up and maybe someone from OSM can address that or
38 maybe at the next meeting. But that, ultimately in my
39 view, that is what needs to change fundamentally. And
40 if that's part of the review process, maybe it needs to
41 go into that letter. I'm not sure. Thank you.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. I think
44 what you're trying to suggest is maybe just to try to
45 sum it up perhaps there needs to be some brainstorming
46 about a new -- what could potentially be an inter-
47 jurisdictional management body or something. And that
48 is, yeah, definitely outside the purview of the Federal
49 Subsistence Board. But there were some comments also
50 made to that yesterday when you and member Tim Gervais

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1 from WIRAC were speaking about frustrations with the
2 siloed management of salmon. And I think that could, you
3 know, since it was already raised those points could be
4 added to that you just made when we developed those
5 comments. But I think Lisa wants to add something else.

6
7 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. And I
8 guess just maybe a little bit of a historical perspective
9 when, you know, obviously, when Congress wrote ANILCA,
10 they're intending the state to manage the whole thing.
11 So he wouldn't have had this, you know, only on federal
12 lands and state lands or something else. And so, I --
13 that speaks to I think part of the problem, Andy, where
14 you're reading what's required in ANILCA and it's like,
15 what does this even mean? How can we even do this? And
16 so I guess maybe to Brooke's point of just keeping, I
17 guess, maybe differentiating what we really want to do
18 in the annual report versus what might be more
19 appropriate in the adding to the comments of the
20 Secretarial Review. Because the Board, I mean, I guess
21 the best the Board is thinking about right now is a
22 joint meeting with the State Board of Game and Board of
23 Fisheries. But looking at just meeting cycles, that's
24 probably not going to happen for another year at least.
25 I mean, that's how long it takes to plan some of this
26 stuff to get people to gather. But that is on the table
27 consideration to have a joint meeting between the
28 Federal Subsistence Board and the Board of Game and Board
29 of Fish and perhaps, I mean, like you mentioned, we
30 should start thinking now about how to incorporate, you
31 know, local knowledge holders or, you know, community
32 tribal members in that meeting as well. But again, maybe
33 it might be better to just note this as like a running
34 tab of things to add to the Secretary Review, because I
35 would think that level might be able to do a little bit
36 more than the Board.

37
38 MR. BASSICH: Thank you for that, I
39 agree. I just don't -- I guess what I was getting at is
40 I don't know where to address that topic effectively is
41 what I'm struggling with. So that helped me a lot. Thank
42 you.

43
44 MS. BURK: This is Eva. All of the
45 agencies that sit on the Federal Subsistence Board have
46 signed these Gravel-to-Gravel Memorandum of
47 Understanding with people like the Yukon River Inter-
48 Tribal Fish Commission and Tanana Chiefs Conference who
49 have like for the Fish Commission, we have 40 -- over a
50 40 member body everybody representing fish and wildlife,

1 I would say. But in our instance, it's fish. So
2 structurally, I see that recommendations for concerning
3 policy standards, guidelines and regulations to
4 implement the strategy. That's where, you know AITRC,
5 the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Yukon
6 River Inter Tribal Fish Commission, these are the only
7 intertribal organizations I know that are -- their
8 mandate is for management of fish and wildlife to support
9 and restore us, our fish and wildlife populations. And
10 so, I feel like those entities which represent sovereign
11 tribal nations need to be part of the policies and
12 standards guidelines, regulations. I'm not sure how to
13 word that and I'm kind of thinking about the fly right
14 now and it's late. But structurally, I saw that today
15 where we had AITRC wanted to be called out on to be
16 cooperated with. So, I kind of -- my head is thinking
17 something similar here, but then I really want to touch
18 on what Andy is talking about and then that's why I
19 called out the federal agencies for having this. We
20 already have all these things we signed and put together,
21 and we're not doing it. We're not using these existing
22 memorandums of understanding. And so, it's time to
23 convene those people together. And the thing that we
24 need, the management strategy that we need, is we need
25 to come together and develop a management strategy
26 that's going to rebuild our Yukon River fish
27 populations. I am very disturbed by the fact that the
28 rebuilding is -- currently the only rebuilding that I
29 know of, strategy that's being developed is at the Yukon
30 River Panel through a contractor. And so that I'm very
31 concerned about the omission of local knowledge because
32 of that who's doing the rebuilding and their
33 relationships with folks on the river and that the
34 rebuilding is not being led by, like, Tanana Chiefs, the
35 Fish Commission, you know. Yeah. Other Yukon River
36 drainage fisheries associations, these other bodies that
37 represent the people. So yeah, there's -- that's part
38 of what I'm getting at and I -- and then before I forget
39 that at the AYK meeting at Board of Fish just recently,
40 they actually hit on a target for rebuilding for fall
41 chum. They were like 450,000. But what wasn't sorted out
42 was how they were going to fish for subsistence. If they
43 weren't making an escapement of 450,000, were they all
44 the way cut out? But we never talked about how to use
45 other permits, like the state culture and education
46 permit to meet subsistence needs too. And we have no
47 culture and education permit on the federal -- or yeah,
48 we do I lied, we do have one. Okay. So, we're not we're
49 I feel like there's a lot of things going on and we need
50 to put them together. We started developing tools, but

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1 we're not putting them together.

2

3 MR. BASSICH: Quickly just to respond to
4 Eva. As far as the Yukon River Panels rebuilding plan,
5 we have a strategic planning committee, which I'm a part
6 of, and there are other people that are part of the TEK
7 part of the Yukon River Panel that are putting input
8 into that plan. So yes, there will be TEK and local
9 knowledge incorporated into that, and it's weighted
10 equally to science. Just to take that off your plate,
11 as far as a big concern, we are addressing that. It has
12 been identified. Where I see that plan is going to fail
13 is there's only so much we can do in the drainage. The
14 vast majority of the problems are in the marine
15 environment, and the Yukon River Panel has absolutely
16 no jurisdiction in the state of Alaska has -- and I've
17 been pushing for this at the panel. The state of Alaska
18 does not want the panel to participate in the Board of
19 Fish or any other Alaska process. And that's the problem
20 that we have moving forward if we're going to try and
21 address the true reasons why salmon are failing. So, I
22 like your idea of maybe through the annual report, we
23 could ask for the Federal Subsistence Board and those
24 entities that make it up, those agencies to begin
25 discussions on how we can fully develop the co-
26 management between all of those agencies, the Federal
27 Subsistence Board, the Indigenous people, and bring in
28 to try and incorporate that into some sort of a process
29 in the North Pacific Management Council. All of these
30 entities need to communicate. And so maybe starting with
31 the Federal Subsistence Board with the people that are
32 at the top of the agencies who will be able to help
33 guide that a lot more quickly and effectively might be
34 the best starting point. I don't know how to word that
35 in the annual report, but that would be the essence of
36 what I think is a starting point. Thank you.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. And I
39 actually think that Yukon, my other RAC YK Delta, asked
40 the Board to do that last -- at one of their previous
41 annual reports. And I don't yeah, I don't know that it
42 went anywhere. I think that also feeds into some of your
43 comments with the Secretarial Review. But I did note it
44 down as an annual report topic. I did want to follow up
45 on something that Eva was talking about and how today
46 we were -- you all modified, suggested modifying
47 delegated authority for wildlife in your region. But
48 there's also delegated authority for fisheries, and that
49 was not on the table. And so, I know maybe Lisa can help
50 me out here, but I don't think you need a proposal to

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1 modify a delegated authority. It's administrative. So,
2 the Council could -- would they need to send a letter,
3 or could they include that in their annual report if
4 they wanted to do something with fisheries delegation?
5 Thanks.

6
7 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin. I think
8 including it in your annual report would be fine. I
9 mean, yeah, like Brooke said, it's an administrative
10 action. So, it would just be a matter of the Board
11 agreeing, like, yes, add this, you know, entity to the
12 list for consultation and then issuing, you know, OSM
13 would modify the delegation authority letter and issue
14 them again, so.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Probably very
17 soon. So, I guess the question then -- thank you, Lisa,
18 for that. This is Brooke. Eva and others would be who
19 you would like added to fisheries delegation of
20 authority for the Yukon. I know you said TCC, Tribal
21 Resource Stewardship for wildlife. Would you like them
22 in addition the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish
23 Commission?

24
25 MS. BURK: Yes. And Yukon River Drainage
26 Fisheries Association. And then I feel like that's going
27 to get everybody. And then -- this is Eva. Back to Andy's
28 point. Yeah. Those agencies and that's what we've been
29 complaining about, Andy, is that we don't have a gravel-
30 to-gravel MOU. We have a gravel MOU in order to get the
31 two gravel MOU in place, we would need the Secretary of
32 Commerce who has oversight on the North Pacific. That's
33 who needs to be part of that MOU. And that's what's
34 missing and I don't know if we call that out.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Eva. I think
37 it's worth mentioning in your annual report, since it
38 is so important to you all and letting them know that
39 that's something you are including in your comments in
40 the Secretarial Review, because you recognize that that
41 level of coordination between Department of Interior,
42 Department of Commerce is above the Board, but you want
43 them to be aware that's an ongoing concern.

44
45 Okay. I heard Dorothy earlier say --
46 this is Brooke. You want it to include, let the Board
47 know. You'd like to ask all the other councils about
48 including Native Corporation lands on maps in their
49 region. Is that accurate?

50

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1 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so the topics I have
4 now are one about the maps. Two about this real big
5 interagency, inter-department collaboration that's
6 needed for fisheries management and true gravel-to-
7 gravel management of fisheries. Three modifying
8 delegated authority for Yukon River in-season management
9 to include required consultation with TCC, YRDFA and
10 Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Are there any
11 additional topics for this year's annual report?

12

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

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Go ahead, Andy. Thanks.

16

17 R=MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Thank you. I guess
18 the other only other thing that came up in my mind is
19 the communications aspect in regards to conflict between
20 hunters. So, I don't know if it's possible through the
21 annual report to ask for some kind of a small funding,
22 stipend or whatever. I know the outreach and education
23 aspect has kind of dwindled since the Covid. I would
24 really like to see that pick back up. I think that's the
25 avenue for handling some of these conflict -- hunter
26 conflict issues. So maybe just putting that as a top
27 priority for communications to try and help address
28 education and outreach throughout the state and in
29 particular in the Eastern RAC's region. And I'll just
30 reference our discussions on 25D -- both of those two
31 proposals that I think that can be addressed through
32 communications and outreach initiatives. So, I guess
33 just asking for a little bit of funding or whatever to
34 help keep that process going. And I kind of feel bad
35 that it's kind of dwindled down, but I still feel very
36 strongly that that's something that we need to work on
37 and we have a pretty good base for it. We just really
38 need to revive. Thank you.

39

40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Can
41 definitely include that. Do you feel like that's a
42 comment that also might need to be a part of the
43 Secretary Review comments in regards to ensuring fund -
44 - funding for the federal subsistence program, and
45 potentially maybe additional positions that could help
46 with additional outreach and education?

47

48 MR. BASSICH: Absolutely. I think what
49 I'm learning through the Yukon River Panel process, what
50 I've learned for many years, observing what happens is

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1 when the time you need communications and outreach the
2 most is when everything is in decline and people are
3 starting to fight over resource, or the resource is
4 struggling, and you need to change the way actions are
5 being taken through harvest. That's when you need it the
6 most. And unfortunately, that's often overlooked. So
7 that's my reasoning for it. It's pretty critical that
8 when resources get -- are declining, people start
9 throwing stones at each other. And that's when you really
10 need the outreach and communication to educate people
11 and try and bring people together collectively and as a
12 coalition as opposed to in opposition. Thank you.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Are there
15 any other topics folks would like to see for this year's
16 annual report? I know it's kind of a bummer that we're
17 short on time here. But I would note that at our next
18 meeting, although you can't add topics to the report at
19 that time, you could formulate letters and so we'll just
20 -- okay. I'm not seeing any other -- oh. All right. Come
21 on, Eva.

22
23 MS. BURK: Thanks. I've been sitting here
24 trying to figure out how to word this, and I'm, you
25 know, I'm looking at number 5 in last year's development
26 of federal subsistence use amounts, and then thinking
27 about everything I've heard today and everything I hear
28 on my other Boards. And then it says, you know, we the
29 federal subsistence protections under ANILCA are
30 extensive and cover such things as customary and
31 traditional timing, patterns, duration of subsistence
32 activities, methods and means, and seasons of harvest.
33 We're not getting any of this and I don't -- I feel like,
34 is there a disconnect to the federal agencies at the top
35 level and Secretary of Interior, Secretary of
36 Agriculture, that they don't realize this huge food
37 insecurity issue that's happening in Alaska? And what
38 kind of analysis can we ask for from OSM to quantify
39 this, to quantify historical -- I want those things I
40 just listed out, what historically things look like and
41 what they look like today. Because I'm thinking about
42 the duration of subsistence activities, when you get out
43 to the river in late June, make sure you have your camp
44 ready, and then you're there all summer into August. And
45 if you're real lucky and you're fishing -- you're fishing
46 the whole river from July through October, that I'm
47 talking like until November, right, until almost
48 November. And that duration is gone. That's not
49 happening. Months have turned into to hours and so we
50 need to quantify that. And so that there is some type

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1 of document that people can look at and be like, oh my
2 gosh, we are -- their subsistence needs have not been
3 met. And then the delegation of authority for many years
4 now, the subsistence needs are not being met because of
5 the prioritization of commercial and wherever that
6 prioritization is happening. For a long time, it was
7 happening at the mouth of the Yukon River, and we have
8 a report at the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
9 that I would like to be included to show people at higher
10 levels just how bad this is and just how very little
11 we're getting. So, I feel like I'm rambling, but I'm
12 trying to make sure everything's there.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Eva. That sounds
15 like something that might want to go in the Secretarial
16 Review and especially highlight for Department of
17 Agriculture since they deal with all these food security
18 issues. Maybe that's the whole research and study that
19 they need to do.

20
21 MS. BURK: Yeah. I mean, if you look at
22 all the things that we rely on in the decline of those
23 and how very little that we're getting. And then on top
24 of that, like people were losing access to SNAP benefits.
25 There's -- and then the food price increases like that's
26 going to hit. These things are going to hit rural Alaska
27 very hard in the next few years. And I'm very concerned
28 about people's ability to make ends meet.

29
30 MS. GREDIAGIN: Lisa Grediagin, I
31 just.....

32
33 (Simultaneous speech)

34
35 MR. BASSICH: This is Andy.

36
37 MS. GREDIAGIN: Oh.

38
39 MR. BASSICH: Go ahead. No, go ahead,
40 Lisa.

41
42 MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay. Yeah. I was just
43 going to echo Brooke that I mean, this is probably more
44 appropriate to put in the Secretary Review because if
45 you put in the annual report, you're just going to get
46 another unsatisfactory response. I mean, this is so
47 outside the scope of OSM and the Board. I mean, we're
48 constrained by ANILCA and just our legal requirements
49 on how we analyze things and what, you know, how the
50 program is set up. So yeah, it sounds like maybe several

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1 PhDs dissertations and maybe a change in ANILCA like a
2 statute change. So yeah, it's just so outside our scope.

3

4

MS. MCDAVID: A suggestion.....

5

6

(Simultaneous speech)

7

8 MR. BASSICH: I just wanted to add real
9 quick, if I may just building on the thought that Eva
10 has what I've been thinking about for a long time that
11 really resonates with people is the economics of the
12 loss of this food. So, food security, the actual food
13 is one aspect, but what people don't seem to understand
14 is what the value of even just the fisheries aspect of
15 it is economically to the people. If -- and the way to
16 do that would, would be to do an analysis on if the
17 state of Alaska had to feed all the people in rural
18 Alaska with store bought foods from these companies,
19 what would that cost? What would it cost the state of
20 Alaska to feed all the people with -- or replace all the
21 food that people would normally get through their
22 subsistence activities. And then the third thing to add
23 to that is what is the cost of health care declines due
24 to the lack of their subsistence foods, because there's
25 a lot of documentation about that. It would be in the
26 hundreds of millions of dollars is in my back of the
27 napkin. And that's what people respond to now, is what
28 is the economics of it? Because most people, that's the
29 way their whole life is. It's not about -- most people
30 If they want to eat, they think about, well, can I afford
31 a restaurant? Do I buy at Costco, or do I buy it at
32 Trader Joe's, right? It's all about how much money does
33 it cost to feed themselves and there's very few people
34 that in left in this world that have the experience that
35 we live and take for granted or used to take for granted,
36 and that is we can feed ourselves for free, we're darn
37 cheap if the resources are there. Those are the analyses
38 that need to take place if we're going to make any
39 meaningful changes. And that has to happen, I'm guessing
40 probably, like you said, through universities, but that
41 that needs to take place because I don't think we're
42 going to get any movement from legislators or regulatory
43 bodies until we show that aspect of it. Now I'll just
44 stop there. I know it's really late. I just had to throw
45 that in there because it's something I've been thinking
46 about a lot strategically on how we need to address this
47 issue to people outside because they don't understand
48 our life. If you don't live this life, it's darn near
49 impossible to really understand what's in our
50 hearts.....

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2

(Simultaneous speech)

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4

MS. BURK: Okay, Andy.

5

6

7

MR. BASSICH:and what our needs
are.

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9

We got you here. We hear you loud and
clear. We gotta get a motion going on this if we want
to add this.

12

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MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you, guys.
Thank you so much, Andy. I think what you guys -- I have
a suggestion that your last topic should just be to let
the Board know that you had significant discussions on
the Secretary Review. You have a lot of information that
you'd like the Board to know that you're passing on to
the Secretary and just attach the comments that you're
forwarding to the Secretary through the review to your
annual report. I think that would cover a lot of this.
You wouldn't have to repeat it. And it would make the
Board aware of what you're submitting.

25

26

27

28

29

30

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Lisa Grediagin.
We're about to lose quorum. So, if we don't vote in
about the next minute, we're not going to be able to.
So just asking for -- yeah. Dorothy has her coat on,
she's poised to, like, dart as soon as we vote.

31

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MS. BURK: So, I have a life commitment
to these salmon. This is Eva. I make the motion that we
include this kind of subsistence -- how subsistence
needs are being met or not being met reviewed -- be
added to the Secretarial Review or comments to the
Secretarial Review.

MR. WOODRUFF: Second.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. It sounds like we're
making a motion to add comments to the Secretary Review.
We've got what Eva just said. We have what Andy said
about cross regulatory jurisdiction, high level things.
We have a comment about funding that's needed. We have
a comment about the ability to gather more local
knowledge and primary research, we'll include those. So,
I think you all can vote now. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Asking
for unanimous consent. All those against this motion,

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1 please signify by saying aye.

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Hearing none, it passes. Thank you.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And now we need a
8 motion that was for to add comments to the Secretarial
9 Review. We need a motion to approve the five topics that
10 you identified for this year's annual report.

11

12 MS. BURK: So, move. This is Eva.

13

14 MR WOODRUFF: Second.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Seconded, Andy.

17

18 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Don beat you Andy, for the
21 second. Dorothy has called question all.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll ask for
24 unanimous consent. All those against this motion, please
25 signify by saying aye.

26

27 (No response)

28

29 Hearing none, passes. Thank you.

30

31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you guys. And the
32 last item of business is to confirm your meeting dates.
33 For the winter meeting you selected March 3rd through
34 5th in Fairbanks. And next fall, you want to meet in
35 Fort Yukon October 6th through the 8th. If you confirm
36 that, I will begin reaching out Gwichyaa Zhee to and
37 working with Gerald and folks there to discuss the
38 possibility with a backup of Fairbanks, in case they're
39 not able to accommodate us.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll confirm it.

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: March 3rd through 5th here
44 in Fairbanks. And I've already got Pike's reserved for
45 that, so. Just so you know.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Right on.

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: And then after that, I have
50 one other small thing you guys need to vote on. It's

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1 important, actually two things, sorry. But if you want
2 to quickly just confirm, we don't necessarily need a
3 motion to confirm the meeting dates. You've already
4 selected those, so just consensus. Leave them as they
5 are? Looking around the room. Okay.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: You won't be able
8 to make.

9

10 MS. BURK: I won't be able to make it.

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Thanks Eva, for
13 letting us know. The last two items of business. If you
14 guys want to send someone as a representative to North
15 Pacific Chum Bycatch meeting in February to speak on
16 behalf of the Council. You don't necessarily have to
17 choose exactly who that will be, but you do need to put
18 in a request in case we need to send someone that's not
19 already going, or someone that would already be going,
20 could provide comments on behalf of the RAC.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll already be
23 going.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so it sounds like
26 Chair Wright will provide comments on behalf of the RAC
27 at that meeting.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'm already going
30 anyway, so if you guys want to send somebody else, that's
31 fine, but otherwise I could do it.

32

33 MS SHOCKLEY: I think we should put a
34 request in case and send someone else. Yeah.

35

36 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Well, can you guys
37 make a quick motion that you'd like to send someone to
38 North Pacific?

39

40 MS. BURK: This is Eva. So, moved.

41

42 MS. SHOLCKEY: Second.

43

44 MS. BURK: Question.

45

46 MR. BASSICH: Support.

47

48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Ask for unanimous
49 consent on this motion. All those against this motion,
50 please signify by saying aye.

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(No response)

3

4

Hearing none. Motion passes. Thank you.

5

6

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And the last item of business. You know, as Don mentioned, he might not be able to attend the Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition. If you guys would like to send an alternate. If there's any volunteers or folks who would like to step in if needed. For the Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition, they'll probably meet in Fairbanks. They've met in Tok in the past.

14

15

16

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll do it, if nobody else wants to.

17

18

MS. BURK: Have him do it.

19

20

21

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I don't know how to say no.

22

23

24

MR. BASSICH: And, I'll also -- I'll also offer.....

25

26

(Simultaneous speech)

27

28

29

MS. SHOCKLEY: Just keep us posted so that we could go if we can.

30

31

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

32

33

34

35

36

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I'll also offer that if somehow if there's nobody to attend. I can attend as an Eastern RAC, and then I can have my Co-Chair from the AC attend as the AC rep. So, we're covered.

37

38

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you.

39

40

41

42

43

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And what about Area M Board of Fish. Will anyone be going to that meeting and be willing to present Council comments, or do we want to vote to send someone?

44

45

MR. BASSICH: What are the dates?

46

47

MS. SHOCKLEY: Where?

48

49

50

MS. MCDAVID: February 18th through 24th in Anchorage. Okay. Dorothy didn't have the mic on, but

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1 she said she wanted to put in a request. I take that as
2 a motion. Is there a second?

3

4 MS. BURK: This is Eva, a second.
5 Question.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Ask for unanimous
8 consent on this motion. All those against please signify
9 by saying aye.

10

11 (No response)

12

13 Hearing none. Motion passes. Thank you.
14 God bless you.

15

16 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you all.
17 I am going to skip over all the other updates. Your 805C
18 report and correspondence summary are in your book and
19 I assume no one wants to do closing comments at this
20 time. We might entertain a motion to adjourn.

21

22 MS. SHOCKLEY: I want to just say well,
23 Merry Christmas to everyone, but also just sending lots
24 of prayers to Don, praying for good outcomes.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: And I forgot about
27 my housekeeping. A lot of people come here to sit in
28 front of us and help us and give us presentations. We
29 have to try to be here on time. Thank you and be present.
30 Thank you.

31

32 MR. WOODRUFF: My closing comment is,
33 love you all. Merry Christmas.

34

35 MS. MCDAVID: We love you too, Don, and
36 thank you all so much for sticking it out on this very
37 long meeting. You guys covered so much and should be
38 very proud of yourselves. And we couldn't have this
39 federal program without you. So happy holidays, and all
40 the best.

41

42 (Off record)

43

44 END OF PROCEEDINGS

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 197 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME III recorded on the 18th 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.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager