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YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

LONG HOUSE HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM
Bethel, Alaska
March 18, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jacqueline Cleveland, Chair
Henry Parks
John Andrew
Francis Prince, Jr.
Alissa Nadine Rogers
Phillip Peter, Sr.
Wassily Alexie
Tiffany Agayar
Frederick Beans

Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 3/18/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good morning, everyone. This is Jackie Cleveland and we're back from recess at 9:09 a.m. And we'll start first with roll call with Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone. This is Brooke McDavi, Council Coordinator. As Chair Cleveland mentioned, we'll start with roll call this morning again. Member Henry Parks.

MR. PARKS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Norma Evan is absent and excused. John Andrew.

MR. ANDREW: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Walter Morgan is absent and excused. Chair Cleveland.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Francis Prince, Jr.

MR. PRINCE: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Nadine Rogers. Was Alissa able to join us online yet? I don't see her, but she does plan to call in and come in person later. So, we'll circle back. Phillip Peter, Sr.

MR. PETER: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

MR. ALEXIE: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Myron Naneng, Sr. Is Myron online? Okay. Don't see Myron yet. Tiffany Agayar.

MS. AGAYAR: Good morning.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning. Fredrick Beans.

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MR. BEANS: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, everyone. And Madam Chair, we have 8 of 12 Council members present. We have quorum.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again. Next will do introductions again because we have new people on the line. (In Native). So, I'm Jackie Cleveland, Chair for this RAC and I'm from Quinhagak. Yup'ik name is Nalikutaar.

MS. AGAYAR: Hi, my name is Tiffany Agayar, Vice Chair for this RAC. My Yup'ik name is (In Native).

MR. SAMSON: Good morning. I'm Patrick Sampson, the interpreter. Thank you.

MR. ANDREW: John Andrew from Kwethluk.

MR. ALEXEI: Wassily Alexie from Russian Mission.

MR. BEANS: Fred Beans. Mountain Village.

MR. PRINCE: Francis Prince, Jr., from Kotlik.

MR. PARKS: Henry Parks from Native Village of Nunapitchuk.

MR. PETER: Phillip Peter from Akiachak.

MS. MCDAVID: Good morning again. This is Brooke McDavid. I'm the Council Coordinator with the Office of Subsistence Management. Also, here in the room with me from OSM are Katya Wessels, the Council Coordination Supervisor, Kevin Foley our Fisheries Biologist for this region. Liz Williams, our Cultural Anthropologist. And Madam Chair, would you like to go online or ask others in the audience to come up either way?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Either way but since people are up, do you guys mind introducing yourselves before you get settled? (In Native).

1 MS. VICENTE: Good morning. Terese
2 Vicente, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

3
4 MR. CYTHLOOK: John Cythlook with
5 Sportfish Division Fish and Game.

6
7 MR. MAROTTI: Harrod Marotti Inter-
8 Tribal Fish Commission.

9
10 MR. CHEN: Good morning, Madam Chair and
11 Council Members. Glenn Chen with the Bureau of Indian
12 Affairs.

13
14 UNIDENTIFIED: Janine (indiscernible).
15 I'm from Eek, and I'm just a visitor. I'm with Calista
16 Education & Culture.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And that's it for
19 the room here. And then we'll go online. We heard from
20 John (indiscernible) so far. Is there anyone else on the
21 line? Oh, wait.

22
23 MS. ROGERS: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

24
25 MR. TEGOSEAK: Gabe Tegoseak. Utqiagvik
26 (indiscernible) from Barrow. The Tech Director for
27 Talking Circle Media.

28
29 (Simultaneous speech)

30
31 MS. SCHWALENBERG: (In Native). This is
32 Patty Schwalenberg with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-
33 Management Council. Miigwech.

34
35 MR. ALEXIE: Good morning. This is
36 Christian Alexie, Jr., our Refuge Information Technician
37 with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Quyana.

38
39 MR. PLANK: Tom Plank, Wildlife
40 Biologist, OSM.

41
42 (Pause)

43
44 MR. BEMBENIC: Good morning. This is Tim
45 Bembenic with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
46 Division of Subsistence in Fairbanks.

47
48 MS. HARDWIG: This is Madison Hardwig,
49 the Kuskokwim Management Biologist with Fish and Game.

1 MR. WADE: This is Jacob Wade with ONC.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks,
4 everyone. That might be all. But if not, feel free to
5 introduce yourself at any time. So, we're going to start
6 with announcements before we get on the agenda and that
7 will be with Brooke.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
10 This is Brooke for the record. I just wanted to give a
11 reminder that this morning there will be an opportunity
12 for public comments on non-agenda items. Ff anyone would
13 like to give a comment you can do so in the room or
14 online. We also accept comments on any agenda items that
15 will be coming up throughout the day or the rest of the
16 meeting. A reminder that we do have an interpreter here
17 with us in the room. Pat Samson down here on the end.
18 There are headsets on the table to my right and the
19 audience's left. Those need to be on channel one, and
20 you can turn the dial to turn them on and adjust the
21 volume. When Pat is giving the simultaneous
22 interpretation, you can listen on those headsets.
23 Unfortunately for folks online, that's not available,
24 but we'll do our best to keep you looped in if there is
25 translation happening during discussion that you're
26 involved with.

27

28 I did have a couple of announcements
29 about the agenda today for time-certain things. After
30 public comments on non-agenda items, if there are any,
31 we'll have Ms. Patty Schwalenberg giving a presentation
32 from AMBCCC to start us off for the day. And then the
33 only semi-time-certain is this afternoon. Alaska
34 Department of Fish and Game Division of subsistence
35 should be coming through Bethel. And they'd like to come
36 by the meeting and give an update to the Council before
37 they have to catch their -- the jet back to Anchorage
38 later tonight. And then a couple other things from
39 yesterday. I reached out to Holly Carroll and the rest
40 of the Yukon fisheries management team. They said that
41 if you guys would like to discuss those Board of Fish
42 proposal ideas that you came -- you brought up yesterday,
43 that tomorrow morning would be a good time to do that
44 with them, that would give them a little time to gather
45 information and prepare. So, does that sound okay for
46 the Council, as far as timing? Okay. I'm seeing heads
47 nodding, yes. I'll get back with Holly and her team to
48 let them know. I also heard back from someone with the
49 Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Fish
50 Monitoring Program that was in response to a question

1 that Stanislaus Sheppard raised yesterday about if you
2 can send in fish samples for testing of heavy metals.
3 And I do have a point of contact, and he said his name
4 is Kristoff Ferrin and I think he goes by Buck it looks
5 like in his email. But I can get his contact information
6 to Stanislaus or anyone else that's -- would be
7 interested in having fish in your area tested for heavy
8 metals.

9
10 And then two circle backs for yesterday.
11 Well, I guess only one. We covered the fisheries one,
12 the Yukon proposals. That'll be tomorrow morning. The
13 last thing before we go on with our agenda is just wanted
14 to circle back real briefly to the annual report. Katya
15 raised to my attention yesterday that we try not to
16 duplicate too much things that are -- we send
17 correspondence about and things we include in the annual
18 report. Since you voted to send that letter about the
19 Mulchatna Caribou working group yesterday to the Togiak
20 Yukon Delta Refuges and Fish and Game, local Fish and
21 Game. It would be the best course of action to just
22 maybe tweak it in the annual report a little bit to just
23 let the Board know that you're sending that letter and
24 for the Board's awareness. And that way the Board could,
25 you know, follow up. It's not really a request to the
26 Board. It's a request to those agencies to form the
27 working group. So as long as that sounds okay to you
28 guys. All right, I'm seeing heads nodding, yes. We'll
29 make those slight edits in that wording. And I believe
30 that was all I had this morning, Madam Chair. Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Brooke. So as Brooke mentioned, we're going to start
34 with Patty who will be presenting on Alaska Migratory
35 Bird Co-Management Council. So, Patty, you have the
36 floor. Thank you.

37
38 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Good morning. (In
39 Native). And I'm Patty Schwalenberg. I'm the Executive
40 Director of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management
41 Council. I'm a member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of
42 Lake Superior Ojibwe from northern Wisconsin. And I've
43 been working up here with tribal natural resources since
44 1992. And in 2014 assumed the role as Executive Director
45 of the Migratory Bird Council. So, I just wanted to
46 share a little bit of information about the Council with
47 you. We've been finding at the AMBCCC meetings that we've
48 been talking about more than just birds. So, I think
49 it's important that all of our resource organizations
50 start engaging with each other and share information on

1 what's going out on the landscape. So, I just have a
2 real short PowerPoint I'd like to share with you, if
3 that's okay. Can you see my screen?

4

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, we can.

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So, the structure of the AMBCCC, as I said, there's three equal partners. The federal government is represented by the Alaska region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. State of Alaska is represented by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Native caucus is comprised of ten Alaska Native representatives, each representing one of ten geographic regions in the state. So, the Council meets twice annually, once in the spring to consider proposed regulations that govern the subsistence harvest of migratory birds, discuss management concerns and then the fall meeting is where they share observations and technical reports and that's where we welcome reports from other entities also. AMBCC has 21 committees that address migratory bird issues. Some of them are specific like handicrafts and the term indigenous inhabitant

1 which occurs in the Amendment language that has caused
2 some issues. And there's -- we have a technical committee
3 that reviews the proposals. We have an Emperor Goose
4 Committee and there are many others. The organization
5 is led by an executive director. The executive director
6 is hosted by the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission
7 and are supervised by the AMBCCs Executive Committee.
8 The AMBCC really has no staff except for the executive
9 director, but the technical assistance is provided by
10 all three partners as in-kind contributions. So, I
11 interact directly with technical staff from Fish and
12 Wildlife Service, Fish and Game and the Alaska Native
13 regional organizations.

14
15 So, this is just a brief look at how our
16 regulatory cycle works. From November 1st to December
17 15th, anybody, any entity, anyone can submit a proposed
18 regulation for the subsistence season. That proposal
19 comes to me as the Executive Director, and then I send
20 that to all the regions where they have their meetings,
21 and they can review and comment to the AMBCC on that
22 particular proposal. The technical committee also gets
23 the proposal, and if there's any issues with it, we have
24 an opportunity to work with the proposer to fix any
25 technical language or things that might be preventing
26 that proposal from going forward. So, we really try to
27 pass regulations that are grounded in the traditions and
28 cultures of Alaska Native subsistence hunters or rural
29 subsistence hunters, I should say. And so, we work really
30 hard with them to make sure that what they're trying to
31 accomplish does get accomplished, if possible. From
32 there, the AMBCC in April takes action on the proposals
33 and that's the first round of approvals, I guess you
34 would say. So, the AMBCC approves the proposals. They
35 then go on to the Pacific Flyway Council and the Service
36 Regulations Committee.

37
38 The Pacific Flyway Council is one of
39 four flyways across the country, but Alaska is in the
40 Pacific Flyway. So as a courtesy, we send our proposed
41 regulations to them, and they can comment to the Service
42 Regulations Committee on those proposals. We've never
43 had negative comments on our proposals. They've always
44 been recommended by the Pacific Flyway Councils. So,
45 it's been a pretty good relationship. Once the flyways
46 get to look at them and review them, they're then sent
47 to the Service Regulations Committee. The Service
48 Regulations Committee is comprised of five regional
49 directors of the Fish and Wildlife Service from across
50 the country. And they rotate and the chairmanship

1 rotates. So, they take the action on the proposals. And
2 again, they have never turned down one of our proposals
3 yet. So that's a good thing and then from there it goes
4 to the Secretary of the Department of Interior for the
5 final rule in December and January, and then the
6 regulations get published in February and March. So,
7 it's about a year. We work about a year ahead in our
8 proposal process.

9
10 Currently, we are working on updating
11 our emperor goose management plan, and we have a
12 companion plan with the Pacific Flyway Council so they
13 pretty much mirror each other except for the Pacific
14 Flyway Council's plan is for the fall winter sports
15 season, and the AMBCC plan is for the spring and summer.
16 We have a handicrafts regulation that allows Alaska
17 Native artists to sell handicrafts with migratory bird
18 -- non-edible migratory bird parts on them to non-
19 Natives. But right now, it's only limited to 29 species.
20 So, we are working to increase that number to the total
21 number of subsistence species allowed to be used. That's
22 92. Several regions have requested that we continue the
23 subsistence season regulations into the fall and winter.
24 So that's another issue we're working on. The invitation
25 regulation currently allows people that live in urban
26 areas to go back to their home communities to help their
27 families harvest migratory birds. We're finding some
28 issues with that regulation, for instance, maybe a
29 person's immediate relatives don't live in their home
30 community anymore so -- but they still want to go back
31 and hunt or they want to go to another village that's
32 closer. None of those are allowed in the current
33 regulations. So, we're working on that.

34
35 As I mentioned earlier, the term
36 indigenous inhabitant is defined in the Migratory Bird
37 Treaty Amendment as any person, regardless of race,
38 living in the included areas and has a tie to subsistence
39 harvest or migratory birds. So, it's, it causes issues
40 when we're talking about things like Alaska Native
41 crafts, you know, how do you govern that if indigenous
42 inhabitant includes non-Natives? So, we're working on
43 that issue and we're also trying to find a more stable
44 funding mechanism for the AMBCC through 638 compacting.
45 So that's the other issue that's on the top of our list.

46
47 Now, upcoming events. We have an AMBCC
48 spring gathering on co-management happening next week.
49 And this is just an opportunity, a three-day meeting for
50 our members to strengthen the co-management partnership.

1 Learn more about the AMBCC and identify strategies to
2 address the language in the four treaties that cause
3 difficulties in developing and approving proposed
4 regulations that include traditional, cultural, Alaska
5 Native practices and ways of life. And that gets back
6 to the indigenous habitat and inhabitant in the
7 handicrafts, and the invitation to hunt. Those type of
8 regulations are kind of stuck in place until we can look
9 at the language in the treaties and figure out how to
10 overcome those challenges.

11
12 And then as I mentioned earlier, we have
13 two statewide meetings a year. So, the spring regulatory
14 meeting is coming up April 9th and 10th. We initially
15 proposed that it be in Fairbanks, but funding at the
16 federal level in D.C. is still undergoing the
17 administrative review process. So, we haven't received
18 our funding yet. So, we've switched that meeting to a
19 hybrid meeting in Anchorage. So, if anyone can travel
20 to Anchorage, they can be there in person. Otherwise,
21 it will be virtual. So, we'll provide all those links
22 and everything to everybody here after the gathering
23 next week probably. So, the way the spring regulatory
24 meeting schedule works is the first day the committee
25 meetings -- committees can have their meetings if they
26 wish. The next day, the Native caucus has a day dedicated
27 to themselves, whatever they want to discuss before the
28 Council meeting, which occurs on the following two days.

29
30 And then this is just a little bit of
31 information if you want to know more about the AMBCC.
32 We were invited to write a chapter in this book that was
33 published in 2024 called Wildlife Stewardship on Tribal
34 Lands, and it's the first comprehensive resource
35 dedicated to the voices and expertise of Native scholars
36 and wildlife professionals. So, there's over 100 Native
37 and non-Native wildlife conservationists, managers and
38 their programs, and they talk about their different
39 programs and projects and how to best incorporate
40 indigenous knowledge into natural resource projects. So,
41 the link to order that book is on the bottom of that
42 page and that's where you can go if you want to find out
43 more information. And that's all I have to share with
44 you. Madam Chair, (In Native) for your time, and I'd be
45 happy to answer any questions. Or if anyone wants to
46 share any migratory bird observations, I'd be willing
47 to take notes on those and then report back to our
48 Council. (In Native).

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Patty.
2 Does anyone here have questions or comments for Patty?
3 Brooke.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thank
6 you very much, Patty, for presenting to the Council here.
7 Council members, as you know, our Council here is for
8 the federal subsistence regulations, but that only
9 includes fish and wildlife. And so, the AMBCC is sort
10 of like a sister regulatory process for the migratory
11 birds. And I know you guys have discussed maybe different
12 changes you've seen with migratory birds in your areas
13 before and you've raised at a past meeting a concern
14 about snowy owls and there was some interest in learning
15 more about how you might be able to submit a proposal.
16 So, I know Patty would love to hear any of those things
17 that might be going on in your area that she could pass
18 on to AMBCC if you want to share. Thanks.

19
20 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

23
24 MS. ROGERS: Quyana, Madam Chair, Alissa
25 Rogers, for the record. Thank you Brooke. Thank you so
26 much for the invitation for Migratory Bird Council to
27 be here. Patty, I have a question. Have you guys
28 discussed anything about snowy owls in the population
29 and possible research for snowy owls? Our snowy owls
30 have decreased over the past years. And since I was like
31 maybe 6. I'm 38 right now, so. It's from 6 years old to
32 roughly about maybe, 28 we had three snowy owls that
33 stayed within the area here in Bethel. And then all of
34 a sudden, one year there -- they never came back. But
35 they always came back every year after year after year.
36 Do you -- is that something in your realm that you guys
37 can regulate?

38
39 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, that is, if
40 there's a concern about the decreasing population. I'd
41 have to look and see what the harvest is for snowy owls.
42 I know it's one of the subsistence species, but I don't
43 think it gets harvested very much. But we can certainly
44 engage with our partners to see if there's any research
45 on that currently, or if we can develop a research
46 project around that.

47
48 MS. ROGERS: Yeah. Madam Chair, second
49 question, if it's okay.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead.
2 Thanks.

3
4 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
5 Alissa Rogers again for the record. What about our
6 emperor geese? I know our population for emperor geese
7 have been declining, and we were talking about putting
8 the migratory birds back into -- in -- being regulated
9 again. Moratorium on the emperor geese so the population
10 can increase again because I know we were declining, but
11 I don't know why it wasn't closed by emergency order or
12 why it wasn't protected. We're trying to rebuild a
13 population, and we were so successful in it. Why did
14 they not regulate the emperor geese again, instead it
15 was an education and outreach. Thank you, Madam Chair.

16
17 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Thank you. When
18 there's -- the Migratory Bird Emperor Goose Management
19 plan has a threshold system. So, there's three tiers of
20 population levels where we take action. So, when the
21 population is healthy, it's considered in the green zone
22 and people can harvest. Then there's the next
23 conservation area is a yellow zone and that's where we
24 take conservation measures like outreach and education.
25 Stopping egging, maybe reducing harvest or suggesting
26 that one bird per person. Those sorts of things. The
27 Council can figure out how they want to identify the
28 conservation measures for the yellow zone. Right now,
29 we're in the red zone and the red zone is no harvest.
30 So, the emperor geese are closed to harvest right now.
31 The problem with trying to manage emperor geese is we
32 don't really know why the population is declining. It
33 could be the changing environment, the ecosystem. It
34 could be predators. It could be the -- not enough food.
35 We just don't know. But there is research being done on
36 it.

37
38 So now that the birds are closed, I
39 think part of your question was why wasn't it closed
40 when we knew that the populations were declining? So, I
41 think it was last year when we got the numbers back and
42 realized that the harvest was going to be closed. That
43 was in the summertime, and the sport harvest was still
44 due to start in September. The state took the stance
45 that this -- that year's harvest would continue and it
46 would be closed the following year because our
47 regulations move from -- go annually. Native caucus
48 wasn't satisfied with that decision, but that's what
49 happened. And in reality, the state harvest is very
50 minimal compared to the subsistence harvest. And there's

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1 only 25 birds that are allowed to be taken during that
2 time. So, the state didn't feel that it would have that
3 much of an impact on the population if they kept it
4 open.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

7
8 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

9
10 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, I just have a
11 comment for Patty about bird hunting. You know, I'm a -
12 - hi, Patty. My name is Francis Prince Jr. I'm from
13 Kotlik and I'm a council member. And I had as a
14 subsistence bird hunter myself, I noticed a lot of
15 changes to the birds nesting grounds and seeing if there
16 can be studies on the coastline since we deal with a lot
17 of flooding every year. And I kind of think maybe the
18 emperor geese are declining because they're losing all
19 their nesting grounds. I noticed that after the last
20 previous two floods, we've been having a hard time
21 finding nesting grounds where we usually go subsistence
22 harvesting.

23
24 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, thank you for
25 sharing that. I will definitely check that -- check into
26 that with our partners and see what we can find out.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That is a good
29 point, Francis. Thank you. And this is Jackie, Patty, I
30 had maybe a question on the emperor and was there a
31 study done on how the avian flu affected the population
32 by chance?

33
34 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Not on the emperor
35 geese specifically that I'm aware of. But again, USGS
36 has a lot of research that they've done with avian
37 influenza, and I can check with them and see if they
38 have any emperor goose specific information. And I can
39 share that back with the Council through Brooke, if
40 that's okay.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Thank you,
43 Patty. Any others?

44
45 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

48
49 MS. ROGERS: Hi. Thank you, Madam Chair.
50 Through the Chair. Alissa Rogers, for the record. Do you

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1 have a policies and procedures manual for the Migratory
2 Bird Council that you could send me?

3

4 MS. SCHWALENBERG: You mean like how we
5 conduct our business, that kind of thing?

6

7 MS. ROGERS: Or for, like how you guys'
8 process, like Brooke said, you're kind of like our
9 process, like a sister process. So, I just wanted to
10 know what your guys' policies were or your procedures
11 are. So, I know how to navigate through the Migratory
12 Bird Council for issues that are coming up regarding
13 birds.

14

15 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, okay. Yeah, I can
16 send you something. I'll send it to Brooke, and she can
17 send it on to you all.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Brooke.

20

21 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Patty, that
24 would be great. Alissa, Patty showed a diagram on the
25 screen. I know you weren't able to see it since you're
26 joining us on the phone, but I would ask too Patty, if
27 you could kindly send me a copy of your presentation
28 after the discussion today. Just a PDF would be fine.
29 And I can also pass that on to the council members. And
30 just so you know, Patty, when we showed the presentation
31 on the screen that light blue text in the green boxes
32 was really hard to see. So yeah, getting a copy would
33 be really appreciated.

34

35 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, okay. Yeah, good
36 to know. Thank you.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: No problem. Patty, I was
39 also wondering if you could tell the Council who the
40 representative from the YK Delta region is on the AMBCC.

41

42 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Okay. Hold on. I don't
43 have a list of the full council members. We only
44 communicate through Jennifer Hooper at AVCP. But if you
45 give me one second, I will give you the name of the
46 actual representative.

47

48 (Pause)

49

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1 Martin Andrew is the actual voting
2 representative for your region.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Did you say Martin Andrew?
5 This is Brooke.

6
7 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yes.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, great. Thank you.

10
11 MS. SCHWALENBERG: And the Waterfowl
12 Conservation Committee used to be the executive
13 committee of AVCP, but they've cut that down to like six
14 members. I'm not exactly sure which six members are the
15 representatives to the AMBCC, but Jennifer would know.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Good to know. Thank you.
18 Sounds like Jennifer is probably a great point of
19 contact, Alissa. If you have questions or want to get
20 engaged in this region. Patty, this is Brooke. One more
21 question for you. Are there any other harvest
22 restrictions that the Council should be aware of or
23 season dates for this region?

24
25 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Well, the one thing
26 to be aware of for this region is the -- all the other
27 regions except the North Slope have to set a 30-day
28 closure for when they won't be egging to protect the
29 nesting birds. But in your region and in the North Slope,
30 they work together with the Refuge to decide when that's
31 going to happen each year. So, it's a kind of a moving
32 target. The 30-day closure dates are fluid, and they
33 base that on when the birds are there and the
34 environmental conditions and those sorts of things. And
35 so, the Refuge engages with AVCPs natural resource
36 department to determine when that's going to happen. So,
37 you just need to be aware that the 30-day closure isn't
38 the same every year, like some of the other regions.

39
40 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. That's very
41 helpful information.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

44
45 MS. AGAYAR: Good morning. Tiffany here.
46 I was trying to do a little research on the AMBCC. I was
47 wondering if anybody keeps the website up to date?

48
49 MS. SCHWALENBERG: It's a good question.
50 As a matter of fact, the website was managed under

1 another regional organization and then they turned that
2 over to Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission. They've
3 been working to try and update it. And we finally decided
4 that we were going to just redo the whole website so
5 we're in the process right now, actually. We just
6 contracted with an indigenous web designer to redo our
7 website, which she is working on. We are hoping to have
8 it done by June. So, the only information about the
9 AMBCC that's up to date now is by going to the Fish and
10 Wildlife Service website and typing in AMBCC. And then
11 all of our information will come up. Our regulations
12 booklet, all the transcripts from all of our meetings,
13 any upcoming meeting dates. Closed -- species that are
14 closed to harvest, those sorts of things are all on that
15 website, and they will eventually be on the AMBCC website
16 again, so.

17
18 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you.

19
20 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Mm-hmm.

21
22 MS. CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And
23 then.....

24
25 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND:Brooke and
28 then Alissa.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
31 Patty, I was wondering ,you said the call for proposals
32 for the AMBCC process is every November 1st through
33 December 15th. This Council meets in the spring and the
34 fall each year. And if they were interested in ever
35 submitting proposals I guess, I was just curious which
36 -- if it would be better to kind of have that as like a
37 standing item on their agenda -- our agenda to give
38 enough time to kind of liaise through your process and
39 maybe with the AVCP Waterfowl Conservation Committee.
40 Do you have any suggestions if it might be better for
41 them to discuss proposals in the spring or if, you know,
42 in October if they came up with an idea, if that gave
43 enough time before the, you know, the call in November.
44 Thank you.

45
46 MS. SCHWALENBERG: If your meeting is
47 generally in October, ours is generally in September.
48 So, it would probably be a good idea if you don't discuss
49 potential ideas in the spring to attend our fall meeting,
50 because time is set aside on that fall meeting agenda

1 to discuss potential proposals. If anybody has any ideas
2 or they need help, or if they just see an observation,
3 and then there's a discussion about, well, we could do
4 a proposal this way or that way. And so, there's a back
5 and forth between all the partners and the guests in the
6 room as to how to move forward on ideas people have. So,
7 it would be a good time for you to attend that meeting.
8 And if you don't discuss proposals until October, then
9 you could just contact me directly. I can get you in
10 touch with the technical committee members that may be
11 able to help you if you need help, or I can help you too
12 just so that you get it in time. And again, there's that
13 back-and-forth opportunity in January and February to
14 work with the technical committee to make sure your
15 proposal is ready for a vote at the Council level at the
16 spring meeting.

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much. Very
19 helpful.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Patty
22 and everybody. I have a question as well. So, Patty,
23 I've heard in the past that our Delta, the YK Delta
24 region has the most migratory bird or the biggest
25 migratory bird population. Do we still hold that?

26
27 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, yeah. By far the
28 -- you have the most harvesters, the biggest number of
29 bird populations, the most habitat. Yeah. Yukon-
30 Kuskokwim Delta is very, very important to migratory
31 birds, not just for Alaska, but internationally. We
32 engage with three different international flyway groups
33 to make them more aware of the importance of the
34 environment and the habitat in Alaska and how important
35 the birds are to everyone across the flyway. So yeah.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. That
38 was going to be my next question, actually, is if you
39 have international partnerships, because I've been
40 approached actually by the Paimiut Partnership and maybe
41 even New Zealand Connection or something, but good work.
42 Thank you.

43
44 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Mm-hmm.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And then Francis
47 has a follow up.

48
49 MR. PRINCE: Hi Patty, this is Francis.
50 I have a comment here and a question as well. My comment

00018

1 is that I can remember that when I was younger, you know
2 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Alaska Migratory
3 Bird Co-Management Council or I'm not too sure who it
4 was, but back then that Mr. Tucker from Emmonak used to
5 educate all our youth, you know, back in the early late
6 90s to 2000. And this type of education really impacted
7 us youth back then to now, to really respect our birds
8 and our animals that we subsistence harvest, and I think
9 we need to continue to do that to our youth. And who can
10 it fall under, is it the Alaska Department of Fish and
11 Game, or is it Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management
12 Council? Who does the education of migratory birds? And
13 can they bring that back to all our youth in the
14 villages?

15
16 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Funny you should
17 mention that. We just -- we're in the process of
18 finalizing a grant that we received from the National
19 Fish and Wildlife Foundation for \$2 million, and most
20 of it is for outreach and education. So, we're providing
21 funding for each region for a period of four years. I
22 think it's \$20,000 a year per region for four years to
23 conduct outreach and educational projects. And so those
24 education opportunities you're talking about would fit
25 right underneath there. So, there's funding available.
26 We're also hiring two coordinators, one for five regions
27 and one for two -- work with the other five regions to
28 help develop those programs and help them find resources
29 to put those types of things on. Or you can do migratory
30 bird camps or whatever the people are interested in
31 conducting that has to do with migratory birds, we can
32 support that.

33
34 MR. PRINCE: Thank you.

35
36 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. Hold on.
39 Alissa, let me quickly follow up before I lose my
40 thoughts. So, Francis, I was going to mention that as
41 an RIT, Refuge information Technician, we also help with
42 that outreach and education when we're presenting in
43 schools and stuff, is one way in the meantime. Okay.
44 Alissa.

45
46 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. In
47 regards to our shorebirds declining, are you guys
48 planning on doing any research on the shorebirds? And
49 the question is our international partnerships with New
50 Zealand and Mexico or Cabo are we -- are they included

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1 in the meetings when you guys meet or are they just
2 submitting comments and we're just connecting through
3 committees. Thank you, Madam Chair.

4
5 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Oh, yeah. The Fish and
6 Wildlife Service and the USGS are conducting shorebird
7 research. I can send you a list of specifically what is
8 -- the research projects are. And with the international
9 groups, mostly it's been to share information. We
10 haven't really gotten down into the weeds as far as
11 regulations are concerned. We put together a youth forum
12 across the Pacific America's Flyway, which goes from
13 South America all the way to Alaska. So, there were 16
14 countries involved in that. We had 250 students from all
15 the countries participating. So, we do things like that
16 with the international flyways and I'm hoping that
17 that's going to build the relationship so that we can
18 discuss some of those other conservation issues.

19
20 MS. ROGERS: Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any other
23 questions or comments? John Andrew.

24
25 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. (In Native).

26
27 INTERPRETER: Experience as a child, and
28 at that time, there was a lot of migratory birds
29 (indiscernible) to our areas. And there was a lot of
30 snow, they would show up and congregate at the melted
31 lake. And they would -- when they were gathering these
32 lakes, they were just thousands and thousands of birds
33 that came in that area. And when they took off it -- the
34 sky would get dark because there were so numerous. And
35 when they went between the sun and us it would get dark.
36 There was just so many of them that they were darken the
37 sky. And so, they used to tell us down in the other
38 villages it was like that. But at that time before people
39 migrated from south up here, the people would only catch
40 what they needed. And they did not go out to catch as
41 many as they could, so. There's no four wheelers. They
42 all just went hunting by -- through walking and the dog
43 sleds and stuff. So, when they got enough, they would
44 go home and stop hunting because they didn't have any
45 other means of transport the game that they caught except
46 by walking. And so, they did not try to (indiscernible)
47 any of the populations. So, because the parents or the
48 elders will tell them how many birds that they should
49 catch. And after they catch, they need to stop hunting.
50 And so that was how it was done. And so back in the day,

1 they used bows and arrows because there is no guns or
2 ammo available. And so -- also, used those overhand
3 spears that they used to throw. They are called the
4 throwing sticks. And so, they would throw these throwing
5 sticks up into the sky, into the birds as they were
6 coming and they would catch them that way. And so, they
7 did not catch a lot. (Indiscernible) and we -- as young,
8 as we grew up, we had guns and ammunition and a lot of
9 times we caught too much because we had snow machines
10 and sled. We would sled -- we would load up our sleds
11 because at that time we didn't know about the
12 conservations because unknowingly we (indiscernible)
13 help to submit the population by wounding them and
14 letting them fly away. And we were not aware of this.
15 And we used -- before they started using guns, it was a
16 natural conservation effort that the people used.

17
18 And so, when I was a young man, people
19 used to tell us that the hunting area was -- everything
20 was closed and in the closed season somebody would catch
21 just one bird so they could have a meal, and they would
22 leave the rest of the birds because they need to eat
23 somehow. And while I was growing up it was like that as
24 a teenager, but as time went around -- in due time, the
25 state of Alaska Department of Fish and Game came and
26 started closing the seasons. And when we were closed for
27 hunting, we would just sneak out and go hunting in the
28 sly. And a lot of people games were confiscated. Whatever
29 they caught, what they were going to eat, they were just
30 -- Fish and Game would come and just take those food
31 away from them. And so furthermore, during the time that
32 the hunting was closed. In the early 1990s, it was closed
33 for hunting. And during that time, I used to see a lot
34 of planes would come and the planes would fly overhead
35 and harass us, and they would head off the migratory
36 birds away from the hunters. And it was not only in this
37 area, but it was also done in the other villages, because
38 they were really putting an effort into stopping the
39 migratory bird hunting from the indigenous people here.
40 And so, we would standing in the sly and it was just a
41 terrible time for us as we were trying to gather food.
42 And now at this time, when they say there are a lot of
43 birds now, I do not see that as many as they used to,
44 because back in the day there used to be sound of birds
45 24/7, and we wouldn't be able to sleep in the springtime
46 because of the number of birds that came to this area.
47 And so, if you go to the old hunting grounds, you do not
48 even see that much anymore. Now and then you'll just see
49 here and there flocks taking off. It is not as much as
50 it used to. And I just want to say that much. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Guyana. And apologies for the ones online who can't hear the translations.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Patty, you might be particularly interested in what John was saying. And when we get the transcriptions for the meeting. I'd be happy to pass on. But he was sharing a lot of his local and traditional knowledge about the birds over time and some of the regulations that were imposed on people that really were hard especially when they started confiscating food from people who were trying to harvest. And he was also telling cool stories about when there were so many birds that it would block out the sun, and when they would fly away. And he also shared that there's just not as many birds now as there used to be.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: I really appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Anyone else?

(No response)

If that's all.....

MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, wait. Yes. One more. Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: Hi. Alissa Rogers, for the record. Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair. Do you also take care of avian like swallows and redpolls as well?

MS. SCHWALENBERG: No. Those are handled by a different program under the Migratory Bird Management Program with Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke has a follow-up and maybe an answer.

MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, I can get you the contact information if you're interested, Alissa.

1 MS. ROGERS: I greatly appreciate that.
2 Through the Chair. Alissa Rogers, for the record. I know
3 that our swallows have been declining as well, as well
4 as other small avian birds like redpolls and yellow
5 warblers. So, if I can get that information as well,
6 because it's concerning that with the decline of those
7 birds, there's got to be something going on in our
8 ecosystem. Thank you, Madam Chair.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.

11
12 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And then,
15 Brooke, with your question.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the
18 Chair. Patty, I think I heard you mention earlier that
19 there are 92 species that kind of fall under the AMBCC.
20 Is there a list that's available somewhere that you could
21 share, too? I think that might be a handy resource just
22 for the future when the Council has questions. So, we
23 know -- they know kind of who does what for what species.
24 Thanks.

25
26 MS. SCHWALENBERG: Yeah, I can send you
27 that list, certainly. In those 92 species were
28 identified by the Native caucus members. So, they had
29 discussions in their own regions and determined which
30 birds that they considered birds that they use for food
31 and other subsistence uses and added those to the list.
32 So, we came up with 92 statewide, so I will send that
33 to you Brooke. Thank you.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie
38 again, and I wanted to thank you again, Patty. That was
39 a great presentation and good engagement from our group,
40 too. But if that's all, we'll move on to the agenda. And
41 next we're going to pick up where we left off last night
42 under Action Items And New Business, d: Secretarial
43 Review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.
44 And that will be presented by Brooke and on in our
45 booklets it's page 17. Thanks.

46
47 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

50

1 MS. ROGERS: Quyana. Alissa Rogers for
2 the record did we take a public testimony this morning
3 for anyone in the room or anyone online that wanted to
4 give testimony?

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Apparently, we
7 forgot, so we could do that first before the Secretarial
8 Review section of our agenda. Thanks for the reminder.
9 So now we're on -- we're in public comments on non-
10 agenda items. Is there anyone on the list Brooke? There's
11 no one online. Is there anyone in the room?

12
13 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. Just a
14 reminder, if anyone online wants to give a comment you
15 can use the raise hand feature on Teams or press star
16 five on your phone and we can call on you.

17
18 (No response)

19
20 And I'm not seeing any currently, Madam
21 Chair.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Then
24 let's move on to the Secretarial Review of the Federal
25 Subsistence Management Program on page 17.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
28 Yeah. Council members on page 17 in your meeting books,
29 this is just a flyer with an overview of the program
30 review that's currently happening for the Federal
31 Subsistence Management Program. We had this on the
32 agenda at your last meeting, but just as a refresher,
33 the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture are
34 undertaking a limited review of the program. And they
35 have asked for feedback on seven different topics that's
36 noted in those bullet points on the second paragraph.
37 So, the move of the Office of Subsistence Management to
38 Department of Interior that used to -- we used to be
39 housed under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regional Office in
40 Anchorage. The criteria for Regional Advisory Council
41 membership. Membership on the Federal Subsistence Board.
42 Federal regulations and state regulations for
43 duplication and inconsistency. Regulations applicable to
44 special actions. The role of the State of Alaska and
45 Alaska Department of Fish and Game in our Federal
46 Subsistence Management program. And also the Board
47 policies and procedures for rural determinations.

48
49 At the last meeting, you guys provided
50 substantial comments on each of these topics. We walked

1 through them. They're also accepting comments on any
2 other topics related to subsistence management that you
3 feel that the Secretaries need to be aware of. Starting
4 on the next page in your meeting binders on page 18, you
5 will find a copy of the comments that this Council
6 submitted under this scoping process or the Secretarial
7 Review. Based on feedback from Councils, the tribes and
8 members of the public, the comment period was extended.
9 It's now closing at the end of March, on March 30th. It
10 was originally supposed to close in February, but they
11 extended it I believe by 45 more days or so. So, since
12 that comment period is still open if the Council has any
13 additional comments that you want to submit, you would
14 be able to send in sort of an addendum to the comments
15 that you already provided.

16
17 But just as a refresher and since you
18 know, not everyone was at the last meeting, just briefly
19 go through your comment letter and then we can open it
20 up to Council questions or discussion. So, you all felt
21 like the move of the Office of Subsistence Management,
22 maybe there wasn't really enough time yet to decide how
23 it might be affecting people on the ground. But you
24 would like to stay updated about that. And you also
25 asked that you raise the concerns about the
26 communication between the Council, the Board and the
27 Secretaries especially with those delays in your letters
28 and not getting any responses to your letters. So that's
29 included here. You said that you were happy with the
30 council member criteria for membership. And you really
31 wanted to see emphasis placed on local and indigenous
32 knowledge as part of the criteria. And you also brought
33 up your concerns about the lack of council member
34 compensation or like a stipend or honorarium for the
35 days that you attend the meetings. So, that's something
36 that the Secretary does have the ability to change. So
37 hopefully their ears will be open to hearing that because
38 that's something you've raised multiple times in the
39 past.

40
41 Topic number three Federal Subsistence
42 Board membership. You noted that you support the current
43 membership on the Board, and you think those public
44 member positions are very important because they add
45 that local knowledge to the Board. And as a reminder,
46 this region does have someone on the Board as a public
47 member, and that's Mr. Ray Oney from Alakanuk. There was
48 a lot of discussion about regulations at the last
49 meeting, and we really try to capture some of the
50 sentiments that Phillip provided and John provided just

1 about in general, the difficulty that regulations, this
2 dual management system imposes on local people, how it
3 makes it very confusing. And so, the Council really urged
4 where there can be alignment that there should be
5 alignment but also recognize that the regulations
6 between the state and federal system cannot always fully
7 mirror each other because of the rural priority. And you
8 did, you know, emphasize too the importance of that rural
9 priority for your subsistence.

10

11 Number five, special actions. You noted
12 the importance of special actions for taking up things
13 that come up outside of the normal regulatory cycle. And
14 you pointed out the importance of the Board and in season
15 managers engaging with local people when deciding on
16 those special actions or in-season management actions.
17 As far as the number six, the role of the state in the
18 federal program, you felt like it's important for the
19 state and feds to work together, but you did not feel
20 that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game should have
21 a voting membership on the Board. You also pointed out
22 that some things about the state process you might not
23 be as happy with such -- because they can't -- they
24 don't hold tribal consultations in the same way that the
25 federal system does.

26

27 As far as Board procedures for non-rural
28 determinations you wanted to make sure that they don't
29 rely solely on things like just community population
30 size for making those determinations. Especially for
31 remote places like Bethel that are far off the road
32 system with high cost of food and limited availability
33 of goods. Under that section, you also emphasized what
34 you included in your annual report. And that was about
35 -- for displaced people who are affected by natural
36 disasters that have -- are forced to relocate to
37 Anchorage or other non-rural areas that they should
38 remain eligible under federal subsistence.

39

40 And then for number eight, you brought
41 up two topics that weren't, you know, explicitly asked
42 about in the review. But you felt were very important
43 for the Secretaries to be aware of and perhaps to
44 intervene in. And the first was the Western Alaska salmon
45 crisis and the need for subsistence to be prioritized
46 across all jurisdictions, including in the marine
47 environment. I know that came up in discussion here
48 yesterday as well. That is something that's outside the
49 Board -- subsistence -- Federal Subsistence Board
50 jurisdiction. So, it would require this higher level of

1 government engagement. And then you emphasized the
2 importance of co-management and traditional ecological
3 knowledge as standards in resource management. So that's
4 a summary of all the comments that you submitted under
5 the Secretarial Review at the last meeting. And Madam
6 Chair, if it's okay with you, we could open it up to any
7 questions or additional comments that the Council might
8 like us to discuss. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
11 Brooke. Yeah. So, like Brooke said, if there's any
12 comments or questions and anything for discussion on our
13 letter or report, can speak whenever.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, and just a follow up.
16 I think I mentioned yesterday there was two statewide
17 tribal consultations that were held on this. One was
18 yesterday afternoon. The other one was last week. But
19 if your tribes are interested in submitting comments if
20 they haven't already. Again, that comment deadline is
21 March 30th. You can also put in a request to have a one-
22 on-one tribal consultation if desired. I believe that
23 AVCP had put in a request for sort of a regional
24 consultation, but I haven't heard about the dates for
25 that yet. And I guess just a little feedback. Are you
26 guys -- this is Brooke. Are you happy with the comments
27 that were submitted at the last meeting, or is there
28 anything else that you'd like to see added?

29
30 (Pause)

31
32 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Go ahead,
35 Alissa.

36
37 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
38 Through the Chair. Thank you so much for this. It's
39 really well put together, and I really appreciate all
40 the hard work you put into it. Thank you so much, Brooke.
41 Qu yana, Madam Chair.

42
43 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Thank you,
44 Alissa. It's my pleasure to help you guys.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Well, if we
47 do think of something to add, just remember, we have
48 until March 30th. And if that is all and if you guys are
49 all in agreement with the report, we can move on to --
50 if that's okay? Yeah. Are we ready? Wildlife special

1 action requests and those start on page 25. And OSM will
2 present on the Western Arctic caribou. And first we'll
3 start with WSA26-01 on page 25. Thanks.

4
5 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair and
6 Members of the Council. For the record, Tom Plank,
7 Wildlife Biologist, OSM. And we are bringing these
8 special actions to your Council because there are
9 several villages in the northern portion of Unit 18 that
10 have customary traditional use for the caribou and Unit
11 22. So that's why we had these two WSAs, Wildlife Special
12 Actions, that we're bringing for y'all's consideration.
13 So, the first one is temporary wildlife special action
14 WSA26-01, and that was submitted by the Western Arctic
15 Caribou Working Group and is requesting to reduce the
16 caribou harvest limits in Unit 22, 23 and the Southwest
17 portion of Unit 26A to four caribou per year only one,
18 which may be a cow. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd
19 Working Group at its annual meeting assigned the
20 management level to critical declining, for the Western
21 Arctic Caribou Herd based on the current census in adult
22 cow survival rate. The July 2025 photo census estimated
23 the herd at 121,000 caribou, and that is approximately
24 20% decline from the last survey in 2023. There will be
25 a public hearing on April 9th via Teams and telephone
26 for this special action, along with the other special
27 actions that go along with it. So, I will stop there.
28 If you have any other questions, I will stay online and
29 help and be here for if y'all need me. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Tom.
32 There's a question from Brooke.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Tom. This is
35 Brooke, the Council might be curious to hear if any
36 other of the Councils have voted on these and maybe what
37 they suggested.

38
39 MR. PLANK: Of course. Thank you, Brooke.
40 Through the Chair. So North Slope was the first to take
41 a look at these special actions, and they did a
42 modification to 26A Southwest, which is a little portion
43 of the total area that this was to affect. And they're
44 asking for a ten caribou, no more than one could be a
45 cow for that section. And then the four caribou, no more
46 than one could be a cow for the rest of the area, which
47 is Unit 22 and 23. They also submitted their own special
48 action, which would close 26A Southwest to non-federally
49 qualified users. And then Northwest Arctic will be
50 taking this up later on this month. And Western Interior

1 did take it up, but you have to give me a second to look
2 up and see what I have for them. So, give me just a
3 second on that.

4

5 (Pause)

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. While Tom's
8 taking that up, I'm just going to let the Council know
9 sort of about process for this. These are being presented
10 to you because like Tom said some folks on the Lower
11 Yukon have customary and traditional use for these
12 caribou in Unit 22. So, if you would like to submit
13 comments, you're welcome to do so. You can also choose
14 to not take it up or you can choose to just vote to
15 defer to the home region Councils since it's mostly
16 outside your region. So, it's kind of up to you all how
17 you'd like to proceed, if you'd like to weigh in or not.
18 Thank you.

19

20 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

23

24 MR. PARKS: I have a question. Tom, I
25 have a question. for the record, this is Henry Parks.
26 Where exactly is portion of 26 -- Unit 26A at -- located
27 at?

28

29 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Member Parks.
30 That's a very good question. Brooke, do you have that
31 map, or can you display Teams and I can share the map.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: The map is up.
34 It's just not that -- it's just not that easy to read.
35 It's a little blurry and small print, but he found it
36 in his book.

37

38 MR. PLANK: Okay. Actually, yeah. That'll
39 work. So, the 26A, the southwest portion basically goes
40 there from Wainwright down to Unit 23 and everything
41 west of that. That's just kind of a ballpark on where
42 that's at. But yeah, the map shows it there.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. I see him
45 nodding. And while we're waiting just out of curiosity
46 since Kotlik is so close to the 22A line, do you have
47 anything to add Francis? Don't mean to put you on the
48 spot.

49

50 MR. PRINCE: No, I don't at this time.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

MS. AGAYAR: Hearing no other comments, I'd like to suggest to defer to the other RAC.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. If you guys would like that to be sort of formalized recommendation it would need to be a motion. Thank you.

MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

MS. ROGERS: I so move to defer to the other RAC regarding the caribou.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa moves to defer this proposal to the other RACs directly in this region. Is there a second?

MS. AGAYAR: Second.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Seconded by Tiffany. All in favor of deferring this proposal, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. Thanks.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. And this is Brooke, for the record. So, the motion that passed was to take no action on WSA26-01 and 26-02 and defer to the home regions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Next on the agenda is f: Call for Alaska Board of Game Proposals presented by our Coordinator, Brooke. And that starts on page 28. Oh, and since I was just told this might take a while. Let's take a break. So, 10:45? Okay.

(Off record)

(On record)

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Welcome back from recess. It's 10:53. We ended up going 15 minutes rather. And we're going to start by going back to the public testimony sign up. And we're going to call up Martin Nikolai from Kwethluk.

MR. NIKOLAI: Quyana. Martin Nikolai from Kwethluk. I came on behalf of our corporation, but also, I speak for my people back home. First, for how many years now we've been anxious about fishing for salmon here in the Kuskokwim, and we've been very lucky in regards to like the Yukon River, who cannot even fish - who haven't been able to fish for a long time. We're happy for a little bit of the opportunities to catch and store fish away here in the Kuskokwim. We've been very lucky. We haven't been catching the usual amounts that we used to before the restrictions started. But even so, with even half or even a quarter of what you used to catch way back when we put that up, it puts our minds at ease. And we hope -- we're hoping that the fishing opportunities will continue this summer as well. And we know that the trawl industry, what they passed over in Anchorage at the recent meeting, it helps a little bit, not by much. I hope that at least it's a start for the fish coming back to our area, to the Kuskokwim and to the Yukon River.

I guess sometimes our voices do matter because in the past, you know, we cried about it. We testified many times over the unfair balance of the Alaskan subsistence users being under restriction. And they have almost no restrictions down in the Bering Sea trawling industry. And the other thing is that, you know, especially this winter, moose are all over the place. And in Kwethluk, thankfully, there hasn't been an accident yet of moose, you know, hurting people. And we are worried, especially about the children who go who have to go to school in the morning, and especially those who walk to school. Because even though the cow moose -- we've been told, and we have seen that especially when they're caring young, they're already protective of their young even though it's in their belly and they get very aggressive and it's been known in the past that, you know, (In Native). They attack people even though they didn't have a calf yet. Even though it's still in their belly, so. And we warn children about not bothering the moose when they're close by. You know, in the past 30-40 years ago, when the moose came into the village, we just simply killed it and ate it.

00031

1 Now we can't do that, even though this is happening. So,
2 it helps that last year we had moose hunting
3 opportunities for cows and in the fall time.

4
5 And I hope that it will continue, maybe
6 with more of a limit than less because moose are
7 everywhere. They're all over the place now. And we --
8 most of the time we see moose with a calf or two and
9 they're not afraid anymore. Some of the moose that are
10 in Kwethluk, they're not afraid of people anymore. They
11 just browse among the houses and eating off of the trees.
12 This morning there was a big calf in the housing section,
13 just right alongside the road, people going by cars and
14 four wheelers and snow (indiscernible) going by and they
15 don't look at them, they just continue to eat. So that's
16 one thing that is in the minds of the -- especially the
17 elders, they, they don't like it too much when there's
18 moose in the village because it's an accident waiting
19 to happen. An incident waiting to happen. So that's the
20 two things that I wanted to say. Quyana.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In
23 Native). I just had a question. So, you know how you
24 know with like bears and wolves and predators, if they
25 come into our village, we're able to, you know, protect
26 ourselves in and shoot them if we have to. Is there no
27 such thing for moose that exists in the regs? I mean
28 like the state, (In Native). Did the state -- does the
29 state not give you guys permission to protect yourselves
30 from moose like the same way we're able to for bears and
31 wolves?

32
33 MR. NIKOLAI: I haven't heard anybody of
34 killing the moose yet in the village itself. And but if
35 they did, I heard that if we happen to kill a moose out
36 of concern for safety, for safety purposes that we should
37 immediately call the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
38 here and tell them that we had to kill a moose. But I
39 haven't heard anybody doing that yet in Kwethluk. But
40 we've been told that it's allowed. Yeah.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana just
43 wondering. And I think Brook has a question.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, thank you, Madam Chair.
46 I just wanted to confirm that the DLP is allowed for
47 other species that does have to usually be turned over
48 though to the troopers. So just so you know.

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50 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Phillip.

MR. PETER: This is Phillip. (In Native).

INTERPRETER: Thank you. Thank you. These people at Kwethluk, they're the only ones that participate in our RAC meetings. And the other villages -- I asked the other village representatives to come to RAC meetings, but they don't show up. And I asked them to come and give testimony but they do not. And it's -- you're -- Kwethluk the only one that come up and heeds our invitation. So, I really thank you for taking the time and effort to come. And while you were talking, you were worried about or concerned about the fishing season coming up. If you're able to go and do fishing for salmon. But I am going to speak to that. I'm also a member of the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal River Commission and we are going to be meeting March 31 in Anchorage. And so, the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Commission will be meeting in Anchorage at that time.

And we are -- we always put in our request for a special action. And when it comes to fruition through our votes but at this time, we are not operating as before how often when we used to, so. So, we are not practicing our ways and that we have grown up with our cultural activities, indigenous activities. We are forced to start following other rules, regulations that have been thrust upon us. And so -- and even though when we are in meetings such as this and we come to an agreement, and when the proposals are -- when we are -- when we bring this up, the proposals that we sent to them, they were always not ratified by the Boards and they do not -- and so on the other hand we are working with two agencies, 1 or 2 entities. One is a state entity that we are working with and when they open such as for moose hunting or if they open for salmon. It is overbearing. Hard to -- I mean, to work with two entities about what we are trying to practice that we've been using our whole lives. Every year we always ask ourselves, are we going to be able to fish? Are we going to be able to hunt? It's just a way of -- set of rules that we have encountered in our lifetime here, so.

They opened a small window for hunting moose this past winter. And I also hear the same -- share the same concerns that you have about the moose and the villages that are posing a threat to the children in the villages because the cows are protective and

1 sometimes the children are walking by themselves to
2 school or from school, especially in the morning when
3 the moose are out active. And sometimes when I bring my
4 kids to the school, or my grandkids, and when I come
5 home. When I see school child walking alone to school,
6 I stop and pick them up and bring them back to the school
7 too, because I'm afraid of the moose. Because the moose
8 are unpredictable. They do not predict when they are
9 going to attack you. And so, there are a lot of the
10 moose in the villages here that are concerning.

11
12 I didn't get the first part, but he ran
13 into something. But my -- as I was going on the road
14 with my truck on the ice road, I was going to go fast,
15 but my wife, who was the passenger, told me to slow
16 down. And when she did that, I noticed there was a moose
17 on the ice road that I would have hit with my truck. And
18 so, there are a lot more wolves coming up into our areas,
19 coming into our villages. And when I went -- when
20 somebody went to the dump at our village, he did see
21 some wolves at the dump. These wolves -- we do not hunt
22 the wolves anymore. So, we do not care of anybody going
23 out hunting for moose -- I mean, for wolves at all
24 anymore. And I haven't even heard anybody from my village
25 going wolf hunting. And so, I want to thank you again
26 for the concerns that you raised. And thank you for
27 coming to participate in these meetings and do -- and
28 we will be fishing this summer, so don't worry about
29 that because we will be fishing again, because our Lord
30 is always with us and provides for us. And so even if
31 we do fall off the way or whatnot, but God is always
32 with us and he assures our existence. And so up to this
33 day, the words the -- what have been told to us to
34 follow. Even though all these regulations and whatnot
35 are placed on us, we are still eating our food, and we
36 are still practicing our ways of life. And so, thank
37 you.

38
39 UNIDENTIFIED: You reminded me of one
40 more thing that is always been on my mind. You know,
41 when I was young, much younger in the 70s and 80s, we
42 used to sell our furs here in Bethel, our fox, mink,
43 beaver, wolves. And for some reason that I don't -- I
44 didn't understand they stopped buying furs here in
45 Bethel for this area. And my question would be, is there
46 any way for a company to start buying locally harvested
47 fur bearing animals here in Bethel or close by? That
48 would be my question. Quyana.

49
50

1 MS. AGAYAR: Hi. Tiffany here. After the
2 big fur crash in -- the big fur industry crash, it's
3 been hard for fur buyers to be able to buy for at a
4 reasonable price to be able to sell to anywhere at a
5 reasonable price. And it's kind of a difficult
6 situation, but there's some groups out there trying
7 again. And as for the moose, I share your same concern
8 because I don't like my daughter to play outside my
9 house anymore because we get the same handful of moose
10 coming outside and they're getting pretty dangerous. A
11 couple of years ago, when my daughter was 5 or 6, she
12 was just playing right outside my sister's house in a
13 moose ended up kicking her, and we were lucky that she
14 didn't break or anything, but she was heavily bruised.
15 And a woman last year got medevacked here because a
16 moose trampled on her. They're getting very dangerous,
17 and we all figured out that as long as moose hunting
18 season is open and you have a ticket that you haven't
19 filled out yet, that you're able to notify the people,
20 the cops, or any local authorities and let them know
21 that you're going to shoot in town a moose that's being
22 a danger. Thank you.

23
24 UNIDENTIFIED: Quyana.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana. And mind
27 if I -- okay, so Brooke showed me something in the state
28 regs book on page 16. There's a -- this little purple
29 box here. Emergency taking of game in defense of life
30 or property. Page 16. (In Native). And it says, you
31 know, in the one, two, three, four, five, sixth
32 paragraph, if you kill a bison, caribou, deer, elk,
33 moose, muskox, sheep or mountain goat in defense of life
34 property, you must salvage horns or antlers and the meat.
35 You must immediately notify ADF&G or Alaska Wildlife
36 Troopers of the kill and surrender what you salvaged.
37 Within 15 days you must also complete and submit a
38 questionnaire explaining the circumstances of the
39 incident. If you attempted to take an animal but it
40 escaped and may have been wounded, you should also report
41 the incident to ADF&G or Alaska Troopers immediately.
42 And then down there, if you are in a remote area and
43 unintentionally run out of food and cannot expect to get
44 food from another source soon enough, you may kill
45 wildlife or food to save yourself or prevent permanent
46 health problems. If this happens, you must salvage all
47 meat and surrender what is left to the state after your
48 rescue. You will be asked to fill out a statement about
49 your circumstances. So, I just thought I'd read that
50 part for -- under state regs.

1

2 And before we move on to the Call for
3 Board of Game proposals, I wanted to point out an
4 announcement that Lori passed out from the refuge. And
5 for those of you online, it's by ONC and the Audubon,
6 Alaska. Wednesday, March 18th. That's today at 6 p.m.
7 at the Yup'it Piciryaraat Cultural Center. There will
8 be a gathering on shorebirds that nest in Alaska, migrate
9 -- or shorebirds in general. And there will be
10 representatives from ONC, Audubon and local
11 perspectives. So 6:00 tonight at Yup'it Piciryaraat
12 Cultural Center. There'll be raffle, gas vouchers, tea,
13 coffee and kids entertainment. So now we'll get back to
14 the agenda and we're on f: Call for Alaska Board of game
15 proposals. And that will be by our Coordinator, Brooke.
16 And that starts on page 28.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
19 This is Brooke, for the record. On page 28, as Chair
20 Cleveland mentioned, is the Call for Alaska Board of
21 Game proposals for the 2026-2027 meeting cycle. You'll
22 see noted there that the Western Arctic region and the
23 Western region, which -- in which Unit 18 is included,
24 will be meeting in this cycle. And this is just a notice.
25 Proposals for that Board of Game meeting are due Monday,
26 May 1st. And so -- of this year. So, if the Council is
27 interested in submitting any proposals you would need
28 to do so at this meeting. But before we move into talking
29 about any potential Council generated proposals, I just
30 wanted to go over briefly a proposal that's been drafted
31 by Mr. Grant Coplin. He called in to your last meeting
32 and let you know he was interested in submitting a
33 proposal to limit non-resident moose hunting in the
34 lower Yukon area. He does not live in the lower Yukon.
35 He lives in Palmer, but he hunts in that area, and he
36 has friends in that area that live in villages and he's
37 noticed some of the user conflicts that you guys have
38 noted with fly-in hunters. And so, his suggestion, just
39 as a general overview -- well, let me point you first
40 to his -- his draft proposal is in your book. It starts
41 on page 30. And there's a lot of details. But on page
42 37, there's also a map that might be useful just to pull
43 out and look at while we're discussing this. And Mr.
44 Coplin is planning on presenting -- or submitting this
45 proposal, but he just wanted to run it by you guys for
46 any input. You will be able to, if he does submit this,
47 take it up and vote on a final version at your fall
48 meeting if you support or oppose it. But what he is
49 suggesting kind of on page 34, there's a permit
50 structure. So, he's suggesting that on that 120 non-

1 resident draw permits be issued annually for fall
2 antlered bull moose. And he's suggesting that they form
3 this Lower Yukon resource management area and divided
4 up into five different areas that are shown on this map
5 on page 37. And then he's suggesting that only a certain
6 number of permits for each area and then in different
7 like date timeline. So, he's saying, you know, like eight
8 permits, draw permits, the first through the 10th of
9 September, another eight, the 11th through the 20th, and
10 then another eight the 21st through the 30th of
11 September. So, his idea is that this would spread out
12 the number of non-resident hunters more equally and
13 maybe reduce some of those conflicts and spread it out
14 also over time in this area. So that's a general summary.
15 Again, I'm not the author of this and Mr. Coplin is
16 traveling out of state at the moment and was not able
17 to call in, but if you guys have any comments or
18 questions, do the best to answer questions and any
19 comments, I told Mr. Coplin that I would pass those back
20 to him after our meeting, so. Just want to turn it over
21 to you guys to share any thoughts you might have about
22 this idea for non-resident hunter draw permits. And one
23 last thing as a reminder, non-resident means out of
24 state. It doesn't mean for people you know that live in
25 Anchorage or other urban areas. Thank you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Pat, (In
28 Native). But you know the best summary you can and take
29 your time. Okay, so this is our time. We'll use this
30 time to comment on this proposal, if any. And I
31 especially want to hear from Lower Yukon if that's okay.
32 But anyone else, anyone is welcome to comment. Starting
33 with Francis.

34
35 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair. This is
36 Francis, and I just want to comment on this proposal. I
37 think it's a pretty good idea, but I think that the
38 drawdown should be limited maybe to at least 100 to
39 start off, I think. Because throughout our Lower Yukon,
40 there's a total of at least 161 households in Kotlik and
41 an estimate total of 206 households in Emmonak and at
42 least a total of 144 Alakanuk. And a few times those
43 numbers by two, in which that was our previous limit to
44 catch two moose per household. And then after last year's
45 changes to times three, you know, that estimate total
46 became for Kotlik is -- for this times two is 322 moose
47 and for Emmonak would be 412 and Alakanuk would be at
48 least 280. Just want to give us perspective of the limit
49 of household catches per limit, you know.
50

1 MS. ROGERS: Madame Chair

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Brooke and then
4 Alissa.

5

6 MS. MCDAVID: So, Francis, you're
7 suggesting instead of 120 permits that you would change
8 that to 100 draw permits?

9

10 MR. PRINCE: Correct.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

13

14 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
15 Through the Chair. Alissa Rogers, for the record. I don't
16 feel comfortable with this proposal, and I'll state the
17 reasons why in justification that we -- our moose on the
18 Lower Yukon are -- instead of -- they're herding like
19 in a herd. There's so many moose that my suggestion
20 would -- to lift the limits on moose because what's
21 happening is they're eating themselves out of home and
22 location and they're going to get diseases. What I'm
23 worried about is that if we don't contain the population
24 growth or ability to slow down the population growth,
25 what's going to happen is that we're going to crash and
26 we might have to start a new moratorium all over again.
27 So, I am more lenient towards having as many hunters go
28 to the Lower Yukon and try to get the population down.
29 I also am proposing that we put in a proposal to lift
30 the restrictions of three moose and just make it
31 unlimited. People will get what they need, they'll fill
32 their freezers and they won't overharvest. We've been
33 hearing it from time immemorial, people get what they
34 need and they don't overharvest. I have faith in my
35 people. Thank you, Madam Chair.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
38 Alissa. Let me just let you know that this proposal in
39 particular is for non-residents, but what you just said
40 can also be brought up to our proposal ideas later on,
41 either today or tomorrow. And then -- yeah, so thank
42 you. And it's noted and maybe when we look at proposal
43 ideas, let's bring it back up and yeah, so we could do
44 one for residents or your idea if you want. But you have
45 time to think about it until we, you know, get to that
46 part of the agenda. So, Wassily, you had a question or
47 comment?

48

49 MR. ALEXIE: Yes, Madam Chair. This
50 Wassily Alexie. From this proposal, it looks okay to me,

1 you know, I'm from the Lower Yukon. And I think we need
2 to come up with something that's going to limit these
3 non-resident hunters that come from out states. Kotlik
4 is becoming a competition between subsistence hunters
5 and non-resident hunters. They're getting more and more
6 -- they're even bringing their own boats that come from
7 out states. We had four of them this summer that were
8 up around our area. And those are not little boats like
9 what we have. These are big boats. They have two 300
10 horsepower motors on them boats, and they're going out,
11 and, you know, we have corporation lands and they try
12 to keep them out of those lands, but they don't respect
13 that. We had a couple families that went out berry
14 picking, and there were some non-resident moose hunters
15 there. And they told that family, what are you guys
16 doing here? We're hunting out here. So, something needs
17 to -- we need to do something about that. Either cut the
18 time of the non-resident hunters down. Not having them
19 come out, like be open the whole month, maybe 2 or 3
20 weeks or something like that. Anyway, that was my
21 comment. Thank you.

22

23 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Wassily.
26 And Alissa.

27

28 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair, through the
29 Chair. Alissa Rogers, for the record. I am in total
30 agreement with that. Maybe we can also add to a proposal
31 that residents have first dibs for the first part of the
32 month, and then non-residents can come in at the --
33 towards the end of the month. I think that would be a
34 good compromise for management and also to have
35 management tool in the back pocket to make that as an
36 emergency order if they need to. Thank you, Madam Chair.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
39 Alissa. And that's noted as well for ideas later. And
40 Frederick Beans.

41

42 MR. BEANS: For the record, Frederick
43 Beans. You know, I'm all for what Alissa just said with
44 having a resident first dibs, but it needs to be all
45 throughout the month. And then the second month would
46 be for outside hunters. You know, that would be a good
47 idea. And also on this map here between the green line
48 and the red line, I think that that portion right there
49 should be included within the -- with the green and red
50 line area. So that -- I'm sure people -- I'm sure

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1 headhunters go into that area too where -- you'll see
2 headhunters in that area where it's not where there's
3 no boundaries right there. So yeah, that's my thoughts
4 there too. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
7 Frederick. And then Brooke, you're next.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the
10 Chair. This is Brooke. Fred, I just -- I wanted to point
11 out a little bit more about the map. So, each of these
12 different colored areas are the different zones that
13 he's proposing. That would just be, like we said, like
14 eight hunters from non-resident at a time. I heard you
15 say they're also going outside of the boundaries of these
16 lines. I think his idea was to at least try to reduce
17 the conflict along the rivers where most local people
18 would be hunting during that time. So that's good
19 feedback though to share with him, but I just wanted to
20 explain a little bit more his thinking. Thank you.

21
22 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick.

25
26 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here. You
27 know the boundary south of the yellow -- I'm sorry, the
28 area south of the green line, you know, there are people
29 -- there are float planes landing in that area. So, I
30 believe maybe we need to extend that yellow green line
31 to you know, further south. You know, just beyond
32 Kusilvak, wherever Kusilvak is, you know. That -- there
33 is a -- there by Kusilvak there is the Black River and
34 it's accessible by boat. So, I think that should be
35 included along, you know, with the, you know, with that
36 green line. Thank you.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the
39 Chair. So, Fred, just to clarify, I want to make sure
40 we're getting the right comments back to Mr. Coplin.
41 You're suggesting the green area that -- we'll call it
42 zone one, maybe that it should also encompass the Black
43 River in Kusilvak area. So that -- because people can
44 vote in that area as well.

45
46 MR. BEANS: If they are -- it is
47 accessible -- Madam Chairman, Frederick Beans here. It
48 is accessible by the coastal villages, you know, that
49 are in Unit 18, Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay. So,
50 they go in that area to go hunting. So, I believe they

1 should --it should be included for, you know, for their
2 sake. Along with the (In Native) too. So, okay. Thank
3 you.

4
5 MS. AGAYAR: I don't believe it should -
6 - Tiffany here. I don't believe it should be extended.
7 I should -- I believe it should be another area on its
8 own, because that's a lot of mileage going on through
9 that area. And a lot of people do hunt in that -- on the
10 south side of that -- part of the (In Native).

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. So,
13 you're suggesting maybe add a sixth zone instead of just
14 the five? And could I ask Mr. Beans if you feel like
15 that would be an alternative that would work for you?

16
17 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans
18 here. Yes, I believe I'm in another zone because that
19 green zone, it looks pretty big, to you know, for the
20 troopers -- or Fish and Wildlife troopers to you know,
21 patrol and, and a question is with this -- with these
22 zones would there be an increase in fish and wildlife
23 protection agencies, you know, monitoring the area?

24
25 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
26 Brooke. To your last point, would there be an increase
27 in monitoring? I don't think this would come with, you
28 know, getting to hire additional troopers.
29 Unfortunately, we do hear all the time about how it
30 would be nice to have more enforcement presence. I know
31 they have been making an effort to get out more,
32 especially as the moose hunting has ramped up in the
33 Delta. But I think probably not necessarily to answer
34 your question.

35
36 MR. BEANS: All right. Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.
39 Francis.

40
41 MR. PRINCE: This is Francis. I just have
42 a question. Here are 22A residents considered resident
43 or non-residents?

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I'm sorry.
46 Do you mean folks -- so folks that live in 22A, are they
47 considered residents of Alaska or for the purposes of
48 hunting in this unit?

49
50

1 MR. PRINCE: For the purpose of hunting
2 in this unit, because I see in Unit 22A they allow that
3 residents of Unit 18 to allow them to go hunt caribou
4 in their area. And I think it would be pretty nice to
5 add the 22A to come hunt down in the Unit 18 because
6 they have a lot of issues dealing with their drainages,
7 you know, because a lot of the moose hang out around the
8 lakes, around the water areas and not up in the
9 highlands, and it's harder for them to go out moose
10 hunting. It's harder for them to collect their moose.
11 And I've been seeing on social media that residents in
12 Unalakleet and around that area, they are having issues
13 catching their harvest for moose hunting. And it's been
14 an issue for them for how many years?

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
17 Brooke. So, Francis, I know -- it looks like you're
18 looking in the federal reg book. I just, I can answer
19 your question, but I do want to point out this proposal
20 that we're talking about in the Board of Game proposals
21 are for the state hunt. And that's going to be in --
22 this is where we get to the confusing regulations. But
23 back to your question about the -- our people in 22 able
24 to hunt moose in Unit 18. If you look on page 90, under
25 the Unit 18 regs, you'll see under moose this first
26 column describes the customary and traditional use
27 determinations. And in the second bullet, you'll see
28 Unit 18, that portion north of a line from Cape Romanzof
29 to Kusilvak Mountains, mountain villages. All the areas
30 north of the Yukon, downstream from Marshall. The folks
31 who have a C&T are residents of Unit 18, Saint Michael
32 Stebbins, which I believe those are in Unit 22, which
33 was your question about if they were eligible. So, I
34 think they're covered, but that's just for the C&T for
35 the federal hunt. But there's so many moose right now,
36 the -- it's under the state registration permit and all
37 Alaska residents are eligible to hunt under the state
38 regs. So, it's not really done village by village in the
39 state system.

40
41 MR. PRINCE: Thank you, Brooke.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again. I
44 did have a question going back to the map. Because
45 Frederick had included Nunam Iqua to be in his first
46 recommendation. He included Nunam to be part of the
47 green. But then we decided maybe -- or we didn't decide,
48 but we said maybe a whole separate zone for Black River
49 area. What about Nunam? Would that go in that new
50 section, or would it -- is that how you see it, Tiffany?

1 So Nunam would be included in the Black River new zone
2 if there were to be a new zone. Yeah? Okay.

3
4 MS. AGAYAR: I have a comment. Tiffany
5 here. Even though it kind of at first glance sounds like
6 a lot of permits for out of state people, it would
7 actually lower the number of sport hunters coming out
8 to my area, because there has been a very big increase
9 of people coming from out of state to hunt and catch
10 their moose. And a lot of times they don't take the
11 whole moose, they just take certain pieces. And then if
12 they have a local unofficial guide, they often -- the
13 guide person often helps them give the moose meat to
14 families in need or families that don't have any means
15 of transportation to be able to fill their freezers. I'm
16 not too sure exactly how it'll work, but it's -- there's
17 a lot of moose in my area now. But then it's a very
18 contemplative situation right now.

19
20 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the
21 Chair. This is Brooke. Those are good comments, Tiffany.
22 Thank you. I'll note them down for Mr. Coplin. And I
23 think you're right. It's a tricky situation because
24 there's so many moose. They do need to be hunted. But
25 there are some conflicts too that could be perhaps dealt
26 with through some of these proposals. So, I think this
27 is one way that Mr. Coplin is trying to go about dealing
28 with some of that. And then the Council can also discuss
29 other proposal ideas, but if anyone else has additional
30 comments.

31
32 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
33 Wassily.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON: Wassily, (In Native).

36
37 MR. ALEXIE: I just have a comment. Would
38 it be possible, like I remember when we used to -- before
39 we get a lot of moose out there, we used to go up to
40 Paimiut and Fish and Game had a cabin up there. And when
41 we -- if we catch a moose up there, we have to stop by
42 to check in with Fish and Game and report what we caught.
43 Would it be possible for the non-resident hunters to do
44 the same, check in with Fish and Game when before they
45 shipped their meat or go back out states just to report
46 what they got and make sure they take their meat with
47 them? Cause around the area -- our area one person said
48 he flew out with another airline just to go check after
49 moose season was closed, and they said they counted 32
50 moose that was left in their camping area. So that's --

1 something's got to be done about that. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I'm surprised.
4 There's not a checkpoint for them if there's not -- and
5 Tiffany has another question.

6

7 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. Through -- I
8 had a question because the last time I went upriver, we
9 went right below Paimiut and we went to go check that
10 Fish and Game camp just to go say hi. But it was empty.
11 Would there end up needing to be -- if that plan does
12 happen, would there end up needing to be more funding
13 available for that to be possible for them to be able
14 to go in and check in with the Fish and Game? And there's
15 no Fish and Game office or camp in each of these -- each
16 and every one of these zones. How would that be possible
17 to be able to go through the monitoring of that
18 situation? And it's -- I don't know, it's gotten me very
19 confused, even though it sounds like a nice simple
20 request.

21

22 MS. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
23 Wassily. I think the way they can do it, using all their
24 non-resident hunters come through the hubs there.
25 Bethel, Aniak, Saint Mary's maybe Emmo. If they can check
26 in with the local Fish and Game departments there and I
27 think that would be the way to do it.

28

29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And if tribes
30 have, or if a community has a RIT, that might be, I
31 don't know. But RITs they can't really be enforcing --
32 they're not enforcement positions. But what was my other
33 idea? Anyway, while I'm trying to remember Frederick,
34 you had something, right?

35

36 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here.
37 Mountain Village. Yeah, I'm all for the moose checking,
38 but we've got just the vastness of the whole Lower Yukon.
39 I don't know how that can be -- that would be achieved.
40 So, they might need to be a checkpoint in each of the
41 villages there, so. And then yeah, I'm -- if this ever
42 passes, I think we need to put it into like a five-year
43 study or something like that, you know, just to see what
44 transpired throughout that time. Yeah. Similar to the
45 moose moratorium we had back in the 1980s. And that one
46 -- I believe that's the reason we have so much is because
47 of the moose moratorium we had back in the Lower Yukon,
48 you know, Mountain Village on down. So anyway, yeah, I
49 have no idea how they'll -- you know to have a checkpoint
50 by the way. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Frederick. Yeah. So, I'm wondering if this can be a proposal or does it go through another process if we were to ask for something like this from the from Fish and Game to start doing -- or perhaps maybe collaboration with tribes like through their Natural Resource Department, if there are was my other idea before. But Liz or anyone over there, would you guys happen to have feedback on that part? Like what process would we use if we wanted to ask for checkpoints within these zones for moose hunting season? Thanks.

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is Brooke. We have folks from our Wildlife Division that are online. If I don't know if Lisa Grediagin or Tom Plank knows the best course of action or if it's possible for the Council to submit Board of Game proposals asking for moose checkpoint requirements. Thanks.

(No response)

This is Brooke again, and we can always circle back you know, after lunch or something if we need to.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Madam Chair. Are you able to hear me?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Loud and clear. Thanks.

MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin. It always takes a while to find the mute button. Yeah. And I'm sorry, I have -- I'm not aware of whether it -- establishing a moose check station would be within the scope of the Board of Game. I've never seen that as a - - in a proposal and I'm not for sure how those are established. Or if there's anyone from ADF&G available that would better be able to speak to that. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thank you. I just had another brain fog. I was going to say something. One second. Oh, one guess, I guess, was, could it possibly -- I mean, I'm guessing maybe one of the avenues could be through the Department of Natural Resources or writing a letter directly to the Commissioner. Just some other thoughts. Is there anyone else? Francis first and then we have two more on the side. Okay. Francis.

1

2 MR. PRINCE: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
3 have a -- kind of an idea for this drawdown proposal,
4 you know. Regarding this drawdown, I think it would be
5 nice, you know, if they want to apply for these drawdown
6 permits if the Fish and Game or, you know, whoever's
7 doing these drawdown permits to question these non-
8 residents, you know, on the permit that will they be
9 donating the meat to a local or will they be taking the
10 meat with them? That way, you know, they can conserve
11 with the wanton waste situation. And if they're going
12 to be giving it to a local, you know, it would be nice
13 if that permit holder would get the signatures -- the
14 signature of a local resident or a tribal member, tribal
15 administrator from the community. I think that would be
16 a kind of a pretty good idea. That way we won't be seeing
17 so much wanton waste. You know, when they're flying out
18 the villages and coming here to the hub, and when they
19 bump into a law enforcement, that law enforcement could
20 look at that permit and they could look at that question
21 as well, and they could see if they got the signature
22 of a local as well, if they gave the meat to the local.
23 Just an idea for the permit.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Great idea,
26 Francis and you also reminded me of, you know, hearing
27 other concerns in the past about when the meat is given,
28 not just in in the Yukon area, but other parts of the
29 state when the meat is given to locals sometimes by the
30 sport hunters, that it's not quality anymore or it's
31 gone bad or something. So maybe something in there with
32 quality control too can be agreed upon to -- if they're
33 going to make sure it's still quality. If they're going
34 to give it out to locals or eat it themselves. Okay,
35 over here, we'll go to John.

36

37 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. Quyana.

38

39 INTERPRETER: Thank you. This is John
40 speaking Yup'ik. I've been listening to the Yukon
41 villages here. And this is not the only problem to come
42 to the Yukon villages. I know in my area it's not in the
43 Yukon, but in the Kuskokwim, we do see a lot of flying
44 hunters. They come in here to our area with the raft
45 hunters coming to our area.

46

47 MR. ANDREW: They only bring in the
48 antler and the head, and he leaves the whole moose
49 behind. Happens over and over all these years. (In
50 Native).

1

2 INTERPRETER: I know that hunters that
3 go up to the mountains. They do see these headhunters
4 coming down from our mountains, and I know that they
5 have seen them in the -- they see carcasses of moose and
6 caribou laying on the gravel, and the only head that --
7 only the head is harvested on these and they just leave
8 the rest of -- and they've seen rafters coming down with
9 antlers just in their rafts. And so, they tell them
10 that, you know, where they caught their moose and they
11 can go harvest that carcass if they wanted to, but.....

12

13 MR. ANDREW: (In Native). And make it
14 mandatory to give away the meat to the nearest village.
15 Should work, they do some (In Native).

16

17 INTERPRETER: Now and then, we run into
18 people that are hunting, and we tell them that they can
19 take the meat and give them to the nearest village that
20 they come into, that the villagers will be happy to get
21 them -- get that from them. Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Frederick, were
24 you -- did you -- okay. And then now we can go to.....

25

26 MS. AGAYAR: I have a comment for him.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: After Tiffany's
29 comment, we have a public comment. After that.

30

31 MS. AGAYAR: I'd like to add in a comment
32 to what John said. This is Tiffany and a lot of times
33 too, they leave the good parts, the kidney, liver and
34 all the innards. And people do eat those and they crave
35 them too. And they question them, wondering why they
36 leave the best part behind.

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good detail.
39 Yes. Yeah. Our people eat a lot of the insides, like the
40 tongue and the tripe and even hoofs and nose and yeah.
41 So, before I say my stuff, I wanted to go online. And
42 then I guess Stanislaus was first and then we'll go to
43 Pat. So, Stanislaus (In Native)

44

45 MR. SHEPPARD: Quyana Madam Chair. This
46 is Stanislaus Sheppard. Mountain Village. I'll be
47 speaking on behalf of myself, not as a RIT. Everybody
48 brought up good points. Two years ago, I brought up the
49 issue of check station down in 30-mile. Majority of the
50 sports hunters are congregated down in that area. And

1 as I took Mr. Reynolds out, enforcement officer for Fish
2 and Wildlife this past summer, I showed them the routes
3 to take and we passed, I don't know how many sports
4 hunters camps that were already tents were already torn
5 down. There's like gas tanks left behind. And, you know,
6 we didn't stop, I -- because of his -- so kind, I just
7 showed him the route and went back to some kind of
8 monitoring. When the moose moratorium was introduced in
9 the late 80s, early 90s, a year after that, Russian
10 Mission to Kotlik over to Chevak and Hooper total of 13
11 villages. There was a moose, Lower Yukon Moose
12 Management Committee formed. I sat on there as a Chair
13 and with the reports from Department of Fish and Game.
14 They -- elders were telling us there was a lot of
15 opposition on that moratorium and with no choice after
16 the third -- on the third year of our meeting, elder
17 starting to speak up in order for us to grow the moose,
18 we need to hunt a little bit at a time till the
19 moratorium is over. So, with the advice of the elders,
20 on the fourth year, we had a -- opening a five-day hunt,
21 locals only. Before that, we asked the Fish and Game if
22 the bull to cow ratio is 50 to 100 cows, then we can
23 have a five-day hunt. And it was in that range so we had
24 the lower villages, including mountain, have a five day
25 hunt the following year. On the fifth year we had a ten-
26 day hunt. And then after that, every aerial survey that
27 was being done, whether it be it in the fall or, you
28 know, majority time was in the springtime when the cows
29 were calving. They reported that every cow they seen
30 calving down here in the Lower Yukon, every one of them
31 was twinning, not like upriver. So it -- listening to
32 elders is a positive, and for the past three years, I've
33 seen it here in Mountain Village landfill. I hear reports
34 from Saint Mary's, Pilot Station, Marshall, even Russian
35 Mission. Meat that was given out to locals was spoiled.
36 Not edible. So, they end up discarding it there. There
37 needs to be more enforcement on the way cause sports
38 hunters are coming out here and pushing us locals out
39 of the way just so they could get their trophy. And it
40 would be good to start up that moose management committee
41 again. Thank you very much.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana,
44 Stanislaus. Pat, (In Native). Yeah.

45
46 MR. SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Chair, for
47 allowing me to do a public comment on this issue. Sorry.
48 I want to address three areas. First, for the Kuskokwim
49 River people. What the Yukon River is going through is
50 going to happen in the Kuskokwim River. (In Native).

1

2 So with that the Yukon River is
3 experiencing conflicts between the sports hunters and
4 the landowners, the corporation owners, the village
5 people that -- those issues are going to be the same on
6 the Kuskokwim River, because we just went through a
7 moratorium and there's a Moose population that is
8 growing significantly. So, we need to work with the Yukon
9 villages, or else we need to see what they are doing and
10 implement the same thing that they will do, or because
11 it's the same problem that we're going to be having to
12 address. Thank you. Sorry. That's my first point. The
13 second one that I wanted to do was I know with the
14 government shutdown, there was a hiring freeze. And so,
15 I do not know if that hiring freeze is still in effect
16 or not, but that affects the ability for the agencies
17 to put checkpoints or even all that stuff. So, somebody
18 from the feds can probably answer that. That's my
19 question. And also, the state game wardens. Is there
20 also a hiring freeze that would prevent them from
21 establishing these checkpoints?

22

23 And so that's my question. The third
24 point that I want to bring up is because the lack of
25 oversight or not, the lack of oversight, the lack of
26 personnel to do oversight by either federal or state
27 agencies is really thin. And so, the local villages, the
28 local villagers, Councils should be able to somehow come
29 up with a plan to do checkpoints, or we -- the villagers,
30 can check through video and photos and whatnot to make
31 sure that out-of-state hunters are taking everything out
32 of the field. But the question that arises is, how do
33 we avoid the conflict between the village council -- or
34 between the villages and the headhunters? Because we do
35 -- that's the last thing that we need. We don't need
36 conflict at all. Period. And so how do we figure that
37 out? And just to reiterate Kuskokwim River, people will
38 be experiencing the same problem that the Yukon area is
39 experiencing. And then those other two three points
40 speak for themselves. Thank you, Madam Chair, for
41 letting me do a public comment.

42

43 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Through the
44 Chair. This is Brooke. Okay. I wanted to bring up a
45 couple of things in response to this discussion. As far
46 as check points go, it's probably not something that the
47 Board of Game would have authority over. It would
48 probably be more of a budget consideration if Fish and
49 Game had the funding to implement checkpoints. We are -
50 - one of our council members is going to see if someone

1 from Fish and Game could swing by this afternoon to help
2 answer some of these questions for the state side in
3 better detail.

4
5 I believe, at least on the federal side,
6 there are some exemptions to the hiring freeze for law
7 enforcement and other public safety type of positions
8 in regards to that point. I also wanted to bring up --
9 we'll let you guys know that the other two Councils on
10 the Yukon River have discussed some of these same issues
11 at their meetings this month. I also coordinate the
12 Eastern Interior Council that's in the upper River. And
13 my colleague Nissa, she coordinates Western Interior in
14 the middle River region and the Koyukuk region. Both of
15 those Councils are writing letters to Fish and Game and
16 I believe the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and
17 to the refuges in their regions. I'm not very familiar
18 with how Big Game Commercial Services Board -- what their
19 requirements for transporters are. That's what they call
20 the air taxis that drop off hunters. But there is some
21 sort of permitting that goes on through the refuge. And
22 potential additional requirements could be added through
23 that system, but I'm not the best person to speak to
24 that. But that's -- the Western Interior and Eastern
25 Interior were basically kind of asking the refuges and
26 their regions when these transporters are dropping
27 people off, we need more accountability to ensure that
28 meat is actually coming out of the field and not just
29 coming out, but like you said, in good quality. And if
30 not, there needs to be some sort of action that comes
31 of that, whether that's for that hunter that didn't take
32 care of their meat. But they also were concerned about
33 sometimes hunters are getting dropped off that don't
34 have experience in the Alaska Wildrness or backcountry,
35 and they require sometimes like search and rescue. And
36 that adds pressure and funds, you know, from local search
37 and rescue groups that are having to take, you know,
38 oversee these people who aren't prepared for these
39 conditions. I just wanted to make you guys aware of that
40 letter. We might be able to get some feedback from your
41 local refuge. I don't want to put them on the spot right
42 now, but about sort of some of those requirements for
43 transporters in the Yukon Delta Refuge, if Laurie wants
44 to come up, that'd be great. Thanks.

45
46 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
47 Brooke. And thank you, Laurie.

48
49 MS. BOECK: Laurie Boeck through the
50 Chair. So, we do issue permits, special use permits for

1 transporters on the refuge. The permits themselves only
2 discuss the transporter themselves, like, not who
3 they're transporting, but they do have to provide us
4 with locations of where they plan to land, and we try
5 to offset them. So, they aren't competing with folks
6 that are hunting off the river, you know, so they drop
7 them off kind of in more remote areas. And our
8 subsistence specialist, as well as the refuge manager,
9 go through the locations and deny some areas where they
10 actually are able to hunt. And so as far as the state
11 of Alaska, they also have transporter permits that
12 they're supposed to get. There is a fee you have to pay.
13 It's like a business license in order to do that
14 professionally. And that's by boat or by plane. And so,
15 you know, they're doubly covered, but there's really no
16 onus on the transporter themselves to make sure that the
17 meat is coming out in a condition, you know, that would
18 be the hunter themselves. And so, there are some areas
19 in the state of Alaska, they have education requirements
20 that you have to take a class to hunt in some areas that
21 talk about field care of game. And so, you know, that's
22 a potential that you can make that a requirement for
23 your area. So, there are different avenues to try to put
24 more of the responsibility on the hunters. And just so
25 you know, in regulation too with the state of Alaska,
26 they are -- the meat is supposed to come out in a
27 condition that's preserved. So, it has to be, you know,
28 14 days. It has to come out in like a consumable way.
29 But once -- and that's only to get it out of the field.
30 Once it's out of the field, there's no requirement, so.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Laurie. And (In Native). Okay. Frederick.

34
35 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans. Mountain
36 Village. Ma'am, in order to get a transporter permit do
37 we need to have a hunting license and a harvest ticket?

38
39 MS. BOECK: Through the Chair. No, not
40 to be a transporter, unless you're actually
41 participating in the activity itself. But, you know,
42 most of the transporters are just dropping people off
43 in the field and then picking them up.

44
45 MR. BEANS: All right. Thank you.

46
47 MS. AGAYAR: I have a question. It's
48 about -- Tiffany here. It's about floatplanes. There was
49 one year I went -- my family and I went to go moose
50 hunting between Marshall and Russian Mission, and we got

1 there and our family got their moose within five days.
2 We got there right before a group of hunters came with
3 a floatplane, and my cousins from Marshall said that
4 after that floatplane got there, all the moose got scared
5 and scattered. Is there any way that those could be more
6 regulated than they already are because they -- the
7 planes do go low and scare away a lot of moose that
8 other hunters would be looking for, that knew where they
9 were, waiting for the right time to catch them.

10

11 MS. BOECK: Through the Chair, Laurie
12 Beck again. So, there are regulations. One of the things
13 I should point out too, is we only permit people that
14 are actually transporting. Private individuals with
15 airplanes can land wherever they want. That's -- there's
16 no restriction on that. So, they could have been private
17 folks. But there is -- in the state regulations about
18 harassing game and so, you know, that includes with
19 planes. And so that would fall under harassment. So, if
20 you notice somebody doing that, you know, you can report
21 to the troopers with a tail number. Description of the
22 plane, something like that just to point out that they're
23 scaring off moose. But the more information you can
24 provide to enforcement, the better.

25

26 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks. I'll say
29 my part. So being from Quinhagak, we also deal with not
30 a lot of sport hunters, but a lot of sport fishermen are
31 and women. And often times it feels like the wild West
32 or free for all area when it comes to that. And we notice
33 a lot more things happening, like trespassing on corp
34 or allotment lands to get to the, you know, our growing
35 population of pike in the oxbows and the creek systems.
36 So, we're noticing a lot more trespassing since the pike
37 are increasing because they like to walk back into the
38 calmer waters. We're noticing a lot more trash after --
39 either rec users have been camping on certain gravel
40 bars and then not just trying to pick on the sport
41 people, but, you know, we all, you know, there's also
42 locals I'm sure who litter too, but the stuff that we
43 found was right after people have been camping on these
44 gravel bars. Anyway, my point is I liked what you said,
45 Laurie, about the hunter -- I think that was you. Hunter
46 education. And I think that's that would be very
47 beneficial to address these issues of like lack of
48 stewardship on our lands and waters and maybe even
49 pointing out the human aspect along these rivers that,
50 you know, we depend on these waters, these lands, the

1 animals and fish that come out of them and make that
2 like a video that they have to watch before they come
3 and sport hunt or sport fish. And so, I'm all about the
4 hunter education, and so one way that our -- through my
5 work with Alaska Venture Fund, we have an idea of
6 producing a video that addresses like the Leave No Trace
7 initiative for instance, and the stewardship and the
8 human aspect of the resource. And, you know, if other
9 parks under the state and federal lands, sometimes you
10 have to watch it like a little video before you enter a
11 park or so, making it like that is how -- what we have
12 in mind and still waiting on how to find the funds for
13 that. So just an idea. I mean, it would be -- if other
14 parks do it in the Lower 48, why not make it mandatory
15 for them to watch a video on education, and maybe how
16 to conduct yourselves when near these communities, or
17 when hunting or fishing here. Frederick and then
18 Wassily.

19
20 MR. BEANS: In that one you suggest, the
21 hunters video. You know, hunter education, I think one
22 of them would need be that they mandatorily need to
23 bring back their garbage because one time my wife and I
24 were out hunting Mountain Village and it started raining
25 upon us so we decided to go to one of the camps, and one
26 of the big game hunter camp that one of the guides have
27 in at that camp there was garbage all over the place. I
28 think they need to bring back their garbage once they're
29 you know, done hunting. That's my thoughts there.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily.

32
33 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Madam Chair.
34 Wassily Alexie. I got a comment about taking the meat
35 out from the camps. Is there anything that says, like,
36 they have so much time to take the meat out of the field,
37 or can we put something in there, like give them a day
38 or two to get the meat out of the campsite? Maybe we can
39 put a time limit on there so that their meat. You know
40 us -- we -- when we catch moose, we cut it up and bring
41 it home right there. We don't leave it out there. We
42 take everything home. So maybe that would be something
43 to look into. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. And yeah,
46 you just reminded me of something else, Wassily. And
47 like, we have a lot of floaters that come through our
48 river. And when we did have caribou season, you know,
49 it would open August 1st and it's still very warm in
50 August. So, some of these hunters -- and most of the

1 caribou are in the mountains and near the lake, and not
2 as much at the coast if you're floating down the river.
3 And so, you know, we'd run into instances where they
4 caught their caribou at the lake, but they have ten days
5 that they're going to float. So maybe there could be
6 some kind of timing strategy to where, you know only on
7 your last day or two or something, if you're going to
8 do a float or just maybe not -- I don't know, but I
9 think that's a big waste when floaters keep their game
10 in the boat for the rest of their float if there's a lot
11 of time after, if that makes sense. Pat.

12
13 MR. SAMSON: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.
14 Hunter education is a good idea because the out-of-state
15 hunters, the biggest thing that they hunt probably down
16 in the States are elk. And elk are like around 500
17 pounds, 400 pounds to about 8-900 pounds, and they stand
18 about five feet tall. The Alaskan moose six, seven feet
19 at the shoulder and they weigh 12-, 15-, almost 2,000
20 pounds. And so, the hunters that come here do not realize
21 how big the moose are, and they just think they can just
22 throw them over at the shoulder and take them out of
23 camp. So that hunter education is a real must to let
24 them understand the sheer size of the moose. Thank you,
25 Madam Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good idea, Pat
28 Quyana. And then Brooke.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
31 just remembered at the last Board of Game meeting. Let
32 me check my messages here. Make sure I don't misspeak.
33 So, on the screen here at the last Board of Game meeting,
34 actually one of the council members on my other Council
35 had put in a proposal through his AC to require this
36 online hunt hunter orientation for moose hunters from
37 out of state. They have to take this quiz and get a
38 little certificate before they hunt. I haven't gone
39 through to look at all of the questions, but they are
40 suggested they need to watch before they take this quiz
41 about the field care of big game meat. And there's videos
42 that Fish and Game has produced and is this moose legal.
43 So, knowing, you know about any antler restrictions or
44 requirements, probably something about the difference
45 between cows and calves and stuff like that. And then
46 Laurie mentioned that it does include some Leave No Trace
47 stuff as well. So, part of me is wondering in some
48 instances, maybe even when you put these certain
49 requirements on, or you try to do a little more education
50 and outreach. It doesn't always prevent all of these things

1 from happening. Thank you.

2

3 And then I'm -- okay. There was a
4 question about like timing and making sure to get the
5 meat out of the field quickly so that it's -- doesn't
6 go bad. I know in some cases when this has been discussed
7 in other meetings I've been at, there's always hesitancy
8 to put some sort of real like requirement on that because
9 as you all know, things can change quickly when you're
10 in the field as far as weather, things like that. People
11 could get stuck for a while. There are things that could
12 be beyond their control. So, but there's a note here
13 that the meat is supposed to be good for 15 days. So
14 processed for human consumption means prepared for
15 immediate consumption or prepared in such a manner and
16 existing in a state of preservation to be hit -- fit for
17 human consumption after a 15-day period.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
20 Brooke. Pat.

21

22 MR. SAMSON: Thank you, Madam Chair.
23 Thank you for bearing with me. In this area of Johnson
24 River, first part of August moose hunting opens up there,
25 and I really want to go up there and hunt moose. And
26 because they're fat and their velvet hasn't taken up.
27 But I don't go hunt because it's too warm. Because if I
28 shoot a moose down, upriver, up in that Johnson area,
29 it takes me about a day to come back to Bethel. And
30 during that transit, it's too warm, my meat will spoil
31 so I don't go hunting even though I want to. And so,
32 some people suggested that outside hunters should wait
33 until the end of the season when it's colder out there
34 so the cold can help refrigerate or keep the meat from
35 spoiling instead of doing it at the start of the season.
36 Thank you.

37

38 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
39 This is Brooke. We've heard a lot of good discussion and
40 ideas for proposals potentially to Board of Game. I might
41 offer a suggestion that could potentially break for
42 lunch, and then when we come back, we could kind of step
43 through those ideas that have been brought up and decide,
44 okay, do we want to submit a proposal about this and
45 have a couple other holdovers from the last meeting to
46 that I noted down that were brought up. So that might
47 be a suggestion to consider. Thanks.

48

49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Does that sound
50 okay to you guys? Take a lunch break first, come back to

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1 this?

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UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Okay.

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MR. BEANS: I shall move, Madam Chair.
8 This is Fredrick.

9

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11

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana,
Fredrick. But did you have something to say before, or
do you want to wait till we come back?

12

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14

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick. No,
I'll wait till after lunch.

15

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Quyana.
So, like yesterday, we'll go for an hour and a half, if
that's okay. So 2:00, we'll come back. Or hopefully,
like maybe five minutes to 2. So, we could really start
at 2.

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MS. MCDAVID: All right. Thank you. You
guys heard our Chair try to be back before two so we can
start on time. Thank you.

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(Off record)

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good afternoon,
everyone. It's 2:11, so we can get started. On the agenda
we left off at f: Call for Alaska Board of Game
Proposals. And under f, we are going to be under these
considered developing proposals. And we kind of started
talking about it before lunch. And does everyone have
this? Okay, so we'll start with this sheet. Board of
Game proposal ideas from fall '25 meeting. But it was
actually January '26 when we met and decided when we
came up with these. So yeah, just give a minute and read
through those and we'll be back. Brooke.

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MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. If
it sounds good to the Council, maybe we could move
through them one by one? Okay, so we'll start with the
first one. So, in the federal wildlife cycle, this
Council submitted a proposal to increase the wolf
hunting harvest limit from 10 wolves to 15 wolves. And
at your last meeting, you voted to support that. And the
Board, the Federal Subsistence Board, will be taking

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1 final action on that at their meeting next month. So,
2 this would be an opportunity if you wanted to submit the
3 proposal to Board of Game to mirror that in state
4 regulations so the harvest limit would also potentially
5 be the same. So, you could submit a proposal to the
6 Board of Game to increase the Unit 18 wolf hunting
7 harvest limit to 15.

8
9 Yeah. So next month you'll know the
10 final -- this is Brooke, the final decision by the
11 Federal Subsistence Board, but generally the Board
12 defers to the Council unless there's a conservation
13 reason or something else. So, we can't say what the
14 Board will do for final action, but we might anticipate
15 that it could pass since we haven't heard any wolf
16 conservation concerns for Unit 18. So, would you guys
17 like to see the same harvest limit on the state regs as
18 in the federal regs? That's the question to you.

19
20 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah.

21
22 MS. MCDAVID: All right. We heard a yes.
23 So, what we'll need to do for each of these, if you do
24 want to submit a proposal, we'll just need a motion. And
25 like I said, it's probably easiest to go through these
26 one by one. So, if someone would want to make that motion
27 for the first bullet.

28
29 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

32
33 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here. I'll
34 make that motion, but I do not know how to, you know,
35 say it. So how would you recommend I say it?

36
37 MS. MCDAVID: Fred, you could say, I make
38 a motion to submit a proposal to the Board of Game, and
39 then you could just read this first line here.

40
41 MR. BEANS: Okay. I'll make a motion to
42 submit the proposal to increase the -- in Unit 18 -- oh,
43 my name is Frederick Beans, Mountain Village. I make a
44 motion to increase the harvest to 15 wolf hunting to
45 increase it to 15 in Unit 18.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks,
48 Frederick. Frederick Beans moved to support a proposal
49 to increase Unit 18 wolf hunting harvest to 15. Is there
50 a second?

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MR. PRINCE: Francis.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. ROGERS: Second.

MR. PRINCE:I second.

MS. ROGERS: Alissa Rogers, for the record.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Francis went first. Francis seconds. All in favor of this proposal idea, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: And thank you all. This is Brooke. And I'll just -- I should have asked before we -- the final vote, but for justification on that proposal, I guess I would assume it would be the same justification that you used on the proposal you submitted to the Federal Board that it would provide more opportunity and there are not currently any conservation concerns for wolves. Is that correct? Okay. Thank you.

So, moving down the list here, the second bullet. Similar proposal, but for coyote. On the federal cycle, you submitted a proposal to increase the harvest limit to 4 with the similar justification to provide additional hunting opportunity and based on there are no conservation concerns.

MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Francis.

MR. PRINCE: I'd like to make a motion to increase Unit 18 coyote hunting harvest limit to 4.

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1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis Prince,
2 Jr.....

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4 (Simultaneous speech)

5
6 MS. ROGERS: Seconds.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND:moves to
9 increase the Unit 18 coyote hunting harvest limit to 4.
10 Seconded by Alissa Rogers. All in favor of the motion,
11 say aye.

12
13 IN UNISON: Aye.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed,
16 same sign.

17
18 (No response)

19
20 Motion carries to propose to the Board
21 of Game to increase Unit 18 coyote hunting harvest limit
22 to 4. Thanks.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair and
25 Council Members. All right. The next item on the list
26 was for the federal season, you all voted to start the
27 moose season earlier. To start on July 16th. This is
28 something that you could potentially do also in the state
29 regulations for that same area or any of the other areas
30 in the different zones and subunits in Unit 18. So, I'll
31 turn your attention in your state regulation book to
32 page 97. That's where the moose hunting regs are for
33 Unit 18. And for this one in particular, it's actually
34 on the next page, page 98, at the bottom of the moose
35 section. For 18 remainder it says, includes Lower Yukon
36 hunt area.

37
38 So, you'll see there on the side,
39 there's some little orange box that's in -- that has an
40 R in it, and then there's a green box that has an N in
41 it. The orange box, those are the resident Alaska hunting
42 seasons and the green box, those are the non-resident
43 seasons. So, this is kind of getting at what you were
44 talking about earlier about season dates. You'll note
45 here the resident season date for the three moose, it
46 starts on August 1st. So, you could potentially put in
47 a proposal to mirror the one that you put into the
48 Federal Subsistence Board to start that earlier in July,
49 if you wanted to provide additional opportunity for
50 resident hunters. You could also put in other proposals

1 if you wanted to, like you suggested, maybe start the
2 non-resident season later. So, kind of turn it back over
3 to you guys, for some discussion about those season
4 dates.

5
6 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
7 Wassily.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

10
11 MR. ALEXIE: I just had a question on
12 this extending the moose hunt opening in July. I know,
13 I think I was here in that meeting, we talked about just
14 making this for residents only. Maybe we should include
15 something on this, or would it be included on the federal
16 and subsistence?

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: I might, but let me -- this
19 is Brooke, ask you, Member Alexie, by residents, do you
20 mean anyone in the state, or do you mean local people
21 only?

22
23 MR. ALEXIE: The state -- Unit 18
24 residents only.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: On the federal side, I
27 might need assistance from our wildlife team if they're
28 listening. I don't know if it's limited to only folks
29 with C&T or not at the moment.

30
31 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman, I got
32 question. Is it Unit 18, this proposal comes from the
33 Yukon? Yukon or -- just the Yukon, not the Kuskokwim?
34 The Johnson usually opens on August 1st, for moose
35 hunting.

36
37 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, if I can
38 remember, I think it was just allowed only on the Yukon
39 because Kuskokwim still had the permitted applications,
40 I think, that they have to go through.

41
42 MS. AGAYAR: 18 remainder. Yeah.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. So, 18 remainder. It
45 includes the Lower Yukon, but it also includes some of
46 the coastal areas to north of the Kuskokwim. Let me see
47 in your -- oh, Lisa Grediagin is online. She has her
48 hand up. She can help out with that.

49
50

1 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. I was in a Wildlife
2 Division meeting, and we just ended and I was seeing
3 messages about joining or helping out with this meeting.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Lisa. There were
6 two questions. The first was for that federal hunt --
7 well, for the federal wildlife proposal that this
8 Council put in last cycle, WP26-45, someone asked if all
9 state residents can hunt starting July 16th or if that's
10 only residents of Unit 18, or those with C&T for moose?

11
12 MS. GREDIAGIN: I believe -- let me just
13 double check, but yeah, for the federal proposal, that
14 would just be for the federal qualified user with C&T
15 for moose in that Lower Yukon hunt area for the extension
16 of the moose season.

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Thank you, Lisa. But
19 Member Wassily, I would point out that's only for federal
20 lands where that hunt applies, so on Native corporation
21 land, etc., that wouldn't apply unless you also changed
22 it in the state season or attempted to change it in the
23 state season. Oh, and Phillip, your question about
24 remainder, I don't know the best map that we have. I
25 gave you this map.

26
27 MR. PETER: Yeah.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: I think this crosshatched
30 area is for the remainder of Unit 18.

31
32 (Pause)

33
34 Yes. That's correct. You can see there's
35 a little note there that says it's pointing to Unit 18
36 remainder in that red text, out there in the ocean right
37 below Hooper Bay and Chevak. So, all that area with the
38 crosshatch on this map that I passed out to you guys,
39 that's the area where if it passes at the Federal
40 Subsistence Board next month that the moose season would
41 start July 16th. And again, that's only on the federal
42 lands, not on state or corporation lands.

43
44 (Pause)

45
46 So, I guess since it mostly applies
47 remainder to Lower Yukon and some of the coastal folks,
48 do you guys have thoughts about that's putting in a
49 proposal to Board of Game if you wanted that to also
50 start earlier or any other ideas about the season dates

1 like we were talking about?

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(Pause)

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(No response)

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Not that I'm disagreeing, but just wondering, is the reason why I guess we don't hunt big game in general in July, is it because of the calving and is there anyone in this room who can answer that?

So, in July. Okay, yeah. In July, is the reason why we don't generally hunt big game is because their calves are still -- or would there be a concern of July? And if so, can we hear it? And again, not that I'm disagreeing. Don't mean to put you on the spot there.

MR. REARDEN: I could try. Spencer Rearden, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta here in Bethel. And I was formerly the Wildlife Biologist that dealt with moose and caribou. I think for one, traditionally people most often liked to hunt moose in the fall when the cooler weather is around and sometimes drier weather in September versus August. Less flies. Less potential for spoilage. So, I think that was kind of the tradition. Now the second part of your question is, concerns over calves. So, that's been handled a few different ways. Often the case, the state side of things would say shooting of cows with calves was not allowed. That's a common practice throughout most Alaska. There were other times where we had our season, the federal season, which started in August and we didn't say one way or the other. Biologically being on the Yukon, because we all know moose populations have really increased and hunting is not having much of an effect from what we see. Hence why we have these long and liberal seasons and bag limits. So, some people feel that shooting a cow with a calf early in the season in July would definitely be an early time, would allow that calf to perish, and most likely probably would because it's pretty young in July. Like I said earlier, other ways people have handled it was simply saying, shooting at cows with calves was prohibited. So hopefully that answers your question.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: You did. Thank you.

MR. REARDEN: Yep.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any other
2 discussion?

3
4 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
5 Wassily. If I can remember, I think this was brought up
6 just for bulls only. And the reason why it was brought
7 up was to be opened earlier in July. It would give more
8 opportunities for people to go out and get before the
9 sport hunters come out. I think that was one reason it
10 was brought up. I can't remember who brought it up that
11 time. I think it was maybe Stanislaus or somebody did.
12 Thank you.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, thank you.
15 Through the Chair. Member Wassily, so that proposal -
16 yeah, you're right. It came up at the meeting before
17 last one, so your winter 2025 meeting when you guys
18 voted to submit that proposal. And originally you wanted
19 it just for antlerless without -- it was to extend the
20 cow season, but only cows without calves. And then at
21 the last meeting there was a modification made to --
22 because there's so many moose right now it could be an
23 antlered bull or a cow, as long as it didn't have a calf
24 with it so for that July season. Because you all did
25 discuss you wanted, you know, you didn't want to take
26 the cows with calves or the calves during that time,
27 just out of respect or for whatever reason. So, if you
28 put in this proposal, you could decide to specify about
29 the cows with calf or not. But yeah, in the -- if you
30 look in the state regs right now for that season, it
31 does say 3 moose, only 1 of which may be an antlered
32 bull. No person may take a calf or a cow accompanied by
33 a calf. So, there's a little difference between the state
34 season and the federal season for Unit 18 remainder, in
35 that regard, I think.

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 This is Brooke again. In the same, you
40 know, stream of thought, if you wanted to extend the
41 season later, you know, when it's cooler, you could
42 potentially do that as well, as another way of adding
43 some more resident opportunity after the non-resident
44 season. But actually, looking at these regs, there's the
45 3 moose August 1st to September 30th. And then starting
46 on October 1st through November 30th, it's 3 antlerless
47 moose. So -- and that's only for residents. It doesn't
48 apply for non-residents. The non-resident season for
49 Unit 18 remainder in the state regs is just September
50 1st through September 30, for 1 antlered bull and for 1

1 antlerless moose, there's a winter hunt December 1
2 through March 15th.

3

4 (Pause)

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6 So again, I'll just say this to
7 everyone, this proposal you submitted to the Federal
8 Board, that's the one in parentheses, WP26-45. So, the
9 question is if you want the state season for non-
10 residents to also start on July 16th to provide a little
11 extra opportunity for local people. I would imagine that
12 not a lot of people from out of the area would want to
13 come that time because of it being warm, but if you were
14 close to your community and harvested a moose, it would
15 be easier to take care of the meat that time of year.
16 But it's up to you guys if you would like to see that.

17

18 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. I was
19 recalling the conversations we were having last year. I
20 remember one of the other reasons for the request was
21 because of the king salmon moratorium going on the Yukon
22 River, which led to the reason as to why we put in a
23 proposal to open moose season a little earlier.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. That's
26 correct. That was also part of the discussion and
27 justification for that proposal.

28

29 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick.

32

33 MR. BEANS: Is there time to pull this
34 proposal, you know, not to get rid of it until it's well
35 thought upon?

36

37 MS. MCDAVID: So, through the Chair, this
38 is Brooke. So, the proposals have already been -- the
39 federal ones are already going to the Federal
40 Subsistence Board next month. They'll be voting on it
41 for the federal side. The Board of Game doesn't meet
42 until next year. The deadline for proposals is May 1st.
43 This is -- if your Council wants to submit a proposal
44 to mirror that in the state side, that start date of
45 July 16th, this is the meeting, the only time you'll
46 meet before those proposals are due. So, if the Council
47 wants to submit a proposal, this is the meeting you'd
48 have to do it at.

49

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1 MR. BEANS: So, we're basically trying
2 to get some votes to mirror that?

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Yes, sir. That's correct.
5 This is Brooke. So yeah, the idea is if you wanted it
6 to be the same in state and fed, it does take also a
7 proposal to the Board of Game. There's no guarantee that
8 the Board of Game would pass that, and we also don't
9 know next month if the Federal Subsistence Board will
10 pass it on the federal side. But like I said, the Federal
11 Board usually defers to the Council unless there's a
12 biological concern or other concern. So, we could
13 anticipate it will likely pass. So that would be the
14 reason, like you said, to try to mirror it in state regs
15 so it's less confusing for local people who want to go
16 out and maybe get that early moose or maybe they
17 encounter a moose, you know, in the community or
18 something and would like to be able to take it during
19 that time.

20 MR. BEANS: Okay, Madam Chair. So, in the
21 event that it passes, can we -- do we need a vote on
22 this proposal to mirror that?

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. That's
25 correct. So, this Council -- and unfortunately, since
26 you weren't at the meeting last time is when they voted
27 on it for the federal side, if you want to submit a
28 proposal to Board of Game, you could vote to submit it
29 at this meeting. Those proposals, you know, get put in
30 the proposal book and then they get published. So
31 probably at your fall meeting, you could vote if you
32 want to support it. Send those comments to Board of Game
33 at that time.

34
35 MR. BEANS: So, I can -- hold on a second.

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 So, can I -- we'd need to put that in
40 vote and then vote?

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: That's correct, Member
43 Beans. If you wanted to submit a proposal to Board of
44 Game to start the Unit 18 moose season on the resident
45 season on July 16th, you just need to make a motion to
46 submit a proposal to do just that.

47
48 MR. BEANS: Okay. Well, I guess I'll make
49 a motion to do that.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
2 Frederick Beans. So, Frederick just made a motion to
3 propose to the Board of Game to extend Unit 18 remainder
4 moose hunting season to start earlier on July 16th. It's
5 for residents only. Is there a second?
6

7 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is Francis
8 Prince, I second.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Francis
11 Prince seconds. All in favor of the proposal, say aye.
12

13 IN UNISON: Aye.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed,
16 same sign.
17

18 (No response)
19

20 Motion carries. Thank you. The next one
21 is also on the subject of moose, allow take of moose and
22 caribou from a moving boat under power in Unit 18 and
23 maybe I'll have Brooke talk more about that.
24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
26 I'm sorry I didn't put the proposal number on here for
27 the federal proposal, but the map that you have in front
28 of you, that was from the last meeting when we discussed
29 wildlife proposal on the federal side, 26-41 and 42 and
30 that proposal was seeking to eliminate the ability to
31 take moose or caribou from a boat moving under power in
32 Unit 18. And you guys opposed this proposal and you said
33 that it needed to be changed in the state regulations
34 instead to make it allowed on state regs. That's when
35 we had that long discussion about navigable waters and
36 all of that. And so, you said, yeah, it was confusing
37 to have it to be different. And you cited a lot of safety
38 concerns for not, you know, you didn't want to have to
39 turn your motor off in moving water when you're trying
40 to keep the boat pointed in the right direction and when
41 there's probably multiple people in the boat and loaded
42 firearms. So, this would be an opportunity to submit a
43 proposal to the Board of Game to allow moose or caribou
44 to be taken in a boat moving under power. If those are
45 proposals you're interested in submitting, it might be
46 best to do two different ones, one for moose and one for
47 caribou, since I think that's how they get taken up at
48 the Board of Game by different species.
49

1 Oh, and I will also turn your -- I
2 printed out the regulations from the state and I
3 highlighted in yellow where it says in another area of
4 the state where this is allowed. So, there is precedence
5 for this in the state regs. It says, the following
6 methods of taking game are prohibited unless otherwise
7 provided in this chapter from a motor driven boat or a
8 motorized land vehicle, unless the motor has been
9 completely shut off and the progress from the motor's
10 power has ceased. And then it lists the exceptions. And
11 it says that a motor driven boat may be used in Units
12 23 and 26 to take caribou. So that's kind of one
13 regulation that exists like an exception in the state
14 regs. So basically, what you would kind of be asking for
15 is for the same exception for Unit 18 for moose and
16 caribou.

17
18 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick.

21
22 MR. BEANS: This is Frederick Beans. You
23 know, is this basically for everyone to shut off our
24 motors to harvest an animal?

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. I think the idea is
27 based on the concept of fair chase and ethics and not
28 wanting to harass the animals or chase them, but as you
29 all have described that's not what you're doing when you
30 have your motor running. So, I think if you want to
31 submit a proposal, it would be important to provide --
32 have a detailed discussion on the record about how you
33 are hunting with your motor in a way that's not, you
34 know, chasing an animal. That way you can provide
35 examples for how it's done traditionally in your area.

36
37 MR. BEANS: Okay. The reason I ask is
38 because, you know, majority of us, we drive boats, we
39 know how to drive boats, so. You know, and then having
40 to do that, you know, it wouldn't make sense because we
41 do know how to use our boats. And I think for a rule --
42 in us, I think it shouldn't apply. You know, that's my
43 thoughts.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: And through the Chair. I
46 did also want to pass on, when I talked to Member Walter
47 Morgan, he wasn't able to be at this meeting, but he
48 wanted to pass on to you guys that he is in support of
49 submitting these proposals. He spoke to the safety
50 concerns during the last meeting, so he just wanted to

1 pass that on, so you knew where he stood on this topic.

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(Pause)

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MR. ROGERS: Second.

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MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. When I go moose hunting, I usually have the motor running because it could get kind of dangerous to completely shut off the motor. In the current, we could end up either bumping the bank or on a sandbar or going into a sunken log or something. It could get pretty dangerous.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Tiffany. Do you feel like there should be any sort of limitation on the boat moving, like moving forward or anything? These are just -- I'm asking because this might come up at the

1 Board of Game discussion, you know. Do you think the
2 boat needs to fully stop but the motor could keep going
3 or is it okay if it's moving at a certain really slow
4 pace?

5

6 MS. AGAYAR: Most of the time when we're
7 hunting, we're idling or going very slow. Sometimes we
8 just have it in neutral. It just depends on the way the
9 water is moving below us, mostly.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: And thank you for
12 entertaining my questions. I know some of this might
13 just seem silly to even be asking you guys about, but
14 these level of detail is kind of what the Board will be
15 picking at. So, if anyone else has similar experiences
16 to what Tiffany has, it would be great if you could
17 share.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, I agree. This
20 is Jackie. I agree about it, depending, it's 100%
21 depending. So as many of you know, I'm from Quinhagak
22 and our Kanektok River is -- it has a stronger current.
23 It's narrower than these other bigger rivers. It's even
24 dangerous to get off step sometimes depending on where
25 you are. And then not only is touching bottom a risk but
26 also hitting the banks and tipping over or something.
27 And then I remember Pat had some specific safety examples
28 too with shooting from a gun and the proposal not being
29 safe for gun handling as well.

30

31 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
32 Wassily. I know it's kind of difficult, but can't we put
33 it like it can be up to the boat owner to decide to stop
34 a motor or keep it going?

35

36 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, through the
37 Chair. Member Wassily, yeah. I think there's not -- you
38 can always shut your motor off if you want to, but this
39 is currently in the state regs and in state jurisdiction,
40 so in any of the navigable waterways it's required. And
41 so, this would, if you put in this proposal and it were
42 to pass, then it would be, as you say, up to the boat
43 driver or the owner to make that decision. And if you
44 wanted to shut it off, you could, but if you wanted to
45 idle or potentially be moving very slowly, that could
46 be your choice.

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48 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

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50 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

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MR. BEANS: What are we voting on right now? What the wording?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, so right now we have a motion that was to put in a proposal for moose or hunting moose and be allowed to, you know, take the moose from a moving boat under power. Yes. So that's what we're voting on. There was a second. We're in discussion.

MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. It might be nice to hear from some of our Kuskokwim people. We've mostly heard from Yukon and if the proposal is for all of Unit 18, if you want to speak to any safety concerns or other ideas you have about having to shoot a moose on a boat under power, and if we want any interpretation, we are happy to do that too.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

MR. PARKS: Madam Chair. Yeah, I got confused here because our Coordinator stated that this is for the whole Unit 18, right? Because it is on map one on this paper, it states portion of Unit 18 in which you may take moose from a boat moving under power. So, I got kind of mixed up on it. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Henry. You're very right. It's very confusing because currently on the map that we're showing, this is for the federal side. Yeah. And we're talking now about the state side and what you could do if you put this proposal to Board of Game next federal cycle, you this -- you could make it all of 18 if you wanted to, because right now, you're right, it doesn't include the Kuskokwim. But that's up to you guys next time. Henry, do you like the idea for the Kuskokwim also to -- so you don't have to shut your motor off or what do you think?

MR. PARKS: This is Henry, for the record. You see, I've been a hunter for so many years, and I haven't been shooting a moose from a moving boat. So that's a good question to me. So, I really cannot answer your question, but for safety reasons, you know, like, for instance, if I have a shooter right here beside me and I'm a driver and there's people over there on the front of the boat, yes, it's for safety concerns that accidents do come up sometimes. But then if the shooter is way up on the front of the boat, then that could be

1 on the safe side in a moving boat to shoot a moose.
2 Thank you.

3

4 MS. AGAYAR: I have a comment. Tiffany
5 here with a comment to Henry's statement. I forgot to
6 mention that our shooters are usually at the bow of the
7 boat, and I didn't know that other people don't always
8 hunt like that. But out on the Yukon, our shooters are
9 usually at the front. Thank you.

10

11 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

14

15 MR. BEANS: Is there a -- Frederick Beans
16 here, Mountain Village. Is there a chance to insert, you
17 know, like no more than five miles an hour? Something
18 along that line.

19

20 MS. MCDAVID: Yes. This is Brooke through
21 the Chair. Any sorts of limits you want to put on it,
22 it might make it more likely -- I give it a greater
23 chance to pass that way. It's really showing, okay,
24 you're not meaning you're being unsafe and zooming
25 around and just shooting from a fast boat. But it is
26 either idling or very slowly -- more to help position -
27 - I think the idea is you're trying to more help position
28 the shooter in a safe direction and keep the boat safe
29 in the moving water, is sort of what I'm getting from
30 your discussion. Does that sound correct?

31

32 MR. BEANS: Yes. Madam Chair, this is
33 Frederick. Yes, that sounds like what I'm thinking right
34 there. And then you know, nowadays our motors are -- we
35 got (indiscernible) motors and they're nice and really
36 quiet. I've seen people come up to moose, maybe from
37 here to there, that close without moose doing anything.
38 Just standing there. So, I think a limited go to the
39 moose to, like I said, five miles an hour, you know,
40 that would, you know -- and where it will be in control
41 of, you know, the boat so that that shouldn't be an
42 issue.

43

44 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, through the
45 Chair. Do you think it -- well, I want to go back to
46 Fred's suggestion. Do you guys think five miles per hour
47 or five RPMs I heard over here, some sort of -- do you
48 want to come to some sort of agreement on what that
49 limitation should be, and we could include that speed?
50 Just a suggestion.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I guess.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.....

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND:for me -- you could go next, if you don't mind. For me, again, it comes down to the current and staying on step. And I mean, if needing to be staying on step. And not sure if five miles an hour will keep me on step. I mean, it depends if you're going up river maybe, but not with the current. But not to make things more complicated anyway. Henry.

MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, Henry, for the record. I know for sure that we're not dumb adults, you know. Our younger teenage, kids, teenagers, they're not crazy. Whenever they're in a moving boat and if they see a moose, I know they slow down and they're not going what? 50 miles an hour to shoot that moose? They won't try that, I know. So, for me, I don't think we have to, you know, insert some kind of a limit on that -- on this proposal here. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thank you. Thanks, Henry, for that. I think that's good feedback. What about the shooter has to be separate than the person driving the boat? Does that sound like...? There's a -- if the boat's moving, someone is in control and the shooter is separate. I know that also probably sounds silly. You're not driving with one hand and shooting with the other, but just to make it very clear for this discussion that will likely come out of this proposal. Does that sound reasonable that the shooter would be separate from the person handling the boat?

MR. BEANS: Madame Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Oh, yeah. Right there.

MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans, Mountain Village. As for that, what you're talking about the driver and the shooter, how would that be written down on the proposal?

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. What I didn't pass out to you was the actual blank proposal form and

1 this this might be helpful. So let me do that right now.

2

3

(Pause)

4

5 So, this is Brooke again. Member Beans,
6 so the proposal -- the language that you're proposing
7 is to allow the take of moose from a boat moving under
8 power in Unit 18. This additional discussion is -- sort
9 of goes into the section where you explain the details.
10 So, it's more to provide a clear explanation to the
11 Board so that -- I guess some of the things that you
12 could anticipate the Board discussing are -- well, it's
13 also a safety issue to have a loaded gun and be shooting
14 in a moving boat. So, what you're trying to say is all
15 the ways that you practice firearm safety with multiple
16 people in a boat, with the boat potentially moving. Those
17 are the kinds of details that they're going to want to
18 hear so that they know how you're going to do this
19 safely, I guess is, if that helps.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Pat.

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MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair, Pat.
Thank you. That's a good comment. And I know we're kind
of chuckling, but we have to think about explaining this
to people that aren't from your area. You know, that'll
be at these meetings making these decisions. So, what
you said is very good point. That's why you're not
putting all of these extra details about speed and things
because as Chair Cleveland mentioned too, it really
varies throughout the area depending on the conditions.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Would that be a
2 good enough justification, you think or do you want us
3 to keep discussing?

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: I'm going to check in with
6 our wildlife staff to see if they have anything else
7 they think it might be good for the Council to discuss
8 for justification purposes on the record before we they
9 move on to a vote.

10
11 MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah. Hey, Madam Chair,
12 this is Lisa.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Hi, Lisa. Go
15 ahead.

16
17 MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you, Lisa Grediagin
18 for the record. And just in response to Brooke's
19 question, I may have missed some of your conversation
20 but also pointing out that this practice is currently
21 allowed in other parts of the state, such as Unit 23.
22 And so, you know, if they can do it there, it's safely
23 okay there. You know, making the case, it also should
24 be allowed in Unit 18. Oh, I see Tom is on the phone.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tom. Is it Tom?

27
28 MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah.
29 Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist, OSM. So, yeah, just a few
30 comments that I wanted to add to this, not to try to
31 create more confusion or conversation, you know, to
32 cause any issues here, but a few things to think about
33 with this one, why, you know, when you're putting
34 together your proposal is, you know, like Brooke has
35 mentioned many times, you're also talking to some folks
36 that aren't from your area and don't understand exactly
37 what it is that you have to go through. So, you got to
38 try to relay that to them. So a lot of folks, they just
39 look at it, when a guns up in the ready position, ready
40 to fire, you know, in a lot of waterways and other areas,
41 you hit a log or something and that shooter goes over,
42 which we all know that's not how y'all do it, but you
43 got to kind of make sure that in your justification,
44 you're portraying to them how you maintain a safe boat
45 and hunting environment to negate the issue of having a
46 firearm accident within the boat.

47
48 And another thing is, you know, when
49 you're using different terms in there, like if you mean
50 when you're describing as on step up, to some folks they

1 may not know exactly what on step is, and they may assume
2 that you're meeting up on plane, which we all know when
3 you're on, you know, on plane means you're both pretty
4 much floating on top of the water. You know, it's just
5 -- that's why it's just kind of some small things to
6 think about is, you know, kind of putting your
7 justification descriptions and stuff to folks who may
8 not necessarily understand exactly how y'all do things
9 because the average person, they wouldn't be able to
10 hunt the way y'all do. So, you know, that's, I'm like I
11 said, I'm not trying to cause confusion here, but I'm
12 just trying to make sure y'all make sure that your
13 justification or your description of the proposal that
14 you really just kind of make the language as plain as
15 possible, so it's easier for the Board to understand
16 when they're looking at your proposal. I hope that helps.
17 And I'm on if y'all have any other questions for me.

18

19 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Alissa.

22

23 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
24 guess this was a question for anybody to answer. Would
25 it be simpler just to remove the language all together?
26 That way we're not putting stipulations on people of the
27 river for different waterways. Some people have strong
28 currents, some people don't. Some people have slow
29 water. Then there's the swift water and then going up
30 past Kalskag or Tuluksak. It gets faster up that way.
31 That's my question. Thank you, Madam Chair.

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Member
34 Rogers, this is Brooke. I think that's the consensus of
35 what the rest of the Council would like to do also is
36 to not put those exact stipulations in there but leave
37 it up to the driver of the boat to decide what, you
38 know, sorts of limitations and safety concerns need to
39 be taken into consideration, you know, as is currently
40 practiced by folks in this unit. Does that help? So, it
41 would be like you said, based on the different areas,
42 people would just take into consideration the local
43 conditions and adapt accordingly. So, the proposal would
44 really just be about not having to shut off your motor.
45 And then the details of that could be left to the
46 individual area.

47

48 And then -- this is Brooke again, and
49 we can also flag this for the next wildlife cycle on the
50 federal side, since currently, as Henry pointed out on

1 the map it's just allowed in 18 remainder. So, at the
2 next cycle, we could extend that across on the federal
3 side or, you know, submit a proposal. No -- there's not
4 a guarantee that it would pass, but. I think that has
5 been a really robust discussion and justification. We
6 could always do the wordsmithing to make sure we
7 incorporate all those points clearly and circulate a
8 draft. Our Chair always approves any final drafts too
9 before anything gets submitted so they'll be opportunity
10 to fine tune the minute details of the proposal after
11 the meeting. But if anyone else has any input for the
12 moose -- and allowing the take of moose by boat moving
13 under power in Unit 18, this would be your opportunity.
14 If not, I'll turn it back over to the Chair.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, just a
17 reminder where we are in the motion process. So, there's
18 been a motion to put in a proposal to the Board of Game
19 to allow taking of a moose from a boat under power. And
20 another reminder, it's just on moose. There was a second.
21 We had discussion and now we're ready for question and
22 a vote.

23
24 MR. ANDREW: Question.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question has
27 been called by John Andrew. All in favor of this
28 proposal, say aye.

29
30 IN UNISON: Aye.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed,
33 same sign.

34
35 (No response)

36
37 Motion carries. Quyana. And if anyone
38 feels the same, or if we feel the same, to do the same
39 as for caribou, the floor is open for that.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: And through the Chair. This
42 is Brooke. And you wouldn't need to have the same lengthy
43 discussion for caribou, if your justification is the
44 same as you described for moose. And I will note it is
45 allowed for caribou under the federal regs in all of
46 Unit 18 currently. So, submitting the proposal for
47 caribou on the state side would mirror that in the state
48 regulations. And as we pointed out earlier, it is allowed
49 already in Units 23 and 26. So, we would just need a
50 motion to submit the same proposal for caribou. Thanks.

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MR. ANDREW: Yeah. Madam Chair. (In Native).

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John Andrew motions to support the same proposal, this time with caribou. So, to submit a proposal to the Board of Game to allow the take of caribou from a moving boat under power in Unit 18. Is there a second?

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans here. I second that motion.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Frederick Beans seconds the motion. And any discussion?

MR. BEANS: Question.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, question has been called. All in favor of the proposal, say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. And can I note -- can we use the same justifications so it's not like just blank? Thanks.

(Pause)

We're waiting on maybe the language for another proposal idea we had.

MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through the Chair. I just want to make a note that that last one that we just voted on regarding the caribou, I just want to make a note on record that I don't feel comfortable with adding in the language for caribou when we can't even hunt caribou and our caribou are declining. That's just my personal opinion. Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
2 bringing that up. I had thought of that too since we
3 don't have a season for Mulchatna anyway, is there a way
4 we can note if and when we're -- it's allowed again in
5 in our ask? Thank you. If everyone agrees.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
8 Brooke. Yes, that's correct. As long as the season --
9 it wouldn't be allowed, if there's no hunting allowed
10 for the caribou. So, thank you for noting those
11 conservation concerns, Member Rogers, and we can
12 definitely note that in the proposal discussion that
13 there's no intent to allow this at the time being, that
14 this Council has continued to support conservation
15 efforts in the rebuilding of Mulchatna caribou.

16
17 This is Brooke again, for the record. I
18 -- those were the only ones that I had noted down as
19 ideas. There was, you know, some other discussion this
20 morning about possible other things. You talked about
21 the hunter education requirement. That is a requirement
22 currently for non-resident hunters. They do have to do
23 that online certification. You also talked about the
24 checkpoints and maybe some sort of more oversight for
25 the transporters. I'm not sure that those would be
26 necessarily proposals, but if you wanted to address
27 those in some other way like as a letter or something,
28 those are additional options. But are there any other
29 ideas for Board of Game proposals at this time?

30
31 (No response)

32
33 Through the Chair, I did also want to
34 note, this is Brooke, that I will provide your feedback
35 to Mr. Grant Coplin about adding that additional zone
36 to his non-resident map. If for some reason he's not
37 agreeable to that idea, I don't know, one of the
38 communities on the Lower Yukon or your local AC could
39 submit your own proposal to do that. We just wouldn't
40 be able to submit that as a Council because it would be
41 after your meeting, but there would be potential other
42 avenues outside of the RAC process that a proposal could
43 get submitted. So, I can certainly follow up with our
44 folks on the Yukon about that once we hear back from Mr.
45 Coplin, if he's agreeable to that idea.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, the way I
48 understand it, we are -- where we are now. So, the hunter
49 education, there's already a requirement for non-
50 resident hunters. What Brooke showed us this morning

1 with the little video and the quiz, and you have to pass
2 the quiz in order to be able to hunt as a non-resident
3 here. So that does exist for them. And then the other
4 one we talked about checkpoints and wanting more
5 checkpoints, that one we realized most likely won't --
6 it's not our -- the Board of Game is not the avenue to
7 where we can ask for this, but after maybe some more
8 research, whether it's a letter to Department of Natural
9 Resources or the Fish and Game Commissioner or
10 something, would we all agree to -- even if it's not a
11 proposal, if it has to be a letter form, would we all
12 agree to send a letter to whoever that might be in the
13 process, whether that be the, you know, the Commissioner
14 for Fish and Game or Nat. Resources Department, is my
15 question.

16
17 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
18 Wassily. Brooke read something about, you know, we
19 mentioned something about like giving them so many days
20 to get the meat out of their camping area or their
21 hunting ground. And she read something about 15 days.
22 That's half a month and your meat will be probably off
23 the bones by then. So, there's something that we can
24 insert, like maybe 2 or 3 days to get the meat off,
25 taken care of, and maybe in the freezers by -- something
26 like that.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thank
29 you, member Wassily, and I was reading something that
30 was shared with me, and personally, I didn't quite
31 understand it myself either, because that seemed like a
32 long time and I wasn't sure if someone in the room could
33 maybe speak to that a little more, not to put Laurie on
34 the spot, but if you could clarify that 15-day process
35 for human consumption thing that you were talking about
36 earlier. Sorry to.....

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. That made
39 me wonder if it came with dates or something like it
40 would make sense for maybe late September, early October
41 too. But yeah, that's why we were all kind of surprised.

42
43 MS. BOECK: Okay. Laurie Boeck here,
44 through the Chair. It's just a 15-day limit. It's not
45 time like, I mean, it's 15 days. It's like if you read
46 the state regulations, it talks about preserving for --
47 like fish, for example, it has to be preserved in such
48 a way it can last for a certain amount of time. And so,
49 there's no real definition on it. And you know, in a
50 previous role, when I worked for the state, we tried to

1 get a definition from the troopers on that and there
2 isn't really one. So, it's just 15 days for human
3 consumption. And so, like I said, with fish, you can
4 smoke it, cook it, freeze it. Those were all considered
5 preserved. Like when you're looking at daily bag limits,
6 especially in possession limits. And so, I'm sorry, I
7 can't clarify that for meat.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Could I ask Laurie a
10 question while she's in the hot seat, Madam Chair?

11
12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Laurie, do you
15 have any insight if the Council wanted to sort of help
16 define that better or put limits on it, could that be a
17 proposal potentially? I mean, we could always submit a
18 proposal, and they reject it or, you know, can't accept
19 it, but I just didn't know if you have any guidance at
20 all. Thanks.

21
22 MS. BOECK: Yeah. Laurie Boeck again,
23 through the Chair. I would, I mean, personally, not from
24 the refuge perspective, but it wouldn't hurt. I know
25 that it's come up at other RAC meetings as well as Board
26 of Game meetings that people are trying to get that
27 definition. Just because without having it defined, it's
28 hard to actually implement, you know, the legal aspects
29 of it. So, my personal opinion is it wouldn't hurt.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke again. So,
32 would the definition -- I guess maybe we need some
33 clarification, what it is exactly we're trying to
34 define. It sounds like the Council wants to define how
35 quickly meat has to come out of the field or in some way
36 to reduce spoilage.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry Parks, (In
39 Native). Oh. John, (In Native).

40
41 MR. ANDREW: No.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, okay.
44 Tiffany, was that a hand raised? I must be seeing things.
45 Yes.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Perhaps we
48 could make a suggestion. It sounds like, Wass, this would
49 be something you're interested in proposing, but we
50 might need to maybe gather a little more information

1 about the best way to potentially do that. So, we could
2 circle back to it before the meeting is over if that
3 sounds good to you. That way we could keep moving on the
4 agenda in the meantime. But it sounds like others are
5 in agreement that would be a good idea, it just needs a
6 little more fleshing out.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thanks,
9 Brooke. Tiffany.

10

11 MS. AGAYAR: I have a little bit to
12 share. Tiffany here. I have an aunt that likes to work
13 on the moose the next day, and then I have another aunt
14 that likes the moose to bleed out a few days, and I have
15 an uncle that likes the moose to sit like ten days for
16 flavor and stuff. And I guess it really depends on the
17 families too, with how long they like the meat to hang.
18 Some of them smoke them and hang them. And I don't know,
19 it's something to think about for sure. Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: For me, that
22 would be a hard ask for the whole unit just because like
23 yeah, I mean, I would want the time to be way shorter,
24 like even a day or two if that meat is going to be
25 donated locally by non-residents. You know, if it's
26 going to be donated on their way out, then it's, you
27 know, locals don't really prefer 15 days. But I mean, I
28 guess there are some that like to hang their meat in the
29 field, but that's like with it being gutted and no fur
30 and hanging, you know. But if it were just to sit in a
31 raft or something for 15 days, it wouldn't work. Yeah.
32 So, it's just another one that's so hard to gauge and
33 people's preferences, you know, some do like to hang
34 their meat for a long time, but I know maybe most (In
35 Native) don't.

36

37 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
38 Wassily. The reason why I brought that up is, time
39 limits, we know it's seen a lot, we have the guides or
40 the hunters come out in groups, and they go out hunting
41 and one person catches a moose. He hangs it out and they
42 go out for -- I don't know, I've seen moose hanging up
43 above our area. No campsite, just the moose hanging out
44 in the trees. Nobody around there. The hunters are out
45 looking for another moose for their friend, and the meat
46 is just hanging there, I don't know for how long. That's
47 one reason why I brought that up, that should be taken
48 care of before they get to go out. Thank you.

49

50 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

MR. PRINCE: I'd like to see if I got a kind of like a proposal for non-residents, if that is acceptable. You know, since Unit 18 has a 30-day limit for a lot of these non-residents and all of these other areas got shorter limits, like 20 days and 15 days, I was seeing if that since we're starting to have conflicts between the locals and the non-residents, if they could propose to open their season like September 10th through September 30th. That way it won't be so much of an issue between the locals and non-locals.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, a proposal to the Board of Game asking to start the non-resident season September 1 to September 30 or something, but pretty much after locals have had their chance or residents had their chance for their bag limit. Is that what you're saying?

MR. PRINCE: Yes, and also start a little bit later in September because it gets a little bit cooler and that way those non-residents could have that cooler weather to hang their meat outside, because most of them don't have anybody to look out for in the villages to keep their meat cold or frozen, that way it won't be spoiled.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That's a great idea. I had thought of that earlier too, but I wasn't sure what exists now on the Yukon. But yes, I mean, even like September 15th to October 15th or something, because, I mean, I got a moose on September 10th or something once and yeah, we had to bring it home the next day already because it was already trying to, you know, stink. So, it could still be very, very warm in the first two weeks of September, if that's why we would do, you know, if that's your idea -- so that non-residents don't have to deal with that quality control issue as much, if their season was in the cooler season.

MR. PRINCE: Correct. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And you could make it into a motion if you want, Francis.

MR. PRINCE: I'd like to make it a motion.

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
2 Francis. So, Francis has motioned to propose to the Board
3 of Game for non-residents to start their moose season
4 on the Yukon?

5
6 MR. PRINCE: Yes, on the remainder.....

7
8 (Simultaneous speech)

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: On the Lower
11 Yukon? Remainder.....

12
13 MR. PRINCE: Remainder.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Remainder from -
16 - to start -- what date should we put there?

17
18 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the
19 record. Just so everyone knows, the current season is
20 September 1 through September 30 for non-residents.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, it's
23 already.....

24
25 MR. PRINCE: I'd like to see if they
26 could propose a date from like September 15th through
27 October 15th, because a lot of the locals stop hunting
28 after September 30th due to the kind of, like the rut
29 season. Also, they're trying to get ready for the
30 upcoming winter.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, maybe like
33 September 16th, because I'm not sure how the dates like
34 -- either 15 or 16. Either it could be like Tiffany had
35 recommended, maybe just shorten it to the last two weeks
36 and then now either that or scoot it, you know, and
37 still make it a month, but go into October and make it
38 September 15th to October 15th. So, there's those two
39 ideas. If anyone has anything to say? Tiffany? Okay.

40
41 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Fred.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Fred.

44
45 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here. I would
46 like to see a shortening of their harvest dates. Maybe
47 from September 10th to the end of September. 20 days or
48 roughly 20 days.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So now there's
2 another date. So, Frederick's proposing September 10th
3 to September 30th. And then we heard September 15th to
4 September 30 or September 15th to October 15th.

5
6 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. I support
7 Frederick Bean's suggestion. Yeah. You were in the
8 middle of stating the motion that Francis made, and then
9 we went into conversation.

10
11 MS. ROGERS: I'll second.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Alissa.
14 But we're still trying to figure out actual dates because
15 there's three different dates that were mentioned. Yes,
16 Francis.

17
18 MR. PRINCE: I'd like to just see if I
19 could get more input from the other Yukoners, please.

20
21 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
22 Wassily.

23
24 (Simultaneous speech)

25
26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.....

27
28 MR. ALEXIE: I agree with Fred, from
29 September 15th or 10th to the 30th. 15th to the 30th.

30
31 MR. ALEXIE: What was that? What did you
32 say?

33
34 MR. BEANS: I said 10th to 30th.

35
36 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, 10th to the 30th.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. This is Brooke.
39 Francis, would you like to restate the motion maybe now
40 that you've heard input with the dates?

41
42 MR. PRINCE: I'd like to make a motion
43 to what Frederick proposed. That's a good idea.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, so Francis
46 moves to submit a proposal to the Board of Game to
47 shorten non-resident moose hunting in Unit 18 remainder
48 from September 1 to September and then change it to
49 September 10th to September 30th. Is there a second?

1 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans.
2 I second that motion.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Frederick Beans
5 seconds the motion. You think...? Okay, we'll go into
6 discussion.

7
8 MR. BEANS: Question.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I'm sorry.
11 I know this has been discussed a little bit, but we do
12 need some clear justification why you think the non-
13 resident season should be shortened. If you just want
14 to summarize some of the points from earlier. Thank you.

15
16 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

19
20 MR. BEANS: Due to the fact that if they
21 can give away, like they're saying in the state
22 regulation to give away the moose, you know, the moose,
23 give them that much more, less time for them to hold on
24 to them, moose out in the field and they'll come and
25 give them away, and by then the weather will be a lot
26 more cooler for them to be, you know, kept a little
27 longer.

28
29 MS. MCDAVID: So, I'm hearing maybe
30 they'll be less instances of wanton waste because it's
31 cooler weather later in the season and maybe it'll help
32 reduce some user conflict by letting local people get
33 out earlier in the season and get their moose before
34 influx of non-residents.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

37
38 MR. PRINCE: I just want to agree with
39 Brooke. Yeah, it would eliminate that conflict between
40 the locals and non-locals.

41
42 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. This is Brooke
43 again. I just wanted to clarify. I know it gets confusing
44 when we're talking about non-locals and non-residents,
45 but in this case, this proposal is just for non-
46 residents, and that means out of state. So other non-
47 local hunters would still be able to come in from, for
48 example, Anchorage or somewhere else. Just to clarify.
49 Thanks.

50

1 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. It's because
2 the other Alaska residents that would fly in would end
3 up potentially being mostly family members coming back
4 to their traditional hunting lands.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And now I think
7 we're ready for question.

8
9 MS. AGAYAR: Question.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Question has
12 been called by Tiffany. All in favor of this proposal,
13 say aye.

14
15 IN UNISON: Aye.

16
17 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed,
18 same sign.

19
20 (No response)

21
22 Hearing none. Motion carries. Thanks.
23 Okay, so next we're going to skip over to 13 on the
24 agenda. It's the last page under Other Reports. And we
25 have ADF&G Division of Subsistence. If you're online --
26 oh, you're here. Okay. You have the floor. Thanks.

27
28 MS. FISHER: Thank you, Madam Chair. For
29 the record my name is Brooke Fisher, and I work for the
30 Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the Subsistence
31 Division. I'm one of the researchers on the Yukon, and
32 the Lead Researcher, Tim Bembenic, is online, and he
33 will be giving his part of the presentation online. All
34 righty. Next slide, please.

35
36 The first project I would like to talk
37 to you about today is the Yukon Comprehensive Harvest
38 Surveys. An increase in the Pacific Salmon Treaty
39 Implementation Fund has helped the division survey
40 communities in the Yukon River drainage that have never
41 been surveyed before or where data are no longer
42 representative. In 2022, we surveyed Hooper Bay and
43 Chevak. In 2023, we surveyed Huslia and Koyukuk, and in
44 2024 we surveyed Kotlik and Alakanuk. These technical
45 papers for these communities have been published. In
46 late 2024, we received funding from the NOAA 2020 and
47 2021 Chum Salmon Disaster Fund to continue our
48 comprehensive harvest surveying effort in communities
49 along the mainstem Yukon River. This past spring, we
50 conducted harvest surveys and ethnographic interviews

1 with residents in Ruby and Holy Cross and are currently
2 in the process of analyzing that data and writing up
3 that report. We currently have plans to survey Nunam
4 Iqua, which is where I am on my way home from, and
5 Rampart, this spring. Next slide please.

6
7 The next project I'd like to talk to you
8 about is the project titled The Use of Salmon in the
9 Pastolik and Pastoliak River, and it is a response to
10 three proposals submitted to the 2019 AYK Board of Fish,
11 seeking to expand commercial salmon fishing
12 opportunities in both these rivers. This project was
13 funded by OSM/FRMP and was a joint effort by Sportfish
14 and Subsistence to update AWC info for all life stages
15 of salmon by documenting presence and habitat use. In
16 July 2023, department staff completed biological
17 sampling in the two rivers. In the winter of 2024, the
18 Division of Subsistence worked with the Village of
19 Kotlik to document local harvest -- historical harvests,
20 excuse me, and local and traditional knowledge about the
21 population of fish in these coastal rivers. This report
22 was published in June of 2025. Next slide please.

23
24 As kind of a continuation of this theme,
25 the Division of Subsistence recently received funding
26 through the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund to conduct
27 additional research on two more coastal streams, the (In
28 Native) and the Kashunuk Rivers. The Division of
29 Subsistence will document local and traditional
30 ecological knowledge held by Scammon Bay and Chevak
31 residents concerning the life history of salmon in the
32 (In Native) and Kashunuk Rivers, historical and
33 contemporary uses of these river systems for subsistence
34 fishing, and document subsistence fishing and harvest
35 locations. The Division of Commercial Fisheries,
36 Division of Sport Fisheries, and YRDFA biologists will
37 then describe salmon presence, life history patterns,
38 and stock of origin information for salmon and other
39 fish species within these two river systems. This
40 project was funded in December of 2025, so pretty
41 recently, and the Division of Subsistence plans to begin
42 project start up and planning, in July of 2026 and
43 conduct fieldwork between October and November of 2026.
44 Next slide please.

45
46 The final project that I would like to
47 talk to you about, the Division received Pittman-
48 Robertson Funds to investigate the ceremonial harvest
49 and use of big game populations throughout the state.
50 The purpose of this five-year project is to compile

1 existing data for ceremonial harvest of game populations
2 statewide, to assess data quality and gaps and gather
3 qualitative data regarding potlatch practices throughout
4 the state. The synthesis of these two data sets will
5 inform the development of a robust educational and
6 outreach program to improve ceremonial harvest
7 utilization and reporting compliance. We interviewed all
8 area biologists and other relevant staff and attended
9 the Kaltag Stickdance in March of 2025 for a participant
10 observation trip. We are currently in the process of
11 analyzing big game ceremonial harvest data provided by
12 area biologists throughout the state, reviewing and
13 analyzing interviews with area biologists, reviewing
14 field notes from the Kaltag Stickdance, and we have
15 identified Lower Kalskag as a partner community to do
16 additional participant observation. That is the end of
17 the Yukon projects. I'm going to turn it over to Tim
18 online if he is there.

19
20 MR. BEMBENIC: Yep, I'm here. Good
21 afternoon, Madam Chair and Council Members. For the
22 record, my name is Tim Bembenic and I'm a Subsistence
23 Resource Specialist, the Alaska Department of Fish and
24 Game. I mostly work in the Kuskokwim River region, and
25 I'm based out of the Fairbanks office. And I have a few
26 slides that discuss two of our recent projects in the
27 Kuskokwim River region. So next slide please.

28
29 Okay. The first project that I'd like
30 to discuss with you today is called Local and Traditional
31 Knowledge of Salmon Declines and Effects of Increasing
32 Salmon Fishery Management on the Lower Kuskokwim River.
33 This project was funded by Office of Subsistence
34 Management and documented local and traditional
35 knowledge of past and present fishing patterns, as they
36 relate to increasing management of the subsistence
37 salmon fishery on the Lower Kuskokwim River. The
38 participating communities in this project included
39 Napakiak, Nunapitchuk, Kasigluk, and Eek. And we
40 completed this project in June of 2025, and the final
41 publication is now available online. This project was
42 interview-based and explored themes related to how
43 subsistence salmon fishing practices have changed
44 through time from a local perspective, particularly
45 following the 2012 Kuskokwim River chinook salmon
46 declines. And for example, fishers discuss what kind
47 salmon fishing was like prior to 2012 and how it is
48 practiced at present. Researchers met with local
49 residents and discussed concepts such as timing, gear
50 type, and location, as well as documenting concerns such

1 as reduced fish camp use, increasing competition between
2 fishers, rising cost of living rates, and generational
3 knowledge loss. Again, this project has been completed
4 and it's accessible online. Next slide please.

5
6 Okay. In our second project overview is
7 the Kuskokwim Management Area Postseason Subsistence
8 Salmon Harvest Survey Project, or KPSS for short. This
9 annual study is funded by the Office of Subsistence
10 Management, and the Department has been collecting
11 subsistence salmon harvest information from Kuskokwim
12 area families since 1960. For over the past two decades,
13 the Department has partnered with ONC in Bethel to
14 conduct surveys among Bethel area households. The
15 purpose of this project is to estimate subsistence
16 salmon harvests in 28 of the Kuskokwim River drainage
17 communities, including the South Kuskokwim Bay region.
18 In the fall of 2025, we were able to travel to 24
19 Kuskokwim Area communities, including Bethel, to conduct
20 door to door in-person surveys. Our sampling design for
21 the 2025 season was similar to 2024. If a community has
22 40 households or less, we attempted to sample all the
23 households in that community. If a community size is
24 greater than 40 households, then we used a stratified
25 random sample and attempted to survey all high and medium
26 harvesting households, as well as any unknown households
27 that were new.

28
29 In addition, we sampled approximately
30 50% of light harvesting households and 30% of non-
31 fishing households. Surveyors attempted to contact the
32 household at three different times on three different
33 days when time permitted. Follow-up phone surveys were
34 conducted if households could not be contacted in
35 person, and we completed 17 surveys from 8 communities
36 by phone. In Bethel, a simple random sample of 25% of
37 the total households was conducted in partnership with
38 ONC staff. Together, Fish and Game Division of
39 Subsistence and ONC staff surveyed Bethel households and
40 achieved the desired 25% sample, and we completed 508
41 household surveys. In total for the project, we
42 completed 1,363 in-person surveys throughout 24
43 communities of the Kuskokwim Management Area. Next slide
44 please.

45
46 Okay. So, what did we find out? Well,
47 this slide shows a draft table of harvest estimates of
48 Chinook, chum, sockeye, coho, and pink salmon harvest
49 by community, district or regional level and the
50 drainage. And it's kind of a busy table to look at, but

1 on the left-hand side of the table, you'll see a list
2 of each community as well as a district total line. The
3 four districts are the Lower River, the Middle River,
4 the Upper River, and South Kuskokwim Bay. At the top of
5 the table, all five salmon species are listed, as well
6 as a total of all the species combined. The first red
7 box shows the salmon harvest estimates by species of the
8 Lower Kuskokwim River communities, including Bethel. The
9 second highlighted box shows the salmon harvest
10 estimates by species of South Kuskokwim Bay communities,
11 as well as the KAM total estimate of fish harvested at
12 the lower right-hand side. Please note that the harvest
13 numbers are an estimate and are not finalized, so they
14 may change slightly before we publish the final report.
15 This table and the remaining finalized tables and
16 figures are generated annually and are made accessible
17 to the public in a technical report, which is available
18 on the Fish and Game website.

19
20 And that is all I have to share with you
21 today. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity for us
22 to present and express my gratitude to ONC staff, Tribal
23 Council Office staff, and the hundreds of Kuskokwim
24 households that participated in the survey last year.
25 I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time. Thank
26 you.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tim, this is
29 Jackie. Do you mind going back to the previous slide
30 with all the numbers and the data? Thanks. Thank you for
31 your presentation and good work on getting all those
32 surveys done. Are there any questions or comments from
33 our group?

34
35 (No response)

36
37 I have a question. I assume some
38 communities choose not to participate. Is that why, like
39 for instance, on the Lower Kusko, you know, I don't see
40 (In Native) or Oscarville. And so how do you -- so, I
41 guess, how do you start? Do you get maybe -- do you talk
42 with the village leadership or something to see if it's
43 okay to do these surveys? And then -- yeah, I guess I'm
44 wondering why not the other villages?

45
46 MR. BEMBENIC: Through the Chair. Yeah,
47 that's a good question. We typically begin our season
48 by calling the tribal council offices and requesting for
49 approval to visit. And then we also -- when we get to
50 the community, we try to hire locally, when possible,

1 especially the bigger communities like Quinhagak, to
2 help us navigate around. If a community declines to
3 participate, that's fine and we respect any kind of
4 refusal and that includes surveying at the households
5 themselves. So, if an individual does not want to take
6 the survey, that's completely within their right, and
7 we respect that request. I will further say, so last
8 year due to the big storm affecting the region, we were
9 -- we didn't feel like it was appropriate for us to go
10 out during that time period to a few communities. And
11 we did make it out to Lime Village a little late. But
12 we did a group total for Lime Village. We had one
13 participant that collected most of the harvest. So, it
14 can be challenging logistically to get to these places,
15 and we only have a short amount of time to do so. So,
16 we do appreciate all the hard work and the collaborative
17 effort from everybody in the communities themselves as
18 well. So, thank you all.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you again.
21 And I see it as very important work because for areas
22 like mine, where we don't have a weir or a way of getting
23 escapement numbers besides from aerial surveys, and now
24 we have these other smaller projects that are with drones
25 and stuff and it helps, but one thing we really go by
26 is the subsistence surveys out in our bay and I'm from
27 Quinhagak, by the way. But we've always wished that other
28 communities and villages would participate because it
29 would help us also. Without a commercial fishery or a
30 weir, there are no -- there's no way to really gauge
31 what's leaving our little bay that has so many users
32 now. So, I know one way would have been to hear from
33 other villages who also fish in our bay. And yeah, but
34 that's always been a challenge there. So again, thank
35 you for all that hard work. Is there anyone else here
36 who wants to say anything?

37
38 (No response)

39
40 Well, keep up the good work, you guys.
41 Thank you again. Next, we're going to again skip around
42 on the agenda and go to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Kuskokwim
43 River Salmon management. Spencer and Aaron are here to
44 talk about that.

45
46 MR. REARDEN: Yeah. Thank you. Spencer
47 Rearden, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Yukon Delta
48 Manager. And I'm with Aaron Moses, Subsistence
49 Specialist. I think we'll start off with maybe Aaron
50 quickly summarizing what our 2025 season looked like on

1 the Kuskokwim. We often like to refer to the last year
2 of how we manage the fishery. We're not only here to
3 deliver information and summarize but try to outline
4 some of our next steps that we're going to be taking
5 before we make some decisions here for this next season.
6 And in doing so, we're also seeking input. We've been
7 traveling to villages and trying to get their input and
8 often using last year as an example of how we managed
9 and describing how we came to decisions and trying to
10 always improve how we manage the fishery. More
11 importantly, I'm also looking for input on
12 considerations for management for this next summer. In
13 particular concerns, which species we think deserve
14 federal management and those kind of things.

15
16 The timing of this meeting is actually
17 pretty adequate for us because we're currently having a
18 lot of discussions with the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
19 and with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. We're
20 having discussions within my own agency between staff
21 like Aaron Moses. We have other people on our team,
22 Chris Tulik, Emmitt Nicori, and Christian Alexie, made
23 up of a bunch of local people that are familiar with
24 this fishery and have been assisting with trying to make
25 good decisions. So, I think Aaron will start with the
26 summary and then I'll follow up with describing what in-
27 season management looks like. I want people to
28 understand what we consider. And then I'll be telling
29 you what's next for this year and hopefully you guys
30 have some input for us to take for our consideration in
31 deciding what we're going to do next. So, thanks.

32
33 MR. MOSES: All right. Again, my name is
34 Aaron Moses. I'm the Subsistence Coordinator. So, for a
35 summary of the 2025 season, the refuge worked closely
36 with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
37 and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage
38 chinook, chum, and coho salmon on the Kuskokwim. The
39 refuge and the Fish Commission jointly developed the
40 2025 Kuskokwim River Salmon Management strategy, which
41 was similar to strategies used in 2021. These strategies
42 were developed according to the following guiding
43 principles. To use a precautionary approach by utilizing
44 in-season information rather than just pre-season
45 forecasts to avoid overharvest, integrate meaningful,
46 local and traditional knowledge into the fisheries
47 management and to strive for continued customary and
48 traditional subsistence harvest opportunities while
49 balancing the need for adequate escapement, and also to
50 uphold federal fisheries conservation and stock

1 diversity mandates. We were able to provide more fishing
2 opportunities in 2025 than in recent years, largely due
3 to abundant sockeye salmon and a better understanding
4 of the subsistence fishing behavior and needs from prior
5 years. With restrictions, we were able to escape an
6 estimated 105,000 chinook salmon. Population trends for
7 the last five years at the Kuskokwim -- with the
8 Kuskokwim run reconstruction has remained flat between
9 125- and 176,000 chinook salmon compared to historical
10 runs. Chum salmon numbers remained well below historic
11 returns, but we still met the only established
12 escapement goal at the (In Native) River.

13
14 The 2025 season returning adults came
15 from the 2020 and 2021 parent years, which were the
16 lowest counts on record. 2026 will see returns primarily
17 from the 2021 and 2022 parent years, which were also
18 very poor returns. Coho salmon numbers also met
19 escapement at the (In Native) River. Early in August,
20 precautionary measures were used and restrictions were
21 in place for coho. Once the refuge and the Fish
22 Commission determined the 2025 coho run was likely to
23 meet conservation goals, federal management on the
24 Kuskokwim River was relinquished, which occurred on
25 August 7th.

26
27 MR. REARDEN: Okay. Spencer Rearden
28 again. And I just want to give the group kind of an
29 understanding of what does in-season management look
30 like and what we call in-season management is. During
31 fishing time, pretty much June, we're frantically trying
32 to understand what's going on with this fishery. And no
33 doubt, instrumental to understanding fish is the local
34 perspective on what they're seeing, the local generated
35 data, our local partners, Inter-Tribal Fish Commission,
36 no doubt. So, we have continuous coordination primarily
37 with Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. There's weekly,
38 sometimes biweekly meetings and trying to make best use
39 of the data of what people are saying. There's an elder
40 advisor at the table that the Fish Commission brings.
41 And all in all, we're trying to make good decisions. We
42 coordinate with Office of Subsistence Management. They
43 help us with the processes and the RAC Chairs or the
44 RACs. We've addressed the Western Interior. I guess
45 Aaron Moses did that, the Alaska Department of Fish and
46 Game. And we also routinely talk to the state Kuskokwim
47 River Working Group. And I mentioned earlier, we're
48 doing our village visits. Now, we've been doing that for
49 over ten years, and so I think we got eight of them thus
50 far and we're hoping to get a few more. We conduct

1 continuous outreach and discussions over the radio. We
2 have a weekly call-in opportunity that we offer to the
3 public. The Inter-Tribal Fish Commission does this and
4 we participate with that just to continuously try to
5 hear from the local people.
6

7 During periods of uncertainty of salmon
8 abundance, we use the following in-season stock
9 assessment tools. The fish and game sonar project.
10 Community-based harvest monitoring. This is data that's
11 provided by the Fish Commission in coordination with ONC
12 and the refuge. Local and traditional knowledge that
13 included run timing, abundance, health of salmon. And
14 to describe our goal for chinook salmon, we're targeting
15 110,000 escapement. This is the upper end of the state
16 escapement goal. And we believe this helps ensure
17 equitable harvest for upriver communities. And we are
18 taking into account that our salmon these days are
19 smaller, which produce fewer eggs. And so, we're taking
20 into account those things and trying to build this
21 population up. For chum and coho, excuse me, we aim for
22 minimally meeting established escapement goals at the
23 (In Native) weir. You know, due to similar run timing
24 of chum and sockeye, it makes it pretty challenging, but
25 while we're trying to conserve chum salmon, we
26 understand there's abundant sockeye salmon that people
27 want and so we believe that set net opportunities rather
28 than drift net opportunities, allows fishers to harvest
29 sockeye while reducing catches of chum. As sockeye are
30 viewed as more bank oriented fish, they tend to be near
31 the banks, whereas chum more towards the middle, the
32 deeper parts of the river.
33

34 So, what is next for Kuskokwim River
35 management? I mentioned seeking your input along with
36 the villages, our meetings that we've started with the
37 Fish Commission and with the Alaska Department of Fish
38 and Game, we've started those discussions. We're going
39 to coordinate and discuss what conservation measures may
40 be needed for this next summer, which will help determine
41 if federal management should be considered and for which
42 salmon species. If conditions warrant federal management
43 of subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River, I will
44 announce our intentions, and I'll issue a Temporary
45 Special Action. I hope to have that here soon. These
46 intentions will be shared with all entities previously
47 mentioned. Before finalizing any decision on the
48 Temporary Special Action, we're going to first have a
49 public hearing. We've been doing this for quite some
50 time. And only after the hearing, after hearing from

1 more of the public, potentially other entities,
2 agencies, then we'll finalize the decision. This is not
3 out of the ordinary. This is what we've been doing in
4 trying to ensure we're hearing voices from all entities
5 before making final decisions. So, I welcome any
6 questions. I will stress again that the decision-making
7 process that we have with the Inter-Tribal Fish
8 Commission, with our refuge information technician, and
9 subsistence specialists reaching out to local people,
10 we're -- we don't pretend that we have all the answers,
11 but collectively I think we have a system that helps
12 make good decisions for the local people. We truly
13 understand that local people have the most to gain and
14 the most to lose from these decisions. And no doubt they
15 should be at the center of these decisions. So, we work
16 for the local people. That's what our jobs are.
17 Subsistence is king. This is what we do. And so, but
18 we're always looking for more input and we're always
19 looking for a better way of doing things. I'll also
20 throw the caveat out there that with any kind of
21 restrictions, someone's not going to be happy. It's
22 unfortunate, but it's what we're dealing with in today's
23 world. We're trying to ensure that we conserve enough
24 salmon for our future generations. And I do think that
25 things are working. We're still fishing. It's not to the
26 amount we want. We have a goal. We would like to see
27 unrestricted fishing just the same, but we're still
28 fishing and that is a good thing to remember. So, I
29 welcome your comments in particular about your ideas on
30 what you don't like or do like about maybe our recent
31 year summary of fishing because it may look like similar
32 to that or which species we should be considering to
33 manage for, which ones need conservation, and those kind
34 of things.

35

36 (Pause)

37

38 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman. I'd like to
39 make a -- thank you for your report. Before the opening,
40 right after smelts passing me. I said that I looked for
41 eddy for setting my set net. And I found one like maybe
42 four miles downriver. And I was really surprised when I
43 checked them in the morning. I catch ten kings and rather
44 big whitefish, almost four feet. Those king salmons,
45 really shiny and really fat. That was before the opening.
46 I set it at one week. Ten. Total 41 kings, one week, big
47 ones, not the small ones, with six-inch. When you hang
48 a net -- my uncle taught me, when I first started hanging
49 the nets. You know, those are expert elders. They teach
50 us right. They explained it to us what they do with

1 their own complete body, with their hands. When you hang
2 the net, six-inch, two by two, two, two, two by two.
3 When you want to catch for big ones with five and a
4 half, six inches, you measure it. And hang three, which
5 is really loose. No escapement, even big ones with six
6 inch, no escapement. One stay. Caught. It will not go.
7 They swirl themselves in the net and it's really hard
8 to -- a lot of work. 41 kings before they closed set
9 netting, before June 1. First time in my life I see
10 these kind of kings for a long, long time.

11
12 We need to observe and learn. Kuskokwim,
13 the river down there. That's what my elders used to tell
14 me. Watch and learn. Watch and learn. I believe them
15 when they tell me, I try to see if it's false or to see
16 if it's true. They're really true. True words. And in
17 summer, first opening, we didn't do good, but on the
18 second opening, we're doing good. I was catching too.
19 In the morning, when you go out to set your net, when
20 it's opening, you had to be first. You have to be first,
21 set your net. No waiting. You set your net and catch
22 kings. But this year it's different. Last year, it's
23 different. First time I don't see any combat fishing.
24 Less fishermen, less than 20, 24. When I go up to the -
25 - below Akiak, I only see three Akiak fisherman fishing,
26 including me four.

27
28 But we're all doing good last year. I'm
29 really glad. And those chums, I catch only 40. That's
30 good. It's good for me. 40. 40 chums, and over, almost
31 200 sockeye. Almost 200 sockeye. I met my goal to 60. I
32 can't exceed that 60 because I got no dogs, only one.
33 That's why I asked my uncle when he was alive, how many
34 kings should I take without dogs? How many kings should
35 I take without dogs? And he told me right away, 60. It's
36 good enough for you. It lasts for nine months. Sockeyes
37 are increasing on the Kuskokwim even though they opened
38 for set netting. I'll tell you, set netting in my
39 community. There used to be lots of set nets, but last
40 year few. Only few. Few set netters. And also, some of
41 the fish camps were closed. Few -- only few of us have
42 fish camp in my community. Less than 15. There used to
43 be lots. Now, less fishing. Less subsistence fishing.
44 And cohos, I don't fish for cohos. Only a few of them.
45 For (In Native), salted fish. I'm really glad that we
46 have fish in the Kuskokwim. I always pray for the river.
47 I always pray for the river. Thank you very much for
48 your report. I hope this summer it'll be better. Better.
49 Quyana.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Phillip.
2 (In Native), Phillip.

3
4 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair. Henry, for the
5 record.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

8
9 MR. PARKS: I have a comment and a
10 question. You see, I'm from the tundra villages, and
11 when I go down to the Kuskokwim River for fishing, it's
12 about like an hour ride from my hometown to the fishing
13 grounds and down there at the Kuskokwim River. But I
14 want to thank you guys, first, that you guys gave us an
15 opportunity to fish last year. So, I do have some dry
16 fish right now, still have dry fish and bucket -- two
17 buckets of salted salmons right now. So, I want to thank
18 you for that first. And then last year the chums returns
19 were better than previous years because I caught more
20 chums last year. And I want to thank you guys, the
21 federal side. You know, I've been bragging about that,
22 that Sunday fishing before in the past. So, I'm glad
23 that we did not have any fishing -- subsistence fishing
24 on Sundays because Sunday is a rest day, Sabbath day for
25 us. And we do respect that. And we all know now there
26 is a conflict between other countries right now. And we
27 all know that crude oil and the gasoline price will
28 spike up pretty soon for sure. So, it's kind of hardship
29 for us Natives to, you know, to try and harvest fish
30 sometimes back home, not in -- I believe not in my
31 hometown alone, some people, they need gas to go fishing
32 from my place to the Kuskokwim River. So, it's kind of
33 hardship for us sometimes. And then pretty soon I know
34 for sure the food products, I know that they will spike
35 up too because of this war going on. So, that's my
36 comments and then my question is, do you think that we
37 will have a fishing again? Subsistence fishing again
38 down in Kuskokwim River this year?

39
40 MR. REARDEN: Spencer Rearden. I do think
41 we'll fish this summer. I mean, Aaron mentioned that our
42 chinook salmon numbers have, you know, not fluctuated a
43 lot. We haven't seen the big increases we used to see
44 but it hasn't been, you know, declining a lot either.
45 It's kind of flatlined. So, with that information, I'm
46 pretty confident we're going to be fishing to some
47 degree. In the early season, a lot of the decisions are
48 based on the forecast. There's only a forecast for
49 chinook, and that's what helps determine the first set
50 net periods and then usually is the information used for

1 determining the first drift net opener, which in recent
2 times has been on June 12th, and then usually there's
3 one more after that, like around the 15th or 16th of
4 June. About that time, is when we change our strategy
5 and we look at the in-season information. And that
6 includes again the sonar, the harvest, we've been
7 comparing the harvest estimates that Fish Commission,
8 ONC, Fish and Wildlife help collect. It's fishermen's
9 data and we compare it to what fishing was like in
10 previous years, and it's helpful information in helping
11 to determine the health of the fish. How many are showing
12 up? If you guys are catching a lot of fish, it often
13 means that there's more fish in the river. And often
14 it's an agreement with the sonar. And then we also take
15 individual fish reports that people are telling us.

16
17 There's chinook. Our chum are still in
18 trouble. The chum numbers aren't as high as we want.
19 Sockeye, over the years and I'm sure many of you remember
20 back in the 80s, they weren't nearly as abundant as they
21 are now. I think our sockeye numbers are estimated near
22 900,000, somewhere in that nature. And in some years,
23 there are 500,000. I would say that's plenty of fish to
24 allow opportunities to fish for sockeye. So yes, I'm
25 pretty confident we'll be fishing. Now we don't act like
26 we know exactly what's going to happen. You know, things
27 have changed, but I think using in-season information
28 is the best way to protect against trying to make real
29 time decisions. We don't know when to announce fishing
30 until the fish tell us, until they show up, and we
31 determine what their numbers are looking like. And
32 that's been a good strategy for ensuring that we're
33 making good decisions.

34
35 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, Henry, again for
36 the record. Thank you very much. And then lastly, keep
37 up your good work. Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Frederick.

40
41 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans, Mountain
42 Village on Yukon. Do you guys do any Yukon study, or are
43 you guys just primarily at Kuskokwim?

44
45 MR. REARDEN: Spencer, through the Chair.
46 Yeah, it's different managers. The only refuge that the
47 Kuskokwim goes through is the Yukon Delta, which is
48 managed here. And so, we manage only the Kuskokwim. The
49 Yukon is managed by a team out of Fairbanks that takes
50 into consideration the Lower Yukon, which the Yukon

1 Delta Refuge encompasses, but it goes through multiple
2 refuges and other federal lands, you know, on its way
3 up. So, different people.

4

5 MR. BEANS: Another question on sockeye,
6 when they go out to the ocean, where do they eat or
7 where do they grow up on? Which part? Do they do that
8 in Bering Sea or they go beyond the Aleutian chain?

9

10 MR. MOSES: Through the Chair, this is
11 Aaron Moses. They pretty much use the same areas as the
12 chum and all the other salmon do, but -- and there has
13 been studies where they also go out into the Gulf, way
14 out in the ocean in the Pacific. But a lot of times
15 their diet is different. Their diet is more of like
16 filter feeding more than going after other fish.

17

18 MR. BEANS: Okay. So, they basically go
19 through Area M, too. You know, I -- just saying not the
20 one in Yukon. You know, they migrate through Area M too,
21 you know, go up to Yukon. But do they mingle with the
22 Yukon fish?

23

24 MR. MOSES: Through the Chair, Aaron
25 again. I'm not sure if they did genetics for sockeye or
26 -- but, if there is YK chum there, it's probably a good
27 assumption that there's also sockeye that are bound for
28 this area too.

29

30 MR. BEANS: Okay, thank you. Thank you,
31 Madam Chair.

32

33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Maybe this might
34 not be the right avenue because it is a commercial fish
35 question. I'm just asking for opinion. Do you think
36 there's enough sockeye now to bring back commercial
37 fishery just for sockeye? And if so, is there really a
38 way to just target sockeye successfully? I know they are
39 in shallower -- and you know, on the land side of the
40 rivers, but -- and then the other species, like the ones
41 at the same time are in the deeper part of the river.
42 Just out of curiosity I guess, if there were to be
43 someone wanting to commercial fish again. Is it possible
44 to do it with those sockeye numbers and at the same time
45 still conserve the other species?

46

47 MR. REARDEN: Spencer Rearden again.
48 That's tricky. With subsistence users versus the
49 potential amount of commercial fishing users, it's
50 probably different by quite a bit. I don't know what the

1 numbers would be today, but some of us probably remember
2 what commercial fishing looked like when it was a common
3 thing out here. And so, no doubt commercial fishing took
4 a lot more fish. And so, the risk is much higher because
5 of that high take. And I mentioned earlier that our chum
6 are of concern still. Last year the numbers weren't as
7 good as we wanted. It wasn't that long ago we counted
8 less chum than chinook salmon, which is unbelievable,
9 because chum salmon, as you all know, was the most
10 abundant fish on this river for a long time. And then
11 for us to have a year where there were so few was
12 concerning. I don't believe we're out of that realm yet.
13 And so, our strategy of allowing set nets still catches
14 chum. We believe it's less chum than drift nets. So, the
15 take is probably reduced versus commercial, which I
16 guess it depends on how many commercial fishers would
17 be out there. But I would imagine that the risk is much
18 higher because of that, because there'd be much more
19 just assuming it would look like what it once did.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. Thank
24 you, Spencer, so much for your report. I just wanted to
25 ask something about your perspective since you're the
26 manager and maybe the refuge's perspective. I'm not sure
27 if you were here or listening yesterday, there was a lot
28 of discussion about eel sticks, and the proposal passed
29 at the Board of Game -- or sorry, the Board of Fish to
30 recognize eel sticks as a subsistence gear type that's
31 traditionally used. And we realize it's not currently
32 recognized in federal regulations. And so be curious to
33 hear your perspective as a manager, if you think that
34 is something that would be worthwhile to recognize,
35 since it sounds like it is a used gear type. And maybe
36 if there would be any enforcement implications if it was
37 not recognized also in federal regulations. Thank you.

38

39 MR. REARDEN: Through the Chair. I wasn't
40 here, but I could say this, that -- I mean, people have
41 been using eel sticks for a long time, and I imagine, I
42 mean, I was a kid going to St. Mary's and seeing
43 truckloads of eels on the ice. It was a pretty impressive
44 thing. During the time when people are fishing for those,
45 there is no federal jurisdiction on the rivers. Our --
46 when we assert our jurisdiction, it's usually during the
47 summer salmon season, not during the lamprey season,
48 which is November, I believe, typically. So, we have not
49 asserted any jurisdiction during that time. So, it would
50 revert back to state regulations. Is there evidence to

1 show that it's a traditional practice? Yeah, obviously.
2 I think a lot of the elders on the Yukon or a lot of
3 people have been seeing that for a long time. So, sounds
4 like to me it's a little background work to get that
5 approved. Thanks.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Spencer, that
8 was helpful, to note about the jurisdiction issue too
9 that didn't come up in discussion yesterday. Appreciate
10 it.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native),
15 Phillip.

16

17 MR. PETER: For the record, on this
18 federal subsistence about the harvest summary on this
19 report harvest summary for subsistence in-season
20 assessment estimates and gear type. In drift net (In
21 Native), harvest between Tuntutuliak all the way up to
22 Tuluksak. This report, what I'm talking about. From June
23 3, I know this one is for set netting. June 3 -- fishing
24 date is June 3. Which it's set netting. And from
25 Tuntutuliak all the way to Tuluksak, chinook salmon
26 harvest is 34,411 and the other one, chum salmon, 21,571,
27 and sockeye salmon harvest, 32,506. Cohos, 1,109. And
28 the total of the harvest from Tuntutuliak to Tuluksak,
29 90,395. What we harvest. These numbers are really true
30 or just estimates? Or -- I know that I was really
31 surprised they hired some harvest survey local. And when
32 I went to the gas station, that lady -- one lady
33 approached me with a booklet in this hand and I told
34 him, what are you doing? What do you want? Your
35 inspection? I told her, you want something? And that
36 lady said, I am a surveyor for the subsistence set
37 netting and also drifting. And I start to cooperate.
38 Every opening surveyor come to my house and ask me, how
39 many chinooks you caught? How many chums? Those kind of
40 questions, and I told her that it's good. It's your job.
41 I really appreciate. Qu yana.

42

43 MR. REARDEN: Yeah. I'm glad you say that
44 because we encourage it. It's not -- we're not interested
45 in names. We're not interested in -- it's not for law
46 enforcement. It's none of that. It's information that
47 Fish and Wildlife and the Fish Commission are really
48 using, and it's generated by local users. It's data
49 generated from fishers. It's collected by local people,
50 and it's analyzed by the Fish Commission. And these

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1 reports come out. And I said earlier, it helps us
2 determine the health of the run. And it helps us
3 determine whether or not we should have another fishing
4 opportunity because of those numbers. But I'll point out
5 and maybe Terese's going to get to this later. I don't
6 want to step on your toes, but these numbers are not
7 complete. So, like when you see the numbers in July,
8 there's a lot of blanks right there. We label those as
9 fishing periods, but we didn't get information on those.
10 So, we know that chum salmon and sockeye, namely, are
11 caught in July. So, these numbers are more of a minimum
12 count, not that's what they harvested. There's more than
13 that. The State of Alaska just presented on some of
14 their surveys, that's probably a more complete count and
15 obviously encompasses a larger part of the Kuskokwim.
16 This, like you said, is from Tunt to Tuluksak.

17
18 So, it was originally designed around
19 chinook because remember, we used to only manage Chinook
20 and then chum numbers went down and then coho numbers
21 went down. But the chinook data for those openings in
22 June and early July are pretty complete, and they're
23 pretty good. Again, only for that area, but they still
24 miss some harvest. Galik, Johnson, Kweek, those are
25 considered a non-salmon tributaries and they remain open
26 for fishing. And we do know that people get king salmon
27 in those rivers too, and we don't have an estimate on
28 those. We don't even have an idea of what that is. But
29 just to -- so you know, that's not a complete count.
30 It's just a minimum number. But it has been helpful
31 because we compare it year after year to make good
32 decisions. So yeah, thanks for those comments. I really
33 appreciate that because I know people get a little wary
34 about interviews. What are you catching? What kind of
35 net? We're not wanting to use it against anybody, and
36 we don't collect personal information, numbers and
37 trying to understand the fishing behavior to make good
38 decisions. So, thanks.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, both of
41 you. I had a question. Is there -- I mean, I assume
42 maybe there was no surveyor from Eek or something, but
43 is that why they're not included on the -- because I
44 know a lot of not just Eek residents fish at (In Native),
45 which is a non-salmon trib, but some, I don't know,
46 other villages go there too. And I'm just now realizing
47 you guys don't count the non-salmon tribs, but when you
48 are doing the surveys, do they also include the fish
49 that are coming from there? From the non-salmon
50 tributaries?

1

2 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Madam Chair, for
3 the question. For the record, this is Terese Vicente
4 with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.
5 And we're the ones that I guess spearhead this in-season
6 community-based harvest monitoring program. So, Phillip,
7 I'm glad that you were doing interviews with the monitors
8 in Akiachak last year. That makes me happy. We have been
9 working with harvest monitors in Eek for the past couple
10 years. So, when we do get data from our Eek monitors,
11 it's included into the computer program that compiles
12 all the data. Most of the time, however, the harvest
13 from Eek fishermen are happening in -- we call them Area
14 O, it's like non-spawning tributaries like (In Native)
15 Slough or areas outside of our survey region. Another
16 component of putting together these in-season harvest
17 estimates, so we have, you know, we hire people in the
18 villages to interview people on the ground. But then
19 Yukon Delta Refuge and Fish and Wildlife Service do an
20 aerial survey above and then count boats and nets out.
21 And so, the way I understand it is like putting those
22 two numbers together helps us get an estimate of the
23 effort and the harvest across the whole opener, and the
24 flight only goes down to Tuntutuliak and then it goes
25 up to -- what do they call that island right above
26 Tuluksak? Nelson Island? Right above Tuluksak and then
27 turns around. So, we don't get a count necessarily of
28 people fishing downriver of Tunt, which might be a lot
29 of Eek people if they go out to the main stem. Does that
30 help? Yeah.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: John.

33

34 MR. ANDREW: (In Native).

35

36 MR. SAMPSON: All right.

37

38 MR. ANDREW: Yeah. My name is John Andrew
39 from Quinhagak. I've been a long-time fisherman and a
40 subsistence fisherman. I used to be a commercial
41 fisherman too. (In Native).

42

43 INTERPRETER: Since I was a small kid, I
44 have been fishing for Kuskokwim for my family and I also
45 was a commercial fisherman starting in 1962, up until
46 1986. At that time, the Area M fisheries, before we
47 started hearing about the Aleutian Area M fisheries, we
48 always caught everything that we needed, and there's a
49 lot of fish in that area and all the smokehouses would
50 be filled with fish. And so, about 1980s, during that

1 time, I started hearing about the Area M fisheries that
2 a lot of fish are being caught down at the Area M. And
3 I also started hearing about the fish trawl, the bottom
4 trawlers out in the Bering Sea. So, they would tell us
5 that the fish were coming and they would have enough and
6 they would get here, and then they would just sharply
7 decline, just there would be no fish after the first
8 post. And so, it was correlation with the Area M
9 fisheries. And back in the day when we were commercial
10 fishermen, we bought big boats, big commercial fishing
11 boats so we could earn. And some of the families had 3
12 or 4 commercial fishing permits, and they had boats as
13 well. And so, and they sort stopped fishing in 1986, and
14 they told us that we will not be able to catch the king
15 salmon or fish for king salmon in 1986. So, we were not
16 the only ones that were told that we were going to have
17 a king salmon crash. It was just not us, also the Yukon
18 River that experienced the decline. And so, at that time,
19 that the commercial boats that we utilized at that time,
20 we still owed. We started -- if we didn't give them to
21 our relatives, we started selling our commercial gear,
22 and we would give them to other people that utilize the
23 big commercial boats.

24
25 And so that's what happened. And now
26 over the years, there's a lot of fishermen that do not
27 fish anymore on the Kuskokwim commercially. And so, we
28 use those commercial boats to try to earn money. And
29 when we stopped commercial fishing, we started going
30 through the subsistence hunt. And so, a lot of people
31 do not -- cannot afford to purchase any fishing gear,
32 boats, etc., because there's no commercial opportunities
33 out here. So, they are at a disadvantage of trying to
34 meet. And so, we hear the price of oil or gas is going
35 up, and so we cannot really afford any gas or anything
36 like that to go fishing anymore. Only the people that
37 have jobs are able to participate in the subsistence
38 fish openings. And so, when I think about this and I'm
39 thinking that, why -- I think about the fishing -- the
40 fish that come into this area, can they migrate out to
41 the sea? Why are the purse seiners or the trawlers that
42 are catching all the fish on their migratory path back
43 to this area, why are not the other fisheries put on
44 hold and let the salmon pass freely? And so that's what
45 I'm always thinking, that other fishers and fishery area
46 should do a positive with all these other fish come out
47 here because now, I can't even go fishing anymore. The
48 only fish that I have are those that are given to me by
49 my friends and relatives, the fish and game.
50

1 The test fisheries, they come and they
2 give us some of the salmon that they catch, and they
3 give it to their families, and we are always thankful
4 of that, but those are just a drop in the bucket of what
5 we used to experience and what we need. And when our
6 relatives go out fishing, they give us a whole lot more
7 than the test fisheries do. They give us enough so we
8 can hang some fish and make strips. And so, I'm always
9 thinking that I am thankful that the Board of Fish last
10 -- not too long ago, said for the first time they told
11 us that they would address the purse seiners or some --
12 that they're going to limit the fishing in the Area M
13 fisheries this coming season. And so that was the first
14 time that they listened to us. And so, the purse seiners
15 will be limited by 30% fish takes. So maybe this summer
16 I'm thinking that I'm thankful that we might be able to
17 catch a lot of the fish this coming summer, not only
18 this area, but for Bristol Bay and to the Yukon-Kuskokwim
19 or Yukon Arctic area. Thank you. Mr. Chair -- or Madam
20 Chairman.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana.

23
24 (Pause)

25
26 MR. REARDEN: Through the Chair.
27 Appreciate it. Appreciate your guys' time. Appreciate
28 the work you're doing. I have high value for input. And
29 so, thanks again.

30
31 (Pause)

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, thanks.
34 Thanks, you guys. It's almost five, and I'm wondering,
35 we could have Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish go next
36 and do their presentation, or we could pick up where we
37 left off tomorrow morning instead. (In Native).

38
39 Okay. I was told the elders said
40 tomorrow. So, you're good with tomorrow, Terese? Yay!
41 So, I guess that means we're in recess again. So right
42 at 5:00 this time. So be back here tomorrow morning at
43 9:00, a little earlier if you want, so we can start at
44 9:00. Have a good night.

45
46 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

49
50

1 MS. ROGERS: Before we break, can we have
2 a moment of silence? Chairman Lester Wild just passed
3 away at the hospital. I just got the phone call. If it's
4 okay with you, can we do an honors for him and have a
5 moment of silence, please?
6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Alissa, I'm just going to
8 -- this is Brooke -- going to repeat for everyone in the
9 room. Alissa just shared that the past RAC Chair, Mr.
10 Lester Wild, has passed away and is requesting if we
11 could do a moment of silence, if everyone could maybe
12 join in standing and just recognizing him.
13

14 (Moment of silence)
15

16 Thank you all. I didn't personally know
17 Mr. Wild. He wasn't on the Council when I came on Board,
18 but I know he greatly contributed to the subsistence in
19 this region and if any of the council members want to
20 share any remembrances with him, you'd be welcome to do
21 so.
22

23 (No response)
24

25 And it doesn't look like at this time
26 but thank you for sharing that difficult news with us,
27 Alissa, and we wish everyone a good evening. Quyana.
28

29 (Off record)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 105 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIN DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II recorded on the 18th day of March 2026;

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 14th day of April 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager - Transcriptions