

0001

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

YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME III

LONG HOUSE HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM
Bethel, Alaska
March 19, 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

Recorded and transcribed by:

Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp
787-239-0462
Info.@lighthouseonline.com

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

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Bethel, Alaska - 3/19/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good morning and welcome to day three of the YKRAC meeting. And we're calling to order at 9:10 a.m. this morning. And we will start with roll call and announcements with Brooke, and then we'll do some introductions to new people in the room and online. Thanks, and good morning.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair, and good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us for day three of the YK Delta RAC meeting. My apologies for the sound of my voice but please bear with me. We're going to start with roll call for our Council members, and then I'll have a couple of announcements. 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: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Alissa Nadine Rogers.

(No response)

I thought I saw Alissa online. Alissa, it looks like you're unmuted. Are you able to hear us?

(No response)

Okay. We're not hearing folks online in the room, but they're hearing her online, so we might need to unmute something here. And while that's getting started, we are going to -- after our roll call and

1 announcements, we will be doing a moment of recognition
2 for a passing of a former chair of this Council. So,
3 could we do a check again? Could someone online? Oh,
4 okay. We're going to restart the, our audio tech is
5 restarting the meeting here in the room and we will try
6 to get the audio working. Thanks for your patience.

7

8

(Pause)

9

10 All right. We're going to do another
11 sound check, if someone online, perhaps Member Rogers,
12 if you could let us know if you're present.

13

14

(No response)

15

16

17

18

19

All right. Anyone online, if you could
unmute and just do a sound check, please, for us? We
still can't hear folks online in the room, if you're
trying to speak.

20

21

UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning, Brooke.

22

23

(Simultaneous speech)

24

25

26

27

28

29

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, Rogers. All
right, we got you now. Thank you Member Rogers, for
noting your attendance. Gabe, we just might need the
sound turned up a little bit more, please.

30

31

32

33

34

MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair, through the
Chair, can we have a moment of silence before we start
the meeting this morning after roll call for early
Chairman Lester Wild. Thank you, Madam Chair.

35

36

37

38

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa. We
just announced that we would do that after roll call.
Thanks, though.

39

40

MS. ROGERS: Quyana.

41

42

43

MS. MCDAVID: All right. Continuing with
roll call. Phillip Peter, Sr.

44

45

MR. PETER: Here.

46

47

MS. MCDAVID: Wassily Alexie.

48

49

MR. ALEXIE: Here.

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Myron Naneng. Was Myron
2 able to join us online this morning?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 All right. Not seeing Myron. I know his
7 wife was having some health issues yesterday, so he's
8 excused. Maybe he'll be able to join us later. Tiffany.

9
10 MS. AGAYAR: Here.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Frederick Beans.

13
14 MR. BEANS: Present.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, with nine of
17 12 Council members present, we do have quorum. And before
18 I go into announcements, do you want to ask for a moment
19 of silence for Lester Wild, who passed yesterday. I'm
20 going to share his picture here for folks who might not
21 have known him. But I might ask, John Andrew, if you
22 might say a few words about Mr. Wild, since you worked
23 with him in the past. And.....

24
25 MR. ANDREW: Yes, John Andrew over here.
26 Lester Wild was the brother of a past Chair, Harry Wild.
27 That's his younger brother. He was one of the -- a second
28 group of original past RAC members of -- for YK. He was
29 all around here, everywhere. At one time, he used to
30 work out of a Bethel at the Swanson's Marina as a
31 mechanic and some of other outfit, but him and his
32 brothers were full time, used to be both, I think
33 subsistence and subsistence fishermen all their lives
34 and they shared what they have. Like they shared their
35 catches with the village, like what we do now is. And
36 he was really easy to get along with. And we spent many
37 years over here until -- in the years when his health
38 start to fail, he got off the RAC and, but he was real
39 easy to get along with, like our group right now. We
40 have had many good memories, but we all tease each other.
41 He was a good mechanic, too. And he used to love to ride
42 big four (indiscernible) machines that go fast anywhere,
43 just about anywhere. Qu yana, Madam Chair.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you very much, Member
46 Andrew. Would anyone else like to say a few words about
47 Mr. Wild?

48
49 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa, go
2 ahead.

3
4 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
5 Through the Chair. Uncle Lester was the last of the
6 original RAC members. He's now up there with my grandpa,
7 John Hansen, Harry Wild, James Charles, Ephraim, Johnny
8 Thompson, Charlie Brown. Well, Charlie Brown, since
9 they're the OGs of the RAC. Every time they came to
10 town, they always wanted steak. So, I would cook them
11 up some steaks and dinner at my parent's house and they
12 would continue the conversations of talking the meeting
13 and working out strategies and trying to figure out
14 different things and just explaining to each other how
15 things work in certain areas. And they're thinking about
16 how to brainstorm on how to improve each area that they
17 had. And even when we went to Board meetings in Anchorage
18 and Fairbanks, we were still strategizing and working
19 on trying to find solutions, even after the meeting. One
20 of the biggest things that I was taught was, we may not
21 agree or be friends in these meetings because we have
22 different sides that we have to fight for but at the end
23 of the meetings, we're always still friends. It was
24 instilled through me, through my grandpa, and it
25 continued to go through, Harry, Lester, James Charles,
26 Mr. Slats. I told my mom that they're probably all up
27 there, right now, having a meeting about how mischief
28 we've all been down here on earth. And how good of a job
29 we've been doing taking care of our resources. Thank
30 you, Madam Chair. I think that's it, because I'm going
31 to keep crying.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
34 Alissa. Is there anyone else in the room who would like
35 to say anything? Katya will say something. Thank you.

36
37 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
38 When I first started working for OSM in 2016, Lester
39 Wild was still on the YK Delta Council. And by that
40 time, he gave 20 years of his life to service on the
41 Council, which is a big chunk of anybody's life. 20
42 years, when you think of dedicated service, I don't know
43 how many years he was the chair of the Council, but in
44 2016, when we had our first Council meeting, he received
45 an award for 20 years of his dedicated service, from the
46 Federal Subsistence Management Program and from the
47 Office of Subsistence Management. We just would like to
48 express our sincere condolences to his family and
49 friends here in YK Delta region on his passing and thank,
50 you know, his family and friends for letting him serve

1 on the Council for so many years. And we [sic] also
2 thankful to all of you for serving on the Council. Now
3 just carry in your memory what he'd done. And you know
4 that the subsistence is in good hands. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
7 Katya.

8
9 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. And I know
10 we did a short moment of silence last evening when we
11 adjourned, but it was kind of rushed. And if you all
12 would join me in just another moment of silence and
13 lifting up Mr. Wild in your thoughts and prayers.

14
15 (Moment of silence)

16
17 Quyana cakneq to Mr. Wild and all our
18 other council members who dedicate themselves to
19 protecting subsistence. Thank you. This is Brooke, our
20 Chair had to step out for a moment, so she asked me if
21 I could just continue on. I do have a couple of
22 announcements. If you're here in the room with us, if
23 you could please remember to sign in. We also have green
24 comment cards on the back table. If anyone would like
25 to give public comments today, for any agenda items or
26 non-agenda items, you can pass those to myself or to the
27 Chair. You can also submit written comments here in
28 person or email those to myself or
29 subsistence@ios.doi.gov. If you're online and would like
30 to comment during the meeting, if you're on your
31 telephone, you can press star-five and that will raise
32 your hand. And we'll look for that to call on you. You
33 can also use the raise hand feature in Teams. And if,
34 for some reason, we do not see you, feel free to say,
35 Madam Chair and get the attention of the Chair and she
36 will call on you at the appropriate time.

37
38 For other announcements, we do also have
39 our interpreter, Pat Sampson, joining us again today.
40 Thank you, Pat for being here. We have headsets on the
41 back table in the room. If there are times when Pat is
42 translating, then you can turn those on. They need to
43 be on channel 1 and you'll hear the simultaneous
44 interpretation on the headsets. And we apologize that
45 our current technology setup does not allow that
46 translation to be heard online. So, after announcements
47 this morning, we'll move on to introductions for people
48 -- new people that haven't joined us yesterday, here in
49 the room and online.

50

1 Before we move on, though, I did want
2 to take the opportunity to -- for council members for
3 just a real quick sort of training opportunity about
4 Robert's Rules. Just an example that came up yesterday,
5 that was brought to my attention, and no one did anything
6 wrong. But you'll remember we were talking about a
7 proposal to limit the dates for the moose hunting season
8 for one of those Board of Game proposals and one of our
9 members had made a motion and then there was a lot of
10 discussion about the dates before there was a second.
11 And the proper way, through Robert's Rules, would have
12 been just go ahead and second the motion, then it's on
13 the floor for discussion. And if we want to change the
14 dates that were suggested, then a motion to amend the
15 original motion would just be the proper step through.
16 So, again, it's no problem, but I just wanted to point
17 that out for future. We're all learning and even myself
18 don't catch those things sometimes so, no problems
19 there, but just a chance to sort of revisit and keep
20 that in mind. With that, we'll go ahead and move on to
21 introductions. I think we have one new person in the
22 room with us today, if you wouldn't mind coming up to
23 the mic and pressing the button to turn it on and just
24 let us know who you are and who you represent. We'd
25 appreciate it.

26
27 MR. AKERS: Good morning everyone. My
28 name is Nate Akers. I'm the Fisheries Biologist based
29 here year-round in Bethel. I work for Yukon Delta
30 National Wildlife Refuge. This is the first time I've
31 actually got to see some of your faces in person, so
32 it's been really cool. I've been in Bethel for about
33 three years now, and I'm looking forward to several more
34 years of working out here on the rivers and getting to
35 know your culture and your people. So, thank you for
36 having me this morning.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for joining us,
39 Nate. We appreciate it. Now we'll go online. Is there
40 anyone that has joined us online today that wasn't with
41 us on the previous days? Please unmute yourself and
42 introduce yourself.

43
44 MS. CARROLL: Hi, everyone. This is Holly
45 Carroll. I'm the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon
46 River Manager.

47
48 MS. HOOPER: Hi, good morning, Brooke and
49 RAC. Sorry, there's a bad echo online. This is Jennifer
50 Hooper with AVCP. Apologize, I have not been able to be

0008

1 there in person. Have been trying to call in here and
2 there, but hopefully, we'll be able to join you this
3 afternoon. Thank you.

4

5 MS. SENEAL: Good morning. My name is
6 Anna Senecal. I'm a Fisheries Biologist with OSM and I
7 sit in Anchorage. Thank you for letting me join.

8

9 MR. RANSBURY: Good morning everybody. My
10 name is Shane Ransbury. I'm a Fisheries Assistant
11 Biologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working
12 here in Fairbanks.

13

14 MR. AYERS: Good morning everyone. This
15 is Scott Ayers, the Deputy Director of Sciences for the
16 Office of Subsistence Management. I'm happy to be
17 joining you today. Thank you.

18

19 MS. LA VINE: Good morning everyone. This
20 is Robbin La Vine a Subsistence Policy Coordinator
21 joining you from Anchorage. Good to be here.

22

23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all. Was that all
24 of our new folks online? I'll give one more opportunity
25 for anyone else to introduce themselves.

26

27 (No response)

28

29 And we apologize for that echo. It
30 happens when one of the mics in the room is left on. So,
31 we'll try to do a better job of making sure those are
32 turned off. And then we do have our Chair back so, I'll
33 turn it back over to Chair Cleveland. Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
36 Brooke, and welcome to the ones who just introduced
37 themselves, the new people in the room and online. Next
38 we're going to move on to Public Comments On Non-Agenda
39 Items. And, Brooke, is there anyone signed up this
40 morning?

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, I don't have
43 any cards here in the room. If anyone online would like
44 to give a public comment on non-agenda items, this is
45 the opportunity to do so. And as this is the last day
46 of the meeting, this would be the last opportunity. So,
47 anything related to subsistence that folks might like
48 to comment on that hasn't been discussed, you can raise
49 your hand or say Madam Chair.

50

1 (No response)

2

3 All right. I'm not seeing any. So back
4 to you, Madam Chair.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thank you
7 again, Brooke. Let's move on to the Yukon proposal
8 follow-up with Holly Carroll. If you're on, Holly. Good
9 morning and you're on.

10

11 MS. CARROLL: Good morning. Yes, I was
12 asked by Brooke, based on some conversation that you
13 guys had around your proposals. I guess, one thing is,
14 I'm just kind of here as a resource for you. And so, it
15 might be worth taking up the proposed proposals, one at
16 a time, and seeing if there's anything me or my team
17 could help answer some questions on. I know that the --
18 one of the proposals was regarding the coastal
19 communities in that area. So, having missed the
20 conversation, we did look at the transcripts, but if you
21 wanted to ask any questions that you have or talk about
22 the proposal, we might be able to provide some insight
23 or answer questions.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you so much for
26 joining us this morning, Holly. This is Brooke, for the
27 record. Yeah, so just as a recap for council members and
28 then maybe we can move into sort of the two different
29 proposal ideas that came up, one at a time. The first
30 one that came up was the potential desire for the three
31 coastal communities to kind of be separated out into
32 their own management area, separate from the Yukon. So,
33 Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay. There had been
34 interest in that in the past. And Member Rogers had
35 raised that. So, perhaps we could start with that topic.
36 And then, the second one would be about the opportunities
37 for six-inch mesh in none -- for non-salmon. But I would,
38 maybe start by giving opportunity to Member Rogers, if
39 you wanted to bring up your comments or idea to Holly
40 and maybe we could first discuss that topic. Thank you.

41

42 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair.

43

44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.

45

46 MS. ROGERS: Madame Chair, through the
47 Chair. I can't quite remember what we were talking about
48 regarding -- Brooke, can you restate so, I can refresh
49 my memory? And, because my notes are there at the
50 meeting.

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair, this is
3 Brooke. Yes, no problem, Alissa. So, when we were talking
4 about potential ideas for federal fisheries proposals
5 to submit, you had brought up the past discussion about
6 the coastal communities wanting to be separate from the
7 Yukon for management. And I don't know -- if you don't
8 have necessarily anything else to add, that's okay. I
9 just wanted to give you the opportunity to do so before
10 Holly maybe helps address that.

11

12 MS. ROGERS: Oh, it's okay. Holly has the
13 floor.

14

15 MS. CARROLL: Okay. Through the Chair.
16 Madam Chair Cleveland. So, on this topic, this is an
17 interesting topic and it has been brought up multiple
18 times in different forums. We actually even had a tribal
19 consultation, government-to-government consultation
20 with the community of Scammon Bay about this. One of the
21 things that I would really like to see is having some
22 dialogue directly with those communities about this
23 request. I don't want to speak for the three communities,
24 Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay, because their
25 requests are kind of similar but a little different. And
26 they are something like, you know, we are not sure that
27 the fish passing by these communities are Yukon bound,
28 and so, we do not feel we should be managed with the
29 Yukon River. That's at least the way that I understand
30 the basic request. One of the issues with that is that
31 we really need to sit down with those communities
32 directly, particularly, would be great if their tribal
33 councils would meet with us or if we could come into
34 community and discuss this. Share what science we do
35 have, and science we don't have to address that question
36 about the origin of the stocks passing in front of those
37 communities. But we do know that historical studies,
38 that are quite old now, did show that when you tag fish
39 near some of those communities, they do end up, the
40 majority of them end up in the Yukon River. And right
41 now, our Yukon River stocks are doing just so very
42 poorly. The summer chum, the fall chum, and the chinook
43 continue to be, basically, unfishable. We're not meeting
44 our escapement goals by a massive margin. I mean, for
45 most of our systems, we're not even meeting half the
46 escapement goal, we're meeting a quarter of the
47 escapement goal, which is biologically pretty scary for
48 the long-term survival of these species. And so, at this
49 time, you know, I don't see how pursuing this proposal
50 to change the definition of their area would help them

1 management. Because if there's any chance that the
2 salmon passing those communities and then turning into
3 the Yukon mouths and coming up the river are Yukon bound,
4 we really do need to continue our conservative approach
5 and keep fishing for those three species closed.
6

7 And so, if you just wanted to focus on,
8 okay, we don't want to be associated with the Yukon
9 area, you are already, that area is already considered
10 a coastal area. And we can manage it separately. And we
11 often have. So, for instance, the timing of the fish,
12 they're first to arrive in the coast. And so, often any
13 closures that we make would be long before District 1,
14 or conversely, once the fish have passed into the mouth
15 completely towards the tail end of the run, we often
16 would open up the coast first and then open up Y1 after
17 the fish had completely passed Y1, because there's quite
18 a few days of travel time there. So, we already have the
19 management flexibility to manage the coast separately.
20 But in the last few years, we haven't been, because the
21 conservative approach kind of requires that we just be
22 really cautious and close all areas, right when we think
23 the first fish would arrive. And so, we've been including
24 the coast in the Y1 and closing them June 1. There's a
25 chance that some salmon would come in past those areas
26 a little earlier than June 1 but our data shows that
27 it's not many. So, the real question is, does this RAC
28 want to put in a proposal that would somehow change the
29 management area, and what did they hope to achieve by
30 doing that? I guess that's what question I would have
31 for Member Rogers. Does this whole RAC agree that that
32 coastal area should be changed in federal regulation? I
33 mean, they're already listed as a coastal area. We can
34 manage them separately or together, but it's not likely
35 to change the fishing restrictions in place now. Does
36 that make sense?
37

38 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Ms. Holly. Yes,
39 that makes sense. Madam Chair, through the Chair. Alissa
40 Rogers, for the record. It makes perfect sense to me.
41 It was more of coming from Hooper's, Scammon, Chevak
42 people that were calling in at my last Federal
43 Subsistence Board meeting there in Anchorage, that were
44 calling in regarding they wanted to be removed from the
45 location or not location, but they wanted to be removed
46 from those heavily restrictions because the type of
47 fishing that they do there doesn't coincide with the
48 Inner Yukon and Black River style of fishing. It just
49 all depends on the wind. And if we could get you out to
50 Hooper, Scammon, and Chevak to do community meetings,

1 I'm more than willing to happily help you set those up.
2 I know they've been wanting to. There was some very --
3 a lot of people that called into that meeting so, I
4 would be more than willing to help out in any capacity
5 to get you out there for to get more information.
6

7 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair. Yeah,
8 that would be amazing. We have, like I said, been in
9 contact with each of those communities and talked about
10 having a meeting, and then we just have never really
11 made one happen and I'm not sure what it will take. We
12 would prioritize a trip out there. We could afford to
13 fly out there and meet with folks. I think we just need
14 the invite from the communities. One thing that is at
15 the heart of this kind of misunderstanding is that, you
16 know, they may not have much faith in the current data
17 about where the, you know, the studies that were done
18 to determine whether the fish passing there are Yukon
19 bound. And so, one kind of real positive thing, and I
20 think it's in your packet, but Alita Trainor and Jesse,
21 I am forgetting her last name, but from Alaska Department
22 of Fish and Game Subsistence Division, they worked to
23 design a study that would involve community interviews,
24 anadromous waters research and that before the Chevak
25 area to, specifically, address the fish in their area.
26 And, for a while, we were really excited about that
27 project, but we were waiting on some FRMP funding. But
28 now, I just found out it's also been funded by AKSSF and
29 so, my hope is they'll proceed with that study.
30

31 I think if we could get some more
32 current research in the area that actually is designed
33 by locals and involves locals, I think we could kind of
34 bridge the gap on our gaps and understanding about those
35 fish, but also in our gaps in understanding the way they
36 fish, what their needs are, but also hopefully a better
37 understanding that we do really need to conserve. If
38 they are Yukon fish, we really need to conserve them.
39 Any harvest of those fish right now could be detrimental
40 to the long-term survival for the whole river. So, my
41 hope is that, if we can have these meetings, and also
42 engage in this research, it might take a little time,
43 research doesn't happen overnight. But my hope is that
44 we could help to turn the corner for these communities
45 and at least help them kind of understand where they fit
46 in the Yukon management and have kind of more of a
47 proactive role in it.
48

49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
50 Holly. It's good to hear that so far, you've met with

00013

1 one of the villages as a consultation and that you plan
2 to consult more with the other tribes. Does anyone have
3 any other questions? One second. We're having technical
4 difficulties. If you can have -- if you guys can hear
5 us online, hold off a little bit.

6

7 MS. CARROLL: We can hear you.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. One
10 second.

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: We lost our visuals. This
13 is Brooke. So, sorry, if you could stand by for just a
14 few moments. We're having some surge plug power tripping
15 issues.

16

17 (Pause)

18

19 Okay, we got power back to our
20 projector. Thank you for the patience. Sorry to
21 interrupt the conversation.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, does anyone
24 have questions or comments for Holly on that particular
25 proposal idea of having those three coastal communities
26 of Chevak, Hooper, and Scammon be their own area/zone?
27 Which they, you know, already are considered part of the
28 coastal communities but managed under the Yukon.

29

30 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

33

34 MR. BEANS: Frederik Beans here. Perhaps
35 we could look into this proposal once our -- the fish
36 stock, you know, comes up and then we could look into
37 that -- this proposal. Thank you.

38

39 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
40 Brooke. Thanks for that comment, Fred. Holly, were you
41 able to hear Member Fred Bean's comment there?

42

43 MS. CARROLL: Yes, I. Yeah, I think
44 that's great.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. This is Brooke
47 again. Yeah. Holly, I know the RAC would really
48 appreciate any reports back in the future if you do, if
49 you are able to find those opportunities to have more
50 discussions with those communities and also this ongoing

1 research about those fish and, potentially, where
2 they're migrating through, I think would be of great
3 interest to them. But before we move on to the next
4 topic about the six-inch mesh for non-salmon, any final
5 comments or questions for Holly on the coastal district?
6

7 (No response)
8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Can I? This is
10 Jackie. Can I check if Myron Naneng is online by chance?
11 Just because he is from that cluster of villages and
12 it'd be nice to hear from someone from that area. No?
13 Okay.
14

15 MS. ROGERS: Madam Chair, through the
16 Chair.
17

18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Alissa.
19

20 MS. PINGAYAK: My name is Liana, and
21 I'm.....
22

23 (Simultaneous speech)
24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh, Liana.
26

27 MS. PINGAYAK: On my first term with
28 Chevak Native Village. And I'm just sitting in here to
29 kind of get familiar with some of the ties that the --
30 as a council member, you know, they should have. I'm --
31 I just have a question. How do they -- that lady, I
32 didn't catch her name, she said she they just need an
33 invite from Chevak. What type of invite do you need?
34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, oh, and
36 that was Holly Carroll. Holly do you mind, if you heard
37 the question, can you answer it, please, if you can?
38

39 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, sure, Madam Chair,
40 through the Chair. Hi, Liana. I'm happy to meet you. I'm
41 -- my name is Holly Carroll, and I'm the Fishery
42 Biologist and River Manager for the Yukon River for Fish
43 and Wildlife Service. So, the Federal Manager. And yeah,
44 we really -- we would be happy to have a government-to-
45 government consultation at any time, at the request of
46 any tribe along the Yukon and along the coast. So, we
47 offer those, we usually send emails to every single
48 tribe, including Chevak. We have you on our mailing list.
49 So, if you haven't seen those, I know that the Assistant
50 Manager, Keith Herron, who you guys are going to hear

1 from later, he sent out some emails earlier this season
2 reminding all the tribal governments that at any time
3 they can request a government-to-government consultation
4 with us. So, that could be a phone call, that could be
5 a Zoom. Or, if you want a community visit, we would love
6 to come out, especially since, you know, with Chevak,
7 Hooper, and Scammon, we have been trying to come out and
8 have a meeting in person. So, yeah, if you want to maybe
9 put your email in the chat, if you're comfortable doing
10 that, then we would reach out to your tribal council and
11 try to arrange something.

12
13 MS. PINGAYAK: Madam Chair, through the
14 Chair. I'm calling through the phone so, I don't have -
15 - I'll search you, or I'll find you.

16
17 MS. CARROLL: Okay. Or you could give us
18 your tribal council phone number and we'll make sure we
19 have the right one, and then we'll call you.

20
21 MS. PINGAYAK: Should I give that to you
22 now?

23
24 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, that would be great.

25
26 MS. PINGAYAK: Okay. 917-358-7428. And
27 our Acting Admin is Tavin, T a v i n.

28
29 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair. That's
30 wonderful, thank you. Yeah, we would love to come out
31 whenever it's convenient for your community. So, offline
32 we'll get in touch with you very soon. And I guess, one
33 thing I would ask, maybe the other members of the RAC,
34 if Myron Naneng comes back on and wants to call us
35 directly. I'm going to put my phone number in the chat.
36 And you guys can always just give me a call directly.
37 Especially on this topic, it would be really great to
38 just get a dialogue going and make sure that we're just
39 really hearing what the concerns are and figure out a
40 way that's the best path forward that actually is
41 something that communities want.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That sounds
44 good, Holly. And then I want to thank Liana for being
45 online from Chevak. There's people are wondering what
46 your last name is Liana.

47
48 MS. PINGAYAK: My last name is Pingayak.

49
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Do you mind
2 spelling it?

3
4 MS. PINGAYAK: It's P i n g a y a k.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native),
7 Pingayak. Okay. Quyana again for being online and
8 providing your comments.

9
10 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
11 Brooke. I just wanted to read Holly's phone number that
12 she put in the chat for folks that might not be on the
13 Teams meeting, that can't see it. So, it's Holly Carroll.
14 And like she said, she's the Fish and Wildlife Service
15 In-season Manager for the Yukon River and her number is
16 907-351-3029. So that's 351-3029. Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again,
19 everyone. If it's okay, can we move on to the next
20 proposal idea related to the Yukon, which is the six-
21 inch mesh opportunity -- subsistence opportunities in
22 non- salmon spawning tributaries.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
25 Brooke. So, this discussion came up also during the
26 proposal ideas that were shared. And -- so, this is an
27 opportunity that -- well, opportunity has been provided
28 in the past by the in-season managers to have the use
29 of six-inch mesh gear in certain areas, non-salmon
30 areas, along the Yukon. And there are maps of where --
31 the waters that have been open to this opportunity. I
32 know we had a suggestion from Member Wassily Alexie from
33 Russian Mission for a stream or area that you would like
34 to see open for this opportunity. So, perhaps, Wass, you
35 could let Holly know where that area is and the timing
36 and things like that. What you're hoping to fish for, I
37 think that would provide the management team with some
38 good information and I can also put a map up on the
39 screen for folks to look at for reference. Is this area
40 in Y3 district? Okay, I'll make sure I share the right
41 map. Thank you. And this is Brooke, just bear with me,
42 I'm getting a map up here. All right. Thank you. Wassily,
43 would you like to share with Holly what you shared with
44 us the other day? Thank you.

45
46 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Madam Chair.
47 Hello, Holly. This is Wassily, from Russian Mission. I
48 just had a request yesterday, I brought up about, you
49 know, using a four-inch net in a non-salmon tributary
50 area. That's one location that's below -- across Russian

1 Mission. It's called a (In Native) Slough, but they call
2 it Portage Slough. And from my understanding is, when -
3 - during closed season, there's people that want to set
4 mesh in that area because they do go for whitefish. It's
5 mainly whitefish, pike, lush and sheefish. And from what
6 we heard, that we're told we are allowed to use only
7 four-inch and we can't use any six-inch nets along that
8 slough. So, my request was to see if we can lift that
9 and use six-inch during closed season or during the
10 summer season.

11
12 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair. This is
13 Holly again. So, one thing about that is that -- so, our
14 team, Shane Ransbury is one of the main people who made
15 these maps and helped to, kind of, do the research to
16 figure out which areas we could safely open up, because
17 they don't have migrating salmon. And we recognized --
18 so, last year was the first year we did this, and we
19 definitely are getting individual feedback from
20 communities of areas that, maybe we opened up that do
21 have salmon, and that was a mistake, or areas that could
22 still be opened up that we've got closed. And so, we
23 definitely want to hear this feedback. And one of the
24 best ways would be to, again, to call us directly. I've
25 got -- Shane just showed up online, that's great. I
26 might have him step in and talk about the Portage Creek
27 you're talking about. But just -- so, in regards to a
28 proposal, so you would want to change the federal regs
29 to basically allow fishing in this one creek. One of the
30 things about that process is like, we already have the
31 authority to open and close the various creeks. And so,
32 if we choose to close them, it's usually because we've
33 got some evidence that there's migrating salmon. And so,
34 we're only opening the areas we're pretty sure there's
35 no migrating salmon and we're doing that in fall time.
36 But we 100% recognize that you get the bigger, better
37 pike and sheefish and broad whitefish if you're using a
38 six-inch. That's why we did this. But the trade-off of
39 allowing a six-inch in a stream that could have salmon,
40 either milling into it, so maybe they don't spawn in
41 there, but maybe it's a little refuge. As they're
42 migrating past, maybe they pull in there and then swim
43 back out, that could be why there's been presence in the
44 past. If there's any chance of that, we don't want a lot
45 of six-inch gear out there catching those chums and
46 kings. So, that's just kind of the rationale for how we
47 did these maps for each region. I'm going to hand it off
48 to Shane to just see if he has anything specific to add
49 about your Portage Creek request.
50

1 MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair, this
2 is Shane. So, yeah, I think, you know, in that area,
3 like, it's a little hard for me to think about. And we,
4 it would definitely be nice to have more conversations
5 about this and more time to talk about it. I know that
6 when we made all the maps for the whole region, they
7 trend or they tend to be conservative. And so, like I
8 know that the, where the river, I always pronounce it
9 wrong, it's like the (In Native) where it cuts into
10 Portage Slough, that the river itself was open, but open
11 kind of back off the slough away. And I think it would
12 be -- well, I don't know, like, so, on one hand, we
13 started out just doing this during fall season for kind
14 of the reasons that Holly has said. And we're kind of
15 slow walking into it a little bit because we don't want
16 there to just suddenly be this huge increase in closed
17 salmon species. So, like, if we talk at least about just
18 in fall, you know, the (In Native) was open for six-inch
19 and we could open it a little closer to where it cuts
20 into Portage Slough, which would give an additional,
21 like, something like two miles of fishing. But I
22 understand that that wouldn't necessarily help you out
23 with something like sheefish.

24
25 I think to go further than that and into
26 the Portage Slough itself, since it's so close to the
27 main stem Yukon, it's, you know, it's silty and all
28 that, I think that would take longer discussions for us
29 to figure out if we want to have an opening there. And
30 just, in general, throughout the whole river, I think
31 we'd want to have a lot more discussions to see if we
32 wanted to even expand this opportunity into summer
33 season at all, because of the concerns over, primarily,
34 chinook salmon, but also summer chum, that have been
35 closed in recent years. So, you know, it's not to say
36 that like it can't happen. I just think we'd need to
37 talk a little bit more about it.

38
39 When we initially opened up the six-inch
40 opportunities in fall season, you know, last year was
41 the first year and I think we opened, like, I can't
42 remember the exact number. I want to say it was like 80
43 different streams and rivers. And following that, we've
44 had some feedback to close at least one. And then I've
45 received feedback to open another maybe 15 or so. And
46 we're still kind of reviewing all that. So, you know, I
47 definitely encourage people to, you know, propose
48 anything that they would like added for six-inch
49 opportunities. I can't promise anything right now
50 because we do want to be conservative if we can. But I

00019

1 appreciate you bringing that to our attention and we'll
2 have further discussions about it.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
5 that. Is there anyone else who wants to respond?

6

7 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is Wassily
8 again.

9

10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wass.

11

12 MR. ALEXIE: On the map, I noticed there
13 are dark areas, it's showing that there's open waters
14 and it's the first time I saw this map. Maybe, if you
15 can send some out to our tribe, we can distribute them
16 out to the people so that they can know. And another
17 thing is I just want to bring up that slough that I'm
18 talking about. There's only like maybe 4 or 5 people,
19 at the most, that usually go out and set nets. And that's
20 about, maybe 4 or 5 miles from the mouth of the stream.
21 There's a fork that goes to the left and right. That's
22 usually where they, mainly, set the nets in that area.

23

24 MR. RANSBURY: Sorry, I was just taking
25 some notes. Through the Chair. Is that -- so is that
26 going up into (In Native) River itself or is that still,
27 like they're setting in Portage Slough before it, kind
28 of, cuts into the clear water of (In Native)?

29

30 MR. ALEXIE: That's -- it's going both
31 ways. There's a fork. The left fork goes up to what we
32 call (In Native) River. And the right side goes up to
33 the tramway, up to Portage Slough.

34

35 MR. RANSBURY: Can you spell the river
36 on the left side?

37

38 MR. ALEXIE: What was that again?

39

40 MR. RANSBURY: Do you mind spelling the
41 river that it goes up to on the left side?

42

43 MR. ALEXIE: The left side is called
44 Klik, k l i c k, I think, or q, something like that.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke.

47

48 MR. RANSBURY: Okay.

49

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Wass, if you want to point
2 a, like, come up and point, I can be sure to note it
3 down and maybe send some more visual details to Shane,
4 too. I know it's hard when we're on this hybrid meeting.

5
6 MR. RANSBURY: Yeah. Through the Chair.
7 Because I have a general idea of the area you're talking
8 about, but I wasn't aware of names for some of these
9 things. And so, it's always helpful to know what the
10 individual names are. So -- because I think, last year
11 during, fall season, we opened, basically like the right
12 fork of what you're talking about. We didn't open the
13 left side. So, I could, you know, the chance that we can
14 get that part open or open up to Portage Slough is much
15 better than Portage Slough itself, where it's
16 (indiscernible) still. But again, this would be mainly
17 during fall season, and we'd have to have more
18 discussions about whether we want to have any because
19 we haven't six-inch opportunities anywhere in the river,
20 up in summer season yet. And it's not, necessarily, that
21 we couldn't, but I think it's just a longer discussion
22 because of the concerns over chinook salmon.

23
24 MR. MCDAVID: Madam Chair.

25
26 (Simultaneous speech)

27
28 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, so.....

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Oh.

31
32 MS. CARROLL: Go ahead.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, sorry, Holly, I didn't
35 -- this is Brooke, I don't want to cut you off, but I
36 did want to let you and Shane know that, it also seems,
37 like maybe some of the map names might not be exactly
38 how local people refer to these areas, too. So, Member
39 Alexie was just telling me, we were up at the screen
40 looking at the map that the (In Native), they actually
41 refer to that as Portage Slough and maybe even the area
42 he's wanting to potentially fish was open last year and
43 they just weren't aware of that. So, yeah, perhaps too,
44 we could get you in contact, Wassily, after the meeting
45 with Shane and Holly and can follow up a little bit more
46 about that. Thanks.

47
48 MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. Can I
49 ask one more question?

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Go ahead.

2

3 MR. RANSBURY: And so, what months would
4 be most important to fish that area?

5

6 MR. ALEXIE: Usually July through
7 October, is when they usually go out and set nets in
8 that area.

9

10 MR. RANSBURY: Okay.

11

12 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair, this has
13 been really helpful discussion. I mean, I think with
14 some of these things, it's important to know that your
15 managers have the authority to just, kind of change these
16 if we can sometimes. Sometimes we can't, or we're doing
17 it for a certain reason. And maybe, we can better explain
18 that. So, it is always worth a direct call. And so,
19 yeah, Wassily, I hope you'll follow up with me and Shane
20 afterwards. We can always run any ideas past Fish and
21 Game, and then we have a couple months to figure out if
22 we can change anything for the coming season. One thing
23 I kind of wanted to mention to folks though about why
24 we're closed for these non-salmon areas in summer. And
25 that's largely based on traditional knowledge. We've
26 heard from countless non-salmon fishermen that the
27 better-quality fish are in fall, that in summer a lot
28 of the whitefish are mushy. And so, you know, we've
29 really, kind of taken that to heart and decided to focus
30 these efforts in fall. There's still the chance that you
31 could have incidental salmon harvest, but it's the best
32 time for letting folks go after those whitefish when
33 they want them the most. And so it's kind of a trade-
34 off of protecting the chinook in summer, and knowing
35 that it's a hardship to not allow the best non-salmon
36 gear in summer, but that's about a month and a half. And
37 then we switch. And then we -- last year we opened these
38 fall six-inch openings August 17th. And then it went
39 till the end of the year. So, we recognize that the
40 weather is starting to get bad in August. If we can move
41 these fall openings a little earlier, we might. We've
42 got to maybe negotiate that with Fish and Game. But,
43 really, that's our rationale behind why we're doing it
44 that way. We're trying to balance what people have told
45 us, when the best quality whitefish fishing is
46 happening, but also how can we avoid the king's, almost
47 entirely, with those gillnets. Because they are proving
48 to still be quite lethal for our kings. We're still
49 harvesting about a thousand kings a year in our four-
50 inch gear. So, we certainly don't want to allow six-inch

1 gear additional to the four-inch. So, those are kind of
2 our balancing priorities that we're doing. And then, to
3 comment on you never seeing this map, that's very
4 frustrating. We are doing our best to make sure that the
5 -- these announcements are legal documents. They go to
6 the tribes by email, they go to the city by email, and
7 then the openings are on a toll-free fishing hotline
8 phone number. And then, they are also on radio
9 announcements. So, Fish and Game handles the radio
10 announcements, but they still match, you know, what you
11 would see today, I've just emailed it to Brooke and
12 maybe she can forward it to you. But if Russian Mission
13 Council and City are not distributing those news
14 releases, which you should be seeing almost weekly,
15 we're usually taking an action every week, every other
16 week. If you're not seeing any of that information, it
17 would be good to know that. And then, maybe, we need to
18 do a better job of connecting with the city and the
19 tribe to see if there's any way they could be printing
20 those out or making announcements, posting them up
21 around town. Because I'm not really sure how to improve
22 that otherwise.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
25 Brooke. Holly, to that point, maybe could get a little
26 feedback from Member Alexie about what's the best way?
27 Is, does email work for your tribe? If we get the right
28 email address or is fax or another way to share? The
29 easiest for you guys?

30

31 MR. ALEXIE: I'm getting an email would
32 be the best way. I can give you our tribe's email
33 address. It's iqugmiut71@yahoo.com.

34

35 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair, thanks
36 very much. That's helpful. I know that we have emails
37 and phone numbers for every single tribe and city. And
38 Keith Herron does a good job of each year calling
39 everyone and checking all those. But yeah, if someone's
40 getting the emails but then doing nothing with them and
41 like there's no system for distributing it in the
42 community, you know, maybe that's worth -- if you have
43 the ability to talk to someone at your tribe to ask hey,
44 could we get you to print those out and put them on a
45 community Board? You know, like I said, there's about
46 15 or 16 of them that will come out during the season.
47 So, it's not a huge burden for someone. But it would be
48 neat to make sure that they know that that's the only
49 way their community might get it. It's also posted on
50 Facebook, actually. Fish and Game posts every single

1 announcement on Facebook. So, also, if people think they
2 might find it that way, you can follow Yukon River
3 Fishing page on Facebook and you'd find it there. And
4 our subsistence program with DOI, they also post it
5 Facebook. So, maybe Brooke can kind of hook you up with
6 that if you have any of those abilities, too.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
9 Brooke. Thanks, Holly. Yep. We can definitely help
10 connect people to those resources. And I wanted to ask
11 you and Shane if it would be okay if I showed the
12 District 2 maps and maybe the District 1 and coastal
13 maps, also on the screen because we might have other
14 members from other areas that might want to provide any
15 feedback about non-salmon opportunities they might like
16 to see in other parts of the lower river. Does that
17 sound okay?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, please.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. One moment. I'm going
22 to take Holly and Shane off the screen for a moment and
23 put the map back up and we'll just -- we'll move down
24 river so, I'm putting the District 2 map up here, and
25 let me get it shared online so folks can also see what
26 we're looking at. Alrighty. So, this is a similar map
27 to what we just looked like -- looked at. This one is
28 in color so it makes it a little bit easier to see. The
29 red is what was closed to the six-inch, and the blue
30 areas are where opportunity was provided in the fall for
31 non-salmon fishing with six-inch. So, if anyone from
32 this region has any feedback for non-salmon fishing that
33 you might like to see, I know we have one, Member Mr.
34 Beans, from this area.

35
36 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans
37 here. All those blue on the -- are inaccessible by boat
38 so, there's no point in trying to fish in those areas
39 where you can't access them. Just a comment.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: And Fred, this is Brooke.
42 Are you aware of any areas that are shown in red where
43 salmon do not go that people might fish for non-salmon?

44
45 (No response)

46
47 And for folks online, they're just
48 conversing here in the room, trying to think about it.
49 All right. Folks are going to walk up to the screen.
50 It's kind of hard to see, so. I'm going to put up the

1 coastal map too, because there, we were pointing towards
2 that one. Let me find it.

3

4 MS. CARROLL: And one thing to point out,
5 just for clarity, is that after December 31st, nothing
6 is closed. So, they can fish for their whitefish with
7 their big mesh through the ice until June 1. Until we
8 close the fisheries in summer. So, actually be even after
9 June 1, further up in the drainage. But, basically, in
10 the spring you can be fishing through the ice. It's not
11 limited.

12

13 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks, Holly. And remember
14 Beans and Member Alexie, we're pointing to this -- I
15 don't know, can you see my pointer on the -- for online?
16 Holly, can you see my mouse?

17

18 MS. CARROLL: Online, I don't see a
19 pointer moving.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Okay.

22

23 MR. RANSBURY: I can see it.

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Well, Shane can
26 see it. Sorry, I'm kind of far away. I think it might
27 say (In Native) Slough. They were saying that folks catch
28 king salmon here sometimes, and that maybe this should
29 be closed to protect them.

30

31 (Talking)

32

33 MS. MCDAVID: In here? Yes. Okay, but not
34 here? Or yes, here? Okay, maybe. Sorry. We might have
35 been confused. So, not in this right here? Yeah.

36

37 (Talking)

38

39 But yeah, Member Beans was just saying
40 that this is one reason the coastal communities are part
41 of the Yukon, because some of these sloughs and streams
42 have salmon that come through. Okay. So, there -- our
43 members were saying, sometimes, before the fish come
44 into the mouth or any of the mouths of the Yukon, they
45 do see them in these connecting waterways from the coast.
46 So, it is something to keep in mind when we're
47 considering whether the coastal district should be a
48 part of the Yukon. And, sorry for folks online, I know
49 it's kind of difficult to have this hybrid conversation
50 but thank you for bearing with us while folks were up

1 at the screen looking at the maps. This is Brooke again.
2 Do any other council members have comments about non-
3 salmon areas? It sounds like Francis might.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

6

7 MR. PRINCE: Good morning, Holly. My name
8 is Francis Prince and I'm from Kotlik. I just want to
9 make a comment on -- I see that you have a drainage
10 closed for the inside Kotlik that goes to a lake in
11 which -- that one is a very narrow slough. Yes. And it's
12 covered in red and that's our main whitefish and pike
13 fish river. And we barely -- we don't see any salmon
14 swim up that one because it's pretty -- the water is
15 different, the water color is different compared to the
16 Yukon. And we catch most of our broad whitefish in that
17 one. With pike. We call -- we call it Inside Kotlik
18 Slough. And it leads up to the lakes that are -- that
19 don't connect to any other waterways.

20

21 MS. AGAYAR: If I remember right, the
22 water is brackish too, right? Yeah. Brackish water?
23 Dark?

24

25 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

26

27 MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. Can I
28 speak to that a little bit?

29

30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, please.

31

32 MR. RANSBURY: So. Yes. I'm glad someone
33 from Kotlik is here. Because I had been wondering about
34 those. So, in general, when I opened all these up, I
35 needed to know a name and I needed to know, you know,
36 like a coordinate for where they enter or whatever. So,
37 I can set, you know, like pass this coordinate, fishing
38 is open. So, sometimes in the -- in these maps,
39 especially in the coastal district, I didn't know the
40 names of places. And so, I couldn't open them up even
41 if I was kind of interested in it. And so, like for
42 example, in earlier this winter, I can't remember what
43 meeting I was at, might have been a Board of Fish or
44 something, but I sat down with some folks from Nunam
45 Iqua and Alakanuk and they walked me through a lot of
46 places in their area and what they were all named between
47 Nunam and Scammon. Kind of like, coming out of the
48 permafrost into the black. And so, I'm going to be
49 working on incorporating a lot of those. And regarding
50 Kotlik, you know, I think there's like three, maybe,

1 places coming, you know, from south to north toward
2 Kotlik and do those all have names, or like, what, you
3 know, you said you have Inside Kotlik Slough, like which
4 one exactly is that? Or if -- maybe if you can work with
5 Brooke to like give me an exact place on the map, just
6 so I don't confuse it with something next to it. That
7 would be super helpful.

8
9 MR. PRINCE: The two sloughs that are
10 near Kotlik that goes nowhere. The one on the left, the
11 shorter one, is called Elachik Slough, but the longer
12 one is called Kotlik River. That one's called the Elachik
13 Slough. A little bit longer -- yeah, the one you're
14 pointing at right now is Elachik Slough but the one on
15 your right is a Kotlik River, which leads to the lakes.
16 But the Elachik Slough is just a dead-end slough.

17
18 MR. RANSBURY: Okay. And you're saying
19 Elachik Slough like electricity?

20
21 MR. PRINCE: Yes.

22
23 MR. RANSBURY: Okay.

24
25 MR. PRINCE: To spell it is. It's spelled
26 E l a c h i k.

27
28 MR. RANSBURY: Oh, okay. Thank you,
29 that's helpful.

30
31 MR. PRINCE: Nobody fishes in that slough
32 because it's too narrow and it's gets shallower. But we
33 mainly fish in the Kotlik River for our broad whitefish
34 and pike, and also sheefish.

35
36 MR. RANSBURY: Okay, that's good to know.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Shane, through the Chair
39 that, this is Brooke, again. And so, those three little
40 fingers coming out from Kotlik, the really long one,
41 Kotlik River, the medium one Elachik, but the way that
42 Francis spelled it and then he said the very short one
43 that you can -- we can kind of barely see it on the map
44 here, it's kind of -- is near the dump in the community,
45 past that. But he said that they do do a little bit of
46 pike fishing in that real short one, too, but he wasn't
47 sure of the name. He'd have to ask some elders in his
48 community, but we could follow up after the meeting with
49 that.

50

00027

1 MR. RANSBURY: Okay. Yeah, I'd appreciate
2 that.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: We're looking at maps on
5 phones now so one moment.

6
7 MR. PRINCE: And also, this one right at
8 the mouth. You can barely see it. It's very, very tiny
9 still, when we do our cisco fishing there. Whitefish.
10 So, there's barely no salmon there.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. And Shane, I'm going
13 to try to move my mouse one more time there. I don't
14 know if you can see it on your screen. There's this
15 teeny little finger over here that Francis also said
16 there's not salmon. And they fish for non-salmon in
17 there.

18
19 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. On the maps,
20 the little one that Francis is talking about with the
21 Apple maps, it's spelled k a n u n u k. Kanunuk or
22 Kanunuk Slough or something like that.

23
24 MR. PRINCE: Shane.

25
26 MR. RANSBURY: Okay.

27
28 MR. PRINCE: This is Francis again, and
29 I got it. There's another small slough, which was our
30 old village site called Chaniliut, and I got through
31 pointing it out to Brooke here on the map. It's toward
32 the mouth, and that one's our main cisco fishing waters.
33 It's smaller than Kotlik Slough. Kotlik River.

34
35 MS. AGAYAR: In the maps. It's spelled C
36 h a n i l i u t.

37
38 MR. RANSBURY: Okay. That's helpful. I -
39 - you know, I have a some of the folks from Nunam shared
40 with me a pretty good map with names for a lot of these
41 so, I think I should be able to look them up okay based
42 on what you guys are telling me.

43
44 MR. PRINCE: Through (In Native) and (In
45 Native), they sometimes do get salmon in them, only when
46 the water is very high. And at the mouth of those
47 sloughs, it's pretty shallow.

48
49 MR. RANSBURY: Sorry. Which one is that?
50 That was the (In Native).

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

MR. PRINCE: Yes.

MS. AGAYAR: I have a question for Francis. What kind of salmon do they sometimes get when the water is high enough? Tiffany here.

MR. PRINCE: In (In Native) and (In Native) sometimes they usually get the kings and the chums. They swim up them, but they come right back out, when the water is really high. And it also depends on the wind conditions, what kind of winds we're getting in Kotlik.

MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. It's kind of hard to know online. Are you guys still having side discussions about this?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: A little, but not so much as earlier. But I think that might cover -- not everything, but I think that's all everyone has, besides, Francis.

MR. PRINCE: I have a question. Would it be nice to open up the Chaniliak Slough, just for our whitefish? Because I see it's closed and we don't catch any salmon in the Chaniliak Slough. It's too small and narrow and shallow.

MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. Let me look into it. I didn't realize Tiffany was there earlier. So, Tiffany so, I talked to her earlier about some of the stuff over by the Black River and so, you know, Tiffany, if you could share with me maybe what exactly that slough is or where exactly it is, I can look for it like we can meet up after this and talk more about it. I just -- I want to make sure I'm looking at the right slough, essentially.

MR. PRINCE: Chaniliak Slough is right below Kotlik, I got through pointing it out to Brooke and Tiffany.

MS. MCDAVID: I'm going to have Francis -- this is Brooke, show us one more time so, I can make sure we're.....

So, this is Brooke, for the record. I'm going to try to zoom in this map a little. Okay. Okay. Tiffany, can you lean this way? Thank you. Sorry, I'm

00029

1 trying to -- okay. So, this little, teeny finger coming
2 off. I don't know if you can see my pointer, Shane. Can
3 you see it?

4
5 MR. RANSBURY: You're not sharing
6 anymore.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, gosh. Sorry. Too many
9 things, guys. Okay.

10
11 MR. RANSBURY: You know, I'll just --
12 I'll say to you, while we're talking about this, I'm
13 also going to be in Emmonak in early June. So, if anyone
14 happens to be in the area, we can talk about this, too.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: That's great to know. I'm
17 sharing the map now. Are you able to see the pointer?

18
19 MR. RANSBURY: Yeah, I can see it.

20
21 MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Yeah, this little
22 finger is what Francis was referring to as Chaniliak
23 Slough.

24
25 MR. RANSBURY: Oh, I thought that was (In
26 Native) that you were talking about earlier.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: I think this one over here
29 might be -- the little one, is what Tiffany called it.
30 I'm sorry I missed the name.

31
32 MR. RANSBURY: Oh, okay.

33
34 MS. AGAYAR: Yes. Francis has mentioned
35 five little areas.

36
37 MS. MCDAVID: And when I get to Fairbanks
38 next week, I can just circle them on a print copy, that'd
39 make it easier.

40
41 MR. RANSBURY: Okay. Yeah, that'd be
42 great.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Well, that was
45 a really good discussion. We really thank you guys for
46 calling in and helping out to facilitate that.

47
48 MR. RANSBURY: Thank you.

49
50

00030

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, thank you
2 everyone. And Frederick Beans.

3
4 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans, Chair here.
5 Mountain Village. I'm sorry, we're going on and on and
6 on, but is there a possibility we could look at Y2? Yes.
7 And zoom in to Mountain Village, right across Mountain
8 Village, please. Okay, Madam Chair, right behind
9 Mountain Village, you see that red area? That down, down,
10 down, down, south of Mountain Village, you see Mountain
11 Village, yeah, that there is a dead-end creek there that
12 we call (In Native). And there's no salmon migrate going
13 into that short slough. So, it's not a slough, it's a
14 creek. But that there, is no salmon in that area. That's
15 where we fish for our whitefish and our whitefish,
16 basically so that -- if we can get it to blue, you know,
17 that would be great. Thank you.

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair. This.....

20
21 (Simultaneous speech)

22
23 MR. BEANS: The name is (In Native). I'm
24 sorry, I can't spell. You could phonetically spell it,
25 but that's what I do. So, I don't know the spelling, but
26 it's called (In Native).

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. Member
29 Beans, is it here, behind the words, we can't really see
30 it on the map.

31
32 MR. BEANS: Yes, it is right behind the
33 word Mountain Village. So, you could see that red mark,
34 right there. That's where we set, you know, and there's
35 no salmon that I know of that ever went into that little
36 creek.

37
38 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. There's no
39 spelling or name on that river in the Apple maps.

40
41 MR. RANSBURY: Is this just downstream
42 amount, a little bit, like you got across the river, and
43 then it's downstream, but then it kind of flows east to
44 west.

45
46 MR. BEANS: It is. Yes, it is. Downstream
47 about a mile or so and across the river and it's inland,
48 about less than a mile. And it runs, basically, about
49 maybe three miles or so. It drained out to a -- from a
50 little lake in that area.

00031

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. RANSBURY: Okay, I think I know what you're talking about. Brooke, can I share a screen? Is that possible?

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Yes. Let me stop sharing, and I'm gonna throw you guys back up there, and then you can share. All right, go ahead.

MR. RANSBURY: All right. So, can you see this?

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Yes, we can.

MR. RANSBURY: Okay. So, good imagery. Okay, so here.

MR. BEANS: You see that? That finger? Yeah, yeah, yeah. No. Over that way. Over. Keep going over here. Yeah, yeah. That one. Keep going. Yeah.

MR. RANSBURY: So, like, right where my cursor is, right where it's coming out, this one?

MR. BEANS: Excuse me. What did he say?

MR. RANSBURY: So, it comes out right where my cursor is, if you can see that.

MR. BEANS: Yes, that the -- that is the little creek we putting a fishnet, actually further in so, yes.

MR. RANSBURY: Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

MR. BEANS: And no further questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Frederick, for pointing that out. If there's nothing else from the room.

(No response)

Yeah. So, I'm not hearing or seeing anybody. So, again, thank you to the both of you, Holly and Shane. Oh, and then actually, hold on. Stans -- Stanislaus has a question. Stan, (In Native).

1 MR. SHEPPARD: Quyana, Madam Chair. Yes.
2 Shane, the map Brooke put up was inside 30-mile. All the
3 streams on the south side going down. On the left side,
4 going down, they're all non-salmon. I see you only had
5 (In Native) marked, all those streams in the 30 mile
6 area that I think are on the left side and the right
7 side coming up there are non-salmon. So, theoretically
8 they should be all blue instead of red. Thanks, Shane.
9 And.....

10

11 (Simultaneous speech)

12

13 MR. RANSBURY: Madam Chair.

14

15 MR. SHEPPARD: (In Native) is the main
16 one, they put six-inch for whitefish and sheefish. Thank
17 you both, springing in the (indiscernible).

18

19 MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. Yeah.
20 I mean, if you could, you know, since you're there in
21 Mountain Village, if you could send me, I don't know,
22 like could you send me like a, maybe a, a picture or
23 something of a map? And if you just hand drew what the
24 names were on it, that would be helpful. And then I
25 could just go through and digitize it to make it part
26 of the map itself. And, especially, if you knew the name
27 and how to spell the name of the slough that he was just
28 talking about across from Mountain Village. But really
29 for any of these that you guys have on that side, you
30 know, it might be helpful to just do it all at once. And
31 then you could just email me just a little map with your
32 handwritten notes on it. That would be really helpful.

33

34 MR. SHEPPARD: Okay, we'll give it a try.
35 Through the Chair, Stanislaus Sheppard. Traditional name
36 for that slough that you guys were looking at with Member
37 Fred Beans was (In Native). Right after breakup, as soon
38 as we can, we go set our six-inches across there and
39 haul a lot of sheefish. Thank you very much.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Stan, would
42 you be able to repeat that name, slowly, please? So, we
43 have it recorded, and then, I don't know, if you're able
44 to spell it, that would be helpful. If not, that's okay.

45

46 MR. SHEPPARD: Through the Chair.
47 Stanislaus Sheppard, again. Brooke, that traditional
48 subsistence area for sheefish and broad whitefish is
49 called (In Native). I don't know the exact spelling. I
50 can make phone calls and get the right spelling. And

00033

1 later on, after a break or after lunch, I can provide
2 that spelling for you.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, Stan.
5 Can I? Let me see if I have it right. Is it (In Native)?

6

7 MR. SHEPPARD: Yes.

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And then (In
10 Native) is another name for it?

11

12 MR. SHEPPARD: No, it's just (In Native).

13

14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Got it.

15

16 MR. SHEPPARD: Not (In Native), no. (In
17 Native).

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Fred.

20

21 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans.
22 There is no (In Native) name for that (In Native). Just
23 for the record.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
26 Frederick. Okay. If that's all everybody. I know I've
27 thanked you guys so many times already, but thank you
28 one last time, Shane and Holly and everybody in here who
29 participated in this conversation. I'm going to move up
30 along the agenda and we're going to stay with fisheries
31 reports and next would be the Kuskokwim River
32 Intertribal Fish Commission. But first, let's take a
33 break until 11. Until 11. So, 12 minutes or 10 minutes
34 and then so we can start right at 11.

35

36 (Off record)

37

38 (On record)

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Welcome back
41 from recess. It's 11:07. A little over our time again,
42 on our break. But we're all back now. So, as I said
43 before, we're going to pick up on the agenda under
44 Fisheries Reports b: Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish
45 Commission Update and we have Terese to present. Thanks.
46 Go ahead, Terese.

47

48 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Madam Chair, and
49 good morning again. For the record, my name is Terese
50 Vicente. I work with the Kuskokwim River Intertribal

1 Fish Commission as our Policy and Programs Director, and
2 I live here in Bethel. I handed out two documents in the
3 room at the beginning of the day. And there's some
4 additional copies on the table in the back. Apologies
5 for folks online, I didn't submit these to Brooke in
6 time to post to the agenda but happy to email or fax you
7 copies afterwards. I can get your contact information
8 through Brooke. I'll just -- I'll walk through these
9 documents briefly. I don't want to read them to you all,
10 you can look through them more. And I'm happy to take
11 questions on anything. But, as you all know, the
12 Intertribal Fish Commission is a nonprofit here in
13 Bethel or headquartered here in Bethel, but working to
14 serve the 33 federally recognized tribes of the
15 Kuskokwim River watershed in fisheries management,
16 research and monitoring. I'll start with this report to
17 the RAC which we had prepared for your fall meeting last
18 year. And so, we just wanted to make sure you saw this,
19 there's haven't been too many updates since then so,
20 we're just sharing it with you, after that meeting got
21 postponed.

22
23 So, some important updates about our
24 leadership and staff at the Kuskokwim Fish Commission.
25 Last April, our commissioners got together for our
26 annual meeting in Anchorage and they elected a new Chair,
27 Marten Andrew of Kwethluk. Our former Chairman, Jonathan
28 Samuelson from Georgetown was elected as our Vice Chair.
29 And then our Secretary was Paul Cleveland from
30 Quinhagak. So, those are our leadership. We're having
31 another annual meeting coming up in just a couple of
32 weeks. And we'll be electing some new Executive Council
33 Members as well as our 2026 In-season Management Team
34 and a new Secretary, as well, because Paul Cleveland has
35 resigned. I did also want to note our elder advisors.
36 James Nicolai (In Native) from Kwethluk, as well as the
37 late Nick Alexie, Sr., from Nikolai. He just recently
38 passed away and we're really, really devastated to hear
39 about his passing. So, if I could, I might offer a moment
40 of silence for Nick Alexie Sr., of Nikolai.

41
42 (Moment of silence)

43
44 Quyana. Last year, our Fish Commission
45 celebrated a really important milestone. We turned ten
46 years old, so it's been a decade of our tribes working
47 together since May 5th, 2015, that was our first annual
48 meeting with all of the Kuskokwim River tribes. And our
49 short history is not without ups and downs, but I think
50 our -- where we are now is stronger than where we began.

1 And we're excited for the next 10 years or 10,000 years
2 working for Kuskokwim people in salmon. The second page
3 has our staff. I'll just note that we have a new
4 Fisheries Technician, a Jesuit AmeriCorps volunteer who
5 began with us last August, here in Bethel. That's Harold
6 Marotti. He's in the audience learning about the RAC
7 process so, we're glad to have him here. I don't want
8 to rehash a lot of the salmon management conversation
9 that happened yesterday with our partners from Yukon
10 Delta Refuge, Spencer Reardon and Aaron Moses. But I'll
11 just note that our -- this RAC report has a summary of
12 the 2025 season, as does the second document I passed
13 out to you. This is our Kuskokwim River End-of-Season
14 Summary from 2025. This one is available on our website,
15 for folks listening online, if you'd like to find it.
16 And we've been producing these end-of-season summaries
17 since 2022, I believe. Just to recap, salmon co-
18 management between the Intertribal Fish Commission and
19 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which also celebrated a
20 10 year milestone last year of that formalized co-
21 management partnership. And then it gives us status
22 snapshot of the key salmon species on the Kuskokwim
23 River: chinook salmon, chum salmon, sockeye salmon and
24 coho salmon. So, I think Spencer and Aaron captured this
25 well in their presentation to you of update, or
26 yesterday. But, you know, we're still in conservation
27 mode for chinook salmon on the Kuskokwim River. They're
28 kind of holding steady, but they're not back to long-
29 term abundance. Though I think a lot of people were
30 pleased, as Member Peter said yesterday, that the king
31 salmon last year seemed a lot bigger than in recent
32 years. So, that was encouraging. We're still in
33 conservation mode for chum salmon. And then it's a little
34 uncertain about conservation mode for coho salmon, but
35 I'm not sure that the data are clear that coho salmon
36 have fully recovered on the Kuskokwim River, yet.

37
38 So, our teams at the Intertribal Fish
39 Commission and Fish and Wildlife Service have been
40 meeting and starting to plan for the upcoming season.
41 And we're excited to have our 2026 In-Season Management
42 Team, elected in a couple of weeks, to be able to prepare
43 for the salmon season. So, we'll have lots more
44 information to come. And we're always happy to share
45 information about what's going on, especially, in-season
46 with the public. So, I'll make sure to give you our
47 office phone number, you can get in touch with us. It's
48 on this report, but I'll share it at the end of my update
49 to you all, for folks online.
50

1 Some other updates for you all are about
2 our salmon research and monitoring projects. So, last
3 year we began phase two of a project to use stationary
4 camera systems to monitor salmon spawner abundance in
5 the tributaries. If you all are familiar with counting
6 towers, it's basically -- we've been exploring using a
7 counting tower, but instead of having someone stand up
8 there and count every fish that passes by we're using a
9 camera pointed at the river to video salmon passage. And
10 we have a researcher with Washington State University,
11 Dr. Daniel Auerbach. He's been working with computer
12 programs, like artificial intelligence type stuff, to
13 train it to count the salmon itself. So, we're hoping
14 to get -- be able to use these things in-season and
15 monitor a lot of the tributaries in the Kuskokwim that
16 don't have weirs or that do have weirs, but often get
17 flooded, things like that. So, last year we operated
18 this camera-based escapement monitoring up on the salmon
19 Aniak River. And we are really grateful for support and
20 partnership with the Native Village of Napaimute to run
21 this alongside their weir. We're hoping to run this again
22 this season at the salmon Aniak, as well as the Takotna
23 River and the Kwethluk River.

24
25 Last year, we also operated our
26 Community-Based Harvest Monitoring Program. We talked a
27 little bit about this yesterday. This is where we hire
28 folks in the villages to interview people, get a harvest
29 report, after the fishing openers. And I think, Spencer
30 explained really well how that information is really
31 helpful for in-season management. Just getting a pulse
32 of how many fish people are catching. How much more fish
33 people might need, how strong the run is, things like
34 that. So, we hired 14 monitors in seven villages between
35 Tuluksak, the furthest upriver, and then Eek, the
36 furthest downriver, last year. And we do have some
37 updated numbers from this report. So, we got about 530
38 interviews from those village-based monitors, which is
39 really awesome, that was really great data. And we're
40 grateful for everyone in the communities who spend a
41 little bit of time after very busy and sometimes
42 stressful fishing days to share about their catch.

43
44 Another project we operated last year
45 was the Kwethluk River freshwater production or the
46 screw trap study. We work with the organized village of
47 Kwethluk and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on this one.
48 And this one counts out migrating salmon smolt in the
49 Kwethluk River as they're going out to the ocean. We
50 collect them, we ID them by species, get their length

1 and then release them on their journey. But with the
2 Kwethluk River weir, which unfortunately did not get to
3 operate last year due to funding and capacity shortages.
4 When we have those two projects operating together, we
5 can tell how much fish are leaving the Kwethluk and then
6 how many are coming back, to get an idea of how
7 productive it is. And we focused on the Kwethluk River
8 because it's one of the most productive salmon
9 tributaries in the Kuskokwim drainage, especially for
10 king salmon. So, that study is ongoing. And we plan to
11 operate it again this coming early summer.

12
13 We also have been working with a number
14 of tribes and nonprofits from the watershed in-state to
15 do a water temperature monitoring network, to gauge
16 stream temperature throughout the watershed, and try to
17 understand how that might be affecting salmon,
18 especially salmon spawners, but also the ecosystem at
19 large. So, last year we deployed 19 temperature loggers.
20 There are these small little devices. We just put them
21 under water and have a buoy marking their location or
22 tie them off on a stream bank. And they collect water
23 temperature data throughout the whole time they're
24 installed. So, we deployed those, I think in late May,
25 early June, and then kept them in until early October.
26 So, trying to expand the amount of data we have about
27 climate and ecosystem change in our watershed.

28
29 And then, finally, we operated the
30 Takotna River weir again last year, in partnership with
31 the Takotna Tribal Council. This weir is the only long-
32 term headwaters stock assessment project in the
33 Kuskokwim drainage. It's been operating for over 20
34 years, and we have a completely local crew, which is
35 really awesome. Some of them have been working for the
36 Takotna weir for over a decade. And we've already heard
37 from a couple of them saying they're excited to work
38 with us again this coming year and help collect
39 monitoring data on salmon going way upriver.

40
41 So, that's a little recap of our salmon
42 monitoring projects. Then some other updates to share
43 with you all. And I'm very happy to take questions on
44 any of these. As you all know, there were two big
45 meetings that happened just last month in Anchorage,
46 about the management of salmon from Western Alaska and
47 other parts of Alaska and the world in the oceans. So,
48 the first meeting was of the North Pacific Fishery
49 Management Council. This is the body that's responsible
50 for managing federal commercial fisheries offshore of

1 Alaska. So, from three miles offshore to 200 miles
2 offshore. Beyond that is international waters. And the
3 North Pacific Council for the last, gee, almost like 4
4 or 5 years has been talking about renewing or reviewing
5 management of chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea
6 pollock trawl fishery. So, in July 2023, they began the
7 NEPA process, the environmental impact statement
8 process, to analyze different management approaches for
9 chum salmon bycatch, which, at that time, did not --
10 there was no cap on chum salmon bycatch. And it was
11 really up to the pollock trawl industry to manage how
12 they would avoid chum salmon bycatch in their nets. And
13 about -- in the -- between June and November, is when
14 the trawlers in the Bering Sea catch most of their chum
15 salmon. And it's about 20% or so, across time, of those
16 chum salmon they catch are from western and interior
17 Alaska rivers, including the Kuskokwim and Yukon. So,
18 this process has been going on for a while. I know we've
19 presented to this RAC before with our partners at Tanana
20 Chiefs Conference. Both of our tribal consortia were
21 cooperating agencies in this process. And last spring,
22 we had some members of the council join this RAC, if you
23 remember that. And, as well as some staff from the
24 National Marine Fisheries Service, to share about the
25 process and the different alternatives. So, just a few
26 weeks ago, at the beginning of February, the Council
27 took final action on chum salmon bycatch in the Bering
28 Sea pollock trawl fishery. And what they did is they set
29 a cap of 45,000 Western Alaska chum salmon in part of
30 the Bering Sea. There's a portion of the Bering Sea,
31 just west of Bristol Bay, right above the North Alaska
32 Peninsula, that was identified as a migratory corridor
33 for chum salmon from our region. So, the Council set a
34 cap in that corridor region of 45,000 Western Alaska
35 chum, specifically. And so, the pollock trawlers will
36 have to use the best available genetic data that there
37 is, which for some of the fleet is in-season genetic
38 information to try to stay below that cap of 45,000
39 Western Alaska chum. If they exceed their cap, then
40 they're going to have a partial closure of that corridor
41 area for the rest of their B season. So, the cap will
42 go into effect in the month of June. And then, if they
43 exceed their cap, they would be closed out of the
44 corridor. Excuse me, not through the rest of the B
45 season, but until September 1st. There's a possibility
46 if they chose the wrong kind of closure area once they
47 exceed a cap, they'll get to choose what part of the
48 corridor they want to close down through August, if they
49 choose incorrectly and then further exceed the cap, then
50 the following year they'll start with only part of that

1 corridor area open to fishing. There's no cap on trawling
2 and bycatch of chum salmon outside of that corridor area.
3 And I apologize, I don't have a map visual for you today,
4 but I'm happy to provide one a different time, or I
5 might be able to return after lunch with some printouts
6 for you guys here in the room.

7
8 So, the other thing that the Council
9 decided during this final action was to include new
10 regulations for the pollock trawl fisheries incentive
11 plan agreements. These are their internal contracts
12 among the different sectors of the trawl fleet and the
13 different vessels. And the new regulations include
14 enhanced monitoring of vessels catching more chum salmon
15 bycatch than others. They include using these things
16 called salmon excluders in their nets, which are like
17 these trap doors that research has found salmon can swim
18 out of but pollock can't. They also have new requirements
19 to share their in-season bycatch reports with tribes,
20 tribal consortia and interested salmon users. So, these
21 are all regulatory now. And that was something our
22 Intertribal Fish Commission had supported, these new
23 regulations for the pollock industry to follow, that
24 they'd, mostly, been following since 2022, voluntarily,
25 but now these are mandatory. However, our fish
26 commission was in support of a full Bering Sea-wide cap,
27 at a low number. And then, also a migratory corridor
28 closure cap at an even lower number. So, we didn't get
29 that part of our ask out of the Council, with just the
30 partial migratory corridor closure and the 45,000
31 Western Alaska chum cap.

32
33 So, that's a little update on their
34 final action. It is important to note that, because of
35 the way the federal process works, it's unlikely that
36 any of that final action will be in the regulations
37 until June 2028, at the earliest. So, we're still a
38 couple steps and a couple years off before this is
39 implemented. Although there's nothing stopping the
40 pollock industry from, voluntarily, trying to practice
41 these things now and continue to do what they have been
42 trying to do over the last couple of years to reduce
43 chum salmon bycatch. So, there will be some other
44 opportunities to weigh in on this final action when the
45 federal agency, the National Marine Fisheries Service,
46 posts the final environmental impact statement, there
47 will be a comment period. Can always testify to the
48 Council and share more, though they're mostly done at
49 this point. You could request tribal consultation with
50 the federal agency. And then, once this goes past the

1 Secretary of Commerce's desk, and hopefully they approve
2 it, then it'll come back to the Council to be
3 incorporated into the quota setting process they do
4 every December. So, there's opportunity to speak up
5 then, as well.

6
7 So, that's the North Pacific Council and
8 Chum Salmon Bycatch Update. Then there's a Board of
9 Fisheries update on Area M. So, that meeting happened
10 in mid-February of this year. And, as you all know, the
11 Area M fishery has for a long time been a place where
12 Western Alaska chum salmon are intercepted. Member
13 Andrew, you talked about that yesterday, I believe. You
14 know, people have been knowing this back to the 80s.
15 We've recently learned from an old genetic study, maybe
16 12 years old at this point, that there's also Western
17 Alaska king salmon caught in the Area M fishery and new
18 genetic information shows it's actually a lot of
19 Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay king salmon. I wouldn't be
20 surprised if there were Yukon king salmon there, as well,
21 but the Yukon king salmon numbers are so low, maybe they
22 just haven't been detected since they've been doing the
23 genetic sampling in the past few years of really low
24 Yukon king salmon abundance. So, the Board of Fisheries
25 is the board that manages state fisheries, as you all
26 know. So, in the ocean, that's from shore to three miles
27 offshore, which is part of the Area M fishery, and they
28 actually manage the whole Area M fishery even that that
29 goes into federal waters.

30
31 There were a number of proposals before
32 the Board, specifically for the June Area M fishery.
33 June is the month when the set netters, drift netters,
34 and purse seiners in Area M catch the most Western Alaska
35 bound salmon. There were some proposals that asked for
36 a complete closure in the month of June. No fishing at
37 all. There were others that asked for ten days in a row
38 of closures in the middle of June to let Western Alaska
39 salmon pass through. There were some from Area M
40 fishermen to increase the amount of fishing time that
41 Area M would get in the month of June. Where the Board
42 landed was on a proposal -- well an amended proposal
43 that actually ended up looking a lot like Proposal 140.
44 If you all remember this from 2023, if anyone was
45 tracking this, and that proposal looks a lot like the
46 2001 to 2004 salmon management plan for the Area M June
47 fishery. So, what it did was, it didn't set up
48 consecutive, like long days of closures for Area M but
49 it shortened the fishing windows for all gear types.
50 Instead of having, say, 88-hour openers for the drift

1 netters, they now have, I think it's just 24 hours and
2 then followed by 36 to 40ish hours of closures. So, all
3 in all, we crunched the numbers and it reduced fishing
4 time, like net and water time for the set netters by
5 13%, for the drift netters by 39%, and for the seiners
6 by 30%, from the plan that was previously in effect. So,
7 they have -- they all have less fishing time in the
8 month of June, when Yukon, Kuskokwim and other Western
9 Alaska kings and chums are passing through. And kind of
10 looking at it entirely, it's about a 20 to 30% reduction
11 in fishing time. The Board also adopted a gear
12 modification proposal, that reduced the depth of purse
13 seine gear by 13% in Area M. So, their nets will need
14 to be a little bit shorter, which might help avoid king
15 and chum salmon swimming, that maybe swim a little bit
16 deeper than say, the reds that are really abundant in
17 that area. So, the new fishing schedule will go into
18 effect this June 2026. And, unless the Board changes it
19 out of cycle, it will be in place until, through the
20 2028 season and then the Board will take up Area M
21 proposals again, in 2029. The gear change proposal for
22 shallower seine nets, they gave fishermen an extra year
23 to be able to purchase that gear and get it up so, that
24 will be an in effect next season, in 2027.

25
26 So, that's an update on some of the big
27 proposals and issues we've been tracking. We're hopeful
28 this new Area M schedule will help our salmon come back.
29 It's definitely a step in the right direction. Didn't
30 go as far as we had wanted it to. You know, our Fish
31 Commission was really supporting longer closures to
32 allow fish to move through the whole area and region.
33 But, you know, less time with nets and water should help
34 the fish some, we hope, so. We'll keep an eye on these
35 things. We try to report bycatch and Area M numbers out,
36 especially, in-season when salmon is on everyone's mind.
37 But I track them pretty regularly and I'm happy to give
38 people updates whenever.

39
40 So, this might be a good time to share
41 our information. You can get a hold of me, directly, at
42 907-545-5022. But our office number is 545-7388. Happy
43 to get calls from anyone and share whatever information
44 we have. You can also email us at info@kritfc.org. And
45 then we try to keep our Facebook, as well as our
46 Instagram up to date. Kusko salmon is our handle and our
47 website is Kuskosalmon.org. And, one final thing I might
48 share, just because this is a little bit newer. There
49 was a subsistence fishery disaster declared for the
50 Kuskokwim region for salmon in 2021, I believe it was.

1 And the funds are now available for applications. We
2 have some information on our website and we're happy to
3 help people fill out the application. It's online only.
4 One per household, just for -- only for the Kuskokwim
5 region. So, there's, I'd have to look up the number, I
6 don't have it right in front of me, maybe I can find it
7 quickly, but there's some funds available from that
8 disaster declaration. It's 568,322 and applications are
9 due online June 9th, 2026, by 12 p.m., noon Alaska time.
10 So, there's a little bit of time. There's some
11 information you'll need to have available. And we've
12 shared it with tribes in the Kuskokwim region. So,
13 someone at your tribal office might be able to help you,
14 but we're also happy to help people fill out applications
15 to try to access some of those subsistence fishery
16 disaster funds. And Madam Chair, I think I'll stop there,
17 but happy to take questions on anything.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I'll ask a
20 question and then Tiffany can go. But I was wondering
21 on the disaster fund, is it -- you might have mentioned,
22 is it just Kuskko River proper or everyone who is signed
23 on to your Commission or the whole Delta?

24
25 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Madam Chair. Good
26 question. It's not necessarily related to the Fish
27 Commission. This is through the Department of Commerce.
28 I think it's -- I'd have to look back. They didn't spell
29 out, like exactly which villages, if I can recall. I
30 believe our coastal communities in the Kuskokwim
31 watershed are a part of that. I know that Mekoryuk and
32 Nunivak Island are not because that was asked on a Q&A
33 I went to with the people that are running this. So, I
34 believe it's just from the Kuskokwim River watershed and
35 the Bay, I believe. Yeah.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Are there any
38 questions or comments for Terese?

39
40 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany has one.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, sorry
43 Tiffany. Tiffany had one and still has one. Tiffany.

44
45 MS. AGAYAR: Good morning. Thank you for
46 the nice, thorough, go-through of what's going on. I was
47 wondering if you would have an update from KRITFC
48 perspective on the Alaska State legislature bills. Those
49 would be good for them to hear about.

50

1 MS. VICENTE: Yeah. Thanks, Member
2 Agayar, through the Chair. Like the banning bottom
3 trawling bills and Board of Fish membership and stuff.
4 Our Fish Commission is still building our capacity to
5 track the legislative process in depth. We don't have
6 any formal stances on any of the bills but to the best
7 of my recollection, there's two bills that we are,
8 somewhat, keeping our eyes on. There's one going through
9 the State Senate to ban bottom trawling in state waters,
10 I believe. And in general, our Fish Commission is
11 supportive of that effort, because we've been hearing
12 more and more concerns from our commissioners and elders
13 about the impacts of trawl fishing on ocean habitat and
14 how that could affect salmon, but also other really
15 important traditional foods: halibut, seals, birds,
16 things like that. And then, our House Representative
17 Nellie Jimmie, last session, or last year, had submitted
18 a bill to change the membership of the Board of Fisheries
19 to allocate seats. So, there'd be, say, a dedicated
20 tribal seat. I think she had written it to be nominated
21 by AFN. Be like dedicated subsistence or commercial
22 seats. We didn't have a formal stance on that one, and
23 I don't have the latest on that bill, unfortunately. So,
24 that's -- I don't know, if you have more information,
25 I'd love to hear it, too.

26
27 MS. AGAYAR: No, it's good. Thank you. I
28 wanted to let them be more aware and hear it from a Fish
29 Commission perspective. Thank you.

30
31 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick
34 Beans.

35
36 MR. BEANS: Ma'am. My name is Frederick
37 Beans, Mountain Village on Yukon. I -- on your report -
38 - I got a couple of questions. On your report, you said
39 you have, you catch the smolts before they migrate out
40 to the ocean, right? Is there any way you can monitor
41 their life cycle up there? Do you have telemetry or
42 anything like that to keep, you know, monitor them?

43
44 MS. VICENTE: Yeah. Thanks, Member Beans
45 through the Chair, this is Terese, for the record. Like,
46 out in the ocean, you're talking about? At this time,
47 we don't, we just monitor them in the Kwethluk River and
48 then release them. There's also a similar effort that
49 the Native Village of Napaimute is doing up in the George
50 River further upriver. We don't know exactly what

1 happens to them as they head downstream and then out
2 into the ocean. And I'm trying to think if I -- I know
3 Fish and Game is starting to do a telemetry project, I
4 believe for coho salmon on our river, which are some of
5 the smolts that we see out migrating from the Kwethluk.
6 But I wouldn't have an update on that. So, we kind of -
7 - we don't know exactly what happens to our fish once
8 they get out in the ocean. Something we are helping with
9 -- we're helping provide funding to University of Alaska
10 Fairbanks, Fish and Game and NOAA Fisheries to do a
11 better genetic baseline of chum salmon. And we're
12 working with the University of Washington to do a better
13 baseline of chinook Salmon so that when we get, say the
14 genetics from Area M or from Bering Sea bycatch, right
15 now, Kuskokwim salmon are lumped into a region that goes
16 down to Bristol Bay and all the way up to Kotzebue, the
17 Coastal Western Alaska genetic group. We're trying to
18 pull out the different genetic groups within there. So,
19 maybe someday, you know, we'd have the DNA to be able
20 to say oh, yeah, that fish, that was a Kuskokwim fish
21 or that was a Kanektok fish or, you know, things --
22 we're trying to refine that. And it would go -- it would
23 be in the Lower Yukon as well, too, and throughout the
24 Yukon. So, but that was kind of an addition. We don't
25 have a telemetry or tagging study to know where our
26 salmon go.

27
28 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, another question
29 is, you said you were trying to have a complete closure
30 out in the Bering Sea for salmon, the corridors. Are you
31 going to continue trying to get it closed for a complete
32 closure?

33
34 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, through the Chair.
35 Thanks for that question. We had been advocating for
36 lower caps that, yeah, would have led to a complete
37 closure if they'd been exceeded. I think we're taking a
38 step back and we're trying to figure out what our next
39 step is to be able to protect our migrating salmon in
40 the Bering Sea. We're still kind of evaluating what the
41 Council decided. And then, it'll take another couple
42 years for that to be seen in the regulations, if it's
43 not contested before that, too, or disapproved by the
44 Secretary of Commerce. So, I think we will continue to
45 do what our tribes ask us to do to protect salmon and
46 minimize the impacts on our salmon that we can control,
47 which is fishing. You know, we can't control climate
48 change, right now, or food webs. The other thing we have
49 started thinking about more is hatchery fish, you know,
50 that are competing for food with our wild salmon out in

1 the ocean. So, these are some of the things we're trying
2 to figure out what, what are our next steps for.
3 Hopefully that helps a little bit.

4

5 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, one more
6 question. Do you have any observers on -- are there any
7 observers on the bottom trawling and who do they report
8 to?

9

10 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, that's an excellent
11 question, Member Beans. Through the Chair, this is
12 Terese. The Fish Commission itself does not employ
13 observers on the Bering Sea trawlers, but in the Bering
14 Sea, there are required to be two observers on board
15 every boat. They're independent from the fishing
16 industry. They're hired and trained by the federal
17 agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, from what I
18 understand. And so, they're on every boat. They're
19 counting the bycatch. They're taking the genetic samples
20 from the bycatch, and then they're reporting that on a,
21 roughly, weekly basis, and it's available publicly, that
22 -- the bycatch data that's reported. So, there's that
23 program. Unfortunately, federal fisheries in the Gulf
24 of Alaska don't have the same observer coverage. And
25 then, in Area M, there's no observer coverage and there's
26 minimal law enforcement presence down there, too. So,
27 there's more uncertainty in the data coming out of Area
28 M because it's all fishermen reported, you know, and
29 reported by the processors from their harvest tickets.
30 There's no one independently monitoring it. We have more
31 confidence in the Bering Sea trawl numbers because there
32 are those independent observers on board every vessel
33 or supposed to be.

34

35 MR. BEANS: One more comment, Madam
36 Chair. Frederick Beans here. You know, when I was
37 commercial fishing on the Lower Yukon, years ago, there
38 was a, they were monitoring the salmon with the scale
39 samples and stuff like that. Can that be implemented on
40 the Area M fisheries down there? You know,
41 independently, basically.

42

43 MS. VICENTE: Through the Chair. Yeah,
44 that's a great question. I had asked a similar one of
45 one of the Board of Fish members in February, and she
46 told me that the Board cannot -- in state regulations
47 that require funding -- if it would be a funding issue,
48 it has to go through the legislature. So, there could
49 be a, say, a bill in our state legislature that would
50 require funds to be spent this way or, you know, our

1 next governor could introduce that into his budget, and
2 then he'd have to, you know, get approved by the
3 legislature. Or the fishing industry could take that on
4 themselves, you know, and do that sampling and work with
5 maybe ADF&G to report the data. But it's not something
6 that could be done through the Board of Fish process.
7 Does that help a little bit?

8

9 MR. BEANS: Thank you very much.

10

11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
12 that thorough report. And I just wanted to note what
13 Brooke just said about, if we -- that the RAC itself
14 isn't able to write letters to the legislature or the
15 state representative, but our tribes can. So, if we're
16 interested in that, like, I would encourage you to
17 attend, you know, your tribal council meeting and,
18 maybe, ask if they're willing to write letters, is one
19 way to communicate to them. And then, I'll move on to
20 my question.

21

22 So, the stationary camera systems, and
23 I know this could probably wait till our lunch, but I
24 appreciated that they came out to Quinhagak to talk about
25 the project and apologies, I wasn't there. But since
26 then, and I don't know if you know this yet, but since
27 then, I've heard back that Quinhagak and maybe another,
28 Kanektok, and maybe another river had been pulled out
29 of the project, and I haven't got a chance to sit down
30 and talk with them. But, yeah, are there -- I don't
31 remember if they said that we'll try again next year or
32 something. Yeah, just, kind of, wondering, I mean, in
33 case we and Quinhagak can do something better to be
34 involved. Thank you. I hope that made sense as a
35 question.

36

37 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, it did. Thanks, Madam
38 Chair. This is Terese. I think, yes, Quinhagak was --
39 we had met with the community back in early October or
40 late September and talked about putting this project on
41 the Kanektok River. I think part of why it hasn't panned
42 out is partly our team's capacity and just being able
43 to do this on a broad scale, we're still building that
44 up. I think it's also partly needing existing escapement
45 monitoring project at the same time. So, that's why we're
46 pairing this stationary camera system with or say, like
47 in Takotna because we have the Takotna weir. And then,
48 at the salmon Aniak, because there's a weir. And then
49 Kwethluk, because we're hoping to install the weir
50 this year. I don't think there's a system on the Kanektok

1 right now.

2

3 So, as we're trying to see if this
4 technology works and is accurate, we need to have, like,
5 that second sort of count with it. Hopefully, like --
6 one of the hopes of this is that, you know, someday,
7 probably not next year or quite soon, but someday, we
8 might be able to install these systems in tributaries
9 that don't have weirs or counting towers or sonars or
10 aerial surveys or anything. So, then we could do it
11 independently, but we're still making sure that the
12 technology and the system and the count works to be able
13 to do that. So, that's the best of my understanding. But
14 Justin Leon is our Research Director and he would have
15 way more details on this, I'd be happy to connect you
16 with him. Or the tribe with him too, if there's
17 questions.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. I've been
20 meaning to get back to Justin and he did write and offer
21 that we can chat longer. So, I'll make sure to do that
22 before our next Council meeting, to be able to update
23 them on that. It is unfortunate, I just hope that maybe
24 we could still be a part of it, somehow, because all the
25 -- since 2015, we have been trying to find a way to get
26 a weir. And for such a heavily used river and bay, it's
27 just baffles me to this day, we don't have an escapement,
28 or we don't have a way to count escapement. And this, I
29 mean, since it's been so hard to get a weir back, there's
30 also, you know, environmental challenges on our river
31 that they would have before with the weirs, we thought
32 this would be, maybe, an avenue to explore to see if
33 this would work better for our river rather than a weir.
34 But we were not aware that the system was planning to
35 just work with systems that already had a weir. So,
36 like, had we known that, we would have maybe applied for
37 ourselves separately or something. Not your fault. And
38 I can talk to Justin more. But besides that, I enjoy
39 seeing the indigenous knowledge stories that you guys
40 post on social media. It's nice to see that coming to
41 fruition after we had planned on it years ago. So, good
42 job on those stories and collecting the indigenous
43 knowledge throughout this watershed. Always good work.
44 Thanks.

45

46 MS. VICENTE: Thanks, Madam Chair.
47 Harrold Moratti, our Fish Tech, wanted to add a little
48 bit more about the stationary camera system. Is that
49 okay? Okay.

50

1 MR. MORATTI: Thank you, Madam Chair.
2 This is Harrold Moratti with the Fish Commission. So, I
3 actually traveled out to Quinhagak with the team back
4 in October, I think it was. And one of the logistical
5 challenges with the camera system is, we went upriver,
6 probably like an hour and a half, two hours. And the way
7 the camera monitoring works is it's face down at the
8 river, and there's a flash panel system that goes in.
9 So, it needs to be a certain depth. And so, we couldn't
10 really find somewhere that was shallow enough. And so,
11 I think, you know, people from Quinhagak know it best.
12 So, if you know somewhere upriver or somewhere that is
13 a certain, like shallowness, to let us know for the
14 future. But it was more so, we couldn't find somewhere
15 that was shallow enough. And, we had gotten upriver to
16 a point, and the people boating us up had told us that
17 it wasn't going to get any shallower. So, that was one
18 of the deciding factors why we chose not to go with
19 Quinhagak.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thank you.
22 Yeah, and around that time, end of September, early
23 October, it's really high water so I don't know if that's
24 the best time to see if that can work. But it's also
25 helpful to see where the water levels go. But thank you
26 for that, those details. Henry.

27
28 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, Henry, for the
29 record. I have a comment here regarding what you reported
30 on, especially, on bycatches in the Area M harvest
31 impacts. Now, according to this paper here, since 2011,
32 there were 246,000 chinooks that were wasted and then
33 3.5 million chum salmon. This is through bycatch. And
34 then on Area M, since 2011, 97,000 -- over 97,000 were
35 harvested by the commercial fishermen and 6.8 million.
36 So now, I can see this through the report here. Bycatch
37 has more impacts on our salmon. Chinooks, especially
38 chinooks. They are coming up to our river systems. So,
39 but I'm happy that the 45,000 cap will be in effect
40 pretty soon. And then, I want to ask, since you stated
41 there's observers down there on those fisherman's at
42 Bering Sea, I believe the salmons are not the only
43 bycatches that are being wasted. What about other sea
44 mammals like seals that we can, you know -- because
45 seals, like, for example, those bearded seals down at
46 the coast are starting to decline. Are those being
47 harvested too, or other seals, too? Thank you.

48
49 MS. VICENTE: Thank you, Member Parks,
50 through the Chair. This is Terese, for the record. And

1 yeah, thank you for flagging these numbers on page 8 of
2 our End of season Summary. I do, quickly, want to note
3 that those cumulative numbers are from all genetic
4 groups. So, all king salmon, all chum salmon from across
5 the Pacific Rim. So, not just Western Alaska, but it
6 does help illustrate, you know, over the last 15 or so
7 years, just how much has been removed out of the ocean,
8 part of these cumulative impacts. And to the second part
9 of your question and comment, you're correct. It's not
10 just salmon that get caught as bycatch, especially, in
11 the trawl fishery in the Bering Sea. I'm not sure an
12 exact number of seals or seals by species, but it's not
13 uncommon for orcas to be caught, for salmon sharks to
14 be caught, halibut, crab or some other big ones that get
15 caught as bycatch. And other types of ocean fish and
16 marine mammals and things. So, I'm not sure if the
17 bycatch is part of what's affecting seal declines, it
18 could be. It could be, you know, bycatch of their food
19 species or how climate change has affected their food
20 species. These are all things that our salmon face, too.
21 But it's the bycatch of the actual fish that we can
22 control so, that's why we focus on bycatch. But I could
23 look into seal numbers and try to get back to you, see
24 what I can find.

25
26 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair, Henry, again,
27 for the record. What was the deadline for the disaster
28 funds?

29
30 MS. VICENTE: Through the Chair. The
31 deadline is June 9 at 12 p.m. noon. And it -- the
32 applications are online only. They're not doing paper
33 forms, that will disqualify you, they said.

34
35 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this is
36 Wassily. I got a question. You mentioned about the
37 trawlers or the area fishermen have two people on the
38 boat that keep an eye on the bycatch. How many percent
39 of the fleet have somebody on the boat? Is it all the
40 fleet out there or there's so many percent of the pollock
41 fishermen and the Area M fishermen?

42
43 MS. VICENTE: Thanks. Member Alexie,
44 through the Chair. In the Bering Sea, it's 100%. They
45 say every pollock trawler and other groundfish trawl
46 vessel or other fishing vessel out there, has two
47 observers on board. That's in the regulations for the
48 Bering Sea. In Area M there's 0% independent observer
49 coverage. And, kind of like I was saying earlier, like
50 the Board of Fish can't put regulations in for

1 independent observers because that would have a price
2 tag associated with it. So, that would have to be a
3 legislative action or the fleet could, you know, put
4 observers on board. But that wouldn't be independent at
5 that point.

6
7 MR. ALEXIE: Okay, thank you. One other
8 question, that you just mentioned that 0% on the Area
9 M. So how do you get the numbers of the bycatch from
10 that?

11
12 MS. VICENTE: Yeah, through the Chair.
13 Thanks for the question. So, Area M, they -- it's not
14 necessarily bycatch in their fishery, because they can
15 sell all the fish that they catch. So, they're really -
16 - they're an intercept fishery. When it comes to chum
17 and kings too, and they're profiting off of those. So,
18 it's not quite the same as bycatch. But I only say that
19 because that was brought forward a lot at the Area M
20 Board of Fish meeting. But how we get the numbers is the
21 fishermen when they go to drop their hold off at the
22 tender or right at the processor, they have a fish ticket
23 and their catch gets weighed and then they divide up the
24 weight by the average weight of the fish at that time.
25 So, they're not actually counting numbers of fish in
26 Area M, they're estimating numbers of fish based on
27 weight of the catch and weight of the species. So, it's
28 precise, and it's not monitored. Like, it's the tenders
29 and the processors and the fishermen reporting these
30 numbers. So, that's why there's a little bit -- quite a
31 bit more uncertainty in the numbers down in Area M.

32
33 MR. ALEXIE: All right. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Anyone else in
36 the room or online have a comment or question for
37 Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission?

38
39 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

42
43 MR. PETER: (In Native).

44
45 INTERPRETER: Yeah. I'm ready. First of
46 all, I want to thank all the reports, especially the
47 Kuskokwim Commission, Fish Commission. Since 1984, they
48 have been talking about the Area M fisheries. It has
49 been an area of concern for all the fishermen. The Area
50 M fisheries has been a concern for many years. Just not

1 that area commissions, but also the trawlers. And so,
2 we have been discussing this. They have worked on this
3 forever, and they've made our plans for us to follow.
4 And when they realized that the fish are coming up to
5 the Kuskokwim and the Yukon River, when they realized
6 that those were the (indiscernible) for those two
7 rivers, we've been announcing our opposition and
8 whatnot, and nobody has really listened or heeded our
9 call for assistance. And nobody has really given us any
10 credence for all that from a long time back, so. And
11 now, it has finally come to us as a, I mean, this issue
12 has been long in coming, and it's been -- so, as it
13 stands now, on this day and age, especially, the day
14 that we're meeting here. This is the first time the
15 Board of Fish has finally begin to understand that the
16 importance of lowering the catch in that area and also
17 the bycatch, lowering the bycatch. The throwing of
18 chums, 45,000 chums.

19
20 So, when other people before us, they
21 were working on this. If they were still alive and they
22 see the bycatch numbers, I wonder what they would be
23 thinking about. The number of bycatch that has happened
24 since. So, the outsiders that come into this area are
25 the ones that make the decisions that are in the Board
26 of Fish and Fisheries that are not from this area and
27 other Boards that they are sitting on, they are starting
28 to understand a little bit about the issues here that
29 we face. And so, I am thankful for that. They are giving
30 us a better opportunity to catch. It's not us that made
31 this happen. They've been addressing this forever. And
32 so, they're giving us an opportunity. And so, this is a
33 call to action for us, that even though these policies
34 do not go with our wishes, but please do not let this
35 break us apart. We need to keep together on this issue.
36 We need to have a united front and this is the call to
37 action that we have. And so, the focus is on that Area
38 M fishery.

39
40 One of the elders said through the
41 people that do not understand that the federal
42 government and the state will cause a division between
43 the people. And so, we need to be informed and stay, and
44 have a united front and keep together, fight together.
45 And when I looked at -- when I read this in the Yup'ik
46 Bible, it said that through ignorance and without
47 measuring our words, and if we say things that will
48 cause a division between the families, between the
49 people. And so, without knowledge, it will just drive
50 us apart. And so, with that, the issues that we face,

1 the fishing and the hunting, these divisions are coming
2 in and starting to try and put a wedge between us. So,
3 it's true what they have said. And they've been warning
4 us about these things. And those before us have always
5 told us what they have experienced. And so, I'm really
6 thankful that, even though we are upset about things,
7 we look forward to the fishing opportunities or else we
8 need to meet and talk together with the state and the
9 federal government.

10
11 If they had gotten the proposals that
12 we have set for it, and if they had taken them right
13 now, we wouldn't have any division or anything like that,
14 and we would be happy about these decisions, but I am
15 thankful that -- I'm really thankful that we are turning,
16 at a turning point to better fishing opportunities on
17 the Kuskokwim River. I think Kuskokwim Tribal Commission
18 and they are working for the state, with the state. We
19 need to provide a united front and the rewards we reap
20 will be good for us and we will attain what we are trying
21 to get at. And so, I know it is also written in the
22 Bible, and it says to love your enemies. You need to
23 love your enemies and pray for them.

24
25 I thank -- I am thankful for the Board
26 of Fish and the, what are they called now? There's the
27 North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and I'm
28 thankful that their hearts are softening towards our
29 issues here, and I am thankful for these processes that
30 are happening. But right now, I implore you to keep a
31 united front, we still need to keep working together and
32 keep on the straight and narrow, even though that these
33 things do not go according to our plans or our wishes.
34 But we still need to stay together because these things,
35 everything are the problems presented on the earth, they
36 always are. Have an opportunity to be affixed on this
37 earth, on this land. So, any problems that we face, we
38 can address and come to a good ending. And so, I'm very
39 thankful. That concludes his comments. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, (In
42 Native), Phillip. Not sure if you want to respond or if
43 I should just ask if anyone else wants to say something
44 or ask anything here or online. Brooke.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. For
47 folks online, you know, Philip was speaking to the
48 importance of working together. And he also thanked the
49 Board of Fish and North Pacific for opening their hearts
50 and helping take some action towards helping preserve

1 the Western Alaska salmon for the future. And I think
2 this would be a very good time for us to give a round
3 of applause to everyone that's been advocating in these
4 spaces. That was a lot of work. And these outcomes are
5 -- they're historic. You've been working on this for a
6 long time, so.

7

8 (Applause)

9

10 Quyana cakneq.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. I'd like to
13 echo that quyana cakneq for, you know, all the advocacy
14 and fighting that we do. And I think the Fish Commission
15 will represent this area. (In Native). So, since it's
16 12:17, let's take a lunch till 1:30. It's a little bit
17 short, it's 20 minutes shorter than the last two days,
18 only because it's our last day, and we can try to make
19 sure to cover the whole -- all the topics on the agenda.
20 So, let's come back for a 1:30 start. Quyana, we're at
21 -- we're in recess now at 12:18.

22

23 MR. ALEXIE: Oh, Madam Chair, this is
24 Wassily. I have an appointment at 2:00. I'm going to run
25 up to the hospital and see if they can see me earlier
26 than that so, I might be a little late. Thank you.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (On record)

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good afternoon
33 and welcome back from lunch on our 3rd day of the YKRAC
34 meeting. This is Jackie Cleveland. We're going to go
35 back to the agenda under 12, Fisheries Reports and going
36 down to d: Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission
37 Update. And Craig Cythlook, if you're on you have the
38 floor. Oh, actually not yet, there's an announcement
39 first and then we'll go to Yukon River Intertribal.

40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is Brooke
42 and sorry for the confusion. It also it doesn't look
43 like Craig is on quite yet. I know he's down in Anchorage
44 at Board of Fish, so maybe we can look for him to join
45 and perhaps Keith with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Yukon River
46 team wouldn't mind doing their update next. But before
47 we move into that, have [sic] a little surprise for the
48 Council. I heard from a little birdie that there were 3
49 birthdays this month of council members. And when an
50 elder makes a request for cupcakes, you have to follow

1 through. So, John Andrew, Tiffany Agayar and Jackie
2 Cleveland, happy belated birthday and now I'll just ask
3 if we could go do a round of happy birthday, please.

4
5 IN UNISON: (Singing happy birthday)

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you guys. And I'll
8 pass these little cupcakes around.

9
10 MR. ANDREW: Thank you very much.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: And it does look like Craig
13 has joined online now.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, we'll come
16 back to the agenda again. And so, I'm told that Craig
17 Cythlook is on the line now for the Yukon River
18 Intertribal Fish Commission Update and Craig, you're
19 welcome to take the floor.

20
21 MR. CYTHLOOK: Thank you. Okay. Thank
22 you. Sorry, I didn't know my mic was on a second ago.
23 Can you hear me okay?

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We can. Thanks.

26
27 MR. CYTHLOOK: Okay. I've got a little
28 bit of a script to read, and then I'll kind of just go
29 off a little bit, but my report will be quick. I'm here
30 in a coffee shop in Anchorage, outside of the Egan
31 Center, attending some Board of Fish meetings. So here's
32 the report that was given. My name is Craig Cythlook,
33 new Executive Director of the Yukon River Intertribal
34 Fish Commission. A little background about myself. My
35 folks are (indiscernible) Cythlook and we're all
36 originally from Bristol Bay.

37
38 A little update history on the Yukon
39 River Intertribal Fish Commission is composed of 44
40 member tribal governments authorized by tribal
41 resolution whose mission is to protect the health and
42 well-being of our people, our future generations, and
43 all Alaskans and Canadians who rely on the health of our
44 salmon. After a decade of incubation as a program of
45 Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Yukon River Intertribal
46 Fish Commission was born as a standalone 501(c)(3)
47 organization on March 2025. The purpose of the
48 Commission, as stated in our Constitution, is to act as
49 a unified voice for the conservation and restoration of
50 all Yukon River fisheries, protect our ways of life and

1 well-being, establish a comprehensive management plan
2 program based on customary -- distinct customary and
3 traditional indigenous knowledge and practices, while
4 striving to -- striving for co-management to ensure
5 meaningful and substantial tribal First Nation
6 participation in all aspects of our fisheries
7 stewardship.

8
9 So, an update from myself. My history
10 with Yukon River Fish Commission. In April of 2024, the
11 Executive Council identified a priority to hire a full
12 time ED. And that started the process this summer of
13 2025 and we followed -- the Executive Council, followed
14 the process and my hire with the organization started
15 November of last year. So, my hire date was in October,
16 but my official start date is in November and we
17 immediately (distortion) holiday break and then
18 immediately into North Pacific Chum EIS final action and
19 the Area M meetings both in February and we're kind of
20 finishing up the regulatory cycle with state wide Board
21 of Fisheries, now having discussions about fall
22 proposals, hatchery proposals and maybe most relevant
23 to our Yukon area is a fall chum stock of concern action
24 plan as well as a chinook salmon stock of concern action
25 plan.

26
27 I think some of the biggest highlights
28 that we have since I started with the organization is
29 we're growing for a little organization as we separated
30 from TCC. We received funding for 3 additional full-time
31 employees. And late last year, beginning of this year,
32 we hired an administrative assistant, (indiscernible)
33 O'Brien. She's originally from Nenana but has ties to
34 Beaver and Old Harbor. He's been doing amazing
35 supporting our advocates, logistical support getting
36 people to and from and kind of keeping us in line,
37 keeping track of all of our spending and making sure
38 that we're getting the paperwork turned into the right
39 places at the right time.

40
41 We are hiring a policy director,
42 hopefully by the end of this week. And then we have
43 additional funds for a coordinator position to work
44 underneath the Director to spend more and more and more
45 time focused our attention and direction with the tribes
46 and with the communities throughout the Yukon. So, we'll
47 have a policy director to kind of take point and lead
48 in developing our positions at Board of Fish, North
49 Pacific, Yukon River Panel, Federal Subsistence Board
50 and the RACs. And our big hope for the coordinator

1 position is to make sure that all of the positions,
2 directions, goals, objectives, and materials are well
3 understood, well communicated, and reflect the
4 priorities from our tribes. So, that's what that
5 position will be dedicated towards.
6

7 Shortly after -- and I see Holly, Keith
8 and Shane are also in this room, we have secured funds
9 for a researcher biologist position. So, thinking about
10 Justin Leon's role with Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish
11 Commission, it's one of our next big hires to really
12 spend a lot of time building our relationship with both
13 state and federal agencies. So, (indiscernible), the
14 department and others as well, with Holly, Keith and
15 Shane at U.S. Fish and Wildlife. So, really, really
16 excited about that. Like I mentioned, we just finished
17 up a big regulatory cycle with Chum EIS and Board of
18 Fish. I'm assuming you guys have had updates there, but
19 I think the biggest reports that I can give from the
20 Commission perspective regarding those 2 regulatory
21 meetings is how happy we were with the unity and the
22 outcomes of both meetings. We did a significant amount
23 of work amongst the tribal consortium leading up to the
24 North Pacific through tribal consultation and just
25 coordination, really unify our perspective and work
26 really well with our advocates, our leaders. And it's -
27 - it was consistent throughout the entire Chum EIS final
28 action and followed through Area M. So, that was really
29 encouraging to see. Feels like there was a lot of
30 momentum gained on that front.
31

32 I think moving forward for the next
33 handful of months here. We are really excited about the
34 recent changes in leadership at TCC. So, we're really
35 looking forward to meeting with Chief Chair Sharon and
36 Vice President Chief Pitka and continuing our
37 relationship there with formalizing our MOU with TCC and
38 continuing to grow our relationship there. They're still
39 our fiscal sponsors, so we're closely tied to TCC and
40 work very closely with their staff. I think we're all
41 finished. We're relatively new, the organization itself
42 has been around, you know, since 2012-2014, has gone
43 through some changes. And I'm really happy and honored
44 to be here. I really loving working with our executive
45 council and our commissioners and for the tribes.
46 Charlie Wright has been an amazing Chair.
47

48 And I'm really excited, looking forward
49 to continuing to grow and build our relationships with
50 our communities, with our tribes. The state and federal

1 agencies and continue the momentum that we've built with
2 our partnered and allied organizations, tribal and non-
3 tribal moving forward. So, really looking forward to the
4 next handful of years with the Fish Commission. As we
5 grow our organization and continue to spend more and
6 more time with our communities, with our tribes and
7 really closely reflect the needs, the wants and desires
8 and the expectations for the goals and the objectives
9 of building unity, developing a co-management plan and
10 executing co-management with the state and feds. So, I
11 don't have a whole lot else to add besides that. You
12 know, I'm really new within my role and really honored
13 and happy about the leadership and the brilliance that
14 got us to where we are. And yeah, I just really thank
15 you for your time and having the opportunity to present
16 here.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
19 Craig. There's a question by Frederick Beans.

20
21 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans
22 here. Madam Chair, is his report in the binder here?
23 Okay, is there any way I can get a written report,
24 please. Thank you.

25
26 MR. CYTHLOOK: Yeah, through the Chair.
27 Yeah, I have a typed report, and I'm happy to share that
28 if I know which emails to send that with and yeah, happy
29 to share.

30
31 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, if you could
32 send it to Brooke, you know, she can be forwarded on to
33 us. Okay. Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We will do. And
36 I think Brooke is volunteering already. Yeah. Okay. Yes,
37 Brooke.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, thank you.
40 Yeah, Craig, feel free to send that to me. I can forward
41 that on to council members. I was also wondering if you
42 might be able to tell this Council that, you know,
43 represents the lower river maybe which tribes have
44 joined in or maybe which ones haven't joined in with the
45 Fish Commission so that they could be aware of you know,
46 maybe opportunities for more engagement and further
47 discussions with the Fish Commission. Thanks.

48
49 MR. CYTHLOOK: (Indiscernible). Thank
50 you, through the Chair. So, the Yukon River Intertribal

1 Fish Commission that's, you know, separating from TCC
2 went from upper 30s tribes who ratified our Constitution
3 we're currently sitting at 44. For everybody's
4 information, we're broken up into 10 territories. It
5 goes from the mouth and territory 10 is inclusive of the
6 First Nations on the Canadian side, but we currently
7 don't have anybody on the Canadian side. So, the last
8 village that's within the -- represented with the Yukon
9 River Intertribal Fish Commission (In Native). But
10 territory 1 Scammon Bay. (distortion) Territory 2
11 Alakanuk. (Indiscernible) Slough, Nunam Iqua, Emmonak,
12 Kotlik. And territory 3 Alakanuk, Mountain Village,
13 Marshall, Pilot Station, Pitkas Point.

14
15 So, we have hopes and priorities within
16 our current goals and objectives to start thinking about
17 spending more and more time with the communities and one
18 of Charlie and I's big hopes as we get out of this
19 regulatory cycle and not so busy down here in Anchorage,
20 is that we can start reaching out to the different
21 territories and start planning community visits. You
22 know, with the folks down at the lower river and people
23 upper river. We have our upcoming annual meeting. We're
24 working with Charlie and his schedule and finding a venue
25 here in Fairbanks. It's looking like it's going to be
26 the 1st week of May or the 2nd week of May.

27
28 (Pause)

29
30 Oh, no. I lost connection for a second.
31 But yeah, well, that'll be a good time for all of our
32 tribes and tribes who might be interested. You're going
33 to -- once we nail down a venue and the dates we're --
34 Jasmine Vent is our Communication Director and we'll
35 start reaching out to the tribes, our commissioners and
36 our Executive Council to share information with all of
37 the communities and extend invitations to people to come
38 up and spend time. Our annual meeting and my, and
39 Charlie's biggest hope and goal out of the annual meeting
40 is that we can continue to prioritize spending time with
41 the tribes, communicating, engaging with, and just
42 learning about priorities at home versus spending more
43 and more time just in the regulatory process and
44 Anchorage or someplace else. So, happy to be reached out
45 to Jasmine Vent, I will share her information as well.
46 He's originally from Huslia, based out of Fairbanks
47 right now is their communications director. If you
48 follow us on social media, he's the one updating all of
49 our outreach and comms and it was really easy to get
50 ahold of and pass along all of our constitutional

1 information, our organizational information, contact
2 information. And yeah, happy to, happy to set up more
3 talks, visits.

4
5 But one of the things that I think we,
6 Charlie and I are really hoping to do, is this next
7 spring, spend some time in the lower river during
8 potlatch season and just visit. No big agenda, but listen
9 and start focusing on some of the relationship building
10 down there and kind of everywhere but we are really
11 wanting to prioritize engagement with our communities
12 and learning from our communities in the near future
13 before we start really expanding goals and objectives
14 so that we have a better understanding of the needs and
15 I did a get a better assessment of all of our priorities.
16 So, I hope that helps. And I'm -- apologize I don't have
17 -- I'm kind of right in the middle of a couple of few
18 meetings here, so. But we should have a lot more
19 available [sic] information soon and hoping to see as
20 many people as possible for our annual meeting first
21 part of May.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again
24 Craig. There's another question by Tiffany.

25
26 MS. AGAYAR: Hi, Craig. Thank you for
27 your report. This is Tiffany. I was wondering, you said
28 you're working on an MOU with TCC. Were you going to
29 fill out an MOU with AVCP too?

30
31 MR. CYTHLOOK: Yeah, I think for the
32 question through the Chair. We have a current MOU with
33 AVCP and Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission.
34 Our 3 organization has signed on to a joint MOU to
35 support the Arctic Yukon Tribal -- Arctic Yukon
36 Kuskokwim Tribal consortium. It's housed under Bering
37 Sea Fishermen's Association, and we have joint goals and
38 objectives and priorities and funding -- pass through
39 funding to both -- all 3 organizations AVCP, KRITFC and
40 Yukon that supporting participation, staff and, you
41 know, infrastructural support. So, we currently do have
42 an existing MOU with AVCP and KRITFC. TCC will be on the
43 side separate. They house all of the infrastructure for
44 our sonar projects. And they have all of the boats and
45 motors and snow-gos and the things that are really
46 important to spending more and more time in the
47 community. So, we're getting together with Chief Chair
48 Shannon -- Sharon sorry. Hopefully next week or the first
49 part of April and it's been ongoing discussions with
50 TCC. So, we're getting close to the final drafts of the

00060

1 MOU with TCC right now. But yeah, to answer your question
2 directly we have an MOU with AVCP and (indiscernible)
3 right now.

4

5 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you.

6

7

(Pause)

8

9 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any other
10 questions from our group in the room or online or
11 comments? Tiffany.

12

13 MS. AGAYAR: One more question. Since you
14 mentioned the sonar from up mid river, Mid-Yukon, what
15 is the update on it?

16

17 MR. CYTHLOOK: Thank you for the
18 question, Tiffany. I don't have a big update. I know
19 feasibility -- this is just information from my chats
20 with Diloola. We -- yeah, one of the feasibility study
21 has been executed and TCC was asking for a letter of
22 support from the Fish Commission for years 2, 3, or at
23 least a year 2 feasibility study and part of our MOU
24 with TCC will be to continue to grow our partnership in
25 that realm. Help where we can as we're growing our
26 capacity there. I think you know, thinking about Holly
27 and Keith and Brooke, all of the folks who are in the
28 room now I think we're prioritizing making sure that
29 we're building relationships with agency and folks in
30 those types of roles before we start really thinking
31 about what Yukon Fish Commission is going to be doing
32 with a lot of infrastructure. But that's the latest
33 update that I can give. But I apologize it's actually
34 under the realm of TCC. So, they're the ones that are
35 currently managing and getting ready for feasibility --
36 next stages of the feasibility study.

37

38 MS. AGAYAR: Thank you. I wanted that on
39 record because I've been getting a lot of questions about
40 it out on the Lower Yukon River. Quyana.

41

42 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
43 Brooke, and that's something we can as -- I mean, I can
44 as your Coordinator, reach out to TCC to see if they
45 would give an update at your next meeting at fall time,
46 if you're interested. They were unable to attend this
47 meeting. Similar to Craig, they're pulled in a lot of
48 directions with ongoing regulatory meetings. So, thanks.

49

50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Anyone else with
2 a comment or questions for Craig?

3
4 (No response)

5
6 Hearing and seeing none. Thank you so
7 much for that update, Craig. Look forward to your next
8 one at the next meeting.

9
10 MR. CYTHLOOK: Okay, thank you.

11
12 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And we'll move on
13 to down the agenda after -- still under Fisheries
14 Reports. We'll go to U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Yukon River
15 Salmon Management Update. And is there a name? Keith
16 will be presenting, so you have the floor and it's on
17 page 59.

18
19 MR. HERRON: Hi. Good afternoon,
20 everyone. Can you hear me?

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, we can.

23
24 MR. HERRON: I'll first introduce myself
25 and then I'll get into my report. (In Native). Hi, my
26 name is Keith Herron, I'm originally from Bethel but
27 grew up in a few communities around the state, including
28 Wrangell, Seward, Kenai and I currently live in
29 Fairbanks. My father is Buddy Herron and my grandparents
30 are Bob and Margaret Herron of Bethel. My mother is Dana
31 Rooney and her parents are Janet and Denny Strum, and
32 they live in Wrangell. That's a little bit about myself,
33 and I work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the
34 Assistant Fishery Manager on the Yukon River. And so,
35 today I'll be giving 2 kind of components. First, I'll
36 begin with some management updates. And then second,
37 I'll give some research updates that our fisheries team
38 is up to. And I would also like to recognize before that
39 the immense efforts that we have seen at the big
40 regulatory meetings at the North Pacific Fishery Council
41 meeting, the Board of Fishery meetings, the Yukon one,
42 the Area M one and the statewide one. Where we have a
43 lot of advocates and stewards from the Yukon and
44 Kuskokwim rivers standing up for our Western Alaska
45 salmon in these spaces to help bring more salmon home
46 to our rivers. And I just really like to uplift and
47 applaud that approach where we're looking at the
48 complete life cycle and thank everyone who was involved.

49
50

1 On the U.S. Fish and Wildlife side. We
2 also were involved in some of those meetings,
3 particularly at the North Pacific Fishery Marine
4 Council. We have a non-voting seat and our Northern
5 Alaska Field office did help develop some of our
6 finalized and formal recommendations on the alternatives
7 that were ultimately decided upon. We did want to see a
8 little bit of more of conservation approach, but if
9 you're interested in our report, we did have a member
10 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boyd Blihovde,
11 at the meeting the entire time. But on the North Pacific
12 Marine Fisheries Council website under B7 is our
13 official alternatives. So, I'd like to uplift our team,
14 particularly Shane Ransbury who helped do some heavy
15 lifting and others within the service that helped in
16 those efforts as well as the public.

17
18 So, for Yukon management I'll give a
19 brief overview of the 2025 season. And as we all know,
20 how sad and heartbreaking and the immense hardship our
21 Yukon residents have been in over the last 6 years with
22 heavy restrictions or complete closures on most of the
23 Yukon salmon. And so, I won't go into all the numbers,
24 but in your report that was mentioned in your booklet,
25 it did provide some numbers. But overall, all the salmon,
26 the king salmon, the summer chum, the fall chum, the
27 coho, they were all within some of the worst all -- the
28 -- about top 5, lowest on record. And so, we did see a
29 complete closures with only some limited selected
30 opportunity on some coho salmon. And when we went some
31 selective gear fishing, it was limited to federally
32 qualified users in federal waters. And the overall
33 harvest for coho, was very low drainage wide. So, even
34 though we did have a low run, we didn't harvest many,
35 about a thousand, slightly over a thousand coho in the
36 whole river was estimated.

37
38 And so, that's kind of the overview of
39 the 2025 season, going into the 2026 season, I imagine
40 we're going to have similar run size. So, I'd just like
41 to prepare people that we do expect a similar situation
42 this year. For kings, we're going to be way -- well
43 below those escapement goals to get those fish into
44 Canada and also the fish on our Alaska side, we're seeing
45 really low king runs. And then for the summer chum, we
46 are coming off some of the lowest of the low. The parent
47 years were 2021 and 2022. So, we need to be very cautious
48 and expect a low summer chum run. For fall chum similar,
49 we've been in pretty low run size. So, another cautious
50 approach to that. And then coho, we may have some

1 opportunity to harvest those. But we really have been
2 focused on those in-river in-season run strengths and
3 waiting to understand how strong the run is before
4 considering any harvest opportunity to get as many fish
5 to the spawning grounds as possible.

6
7 We talked about some non-salmon fishing
8 opportunities earlier in this meeting. And with the
9 four-inch gear, we've heard concerns about how that
10 causes drop out, how there's incidental harvest of those
11 fish. And we don't really want to impact the salmon, but
12 we really want to protect that non-salmon opportunity
13 in these times of low salmon abundance in the summer
14 season. We've been restricting those four-inch gillnets
15 for the bulk of the king salmon run. And then in fall
16 season, we've been putting those four-inch on a week --
17 a weekly schedule where you can use them on weekends.
18 And I imagine we'll use a similar approach this upcoming
19 season. We do plan on doing that six-inch opportunity
20 again, and it will be great to get everyone's feedback
21 at future meetings.

22
23 We are likely -- if there was fishing
24 to occur, we would institute federal special actions to
25 limit that to federally qualified users, but we haven't
26 totally formalized. We don't have any official forecasts
27 yet. Those will come in a couple -- in about a couple
28 of weeks from now. So, we're still working on our exact
29 strategy and waiting for those forecasts to officially
30 make a plan. But once that plan is finalized, once we
31 go to preseason meetings like the Yukon River Drainage
32 Fisheries Association, talk to the Yukon Fish
33 Commission, talk to the tribes, kind of come up with a
34 plan and we'll hold a public hearing before we would
35 issue any special actions. Talk to the state of Alaska.
36 We have a patchwork of state and federal land on Yukon
37 so for any management strategy to work, we need to agree
38 how to best get these salmon up the river to their
39 spawning grounds. So that's kind of some overview of
40 what we expect and what to look for at upcoming meetings.
41 There will be time and place for the public and tribes
42 to weigh in on our management strategy for 2026. And
43 then that kind of the tribal consultations, those are
44 always available upon request. We love hearing from
45 people. We love hearing the knowledge that you share
46 with us. And I'm also the tribal liaison, so try to get
47 as much indigenous knowledge and local knowledge within
48 our management and how we can best work together to come
49 out of these hard times. And before I go into the
50 research update, I just want to see if anyone has any

00064

1 management questions that we would like to deal with
2 right now.

3

4 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Fred Beans.

7

8 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here,
9 Mountain Village. I'm curious Keith, do you -- you don't
10 have you don't happen to have any numbers of the
11 escapement into Canada on the chinook.

12

13 MR. HERRON: Yes, I do. In 2025, are you
14 talking about?

15

16 MR. BEANS: Yes.

17

18 MR. HERRON: We saw about 24,000.

19

20 MR. BEANS: Okay. And then what about the
21 summer chum salmon?

22

23 MR. HERRON: The summer chum salmon, we
24 saw about 350,000.

25

26 MR. BEANS: Okay. Thank you very much.

27

28 (Pause)

29

30 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any other
31 comments or questions for Keith? Frederick.

32

33 (Pause)

34

35 Oh, apologies to Keith. I thought you
36 were finished and are waiting for more comments or
37 questions. You can continue.

38

39 MR. HERRON: Okay, thank you. I just
40 wanted to make sure we didn't have any pressing things
41 that someone might forget. But we do have our research
42 team, and Shane Ransbury is our Lead Research Biologist,
43 and he's on the line in case there's any more detailed
44 questions, but I'd just like to give a general overview
45 about some projects we have going on. And so one of
46 those, the new one we're looking to improve the
47 capability of genetics to distinguish those Western
48 Alaska chum salmon, which are the Yukon summer chum
49 salmon. So, we want to be able to break out the Kuskokwim
50 to the Yukon, to the Norton Sound, kind of was

1 highlighted earlier. Another approach that was looking
2 at the whole genome that the Kuskokwim River Inter [sic]
3 Fish Commission brought up. But we're going to try
4 another way. Maybe one of these ways we'll hopefully be
5 able to figure it out.

6
7 But this is in partnership with many
8 different people. They're listed on your paperwork, so
9 I won't name them. It's a big team, but U.S. Fish and
10 Wildlife Service is involved where we're going to try
11 sample some of the summer chum salmon from major spawning
12 areas in 10 to 16 places spread out across the western
13 Alaska region. And look for small quantities of trace
14 elements. So, everything those fish are eating or
15 drinking, there's going to be little bits of elements
16 hopefully in their body. And we have some pretty good
17 preliminary data. About this to be able to differentiate
18 these stocks further. And that would improve some of
19 those bycatch conversations on maybe who's stocks in
20 what areas of the ocean at certain times. So, just give
21 a better understanding, that's one thing we're
22 exploring.

23
24 Another thing is we have a project in
25 partnership with YDFDA and NOAA to do environmental
26 monitoring in the Yukon Delta, out on the coast, in the
27 ocean, and these buoys are placed out there and we're
28 able to look at the wind and wave conditions. Hopefully,
29 this will help with some of the juvenile monitoring. It
30 could help with some of that knowledge of when the fish
31 enter the river based on wind direction and all this
32 information that is being collected by these buoys out
33 in the Delta is publicly available through a backyards
34 buoy app. So, it's kind of a cool thing that's
35 interactive with the public and a thing that could
36 hopefully help in ways for our salmon monitoring
37 efforts.

38
39 Another project we have going on is in
40 partnership with the Native Village of Koyukuk and TCC,
41 where we're looking to have another main stem -- another
42 sonar in the river, particularly on the Koyukuk River,
43 because we don't have much monitoring going on in one
44 of that -- in that's a major tributary to the Yukon
45 important for summer chum spawning. So, we did a
46 feasibility last season, I think it's on pause waiting
47 for funding notice, but we are exploring ways to increase
48 monitoring of summer chum and some important spawning
49 habitat. And then we're also deploying more temperature
50 loggers to look at the groundwater temperature and

00066

1 sediment loads within major king salmon spawning areas.
2 So, we're going to try to improve our monitoring on
3 those and expand that. And we're also looking at the
4 fall chum spawning habitat in the Tanana and the upper
5 US near the (In Native) up by like Fort Yukon area
6 looking at thermal imagery to see about their habitat
7 in that area for the fall chum.

8
9 And then finally, my last thing I will
10 update you guys about is we are going to close our
11 Emmonak field office. We haven't been occupying that
12 space in the last couple years, but due to staffing
13 capacity and hoping to get more outreach into other
14 communities, probably in big partnership with the Fish
15 Commission, with the tribes and other ways, we can get
16 that community engagement but we are going to close our
17 Emmonak field office. And that's about it from me. But
18 I'm happy to answer any questions. And Holly and Shane
19 are both on, if you have any more questions, we all
20 could help.

21
22 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

23
24 MS. AGAYAR: Hi, Keith, Tiffany here. I
25 got a little sidetracked with your backyard buoys talk,
26 but what did you say about the very end about the Emmonak
27 office?

28
29 MR. HERRON: We're going to close our
30 Emmonak field office.

31
32 MS. AGAYAR: For good?

33
34 MR. HERRON: Yeah, for good and for good.

35
36 MS. AGAYAR: Oh. That doesn't sound very
37 good. Thank you.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily, was
40 that you?

41
42 MR. ALEXIE: Thank you, Madam Chair.
43 Keith, I got a question. I know you guys do studies on
44 the chinook, chum and cohos. Do you guys have any
45 numbers, or are you guys looking into reds? I know we're
46 starting to get more and more reds on the Yukon. Is
47 there any plans in the future to try and look into those?

48
49 MR. HERRON: Yeah. That's a -- we've been
50 hearing that and more people say they see a more and

1 more. I don't think we have a good -- we have an index
2 maybe based on some Pilot Station. It's only a few
3 thousand each year. Maybe they spawn lower in the river
4 near St. Mary's in the Andraefsky, possibly less
5 monitored areas, but it looks like Shane might have more
6 to add about that.

7
8 MR. RANSBURY: Yeah, through the Chair.
9 Shane. We don't have any plans for any research at this
10 time. We used to see sockeye through the Andraefsky weir
11 and they'll be seen at Pilot, but we don't have any
12 specific projects planned for red salmon.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
15 Do you think the reds are going into the tributaries
16 before they're being counted or...? Just wondering.

17
18 MR. RANSBURY: I think there's just not
19 that many. So it's, you know, like red salmon usually -
20 - so, they're kind of split into 2 kinds. There's lake
21 type and river type. Lake type is usually a lot more
22 prolific, like if you have good lake systems you can end
23 up with tons and tons of red salmon. And just for
24 whatever reason we don't seem to have big numbers of
25 sockeye. So, you know, I don't know, like the, the Pilot
26 Station is quite low down. And Andraefsky was even
27 further down. But you know, at Andraefsky -- I can't
28 remember off the top of my head, but I want to say the
29 biggest year we ever had was only several thousand
30 sockeye. And it was kind of all over the map. So, I
31 think it -- they're just not a huge player in the Yukon.
32 And you know, like when I was out watching, you know,
33 Lower Yukon test fishery catches. I think -- at least
34 in fall season, when I was the fall season assistant
35 manager, I can only remember a handful of sockeye ever
36 getting caught down there. So, for whatever reason, they
37 just aren't really in the Yukon in big numbers.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Yeah,
40 I was just wondering, because also on this river on the
41 Kusko, they didn't have many reds before and now they
42 have a lot. So, but I wanted to -- also go back to --
43 and this is Jackie by the way, the backyard buoys is a
44 really cool thing. I know we are, I mean in Quinhagak
45 we have, I think 3 buoys out in our bay. So, just
46 learning about those and what a game changer. Do you
47 mind maybe, I think it was Keith who mentioned it. Do
48 you mind just giving a little bit more on the backyard
49 and -- or the buoys and ways in which we can look up
50 information from them? Thanks.

1

2

3 MR. RANSBURY: So, through the Chair, I
4 can take that one as well. It looks different between
5 the Yukon and the Kuskokwim, but I'm not too sure how
6 it works in the Kuskokwim. And there's a bit of an echo.
7 Sorry, but, you know, the -- let's see, how does it
8 work? So, we use Sofar buoys, which is, you know, the
9 company is called Sofar. And then the backyard buoys app
10 is developed with it was like the Eskimo Whaling
11 Commission or something like that, Alaska Eskimo Whaling
12 Commission up north and they were using a lot for going
13 fishing up there. And then we heard about it and so you
14 know, we started putting stuff out in the Yukon starting
15 last year for fall season. And then yeah, I remember
16 that Quinhagak had some as well, but I'm not associated
17 with that at all. So, I'm not sure -- I can't remember
18 like what group put it out or anything. But you know,
19 overall, there's this app that is developed by folks up
20 north and you can -- you can ask them to be included on
21 it. And then you can put out these buoys, which are not
22 that expensive, I want to say. I mean, they're expensive
23 and not at the same time, right? They're like \$10,000
24 or something by the time you like, factor in the gas to
25 go out there and you factor in the mooring and all that
26 kind of stuff. And then you just put them out after the
27 ice breaks up and leave them up until you know, the end
28 of the year or whatever.

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

And yeah, anybody who has the Backyard
Buoys app, once it's registered to the app can just look
up what the current conditions are. And so, like in the
Yukon we put out 4 last year and we did it in partnership
with YDFDA, so it was U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
YDFDA and NMFS or NOAA. And we put one in each of the
main mouths of the Yukon, and then one kind of in the
near shore down by Flat Island on south mouth. And yeah,
it's an interesting project. We're -- from our point of
view, we're trying to learn more about, you know, the
relationship we know from traditional knowledge, which
is that the fish come in really heavily into the Yukon
River on, kind of southwest winds, particularly in fall
season. And so, just understanding more about, like, how
we can pick up those environmental conditions earlier.
Like maybe we would know more days in advance when fish
are coming in or you know, YDFDA also does a juvenile
trail down there. So, trying to understand how the
environmental conditions are affecting how juvenile
salmon are moving out of the river and just through the
delta in general. And then, you know, long term, I'd
like to be able to expand the project until we kind of

1 like connect with the folks in Quinhagak like you know,
2 our farthest south buoy is over by Nunam Iqua. But it'd
3 be really nice to eventually get buoys like down the
4 coast or out of Hooper or something like that.

5
6 And yeah, and, you know, I think people
7 will buy on eventually. In the, you know, the Alaska --
8 the -- what's it called? Alaska Eskimo Whaling
9 Commission, when they put them out, it seems like people
10 were pretty darn supportive of the whole thing. And now
11 there's just communities that own a few buoys. And then
12 every single year the communities put their buoys out,
13 and the Commission and the Alaska Ocean Observing System
14 kind of work together to make sure those all get on the
15 app and everything and then anybody with a phone can
16 look at weather conditions. So, if we eventually got
17 similar buy in, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, then, you
18 know, hopefully it would be something where we can get
19 just a whole, whole bunch of buoys out there and have a
20 better understanding of what weather is like before you
21 spend, you know, \$9 a gallon of gas or whatever to get
22 out there and find out that the weather is bad where
23 you're trying to go. So, it's a work in progress, but I
24 think there's a lot of opportunity to add to this
25 project, essentially.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you for
28 that. I know it's you know, it also helps just the whole
29 community, like with the search and rescue teams, with
30 the hunting, the fishing. Just traveling in between
31 villages. It's been very helpful for us.

32
33 MR. RANSBURY: Through the Chair. And
34 yeah, and I'll try to drop the link in the chat here,
35 but there's a few different versions. Like one is the -
36 - an app through like the app store if you have an iPhone
37 or you know, whatever the other phone types use. And
38 then, but you can also just look at it on online, like
39 you can pull up a web browser and there's a menu there.
40 So, I'll drop a link to that in the chat here.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks again. Is
43 there anyone else with comments or questions?

44
45 (No response)

46
47 After lunch is always a little more
48 quiet with full stomachs by the way. But yeah, thank you
49 for presenting. Well done. And keep up the good work.
50 We'll hear from you guys next time, hopefully.

00070

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

MR. HERRON: Thank you.

MR. SHANE: Thank you.

MR. HERRON: Thank you for having us. Stanislaus does have his hand up, by the way.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Oh. Thank you. So, Stanislaus.

MR. SHEPPARD: Quyana, Madam Chair. This question is for either Keith or Shane. In regards to like you mentioned the amount of drop off that four-inch would have under mainstream Yukon. When we -- when I first thought about asking, getting the Middle Yukon to submit a proposal for a 6 inch 60ft in these 3 streams through Mountain Village, we were thinking about that drop off the same because those broad whitefish, you know, get stuck on the four-inch. And then when you come to pull them out due to their weight, they just drop off. So, it would be good to have that 6 inch 60ft in these non-salmon streams. Like the ones that I mentioned, 3 stream below Mountain Village, which is traditionally used. Hamilton, for one, is used through Kotlik, Emmo, Alakanuk and Nunam. And I think it might be this even year, we're going to be getting a lot of pinks/humpies or next year. This year. Every 4 years we get, we get the slug of them coming in. Was I mistaken or not? Thank you.

MR. HERRON: And you're correct. Stanislaus is going to be a pink year. So, hopefully in the lower river. We've heard people looking forward to those years, a few of them, so. Yeah, it should be a good pink year, we're not too sure. They've kind of been also -- their abundance has been a little inconsistent, so hopefully we see more. But for the 6 inch in the -- are you -- follow up. Do you mean 6 inch like in the summer season or just in the fall? Like what do you mean all the time?

MR. SHEPPARD: Through the Chair. This is Stanislaus Sheppard again, speaking on behalf of myself. Yes, it never -- there's broad whitefish, sheefish. They don't know exactly you know, time limit. I -- historically for the end of May, beginning of June, as soon as the ice breaks out and drifts out, we go out to like Georgetown, (In Native), (In Native) and set for whitefish and sheefish with 6 inch or 5 and a half. And

1 when we get our limit or our enough, we quit. Then we
2 get ready for the summer chum king salmon. That's
3 historically what we used to do. But you know, with my
4 fish camp located down there inside the (In Native) River
5 we were able to put up a total of 87 sheefish and
6 whitefish. There were more -- there were 40 plus almost
7 50 sheefish and the rest were whitefish.

8
9 And that was enough because the size of
10 them were, you know, if I used 4 and a half inch, I'd
11 be considered wanton waste on pike fish because, you
12 know, the pike fish have no problem swimming through the
13 6 inch or 5 and a half. They don't get hung up like the
14 sheefish and whitefish. So, yeah not during the whole
15 summer. Maybe right after breakup, middle part of June.
16 And then again, in -- toward the ending of July, August
17 and September. That's when we usually try to target more
18 of the sheefish and whitefish. Thank you, Shane.

19
20 MR. HERRON: Yeah. Thank you for that
21 discussion. That helps a lot. But just a little bit,
22 can't promise anything, but we were thinking of ways to
23 do a little longer in fall season. Maybe like not waiting
24 till August 17th, doing it more in middle July or a
25 little after that, so. We've been thinking about that
26 as a team, but you're your feedback there really helps
27 in our conversations with the state or our internal stuff
28 when we come up with a plan. So, thank you.

29
30 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Madam Chair.
31 If I have -- can I have one more question.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Stanislaus.

34
35 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you. In regards to
36 the Fish and Game office in Emmo, is the state going to
37 pull out down there too, or just that the feds won't
38 have any more testing going on down there? That's my
39 question. Thank you.

40
41 MR. HERRON: Go ahead, Holly.

42
43 MS. CARROLL: Through the Chair. This is
44 Holly Carroll, I'm the in-season manager for Fish and
45 Wildlife Service. And I just -- I wanted to address
46 Stan's question, but also, you know, Tiffany's concern.
47 So, we lease some land there and we just have a couple
48 trailer units but we have not been down there since
49 COVID. And what we have learned is that we are able to
50 work really effectively with the Fish and Game team

1 virtually. And so we've been managing, you know, still
2 in a lot of contact with Fish and Game. Now, of course,
3 we've lost the contact with the Community of Emmonak.
4 But we did not have research in that community, it's
5 always been Fish and Game and the YDFDA that have run
6 those research projects down there. Mainly the test
7 fisheries, the sampling for scales at those projects.
8 And I presume that Fish and Game plan to stay there.
9 They definitely are going to open their offices this
10 year. I'm not hearing of any long-term plans of them
11 pulling out of that community. But as you may or may not
12 have heard, you know over the years, our project dollars,
13 our budgets have been severely cut. And we also had some
14 recent executive orders that are really asking all
15 federal bureaucracies to reduce their kind of their
16 footprints, their property and their infrastructure. You
17 know, if we're not using things, we're really striving
18 to be more efficient and let go of some spaces. So,
19 actually Emmonak has been top of the list for a while
20 because we're paying leases on land we're not able to
21 effectively use. So, we're definitely going to try to
22 sell those units. They've actually been put on the GSA
23 auction. So, if anyone wants information on how to make
24 purchases, there is a bunkhouse in an office unit and a
25 couple (In Native) on there already for sale. And we'll
26 be making a trip to go out there and kind of clean out
27 the contents.

28
29 We really hope that someone locally in
30 the community can use those structures. But you know,
31 it's happening all over the service. I know that we are
32 also going to close our Utqiagvik office. There's nobody
33 working there physically anymore. They do, do field work
34 in the summer, so there's a rented bunkhouse, but there's
35 no need for the office anymore. And it was costing a
36 great deal. And so, that structure is also going to be
37 closed and we're going to try to cancel the lease this
38 year. So, you know, really it's not a slight on the
39 Community of Emmonak and we certainly hate that we can't
40 go there each year but with our travel budgets, we'd
41 like to prioritize going to select communities for more
42 community engaging activities. You know, like going to
43 culture camps or going and having community visits, like
44 with Scammon, Chevak, and Hooper Bay that we talked about
45 earlier in the meeting. So yeah, hopefully it doesn't
46 feel too abrupt for folks because we haven't been there
47 for the last 5 seasons. But yeah, if you have questions
48 about it, please call us and let us know what your
49 concerns are.
50

1 MR. SHEPPARD: Thank you, Holly.

2

3

(Pause)

4

5

6

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. To both, Stanislaus, Holly and everyone. If is there any follow up to that from the room or online?

7

8

9

(No response)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

We were starting to move on the agenda, so I guess we'll go back to that. So, f, the next letter after what we were -- where we were just at. Still under Fisheries Reports and the last, yeah, it'll be the last fisheries report. And it's with OSM Fisheries Resource Monitoring and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Programs Updates. And we have Kevin and Lisa here to present. Whenever you're ready.

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. FOLEY: Well, Madam Chair, Members of the Council. Good afternoon. Do we all need to get up and jump around and get the blood flowing? I see lots of smiles, but I'm seeing head shaking, no. Anyway, good afternoon. My name is Kevin Foley and I'm a Fisheries Biologist with OSM, and I'm joined at the table by Liz Williams, Cultural Anthropologist, also with OSM. And I'd like to share a very brief update on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Many of you are very familiar with the process and the cycle and you've been through several but for those of you who may not be as familiar, the Fisheries Monitoring Program is a program that OSM implements to identify and provide information needed to sustain federal subsistence fisheries. The Monitoring Program also supports meaningful involvement in fisheries management by Alaska Native and rural organizations, and promotes collaboration among federal, state, and Alaska Native and other local organizations.

And so, for this update, I wanted to share with you that OSM is currently in the final phase of our 2026 monitoring program funding cycle. And the Federal Subsistence Board met early in February and approved a final monitoring program funding plan. And for those of you on the edge of your seat, we are expecting to release the -- our funding awards recipients by the end of next week. So, that's really great news. And with this cycle coming to an end, it's time for the Councils to begin developing our priority information needs or what we call PINs, P-I-N, for our 2028 Monitoring Program Call for Proposals. And so, our

1 priority information needs are an important component
2 of this Monitoring Program as they outline knowledge
3 gaps and local concerns related to subsistence fisheries
4 and guide what projects are submitted for consideration.
5

6 And so, we are asking for volunteers
7 from this Council and other Councils, but here today
8 from this Council, to meet by telephone this summer to
9 identify knowledge gaps and information needed for
10 management of subsistence fisheries. And so, the draft
11 list of the priority information needs that is developed
12 will -- by the volunteers, is then presented to the
13 Councils for final approval during your fall 2026
14 meeting. And so, how this works is if you are a
15 volunteer, you'll receive an information packet in an
16 email with some information, some historical stuff on
17 PINs, priority information needs that have been done in
18 the past, projects related to it. Also, some input from
19 transcripts, discussions that this RAC has had over time
20 on issues that are of importance to them, as well as
21 some feedback that we receive from people on the ground
22 and local area managers to help guide the decisions and
23 what you're hearing and learning on the ground out there
24 from your communities. And so, this is not an action
25 item, but we are looking for volunteers that would be -
26 - that would like to help to develop these priority
27 information needs for our next cycle. And Madam Chair,
28 Members of the Council. That concludes my brief update,
29 I'm ready to answer any questions you may have and accept
30 any volunteers. Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Kevin. There's a comment already ready.
34

35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
36 This is Brooke. Council members, so the way it's divided
37 up for the FRMP program is there are 2 different areas
38 for this Council since you cover both Kuskokwim and
39 Yukon. So, it would be great if maybe we had at least
40 one volunteer from Kuskokwim side and one volunteer from
41 Yukon side. You can have more than one for each region,
42 but that would kind of be the minimum. And like Kevin
43 said, it's just an opportunity to provide input about
44 what kind of research you think is most important for
45 your area. Maybe we could start with Kuskokwim side. Do
46 we have any volunteers?

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: If no one else,
49 I will. But I'm a coastie. So, would I still be or will
50 we have a section for coasties?

00075

1

2 MR. FOLEY: Madam Chair, you are a voice,
3 and we want to hear your voice, so. Yes, thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, well, if no
6 one else volunteers. (In Native). Okay.

7

8

(Pause)

9

10

MR. FOLEY: Madam Chair.

11

12

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Kevin.

13

14

15 MR. FOLEY: I just want to add that this
16 is probably maybe at most some of the requirements and
17 the commitments that it would take to be a volunteer for
18 this. Read a couple of pieces of paper and then respond
19 to an email at a time that we can meet by phone, that's
20 convenient for you. And then we have a discussion where
21 we talk about these ideas and sometimes these have gone
22 very quickly from an hour of discussion and maybe upwards
23 of 2 hours. And that's really -- I know that that's a
24 lot of time because it's time that would be spent doing
25 other things. But that's probably the most commitment
26 that would be required of you if you decide to volunteer.
27 Thank you.

28

29 MS. AGAYAR: Hi, Tiffany here from the
30 Yukon River. I'd like to volunteer for that stuff.

31

32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
33 Tiffany.

34

35

MS. AGAYAR: I'm kind of coastie, too.

36

37

38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Any other
39 interests from the Yukon?

40

41

42 MR. PRINCE: Hi, Keith. This is Francis.
43 I think I'd be interested as well.

44

45

46 MS. AGAYA: How about someone from
47 upriver?

48

49

50 MR. PRINCE: The more input, the merrier
it'd be for both Yukon and Kuskokwim. Just an idea, you
know.

51

52

MR. FOLEY: Madam Chair, the door is open
for as many as one have participated [sic]. We get a

1 much broader representation of the communities within
2 your region. I'd also add at times that Western Interior
3 will also be having a representative during this
4 discussion as some of the priority information needs
5 from their area. You know, we kind of spill over and
6 there's some overlap. And so, I mean, the more the
7 merrier. But I also want to be cognizant of the time
8 that it would take to fully express a lot of these ideas
9 with a larger group of people. But as many as would love
10 to attend, I really would thoroughly enjoy your
11 participation. Thank you.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I kind of wish
14 Walter Morgan was here too, to see if he would rep up
15 upriver. Brooke.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
18 Yeah, Walter volunteered last year, so since he's not
19 here, we could reach out to him, too, after the meeting
20 and see if he's -- he would be interested if that sounds
21 good. And then for the Kuskokwim side, Kevin mentioned
22 there's overlap with Western Interior. And then for the
23 Yukon group, all three of the Yukon RACs are select
24 people, so you guys can all talk amongst yourselves from
25 the different areas of the river to try to come up with
26 priority information needs. So, we will have -- we have
27 2 people from the coast on this Council that volunteered,
28 but there will be people from further upriver. But just
29 wanted to do a final call if any other of the more
30 upriver in our area would be interested.

31
32 (No response)

33
34 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We'll ask Walter
35 over the phone as well. But if anyone else is interested,
36 yeah, sounds like there's not really a limit. So, if
37 anyone else is interested here, it's okay to volunteer.

38
39 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this [sic]
40 Wassily, I know we got 2 from the Lower Yukon is okay
41 if I be the Middle Yukon or the Upper Yukon? That'll be
42 interesting.

43
44 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily Alexie's
45 been added on to the volunteers. He'll be representing
46 more of the Middle Yukon.

47
48 (Pause)

49
50

1 MR. FOLEY: Madam Chair, Members of the
2 Council. Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm looking
3 forward to this conversation. I'm looking forward to the
4 ideas that are put forward and the needs of your
5 community -- communities. Thank you very much, I
6 appreciate your time.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you.
9 Kevin, before you go I wanted to quickly ask, is this
10 program, if I remember right, is it every other year,
11 right? Do you accept every 2 years? Okay. So, when is
12 the next deadline?

13
14 MR. FOLEY: Well, in a perfect world,
15 what would happen is we, in late summer, we're going to
16 get together, discuss these PINs, present them to your
17 Council at the fall RAC meeting, and then we would
18 finalize them, publish our notice of funding opportunity
19 the following spring in 2027. And then, we would go
20 through that process where we sort of analyze them, look
21 at them, and then we would come back and present those
22 findings to the Council. And then ultimately go through
23 the same process where they're presented to the Board,
24 approved by the director of OSM. And then we are at this
25 point now where we say, here's our awarded funds -- I'm
26 sorry, awarded projects based upon the budget that we
27 have.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you. Any
30 other comments or questions? If not, do you have more
31 on your report? Liz. Thanks.

32
33 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madam Chair.
34 Good afternoon to Madam Chair and members of the Council.
35 I'm Liz Williams, Anthropologist at OSM. And we have
36 another program. So, that one is about funding research.
37 And this one is called the Partners Program. And it's
38 about providing funds for salary for a biologist, an
39 outreach person or a cultural anthropologist like me.
40 So, we had a notice of funding opportunity for the
41 Partners Program in 2025, and it's competitive and the
42 groups that are eligible are Alaska Native organizations
43 and organizations that work on fisheries in rural
44 Alaska. Now, to qualify for this program, it has to be
45 connected to federal waters like next to federal lands.
46 So, that's the important thing. Sometimes people tell
47 us about a project they want, but it's in state areas.
48 And this is about federal areas because it's all about
49 federal fisheries management.

50

1 And so, the purpose is to get more
2 Alaska Native and rural people in jobs so that they are
3 the people on the ground conducting the research. And
4 that's why we provide salaries, because it's very hard
5 to get money for these types of positions in rural and
6 tribal places. In addition to doing research and
7 outreach, these funds can be used for culture camps and
8 for student interns. So, that's another way to bring
9 more rural and tribal people into these fields, if that's
10 what they're interested in doing. The funding lasts for
11 4 years, and there's a partner's review panel that goes
12 through proposals for this type of funding. And we also
13 have some pre-proposal sessions. So, if people are
14 working on a draft proposal, they can send it to us and
15 we'll go through it with them to try to make sure that
16 they really are looking at federal lands and waters, and
17 that they really do have a clear plan to get more people
18 involved in these fields. So, you can have some people
19 from the agency work with you before you turn in your
20 final proposal.

21
22 Now, this year there were 3 new
23 partners, and these were approved by the Federal
24 Subsistence Board and the Office of Subsistence
25 Management Director Crystal Ciisquq Leonetti. And so,
26 these partners for 2025 are Bristol Bay Native
27 Association, Native Village of Eyak and the Ahtna
28 Intertribal Resource Commission. The next time this
29 funding opportunity is open is 2027. And if you like to
30 learn more about this program, you can contact me. We
31 will remind you as we get closer, so if you or your
32 organizations are thinking about this, we can start
33 working with you just to get you focused in the right
34 direction. Anytime you apply for anything with the
35 federal government, it's complicated and sometimes I
36 don't know what the answer should be. So, that's what
37 we try to work with people on because it's so important.
38 ONC has been a partner and Jacob Wades back there, but
39 they have been super important in getting the
40 information ready for the Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish
41 Commission. And they work with Department of Fish and
42 Game as well to do that. So, the point is a lot of
43 different partners working together. So, that's the end
44 of my presentation. And we'll be talking about it again
45 and we'll definitely bring it up to you again before the
46 2027 notice that the funding opportunity is open again.
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you,
50 Liz. Now we got -- sorry, now we can take questions and

1 comments for either Liz or Kevin on the FRMP program.

2

3 (No response)

4

5 Hearing none and seeing no hands. Do you
6 have anything else to add? Either of you? Brooke, did
7 you just raise your hand? Okay. Thanks again.

8

9 (Pause)

10

11 So, next on the agenda, we're going to
12 kind of backtrack and go under 11, Action Items & New
13 Business. And then on the letter it would be g: Yukon
14 Fisheries Delegation of Authority letter modifications
15 suggested by Eastern Interior RAC. And that'll be with
16 Brooke and it starts on page 38.

17

18 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
19 This is Brooke for the record. So, each of the rivers
20 in your region has in-season manager from the federal
21 side. You also have the state managers, but on the
22 Kuskokwim that's Spencer Rearden with the refuge and on
23 the Yukon side, as you heard earlier, that's Holly
24 Carroll and her team that were talking to us. The Federal
25 Subsistence Board has given each of those people what
26 they call delegated authority to work on behalf of the
27 Federal Subsistence Board to manage those fisheries
28 during the summer. And the letter that starts on page
29 38 in your meeting binders, this is the delegation of
30 authority letter from the Federal Subsistence Board to
31 the Yukon River manager or Holly Carroll. And it -- it's
32 pretty long and I don't need you to read through all of
33 it if you're not interested. But basically what this
34 does, it spells out the authorities that Holly has and
35 kind of the requirements that she must meet for that in-
36 season management. And I'll turn your attention to page
37 number 41, there's some yellow highlighted text on page
38 41.

39

40 So, when the Eastern Interior Council
41 was reviewing this letter and talking about it they
42 wanted to suggest a modification and that modification
43 is to this short paragraph on page 41 that's highlighted
44 in yellow. It talks about who the manager is required
45 to coordinate with before implementing any in-season
46 management actions. And they were hoping that this would
47 be expanded similar to how it is on the Kuskokwim. On
48 the Kuskokwim side the manager is required to coordinate
49 with the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission
50 before they implement any actions. And on the Yukon side

1 Eastern Interior wanted to suggest coordination also
2 with Tanana Chiefs, AVCP, Yukon River Fish Commission
3 and YRDFA, I know that sounds like a lot, but the Yukon
4 River is really big. And so, that was their suggestions
5 and I did put that up on the screen. So, it's a little
6 bit easier for you to see the difference. The current
7 language is on the top right now. It just says that the
8 manager needs to coordinate with the Chair of the
9 Regional Advisory Councils on the Yukon. So, there's 3
10 of them the local ADF&G and any of the other federal
11 land managing managers. So, what they want to add is on
12 the bottom to also add in those tribal organizations and
13 YRDFA. And their reasoning is that they think this is a
14 step towards more co-management and it's just sort of
15 formalizing that co-management a little bit more.

16
17 And the detail -- this is just a request
18 that they're putting into the Federal Subsistence Board.
19 This hasn't been approved or anything. But they wanted
20 to get your input to see if you thought this was a good
21 idea since you're also part of the Yukon region. They
22 did also have me present this to the Western Interior
23 Council. And the Western Interior Council was supportive
24 of this idea. So, that's why I'm bringing it before you
25 today and I'm happy to answer any questions.

26
27 (Pause)

28
29 And this is Brooke. And doesn't require
30 a vote. It's just getting your feedback. That way, when
31 the Board responds to the Eastern Interior RAC we can
32 also tell them what the other Councils thought about it.
33 So, not formal action, but we wanted to make sure it was
34 inclusive and not just one region was making a
35 recommendation.

36
37 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
38 Even though I'm not from the Yukon, I will agree that
39 the recommendation defines co-management better to
40 include, you know, indigenous communities who are
41 affected and having them be a decision making or, you
42 know, or having a voice in this process. And yeah. And
43 another reason is for being able to use indigenous
44 knowledge in this process too.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 Do the rest of you kind of agree with
49 what they want?

50

00081

1 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. I do agree with
2 that. Frederick Beans, Mountain Village.

3
4 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, Francis, I
5 would agree with this as well.

6
7 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair. Wassily Alexie,
8 I agree with that.

9
10 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. Sorry, I was
11 in the bathroom when it was being presented so I'll
12 abstain.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
15 Brooke. It sounds like there's general consensus from
16 our Yukon members that this is something you would be
17 in agreement with. So, I will share that with the rest
18 of our staff. And when that request goes to the Board,
19 we'll let them know that this Council was also supportive
20 and will provide feedback at one of your upcoming
21 meetings whether or not the Board accepts this change.

22
23 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans
24 here, Mountain Village. Now I see on there you said the
25 other, I mean, can we add more you know, on to that
26 regional director for OSM, you know, any more, you know,
27 other than you know. What's up there? Do you understand
28 what I'm asking?

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
31 Brooke. Member Beans, I think you can offer suggestions,
32 certainly. 1 of the things you might consider, though,
33 is how long the list could go. I think the thinking
34 behind Eastern Interior was, they wanted to be sure to
35 include these groups that really bring all of the tribes
36 in different communities together as opposed -- because
37 if you listed every single tribe that -- sort of might
38 be way too difficult for the management team to do in a
39 timely manner. They try to do reach all the tribes sort
40 of through these organizations and all working and
41 coordinating together to get as much as possible. But
42 if you have other suggestions, certainly welcome them.

43
44 MR. BEANS: Okay, I see what you're
45 trying to say. So, thank you.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. If no other
48 feedback. Let's keep moving to the next letter down as
49 -- on Action Items and New Business is h: Regulatory
50 maps feedback and that's on page 44.

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

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is Brooke again. Council members, there is a map on page 44 in your meeting binders. So, if you want to turn to that page and then I'm also going to ask you to pull out your federal -- your blue wildlife reg book. And turn to page 88 on that one. And that'll give you a chance to compare these 2 different maps. I'm just going to give a moment for folks to find it. Oh, and I'm going to.....

(Pause)

And that was page 88 in the reg book. So, the map in the regulations book, you'll see it shows all of the federal lands that fall under federal subsistence jurisdiction. So, that's mostly just the refuge and then a little bit of the yellow BLM lands Bureau of Land Management lands. The new map that's in your binder, this was a request that you guys put in. Also, the Eastern Interior Council had the same request was to show Native lands on the maps that are in the reg books. So, on the map that's in your binder, it's also showing the corporation lands and then they're very hard to see on this map because it's so zoomed out but the allotments are also on there because that was part of the request. And so, we wanted to bring this back to you as an example of what this change could look like. And some feedback that we got from OSM about this was that they wanted to take this to all the Councils, even though you were the one that suggested it bring it back to you, make sure it was something that you liked and they were hoping that there would be consistency across all the regions. So, if this change was made in the regulations book, they wouldn't want to just make it for one region. They would want this change to be on all of the maps. So, that's why we're taking it to all the Councils and asking if you like the change and in your case, if you like the change that you suggested. So, if you have any feedback, that would be great. Thank you.

MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this Wassily looking at the change, I think I like that because it'll give the opportunity for the out of staters, non-resident hunters to know where the Native allotments and Native owned lands would be.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie. I agree with Wassily. And not just for out of staters, but also for ourselves. You know, in certain areas, it could get kind of confusing when you're -- you have all

1 these combinations of lands and jurisdictions. So, even
2 for myself, it's very helpful as a hunter, as a fisher.
3 And even you know, just ours -- and then we can also be
4 educating other people this way too. I've always wanted
5 to see a map like this, I love it.

6
7 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. One other
8 thing, so the map in your binder, it's just a draft.
9 They'll probably do more of a final cleaned up version.
10 One thing I know this isn't -- they're not asking for
11 my feedback, but one thing I noticed especially for your
12 area, you have so much waterways is right now the state
13 lands are colored blue on this map. And I thought maybe
14 to make it contrast better against the water maybe and
15 not confuse people. Maybe that blue for state land should
16 be a different color besides that light blue, because
17 it kind of looks like matches the water but I don't know
18 what you guys think about that.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: That's a good
21 point. I think so, because it could start looking like,
22 you know, the lakes and things like state owned when
23 they're not and that, you know, that could be confusing
24 to a hunter or somebody on the ground too. Another one
25 I noticed.....

26
27 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick.

30
31 MR. BEANS: Sorry to -- but anyway,
32 Frederick Beans, Mountain Village. Isn't that a state
33 waterways is not navigable waterways in the state
34 control that? If so, then it should be blue.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
37 Brooke. Yes, Fred. That's also a good point and I'm not
38 sure if that's what they were thinking when they were
39 doing that or not, but.

40
41 MR. BEANS: Thank you.

42
43 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair. This Wassily
44 again. I was just thinking about that. The waterways,
45 you know, the federal waterways, maybe that should be
46 in a different color too, because there's a lot of people
47 that are confused of where does the federal water begin
48 or where does it end? There's a lot of people that don't
49 really know about that.

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
2 Brooke. Thank you, Wass. That's a good point. And we
3 actually discussed that quite a bit at our last meeting.
4 Unfortunately, when you weren't here about the navigable
5 waters issue and it came up, you know, through that
6 discussion that there's a big difference between the
7 waters -- federal waters for fisheries is different than
8 the jurisdiction for hunting. So, the federal program
9 for the hunting doesn't have the same jurisdiction as
10 for the fisheries. And so, since these maps are in the
11 wildlife and the hunting regulation book, they would all
12 anything below the mean high water mark falls under state
13 jurisdiction. So, that's -- but I get what you're saying.
14 And we had a lot of discussion about that. Phillip Peter
15 talked a lot about that and the need to better mark out
16 on the landscape where those changes in jurisdiction are
17 for -- especially for the fisheries season. And where
18 those navigable waters end or not, because not all
19 waterways have been decided or designated at this point.
20 That was also a comment you all included in your
21 Secretarial Review comments was along those lines.
22 Thanks.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

25
26 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here through the
27 Chair. My input for the map is, I like that it has a lot
28 more detail than the old current map. And then it would
29 also be helpful because I know that some corporations
30 have a lot more -- like they need -- if outsiders want
31 to go hunt on to their corporate -- corporation areas,
32 I know that some tribes or corporations require outside
33 hunters to get permission from them and this helps. Thank
34 you.

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Tiffany.
37 And I might have stepped away when we or when we talked
38 about this more. Or maybe you answered it already,
39 Brooke, but the last -- in the last meeting, you -- I
40 think it was you, or after the meeting, you sent us a
41 map of navigable non-navigable and conflict waters. And
42 I don't know, is it worth putting -- adding that on here
43 too? For us, I mean, I think so. For instance, Arolik
44 River is in conflict right now, but in the past, you
45 know, outsiders who weren't aware of the situation there
46 or the rules under conflict or non-navigable, they just
47 go there anyway and find out later that they needed
48 permission or they needed a permit or something. So, for
49 those reasons, I know pointing those navigability
50 statuses would help.

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
3 think those -- that's a very good point. I think, you
4 know, you all express very clearly that that information
5 should be more easily accessible and available for
6 people to reference. And that's not something I
7 necessarily can say whether or not we can do, but it's
8 feedback that I can pass back to, and in our leadership
9 that's here at this meeting can help pass that feedback
10 up the chain. Even if it's not something we can add into
11 our regulations book, because as you mentioned, there
12 are still a lot of disputes going, there's litigation
13 happening over those -- some of those issues. But perhaps
14 even if there was a more easily accessible separate map
15 that's not in the reg book but, you know, maybe in the
16 back or online or somewhere that we could point people
17 to. Maybe there's options that that could be explored.
18 So, thank you for that feedback.

19

20 MR. ALEXIE: Okay, Madam Chair, this
21 Wassily Alexie. I just got a question on looking at the
22 map. You know, from Russian Mission down to (In Native),
23 there's black dotted lines. What are those lack dotted
24 lines? If you look at it, Russian Mission to (In Native)
25 on the north side of the river.

26

27 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair.

28

29 MR. ALEXIE: I was looking at the bottom
30 where it says submerged federal lands but I can see the
31 one by Hazen Bay and around Mekoryuk. But these black
32 dotted lines. I was kind of wondering what those were.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, this is
35 Brooke. I don't have access to the map layers, but my
36 guess might be -- and I guess maybe a question to you
37 is could those be a series of allotments up and down,
38 if that's an old site, do folks have allotments in that
39 -- along those trails or waterway?

40

41 (Pause)

42

43 And I might be able to pull up the print
44 version. And zoom in and see if we can. It is kind of
45 funny that they're so evenly spaced and you know what?
46 That also might be some sort of, another like map layer
47 that they -- since this is just a draft that they forgot
48 to, you know, hide or take off, if there's an old trail
49 there or something. There could possibly be other map
50 layers.

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

MS. AGAYAR: I want to take a wild guess that it's a borderline.

MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. My guess is going to be it's some something, it's like residual, it's not probably supposed to be on there. The border.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: It's the border. You know, I think.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. ALEXIE: You're looking closer at it. It looks like it's the dotted border around the BLM land. The yellow -- yeah, yeah.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Well, I think -- this is Brooke. I think that's a good thing to note. We can pass that back and maybe we'll -- could say it. Maybe that's a little confusing because it is on the -- in the -- this book in the reg book too.

(Pause)

I think we'll just provide some feedback. This is Brooke. You know, just let our team know that folks are asking about these dotted lines. There's some also down below, you see. Yeah. Near Quinhagak just north of Quinahak. And Yeah, I think that would be a good thing just a point of clarification. Maybe we can get-- also like, sort of around Nunivak Island there's those dots, so, maybe it is some sort of border that we're unsure of at this time. But it sounds like overall, you guys like the additions. Maybe just a few things to clarify, and follow up on.

MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, I do like the new outlook of the map, but you know, just to put it down to explain the dotted lines because I know there will be a lot of people asking about what are those dotted lines are So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you, Wassily. And since -- I guess I reminded myself when I said zones. Maybe the zones, the hunting zones can be put on this map too. You know, part of the reason we wanted to see this is for ourselves and our subsistence life and also for us to know zones. Zones would be good. Thanks.

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. And
3 by hunting zones, you mean the moose hunting zones? Okay.
4 I think that's good feedback. Even if you know, they
5 have one overall map or something, it would maybe even
6 just like a smaller side map on the next page or
7 something that showed the hunting zones. I know you guys
8 have asked for those zone maps in the past to like when
9 we were talking about Unit 18 remainder earlier versus
10 Kuskokwim Zone 1 and Zone 2, it starts to get confusing.
11 So, quyana for that feedback.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native). Is
14 that good, good enough feedback for the maps guys? Okay.
15 Good to see that map going though. I like the progress.
16 Let's move to i: Future Meeting Dates. That'll be with
17 Brooke starting on page 45. And just to mention what
18 will be after that will go to AVCP report by Jennifer
19 Hooper after we pick dates.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
22 This is Brooke. So first off for fall 2026, that will
23 be your next meeting. You did already select your dates
24 for that as October 27th through 29 here in Bethel. So,
25 this would just -- this is just an opportunity to
26 reconfirm that and make sure you don't want to see any
27 changes in those dates.

28

29 (No response)

30

31 I'm not hearing any concerns about those
32 dates. So just final, are you guys okay keeping those
33 dates for your fall meeting the end of October the 27th
34 through the 29th?

35

36 (No response)

37

38 All right, I'm seeing some heads
39 nodding, yes, that it's okay. And I'm hearing a lot of
40 silence. So, let's move on. If you guys want to flip the
41 page, also this is for winter 2027. So, you have not
42 selected any dates yet for 2027. So, we're going to go
43 ahead and select your meeting dates for next year. And
44 then you'll have an opportunity to confirm or change
45 those at future meetings. There's been one other Council
46 meeting that's added March 16th through 17th. Since this
47 printed map was made in your books, but it's okay if you
48 overlap with those dates. So, does anyone have any
49 suggestions for the winter 2027 meeting dates?

50

00088

1 Yeah, so you guys could overlap with any
2 of the meetings except for Eastern Interior. Since I
3 also have to coordinate that and there's already
4 multiple meetings that week.

5
6 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Frederick
9 Beans.

10
11 MR. BEANS: Frederick Beans here, what
12 did you mentioned March 16th to the 18th, Brooke?
13

14 MS. MCDAVID: Oh, I was just saying there
15 -- this is Brooke. One other Council -- the Southcentral
16 Council is meeting March 16th and 17th, but that's not
17 an issue for this Council. It just wasn't shown on the
18 map or on this calendar. So, just put that on record.
19 But it's you could meet that week if you wanted to.

20
21 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick Beans.
22 I would pick that that date, March 16th to the 18th. Oh,
23 here in Bethel.

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie
26 again. I just want to -- I remembered at the end of
27 March, usually, there's a (In Native) Dance Festival.
28 So, if that is of any interest to anybody to like, maybe
29 keep staying the weekend when it starts or something.
30 That's another option if you guys are -- if you like
31 going to (In Native) Dance Festival. It might work out
32 too if we went for, you know, the very end of March. So,
33 I'm guessing it would be March 26, 27, 28 or something
34 for (In Native), but I could be totally wrong. And they
35 could pick April 2-3, but it's usually end of March. Is
36 anyone on the (In Native) planning here by chance? Okay.

37
38 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. I'll pull my
39 date and go with what you're suggesting.

40
41 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Yeah. You
42 could select tentative dates, you know, now it's going
43 to be on the calendar, and then at your fall meeting,
44 you'll get a chance to revisit it. So, if you wanted to
45 shift a little bit maybe the (In Native) dates would be
46 ready in the fall time.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: So, I'm going to
49 recommend March 24th, 25 and 26. If (In Native) is that
50 weekend they don't start until the evening anyway on a

1 Friday. So, we'd still be, you know, that way we don't
2 have to, you know, wait a whole day for (In Native) to
3 start, if that makes sense. Francis.

4
5 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is
6 Francis. That sounds like a pretty good idea. Plus, the
7 weather might be a little bit warmer, you know, because
8 now, right now we're in the 3rd week of March and it's
9 March 18-19 right now. And it's pretty cold right now.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Wassily.

12
13 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair this Wassily.
14 Yeah, it sounds like a reasonable date, but if it's
15 going to be toward (In Native), you know, we'd have to
16 get our rooms way ahead of time before all the other
17 organizations does.

18
19 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

22
23 MR. PARKS: Henry.....

24
25 (Simultaneous speech)

26
27 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Henry.

28
29 MR. PARKS:for the record. We
30 haven't met in Anchorage yet, so. For these OSM staff,
31 it would be a lot cheaper for them if we have a meeting
32 in Anchorage. Plus, on top of that, there's a lot of
33 hotels over there.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
36 Thank you, Henry, for the suggestion. One thing about
37 Anchorage, it's not one of your approved hub communities
38 because it's outside of your region. It might be
39 something -- you've put in a request in the past and
40 they've said no. Even though it's easier for staff,
41 there's usually more council members than staff. So, it
42 does get a little bit more expensive. But I did want to
43 say that the Eastern and Western Interior Councils have
44 expressed interest sometime in the future to have a tri-
45 RAC meeting for the 3 regions to get together and
46 especially talk about fisheries issues. So, if that's
47 ever something that we're able to pull off, Anchorage
48 might be a good central location for that, but I think
49 we'd have to have some more planning and thinking about
50 that for the future. But for now, it sounds like, at

1 least for winter 2027, March 24th, 25, and 26 are your
2 preferred dates at this time. Does that sound okay for
3 folks? And meeting in Bethel. Your other options for hub
4 communities are not very many. St. Mary's was one and
5 you all had requested to add a couple of others but they
6 weren't approved. And we did also hear from some of our
7 elders that it's difficult maybe for them to stay in the
8 smaller communities just less accommodation options and
9 food options. So, as long as everyone's still okay with
10 Bethel for now. Okay.

11
12 All right, so moving on to fall 2027.
13 That's on the next page, page 47. Again, I would just
14 ask if you could avoid the Eastern Interior RAC meeting
15 that week would be best for -- well, we'd have to get
16 you another coordinator.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I know for this
19 region we kind of don't like to schedule anything for
20 September just because we're moose hunting mostly. And
21 I know everyone has different hunting schedules and
22 times, but generally September is used for moose hunting
23 for Quinhagak and some other places maybe it ends October
24 15th. So, I mean, I don't like hunting for moose in
25 October, but that's just the dates for now. And then we
26 should keep in mind to avoid the AFN week in case some
27 of us will be going to AFN. So, I think -- since we
28 don't know if AFN will be October 19 to 21 or, you know,
29 October 17th week, or week of October 24th, since we
30 don't know that yet, maybe it's safer to go with the,
31 you know first week of November. I don't know but I'm
32 just thinking out loud and just throwing things out
33 there. If anybody else has ideas.

34
35 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. What do
36 other council members think about that 1st week of
37 November? Is that too late? Does that sound okay since
38 it will be after AFN? Any other ideas?

39
40 MR. ANDREW: Madam Chair, I could go for
41 our first week in November, 2, 3, 4.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. It's a safe
44 week. For me, I might -- if I'm still -- well, we have
45 our tribal council meetings first Wednesday of the
46 month, but they can easily be moved or someone else can
47 chair at home. But yeah. What do you guys think? 1st
48 week of November, right before the window closes for RAC
49 meetings. It's after AFN, after moose hunting.

1 (Pause)

2
3 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Francis.

6
7 MR. PRINCE: This Francis. I like Henry's
8 idea. Plus, everybody's moose season is just about
9 closing right there that week.

10
11 MS. AGAYAR: Yes, and most people usually
12 are done putting away their fall moose by the ending of
13 September.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yea, that's a
16 good week too, because also, you know how the weather
17 starts getting bad in November. We might run into those
18 things too, who knows. So yeah, that's another option
19 because you're right. You know, by the end of September
20 the bulls are rutting. (in Native), I know you mentioned
21 1st week of November, but what do you think of September
22 28 29, 30?

23
24 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. For me
25 personally, no, I don't. I do my hunting on the last
26 week of September. So for me, I wouldn't suggest it.

27
28 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: There's also a
29 first week of October or third week, oh wait, we -- I
30 guess we don't know. Another option is the week of
31 October 24 because generally AFN is that middle. You
32 know, like the middle weeks, not the last week. It's
33 usually the next to last week.

34
35 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, just giving you
36 an idea of when AFN starts, it's usually the third or
37 fourth week of October.

38
39 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, you know, I
40 think maybe the 5th of October, you know. You know,
41 during that Holy Cross and the Anaktuvuk one. But do we
42 need -- can we put it there like 5th, 6th and 7th of the
43 2nd week of October or the first week of October?

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I was just told
46 by Brooke that they usually try to avoid having 3 RAC
47 meetings at the same time. Like they'll accept 2 meetings
48 in the same week, but I guess not 3. Yes, Henry.

49
50

1 MR. PARKS: September 21 22,23. Because
2 you know, when is the moose open again in September? Is
3 it on September first?

4
5 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: It's different
6 for different, I guess, areas, but ours is September 1
7 to October 15. And you know, I know -- yeah. So, for me
8 no on September 21 because that's like almost the peak
9 of when they start walking around where I'm from. Sorry,
10 I don't want it to be because of me. So, anybody else
11 can say. Yeah.

12
13 MS. AGAYAR: I think another set of dates
14 that's conflicting for me would be October 2 through 10.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I just
17 wanted to say, if council members are worried about being
18 cold in the beginning of November we can try to book a
19 meeting venue early so we get a place with nice heat.

20
21 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. Frederik Beans
22 here can it be like Thursday and Friday and then travel
23 on Saturday?

24
25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, it has been
26 before.

27
28 MR. BEANS: Okay, I would suggest October
29 7th and 8th.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair. We typically
32 don't have meetings on weekends. Also, this Council has
33 tried to do 2-day meetings in the past and has really
34 struggled to do that since folks like to have time to
35 talk and discuss. So, sorry about that.

36
37 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. Frederick Beans
38 again. I see October 6th, that's when those Holy Cross
39 and Anatuuk Pass are -- that's their last day. Can we
40 start on that day, and then October 7th and 8th and
41 those are Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Can that
42 happen?

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair, Member
45 Beans. We really try not to have more than 2 RAC meetings
46 in a week because we have staff that cover multiple
47 regions. This will be a wildlife cycle in 2027. Usually
48 there's a lot of Wildlife Proposals to go over that
49 folks need, it's helpful to have all our wildlife staff
50 available to call in and make sure your questions are

1 answered when taking up those. So, sorry about that.

2

3

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Tiffany.

4

5

6

MS. AGAYAR: From what I can see on the maps, we cannot choose dates from October 3 to October 16. Thank you.

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: And I know this is, you know, still like a year out, so we could always come back to it. And for now, we could just tentatively put, you know, either the, October 26, 27, 28 because we think AFN would be the week before anyway or November 2 3, 4. So, those last 2 columns are -- I mean, my preference if -- yeah.

MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MR. PRINCE: Can we have a vote on that and include the September 28th through 30th as well.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: He'll be hunting.

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. Yes. Frederik Beans, if need be, you know, I go with Francis's suggestion, so.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. So now we have either the week of September 26. So, September 28, 29, 30. We have either October 26, 27, 28 or November 2, 3, 4. Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Just for my knowledge, is there a reason Francis, you don't want to meet later in October or November. Thank you.

MR. PRINCE: The reason I don't want to meet in later October, November is because we tend to get more freezing rain and more cancelled flights within our region.

(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Good reasons, though, valid reasons. Do you think we'll all be done hunting by the last week of September? Yeah. Should we put it there the -- tentatively? And we could always.....

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

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. BEANS: Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND:come back to it.

MR. BEANS: If I may. Frederick Beans here. I suggest 29, 30 and October 1st.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: (In Native).

MR. ANDREW: First 2 weeks (In Native) You were competing with better than 2,000 hunters that would leave less than 10% that was getting there moose only going for combat. (In Native)

INTERPRETER: Go up to the Kwethluk River. I do see a lot of hunters. I see a lot of boats up that area. There's a lot of hunters there, it's kind of dangerous and there's a lot some people that are driving under the influence and there's head on collisions and boat collisions due to the speed that they traveling on. And when they do not catch any moose they do go up further up to the Zone 2 area in the middle of October. So, after the middle of October, a lot of the younger reindeer hunters usually go out hunting at the start of the start of the season, so there's more hunters in the start of the season, so. I know they try to go hunt near their villages because of the price of gas, but there's -- because of the price. So, they want to stay close to the villages. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes. Good points too. So, John was just saying. That that last week of September and even up to October 15, even though yeah, maybe a lot have got their catch by then or there -- but there's also always people who didn't have good luck and they do need that -- the last chance. They need to use up the last chance to get meat for the whole -- for the winter. So, I mean, I respect that too, of course. Can we pick October 26, 27, 28 tentatively for now? And we can always come back to this and change it.

MR. ANDREW: (In Native).

INTERPRETER: End of September. Seems like a better date for us that are in this area, we can come show up to the meeting at the end of September.

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

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: It's almost 4. So, I'm just going to say let's put this tentatively for between, you know, like let's come back to it. Brooke, There's some saying. September 28, 29,30 and then some saying October 26, 27, 28. Can we just, you know, tag these 2 and come back to it at the spring meeting?

MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, you do need to select a preferred time because other Councils are going to be voting on them for their meetings as well. If those are the 2 dates, maybe you guys want to vote and I can help with the vote if you would like. This is Brooke.

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Sure. Thank you. Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. Do you guys need me to put the 2 choices up on the screen or? Okay, one moment. Let me get some -- get myself in order here. Alright, so the 1st option will be September 28 through 29 -- no, 28 through 30. And the next option will be October 26, through what, 28?

CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, one moment.

(Pause)

All right. So, up on the screen, you'll see that the 2 choices end of September or end of October. I can make it bigger. Is everybody okay if we do hand raise? It's not very secret. Okay, we're gonna start with the first choice, September 28, 29, 30 at -- the in the middle of moose season. Who wants to meet during moose season? Raise your hand. Okay. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Okay.

And then what about end of October, who wants to meet end of October. Okay. Some people are trying to cheat and vote twice. All right, I see 3 people here in the room, and we do not have any council members online. So, at this time, tentative dates will be September 28 through 30. And we can vote on that at a future meeting if you would like to change it. Thank you.

1 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this Wassily.
2 I think that's a good date, 28 to 30, like what Francis
3 was saying. End of October, that's when we start getting
4 freezing rain and wet snow. So, most of us might not
5 even make it in.

6
7 MS. AGAYAR: And it's also beginning of
8 fall stormy season.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We're going to
11 take a short break before we come back to hear AVCP and
12 do the rest of our agenda, if you guys feel like it. But
13 let's make it short and don't go far. Yeah so, 10 -- so
14 4:10 please. So, that's more like 8 minutes.

15
16 (Off record)

17
18 (On record)

19
20 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Hi.
21 Welcome back from recess. It's 4:14. This is our last
22 section. Of our 3-day YKRAC meeting. So, next we're going
23 to hear from Jennifer Hooper with AVCP. Quyana.

24
25 MS. HOOPER: (In Native). Quyana, Madam
26 Chair. I will try to keep this really quick. I know it's
27 the end of your meeting and it's cold in here and lots
28 and lots of things. So, I appreciate you taking me out
29 of order. It's just been a really busy week and trying
30 to juggle too many things. My name is Jennifer Hooper.
31 I work for AVCP. I oversee our Natural Resources Program.
32 Have been there for quite a while and just have -- for
33 the last several years have been offering to provide a
34 quick update on activities that AVCP has been engaging
35 in, and some other topics that we assume you might be
36 interested in hearing about, so. I apologize, too, I did
37 not get this completed in time to get in your packet but
38 I can share it with Brooke afterwards if people would
39 like a copy.

40
41 So, just some quick updates. Within
42 AVCP, we are currently going some reorganization within
43 our division. Several years ago, quality improvement
44 restructured AVCP's programs under 6 different
45 divisions, and previously we were within the Lands and
46 Cultural Resources Division, working with the realty
47 program, environmental quality and our cultural museum
48 program. Currently we are going to be restructuring that
49 division specifically and are looking to create a
50 specific natural resources division to stand alone. To

1 help coordinate activities and our advocacy and then to
2 provide more direct support for subsistence, which
3 continues to be one of our top regional tribal
4 priorities. So, in the next month or so, we'll be looking
5 at new positions to start trying to develop and recruit
6 for, and then also into the future look at programs that
7 our organization is interested in building up for the
8 region.

9
10 People might be familiar with the IGAP
11 environmental programs out in the tribes. That
12 environmental quality program within AVCP that works to
13 support those tribal IGAP coordinators and a new-ish
14 [sic] brownfields program will be housed within the
15 natural resources division. Just kind of shout out and
16 reminder that AVCP does have a Subsistence Committee
17 through our Executive Board structure that was created
18 a few years ago. They meet quarterly, which was one of
19 the reasons why I wasn't able to be here in person for
20 the majority of your meeting was busy getting ready for
21 that. And then our Executive Board, which is also meeting
22 this week.

23
24 So, I mentioned the restructuring of our
25 division. Within Natural Resources, I am currently the
26 only staff person. I mentioned we'll be looking at
27 revising some prior position descriptions and then start
28 advertising and recruiting for a couple of more staff
29 to help as we build our new division. I've reported in
30 the past some forestry activities. I just wanted to share
31 that that function is going to shift back to where it
32 was originally housed. And that is with our realty native
33 allotment lands program. So, any future forestry type
34 work, including, I think I last reported that we were
35 working on a hazardous fuels reduction project for
36 Russian Mission. That will shift over and become a
37 function under the realty program.

38
39 I caught Terese Vicente's presentation
40 earlier today and I know she shared a lot of good
41 information. A couple of points. First was on the federal
42 fisheries disaster programs. And I know she mentioned
43 that the latest Kuskokwim 2021 disaster program is
44 currently open for crew members and subsistence
45 households, and you have until 2nd week of June to apply
46 for those. The 2020 Yukon and Kuskokwim and then the '21
47 Yukon disaster programs have closed and those funds were
48 all sent out in mid-January. And then the '22 Yukon and
49 Kuskokwim disaster requests have been approved and funds
50 allocated, but review of those spend plans is still

1 happening within the government and we don't know when
2 those might roll out. She also provided really great
3 updates and summaries of action that happened at the
4 North Pacific Council and the Board of Fish meetings
5 last month. I'll just add that AVCP along with the Fish
6 Commission and all of our other coalition partners, And
7 I think Craig with the Yukon Fish Commission spoke to
8 the unity and the -- everyone working together to trying
9 to affect change at those meetings. It was really
10 evident. And our CEO Vivian and along with our
11 Subsistence Committee, they both -- all participated at
12 both of those meetings.

13
14 Our Regional Migratory Bird Committee,
15 the Waterfowl Conservation Committee, or WCC is going
16 to have their spring meeting tomorrow here in Bethel
17 meeting with the refuge and then various agencies to
18 talk about project and survey plans for this coming
19 season. And then also discussing the process we follow
20 to identify when the mandatory 30-day closure to
21 subsistence hunting should start. Just important note
22 there. Not sure if the refuge or other agency staff have
23 presented, but the 25 population index for emperor geese
24 rose a little bit last year, but still fell within the
25 red closure zone, and so emperor geese will be closed
26 for subsistence hunting this year.

27
28 Last year -- just one last update, I
29 reported and shared some information about a salmon
30 project that we received funds for. If you remember, I
31 showed some pictures of staff in Alakanuk and Tunt. We
32 received word in May that our funding had been frozen
33 and we had to suspend work because of the Trump
34 administration executive orders and, you know, word
35 usage and things like that. We had the opportunity to
36 revise the project description and the budget, submitted
37 that and got word in late May -- I mean, late fall that
38 our project was approved to continue. Now just kind of
39 waiting on staff and bodies in the program and to start
40 working on that again. But we do have plans for 2 more
41 phases to continue that work in 4 more communities in
42 the next 2 years. So, I think that's it. So be happy to
43 answer any questions if you have any. Quyana.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana,
46 Jennifer. Does anyone have comments or questions for
47 Jennifer?

48
49 MR. PERTER: Madam Chair.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Phillip.

2
3 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman, quyana. I
4 heard you talking about waterfowl, those birds. Oh, this
5 year is different, those waterfowls. Even in September
6 me and my great grandson and my grandson went up duck
7 hunting for hunting. And then there were plentiful
8 waterfowl ducks and -- end of September, we went up (In
9 Native) slough right above Akiachak. Not one bird -- not
10 one waterfowl. We didn't see. They all disappear. And I
11 was wondering, it's the first time I see like this,
12 disappear. No, nothing. Even the -- even on ponds. No
13 swans, no geese. Everything's disappear. And I was
14 wondering why. And then October 5th, yeah, October 5th
15 in the morning when I go out to check my boat, I see
16 only 3 mallard ducks. After that, I didn't see any and
17 I asked myself why. Fish, animals and birds -- land
18 animals and birds, they know. Because they're breathing
19 like us, they got -- they think. They always think just
20 like us. They always talk just like us. They always
21 watch the weather just like us. And I was wondering why.
22 I went over to my first cousin's house in the morning
23 and we always talk about the moose, birds. And I asked
24 him why the birds are disappear [sic]. And my cousin
25 told me they're -- maybe they're expecting something.
26 Watch, he told me. Watch, they're expecting something.
27 And he told me that maybe they're expecting strong wind,
28 strong wind and the weather. Just they -- and I know
29 that October we had a big storm, really big storm. First
30 time we see this kind of weather. The prediction. These
31 animals and waterfowl, those are signs. They tell us but
32 we did not understand. They tell us, but we don't
33 understand. But they gave us -- if we watched them
34 carefully, we'll understand them. Quyana, for.....

35
36 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana (In
37 Native), Phillip. (In Native). Are there others?

38
39 (No response)

40
41 Hearing, seeing none. Quyana, Jennifer.
42 Jennifer wait.

43
44 MS. MCDAVID: It's okay. This is Brooke.
45 You don't necessarily have to come up, Jennifer. But I
46 did just want to say it maybe it would be helpful, and
47 I don't know, it would be best to come from AVCP or the
48 refuge. When those -- that 30-day closure dates are
49 selected. I'd love to be able to help get notice out to
50 the RAC members and others. That way we can all work

1 together to spread the word so any opportunity to share
2 that would be appreciated. Thank you.

3

4 MS. HOOPER: Madam Chair. Thanks. Yeah,
5 definitely. Thanks, Brooke. I know once the refuge and
6 our WCC agrees on that date, they usually put out a
7 press release and send it to the local media, but I will
8 definitely make sure and make a note to share it with
9 you as well.

10

11 MS. MCDAVID: Quyana.

12

13 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: We'll move on to
14 -- we're still under Other Reports and the last one
15 under Other Reports will be Office of Subsistence
16 Management. And it looks like it'll be Katya.

17

18 MS. WESSELS: Thank you, Madam Chair,
19 Members of the Council. For the record, my name is Katya
20 Wessels. And thank you for enduring this 3-day marathon
21 meeting and still being engaged to the very end. I really
22 appreciate that. You know, you just had your full 2025
23 meeting not that long ago, so you might think that not
24 that much happened in the Federal Subsistence Management
25 Program or Office of Subsistence Management since then,
26 but actually a lot of happen [sic]. And we as usual,
27 pivoting, trying to accomplish many, various things and
28 projects and stay engaged. So -- but I'm glad to report
29 that we were able to hold all of the full 2025 meetings
30 that had -- 8 of them had -- and yours also had to be
31 rescheduled due to the lapse in government
32 appropriations. But now we're all finished with those,
33 and now we're actually almost finished with our winter
34 meetings. After your meeting concludes, there will be
35 just 2 more Councils that will have to meet. That will
36 be Seward Peninsula and Northwest Arctic. The only 2
37 remaining Councils to meet during the winter of '26.

38

39 So, we are thankful to you for your
40 commitment because you agreed with rescheduling your
41 fall meeting and holding it, and accomplishing all of
42 your comments on the -- on many proposals and closures.
43 So since then, we also had the tribal consultations on
44 wildlife proposals and closure reviews. These statewide
45 tribal consultations, that's the 2nd set of them, they
46 were held on February 17th and 18th. And if there is any
47 questions about these consultations, the council members
48 can reach out to OSM Native Liaison Orville Lind.

49

50

1 So, next what's going to happen, the
2 Board will meet April 20th and 24th at the Egan Center
3 in Anchorage and will listen to Council's
4 recommendations on these proposals and closure reviews
5 and make the final decision. So, just a reminder that,
6 you know, the public testimony that's provided at the
7 Council meetings, it's not going directly to the Board,
8 though we're working on it, trying to change it, in our
9 procedures. So, potentially in the future the public
10 testimony that will be made at the Council meetings will
11 go to the Board. So -- but there's also other
12 opportunities to provide public testimony to the Board
13 during the Board meeting, that any topic that is not
14 part of the Board's agenda, there will be a period for
15 public comments on non-agenda items, just as you know,
16 you have at your Council meetings. And also, if public
17 wants to comment on any proposals or closures, they can
18 do it during the time when each proposal and closure are
19 presented to the Board. And there will be one more also
20 opportunity for tribal consultations right before the
21 Board, the day before the Board meets on April 20th, in
22 the afternoon at 1 p.m. So, that's -- so any tribe is
23 aware of that might be listening, or you can communicate
24 it to your tribes. And per usual, you know, any tribe
25 can request a tribal consultation with OSM and with the
26 Board by calling Orville Lind. So, I'm going to stop for
27 a second to see if there's any questions before I move
28 on to the next topic.

29

(No response)

30

31

32 Okay, so next topic is the Secretarial
33 Review. Brooke already touched upon that earlier that
34 the comment period was extended and it's now closing at
35 the end of this month. So -- but what I want to tell you
36 about that the Office of the Secretary, with the help
37 of OSM, held the public listening session on February
38 3rd. And lots of people attended in person. It was held
39 at our office, and over 76 comments were provided orally
40 by people who came in person and people who attended
41 online. That was a very significant outcome of this
42 public listening session. So, then also on March 10th
43 and March 17th, we held a statewide tribal and ANCSA
44 consultations in regards to the Secretarial Review. So,
45 that's for any tribe that wanted they could attend those.
46 Additionally, we're holding many, I don't know exactly
47 the number, but there were quite a few requests from
48 various tribes to hold more private consultations on the
49 Secretarial Review. Just a message from Kara Moriarty,
50 who is the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the

1 Interior for Alaskan Affairs. She said that all of the
2 comments that were received oral and in writing will be
3 reviewed. And at this point, no decisions have been made
4 in regards to if there's any changes going to be
5 happening to the program and OSM. Okay. I will stop
6 again before moving on to the next topic. Any -- if
7 there is any questions.

8

9

(No response)

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

Okay, next topic is the Federal Subsistence Board winter work session. So, that happened on February 5th and the Board addressed several topics. The Board accepted the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan as presented. That was kind of the main reason for that work session. And then the Board also approved the transmittal letters, to transmit Council's letters of concern regarding 3 major topics. One is the (d)(1) lands. The other one is cross-jurisdictional and conservation concerns -- fisheries concerns. And the 3rd topic was the council member compensation that many Councils have been asking for quite a while. So, these letters from the Board together with the Council letters are within the office of the Secretary that [sic] being transmitted. The Board also received an update on the request for reconsideration of the Board's earlier decision to designate Ketchikan -- a community of Ketchikan to be rural, and the Board will make a decision on if they want to proceed with a full analysis for this request during their April regulatory meeting, that's when they will make their decision. And if they decide that the this request merits further analysis, then it will probably take another, you know, half a year at least, before all this paperwork is completed and the Board then will make a decision if they're going to change their earlier decision or not.

Okay. And the Board also received an update on the electronic federal permit database during that meeting. And as well received an update from the advisor -- Senior Advisor for Alaskan Affairs on the ongoing Secretary review. So, the Board also, besides this regulatory meeting in April, to which we hope your Chair or representative will travel to, to represent the Council's positions, the Board will also hold another work session, the regular summer work session, which is scheduled to be held in Anchorage on August 4th and 5th. And this is a great opportunity for the Council Chairs and representatives to be engaged in a direct conversation with the Board. The main topic of the summer

1 work session will be talking about the concerns that
2 Council's brought up in their annual reports. And your
3 Chair, Ms. Cleveland attended the summer work session
4 last time, which was great, but we're hoping that more
5 Council Chairs will attend this year and will have the
6 live dialogue with the Board. Because that's the best
7 way to get them engaged, talking about the issues
8 directly in the live situation, besides just getting a
9 reply from the Board, a written reply that sometimes
10 doesn't really address your concerns. So again, we hope
11 that either the Chair or representative can travel to
12 that summer work session on August 4th and 5th. Well, I
13 mean, it's just one day, the 2nd day they discuss the
14 Council appointments. Are there any questions in regards
15 to this upcoming Board meetings, regulatory meeting and
16 the summer work session?

17

18 (No response)

19

20 If there is none, I'm moving on. So just
21 a reminder, of course you heard that there's a call for
22 fisheries proposals is out, and that call will end --
23 will close on April 3rd. So, if you know of anyone who
24 wants to submit a fisheries regulatory proposal, they
25 will need to do it before April 3rd. So, now about the
26 Council appointments. Some of you whose term expired
27 last December still continue serving on the Council
28 because we have the carryover clause -- carry over term
29 clause in your charters, because the appointments from
30 2025 have not been made yet. The appointment packet is
31 in the final stages of review in the Secretarial Office,
32 and we're expecting the new appointments to be made
33 within the next couple of weeks. And at the same time,
34 we have an ongoing call for new applications and
35 nominations for 2026. So, if your term is expiring in
36 December of this year, current year, and you want to
37 continue serving on the Council, you need to apply before
38 April 2nd because that's when the call for application
39 is closing. And also, if you know other people who would
40 like to apply in your communities, you know, get them
41 to reach out to Brooke. She'll help them to fill out the
42 applications. You know, we -- of course, we don't want,
43 you know, like 50 applications from the region, but it's
44 always good to have a couple of more just in case, you
45 know, somebody decides to resign from the Council or
46 passes away, unfortunately. So, we have somebody as
47 alternates who can possibly get appointed out of cycle.

48

49 So, that's about it for appointments.
50 And let's see. So, there's one other thing and I will

1 read this part. It's update about OSM budget. So, we
2 finally received the money for this year, fiscal year
3 2026 budget. And we have a budget of \$9.4 million. This
4 will allow the program to continue delivering essential
5 services. While this amount is modestly lower than the
6 last years, OSM will prioritize core functions,
7 including process regulatory proposals, supporting the
8 Board and the Council's, conducting public meetings and
9 consultations, maintaining critical permitting and
10 regulatory publications. OSM will also preserve capacity
11 for essential fisheries research and community
12 partnerships. We will do it through strategic planning
13 and efficiency improvement and will continue to uphold
14 ANILCA Title VIII and support food security for rural
15 Alaskans. And if you have any questions regarding the
16 budget, I don't know if I'll have answers, but I can try
17 to answer them.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Do we have
20 comments or questions on the OSM budget? And if not just
21 questions in general? Yeah, or comments in general.

22
23 (No response)

24
25 So, can I ask though you said it's --
26 this year's budget is lower than last years. Can I ask
27 how much lower it is?

28
29 MS. WESSELS: About \$2 million.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay, all right.
32 Thank you.

33
34 MS. WESSELS: Okay. If there is no other
35 questions or comments. That concludes my presentation
36 unless you can think of something else.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Francis.

39
40 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, this is
41 Francis. Just a quick question for Katya. While we're
42 serving on this RAC, you know, can we apply for to be
43 on the Federal Subsistence Board? Just a question.

44
45 MS. WESSELS: Yeah. You can apply to
46 serve on the Federal Subsistence Board. I am really not
47 familiar how the call for the membership on the Federal
48 Subsistence Board happens but we had the situation when
49 the council members that you know, served on other
50 Councils became the members of the Federal Subsistence

1 Board. Like, for example, on Brooks Council, there was
2 a Council Member Rhonda Pitka. Oh, Rhonda is online.
3 Yeah, so she became the member of the Federal Subsistence
4 Board. And if Rhonda is online, maybe she wants to add
5 something. Sorry to put you on the spot, Rhonda.
6

7 MS. PITKA: No worries. Rhonda Pitka. I
8 was just listening in to a RAC meeting. I promised myself
9 I would listen into 2 RAC meetings this year. So, I
10 applied for my appointment when Tim (In Native) retired.
11 The Federal Subsistence Board itself doesn't have term
12 limits for the public members. But when those
13 opportunities do come open, if somebody is retired, then
14 then usually there's an appointment process. The tribal
15 appointment process is a nomination process by your
16 tribe. And I believe all those seats have been, have
17 been filled so far. And I think Ray Oney used to be the
18 Chairman for the Yukon Delta Regional Advisory Council,
19 and he's now a Federal Subsistence Board Public Member.
20 Thank you. I hope that answered your question.
21

22 MR. PRINCE: Thank you.
23

24 MS. WESSELS: Yeah. While, Rhonda was
25 speaking. I also thought that I need to explain. So,
26 there is you know, the Board consists of 11 seats and 5
27 of these seats are the heads of the federal agencies,
28 BLM, BIA, Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and
29 Forest Service. So, then there is the Chair and 2 public
30 members and Ms. Rhonda Pitkas, she is a public member
31 and that's what she was talking about. The Chair is also
32 public member, and they are appointed by the Secretary.
33 But then, you know, 2 years ago, the 3 other seats were
34 added to the Federal Subsistence Board and those seats
35 are tribally nominated public members. And that's what
36 the previous Chair of this Council, Raymond Oney, he was
37 a tribally nominated to be a public member on the Federal
38 Subsistence Board. So, I hope that just explains it a
39 little bit.
40

41 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
42 This is Brooke. I just wanted -- since we're talking
43 about the Federal Subsistence Board, wanted to remind
44 you all that the wildlife regulatory meeting for the
45 Federal Subsistence Board is happening next month at the
46 end of April. Unfortunately, we don't have funding to
47 bring all our council members to those meetings. But the
48 Chair comes to that meeting and represents the Council.
49 Jackie will share how you all voted on all of the
50 wildlife proposals that we talked about at your last

1 meeting. Those are the ones that are in your minutes and
2 so she shares how you voted and your justification with
3 the Board. And she can answer questions. So, she serves
4 as a liaison to the Board. And the Board usually defers
5 to the recommendation of the Council unless there's a
6 really strong reason not to. So, if you all are ever
7 interested in coming to a Board meeting, you know, on
8 your own or if your tribe wants to send you, I'm always
9 available as a resource to help kind of teach you a
10 little bit more about that process, if that's something
11 you're interested in. Even just calling in and
12 listening. Those meetings are also available online or
13 on the telephone and there's opportunities like at this
14 meeting for public testimony, tribal testimony, and the
15 day before the Board meeting starts, there's always one
16 last opportunity for tribal consultation. So, if your
17 tribe's haven't taken up or discussed any of these
18 proposals that we talked about at our last meeting,
19 there's still time to do that. If you want to bring any
20 of those up with your Council's. I know especially the
21 one about the moving boat people felt pretty -- or
22 shooting from a moving boat, people felt pretty strongly
23 about that one. So, those are other ways that you can
24 engage in this federal subsistence process beyond just
25 at the Council meetings if you want to. It's not
26 required, of course. So just wanted to share that. Thank
27 you.

28
29 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thanks, Brooke.
30 I was taking notes. Katya, this is Jackie. You said 11
31 seats, 5 agency heads, 1 Chair, 3 tribally nominated
32 public members. And then I have 2 missing. What am I
33 missing?

34
35 MS. WESSELS: Okay. The 2 -- other 2
36 other public members that are just public members,
37 they're not tribally nominated.

38
39 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. Thanks.

40
41 MS. WESSELS: And that's what Ms. Rhonda
42 Pitkas is, that public member. She's not the tribally
43 nominated and the other one is Charlie Brower, from
44 Barrow.

45
46 (Pause)

47
48 We just hoping that in the future, maybe
49 we'll have a little bit more resources at some point.
50 And so, we can have some kind of like more informal

1 training, having conversations like that. So, people
2 understand the workings of the program better because
3 it's, you know, complicated, especially when you're not
4 like doing it like us day in and day out.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Your report was
7 very much appreciated. Thank you.

8
9 MS. WESSELS: Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: On the agenda,
12 we're down to number 14, Other Business that'll be with
13 Brooke again and we're going to start with the
14 Correspondence Update A, on page 72. And Brooke, you
15 have the floor.

16
17 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair.
18 This is Brooke. And yeah, this is sort of the last
19 section of your agenda, and I think I can get through
20 this pretty quickly. There is going to be just one other
21 I want to add, d, just other business to kind of circle
22 back to before we move into other comments, I just had
23 noted down a couple other things that came up from
24 earlier in the meeting. Just wanted to check in with you
25 guys before we wrap. But for Correspondence Update on
26 page 72 in your meeting binders, there's just a little
27 table that has 4 -- it lists 4 different letters. And
28 this is just a summary of the letters that were sent by
29 you as a Council after the last meeting that we had, and
30 we already talked about a lot of these. That first one
31 was comments on the Secretary review. You also submitted
32 comments on Board official proposals for Area M and then
33 the statewide meeting. We heard updates about what
34 happened at the Area M meeting from Therese earlier and
35 others. The statewide meeting is happening right now and
36 you guys voted on to support some proposals that were
37 seeking to maybe better regulate trawling in state
38 waters. And so at your next meeting, I'll give you guys
39 an update about what happened with those proposals. And
40 then lastly was the comments on chum salmon bycatch. And
41 you also heard from Terese earlier about that cap that
42 they had passed for that at that meeting.

43
44 I personally feel like we covered these
45 pretty good, but -- earlier in the meeting, but I would
46 entertain any questions if anybody had any questions or
47 comments about correspondence from the last meeting.

48
49 (No response)

50

1 And if you don't have any. I can move
2 on if you'd like.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Before you move
5 on, I just want to thank you for, you know, drafting all
6 those letters and those were great. Thanks.

7
8 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Thank you,
9 Madam Chair. And thank you for working with me on those
10 and reviewing them and making sure they represented what
11 the Council was saying. I always appreciate that.

12
13 All right. The next item is about your
14 voucher payments that you guys get as council members.
15 The last meeting we -- in -- for some of you at this
16 meeting, everyone received a debit card. Yeah? Okay. So,
17 on your debit card, when you come to the meeting, you
18 get 60% of your per diem and they call that travel
19 advance. So, that's for you to spend during the meeting,
20 yeah. After the meeting, they put the other remainder
21 after they process all of the paperwork. You have a new
22 option if you want, instead of after the meeting that
23 getting put on your debit card. If you want that to be
24 direct deposit into your bank account instead especially
25 like if you don't have an ATM in your community to pull
26 out the cash or something. I have a form that you can
27 fill out, so you'll still get the advance on your card
28 when you come to the meeting to use during the meeting.
29 But that payment afterwards, if you would like it to be
30 deposit [sic] in your bank account instead, we'll just
31 need to fill out this form with your bank account
32 information. So, if you guys want to raise your hand,
33 if anyone's interested in that form, I can come pass
34 out, give you a copy if you want the direct deposit.
35 Yeah? Okay. Would anyone else?

36
37 (Pause)

38
39 Okay. And for -- this is Brooke. For the
40 folks I gave a form to that were interested in that.
41 It's just the information in that red box that's
42 highlighted in yellow. So, your name, social, your
43 address, and then your bank account info, and then you
44 just sign at the bottom where it says signature. The
45 rest, our team -- I'll take that back and our admin team
46 will fill in the other sections and get you set up. And
47 I'm not 100% if they'll do -- be able to do it for this
48 meeting, but it'll be set up for our future meetings and
49 I'll let you know if they do it for this meeting.

50

1 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick here.
2 On that -- on this one, can we mail it to you once we're
3 once it's finished or filled out?

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Member Beans.
6 You could mail it to me if you want to. You could also
7 just like take a picture of it with your phone and text
8 to me if that's easy once you fill it out.

9
10 MR. BEANS: Thank you.

11
12 MS. MCDAVID: Any other questions about
13 the direct deposit option?

14
15 (No response)

16
17 Okay. Not hearing any, Madam Chair. Is
18 it all right if I just keep moving? Okay, alright. Moving
19 down to c, on page 80 in your meeting books, I printed
20 out some information about the Fish and Game Advisory
21 Committees in your region. So, there's a map that shows
22 where all the different ACs are. And just as a reminder,
23 the ACs are the kind of like the state equivalent to the
24 RACs. And I'm just sharing this information because
25 that's another way to be engaged in resource management
26 in your area. And there are a lot of vacancies currently
27 on the ACs. There's also a lot of terms that are expired.
28 And I spoke with Savannah Hollingsworth, she's the AC
29 coordinator for your region and she is happy to help any
30 communities that want to do elections, if you want to
31 nominate and elect someone for a seat on the AC, she can
32 help you find out how to do the elections in your
33 community. There does need to be a 14-day notice put
34 out. That way people that are interested have time to
35 put in their name and prepare to vote. And I looked
36 through and there's a member on every AC except for one
37 on this RAC. So, you guys are really covering the region
38 but several of you do have expired terms. Phillip Peter
39 was telling me his he was Chair and his term expired and
40 they haven't held elections yet too, so just this
41 information is there for you to help spread the word.
42 And Savannah's contact is there on the first page
43 underneath the map, her telephone number and her email,
44 if you would like to reach out to her to do elections
45 in your community. She's really nice and would be happy
46 to help you do that. Does anyone have any questions
47 about the AC stuff?

48
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
50 I just have a comment. So with the ACs, I'm -- I

1 represent the Central Bering Sea AC. And when I first
2 got on, I was appointed by the tribal council and then
3 somehow it switched to the city elections. So, now it's
4 by actual ballot. So, it depends for this seat. Sometimes
5 the, you know, sometimes not every community has a city
6 government. But even if there still is a city government,
7 just know that, you know, your tribe and council --
8 tribal council is an option to get in that way, depending
9 on how they want to do it. So, we've done it both ways
10 in Quinhagak. I just wanted to note that. Thanks.

11

12 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, thank you so
13 much for sharing that. That's really good to know and
14 something that I wasn't thinking about how not every
15 community has the city government. So, good to know.
16 John Andrew.

17

18 MR. ANDREW: I got a question over here
19 on the expired terms. Can it go through just the
20 nomination process, process be faster. Because some
21 tribes, they don't have elections only twice a year.
22 They tied with the fall time October election and other
23 in the in November for the general election.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, so.....

26

27 MR. ANDREW: They don't have the funds
28 to -- most of the small villages don't have the funds
29 to pay for their election workers.

30

31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
32 I just want to respond to John. So, when our tribe was
33 the 1 that would appoint, they would do it during a
34 regular council meeting and have it on the agenda and
35 vote on it. And they wouldn't wait for.

36

37 (Simultaneous speech)

38

39 MR. ANDREW: The nomination process.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. So, during
42 the meeting, someone would nominate someone and then in
43 that same meeting, they'd vote and not wait for have to
44 wait for tribal elections.

45

46 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. John, if
47 you would like -- if -- do you want me to maybe.....

48

49 (Simultaneous speech)

50

000111

1 MR. ANDREW: When I told him my term was
2 up, the new chairperson didn't know the process. He said,
3 no, you have to do it during the election process or
4 election day.

5
6 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. John,
7 would it be helpful if I asked Savannah to give you a
8 call to explain? Because I think it does depend on the
9 community. And if you have a city.....

10
11 (Simultaneous speech)

12
13 MR. ANDREW: You can make up there -- the
14 city council is separate.

15
16 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. That's where I'm not
17 sure if -- because if you're -- the state process is
18 different. If there is a city Council or government,
19 they might have to do a -- an election. It doesn't have
20 to be part of the tribal elections though, like Jackie
21 was saying. But I think it would be good to double check
22 with Savannah about the process.

23
24 MR. ANDREW: But I'll try to with my
25 tribal council first.

26
27 MS. MCDAVID: Any other comments or
28 questions?

29
30 MR. PARKS: Madam Chair.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, Henry.

33
34 MR. PARKS: Henry for the record, while
35 we're at this issue here. On the lower Kuskokwim, for
36 my -- on my side, I believe I'm the only one right now.
37 That's -- my term will be up on '27 and all the rest of
38 the AC members are -- there term has been expired. No
39 wonder, you know, our coordinator has been calling me
40 and she's trying to hold a meeting because, you know,
41 for your information, council members, these issues are
42 very important issues that we deal with regarding
43 subsistence issues. So, when we meet with my units back
44 home, unit -- under Unit 6 with (In Native) and Kasigluk
45 and Nunam, I always bring this up for them -- for those
46 2 neighbors to select a person to be on this seats but
47 I don't know why they don't.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah, this is
50 Jackie. We have the same kind of issues in our area,

000112

1 there's some that they just choose not to be a part of
2 this. Like the whole community. (In Native).

3

4 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman.

5

6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah.

7

8 MR. PETER: This is Phillip. Last year
9 the Council choose me and I immediately contact that
10 coordinator. I don't know how many times I had to remind
11 her or the coordinator, Lower Kuskokwim advisory
12 coordinator. And I told her that, you need to call the
13 tribal administrator to tell her to issue the minutes.
14 After you review the minutes, you call. And I gave the
15 number for Fish and Game, number. But no response yet
16 from the coordinator. Even she called me, she never said
17 anything. But she wants to meet with Lower Kuskokwim
18 Advisory Committee. And now she started worrying about
19 fishing proposals and the moose hunting proposals. And
20 I told her that you need to call 12 villages. And when
21 she called me a week ago, and I told her, I'll call and
22 I told her, too if you call let me know about those who
23 are the person they choose from the village. No response
24 yet. Okay. Thank you madam.

25

26 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana Phillip,
27 This is Jackie. I have her cell number. (In Native).
28 Okay, yeah.

29

30 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke again. I
31 just wanted to remind everyone that it is a Board of
32 Game year. And so, if local people want to talk about
33 Board of Game moose proposals or anything your ACs are
34 the process for doing that on the state side. I mean,
35 anyone can put in a proposal, a tribe or an individual,
36 but the ACs generally vote on those and the Board -- the
37 State Board is looking for those votes from those aces
38 to show you know, a little bit more weight behind those.
39 So, that's why I wanted to bring this to your attention.
40 I mean, this Council voted to submit 6 Board of Game
41 proposals. So, those will get published and then people
42 will be able to submit comments on them, including the
43 ACs. So, it's all kind of connected together, but like
44 Henry said, it's important and maybe just encourage
45 people in your area to try to get those going.

46

47 And that kind of leads me in just to
48 this, some of these circle back items before we wrap up.
49 Talking about Board of Game. You know, there were a lot
50 of things that came up. There was one idea that was

000113

1 mentioned that we didn't get a chance to talk about
2 because we ran out of time. And you know, it was in
3 regards to the conflicts with outside people and
4 competition. Someone had mentioned the idea about maybe
5 requiring antler destruction as a way to limit the trophy
6 hunters because people might, you know, subsistence
7 hunters most concern about the meat. So, just wanted to
8 put that on the floor if there are any thoughts about
9 that. If people wanted to discuss it or not, that's up
10 to you.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 So ,this is Brooke again. In some areas
15 of the state, there's a stipulation and it's meant to,
16 you know, encourage hunting for the meat. That you have
17 to cut the antlers off of the skull. That just kind of
18 lowers the trophy value. It doesn't necessarily
19 completely destroy, you know, the antlers. It kind of
20 sounds like when you say destruction, they mean that,
21 but usually it just means taking a small cut out of it
22 that can be put back together. But just it was an idea
23 that was brought up. So, if anyone has comments on that.

24

25 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Can I ask who
26 brought it up or which group? This is Jackie. Thanks.

27

28 MS. MCDAVID: I didn't want to put the
29 member on the spot, but if they're willing to speak that
30 -- it's just an idea for discussion. It's not necessarily
31 the proposal or anything.

32

33 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. It's Frederick.

34

35 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELANF: Yes, Frederik.

36

37 MR. BEANS: That -- I was the one that
38 brought that up. I believe there's some other areas in
39 the state where there's antler -- they need to, you
40 know, cut their antlers, just, you know, so that way
41 that will deter the big game hunters, the old ones that
42 go after the antlers only so that, you know, I kind of
43 was wondering what units do that.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: I kind of
46 remember us talking about this now a little. I'm really
47 trying to remember. Sorry, Frederick, if -- I think it
48 was by teleconference last time when we heard from you.
49 So, apologies if I don't remember details but can I ask
50 So, to require any time anyone gets a moose to take off

000114

1 the antlers and bring them back with us to home or...?

2

3 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, primarily the
4 oldest -- not, you know, not locals basically. That was
5 my thought.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I was
8 wondering where my screen was. Hold on, let me. Too many
9 things here. Well, it's come up in other areas. I think
10 Unit 21. I'm sorry, we're so -- we're getting late, and
11 you know, this could be a pin for the future, too, but
12 this is the last chance. If you guys wanted to submit a
13 Board of Game proposal. If not, that's okay, next time
14 in 3 years, it could come up. But yeah, I think in Unit
15 -- part of Unit 21 it's required to cut the antlers off
16 of the skull. You don't have to bring the antlers, but
17 like Fred was saying, it's a way to deter the big game
18 or maybe trophy hunters from coming and competing
19 because, you know, they might just be coming looking for
20 those and, you know, focus on just making sure you get
21 the meat. So, it kind of keeps people from -- that are
22 only caring about the antlers and maybe not taking as
23 good of care of the meat. I think, as you know, the idea
24 behind it. Usually there's check stations in the area
25 where this is, you know, a requirement. That way people
26 stop by and they make sure that the meat was taken and
27 stuff. So, anyway but I also know that in some places
28 people like to sell the antlers for a little extra
29 income. So, that's something else to consider. I think
30 that's just -- we wanted to bring it up for different
31 thoughts and feedback.

32

33 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Fred, again you
34 know, that was just a thought since we've already got
35 something going, I think that could be addressed in
36 another -- later on the -- later on. Okay. Thank you.

37

38 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair. Just a quick
39 comment. Francis. A lot of our people, you know, they
40 already know that they're supposed to be cutting off the
41 skulls by the antlers because you're not supposed to be
42 selling that skull with your antlers. Just to refresh
43 you guys.

44

45 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman. When I used
46 to go moose hunting upriver, Nowitna. I used to see a
47 Department of Fish and Wildlife checkpoint. That was a
48 long time ago, but I don't know, they -- I don't know,
49 maybe they enforced that, what you call a (In Native).
50 And they told us that -- and he told me that department

1 guy, I went check into Holitna and then I went to the
2 tent and then I sign. You have to bring the whole meat
3 even the penis, even the penis of the moose. And if I
4 don't, they'll fine or -- fine. And then even the
5 caribous. But I see a lot of people, sport hunters. They
6 float on the raft. Antlers and moose only. No meat inside
7 the raft. Sometimes 12 people raft down. Only the heads.
8 Caribou and moose head with antlers. But they never go
9 upriver because the corporations start charging us \$400
10 per person to go up there. If we sleep on the corporation
11 land for one night. Ever since they make a rule or
12 regulation, I never go hunting to upriver. And maybe
13 they still do checkpoint -- checkpoints in Holitna
14 River. Qu yana.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Qu yana (In
17 Native).

18
19 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, the last sort
20 of thing about following up on some of the moose
21 discussion earlier was, you know, was brought up about
22 checkpoints many times. And you guys, you know, you want
23 to see checkpoints and you -- so, we had talked about
24 maybe sending a letter about that but just wanted to
25 follow up and see if you think.....

26
27 MR. PETER: Madam Chairman. To the --
28 Chairman. Maybe it would be good if you follow up on
29 letter.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. So, a
32 letter to Fish and Game.

33
34 MR. PETER: Yeah.

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: To local Fish and Game or
37 to the Commissioner? I think it has to go through the
38 high -- yeah, okay. So, we'll do that. Do you think we
39 should copy the Refuge on it since they also are
40 involved. So, Fish and Game and the Refuge. So, state
41 and federal. Okay and then that is an action. That would
42 require a motion if someone wanted to move with that.
43 Yeah, and so, the letter would be to request that
44 checkpoints get established along the Lower Yukon River,
45 at least, I'm not sure if you guys want to provide input
46 for other areas. And then maybe the hub communities or
47 something. I would -- whatever you guys would like it
48 to say.

49
50

000116

1 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, Frederick here.
2 I would like to request (indiscernible).

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Would you like to make a
5 motion to send a letter?

6
7 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, I would like to
8 make a motion to send a letter to the Department of Fish
9 and Game Commissioner to see if we can get some check
10 points for our big game hunters, hunting.

11
12 MR. PETER: Madam Chair. Second the
13 motion.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yeah. There's
16 been a motion by Frederick Beans to send a letter to
17 ADF&G commissioner to see about getting checkpoints
18 established. Lower Yukon?

19
20 MR. BEANS: Primarily the Lower Yukon
21 just to see if it's established, and once it's
22 established. You know, we could.....

23
24 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Yes, for Lower
25 Yukon. And then it was seconded by Phillip Peter, Sr.
26 (In Native) Okay. All in favor of this letter to go out
27 to ADF&G Commissioner, say aye.

28
29 IN UNISON: Aye.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed?
32 Same sign.

33
34 (No response)

35
36 Motion carried. Quyana.

37
38 MS. MCDAVID: Madam Chair, thank you.
39 This is Brooke. That was the only other follow up that
40 I had kind of left over from earlier. Unless this is
41 just a joke. If you guys want to talk about eel sticks
42 again, I'm just teasing. That once didn't go over very
43 good. All right. Back to you, Madam Chair.

44
45 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, another joke.

46
47 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Go ahead.

48
49 MR. BEANS: If -- Madam Chair, Frederick
50 here. If that were the case, then I would have to you

1 know, we'd have to regulate our (In Native) and our
2 harpoons and all that stuff, too. That's a joke.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Is that all for
5 jokes? Okay, let's move on to Council Member Closing
6 Comments. Just keep in mind it's 5:30, and then after
7 that we can adjourn. And I'll go last. (In Native)
8 closing comment. Yeah.

9

10 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair. Yeah. I'm brand
11 new -- and Madam Chair this Frederick Beans, Mountain
12 Village and I'm brand new to this so that -- that's been
13 very interesting and I've learned a lot just at this
14 meeting. So, thank you very much and it was a good
15 meeting, I would say. Thank you.

16

17 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair. This Wassily
18 Alexie, just I'm glad I made it over to this meeting.
19 I'm sorry I didn't make it to the last because, you
20 know, I had a hard time beginning of the year, losing
21 my brother and my young grandchild. But I learned a lot
22 of good information in this meeting. Hope we move forward
23 to getting some of these proposals passed. And I just
24 have one question on the one that we just talked about
25 the antlers and putting up checkpoint position, is that
26 just for the big game, non-resident, hunters or that can
27 be for the whole state?

28

29 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I believe
30 generally a checkpoint would be for everyone hunting in
31 the area. And yeah, I think there would probably need
32 to be a lot of discussion about, you know, strategies
33 for where those might be. And so, maybe in the letter
34 with Fish and Game, it could say like to consult with
35 the local area biologists and the local Acs or
36 communities so that -- to think about the best places.
37 Because not everyone is going to be traveling all over
38 you know, local people. So, that might be one, a hurdle
39 to getting these checkpoints is I think in the places
40 where they do exist, it's like in one drainage where
41 there's only one way in and out. So -- but I think this
42 letter, it will at least raise some more awareness about
43 some of the conflicts that are happening and the concerns
44 that people have. But do you have thoughts Member Alexie
45 about that? Like, would it -- would you only want it to
46 be for non-locals or how would it be okay if, you know,
47 local people had to stop in to, to make sure, you know,
48 they take care of the meet properly too? Thanks.

49

50

000118

1 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this Wassily.
2 Yeah, you know, we talked about it yesterday about how
3 to -- like stopping the non-resident hunters from
4 getting all these antlers and wasting all their meat.
5 The thing I brought up was that maybe have checkpoints
6 in the hubs just to make sure that the big game hunters
7 have their meat with them when they're going out. That
8 was the reason I brought that checkpoint, and that I
9 think it would work out in the hub areas where they come
10 flying in and they get taken out. Then they come back
11 to that hub and they go out. That's one reason why I
12 brought that up.

13
14 MS. MCDAVID: Follow up, this is Brooke.
15 Okay. So, what would you say the hubs are that people
16 are flying in and out of mostly? Just for reference.

17
18 MR. ALEXIE: The main hubs are to me, I
19 know it was Aniak, Bethel, St. Mary's maybe Emmo. I
20 think those are the main hubs.

21
22 MS. AGAYAR: Emmo for sure.

23
24 MS. MCDAVID: Okay, thank you. So, this
25 wouldn't necessarily have to be a checkpoint on a river
26 where people are boating, but maybe when they are flying
27 in and out or after their hunt, when they're flying out
28 to double check and make sure they have everything?

29
30 MR. ALEXIE: Yeah, that would be the --
31 what I'm trying to say. Yeah.

32
33 MR. PRINCE: Madam Chair, just a comment
34 here. Francis. Just to let you know about the moose
35 skull. You know, in order for those non-residents to
36 have their moose skull attached to their antlers, they
37 need to have a permit, but in most cases, horns and
38 antlers that are not attached to any portions of a skull
39 may be sold without a permit.

40
41 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair. This Wassily.
42 I don't know how that works, but I seen a lot of big
43 game hunters coming out with the skulls attached to their
44 antlers, so I don't know how that really works.

45
46 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the
47 record. So, just from what I know about folks that come
48 from outside to go hunting, they don't want to cut the
49 antlers and sell them, they're not -- it's different
50 than local people. They're thinking this is, you know,

1 like a big prize that they want to keep them attached
2 to the skull. You know, maybe they want to put it on
3 their wall or something like that. So, they don't usually
4 cut them like local people do because they don't want
5 to sell them. And that's why in some areas they require
6 them to cut that way, they don't want to come to the --
7 to that area anymore but thanks.

8
9 MR. ALEXIE: Madam Chair, this Wassily.
10 Anyway, yeah, this was a good meeting. I had another
11 suggestion too. You know, our tribe, we've been having
12 meetings, and we're talking about one way to try to
13 reduce the waste is trying to get a processing plant in
14 our -- letting the tribe apply for grants and getting a
15 processing plant to help them cut their meat and freeze
16 them. That's one thing that we're looking into.

17
18 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
19 I like that idea, Wassily. I think our community also
20 tried to apply for something like that. And then yeah,
21 so there's grants out there that -- where you can make
22 like a big game processor. Yeah. So, we're also looking
23 into that. We're on closing comments. So, (in Native)
24 closing comments.

25
26 MR. ANDREW: And my closing comments, I'd
27 like to thank everybody. Especially our staff because
28 they put their meetings together and we always have a
29 great group where we -- you can identify with all the
30 problems that each of us bring up. Our staff always do
31 a great job of getting us over here and put the meeting
32 together to make it possible. And for -- personally for
33 me, I gotta and thank even the Fish and Game, because
34 we work with them. Especially, we work with the
35 Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission on the Kuskokwim
36 side along with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, with their
37 (indiscernible). They have this (indiscernible)
38 agreement for the last 10 years, and they have a budget
39 under the Federal Subsistence Program that could go for
40 19 -- for this coming year, 2 maybe it's a 3 year
41 project. Because they fund all their (indiscernible),
42 fish counting projects, sonar projects for our region.
43 And I thank our Chair and the Vice Chair and the rest
44 of the Council for all their input. But I still have one
45 more on my bucket list, I need a blank check from our
46 coordinator. Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Quyana, John.
49 Tiffany.
50

1 MS. AGAYAR: Tiffany here. I feel like
2 it was a good, productive, calm meeting. And it's good
3 to see everybody again and hope to see you again next
4 time.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: This is Jackie.
7 Thank you everyone for, you know, being here in person.
8 I learned so much from you all. Being from, you know,
9 the edge of the region, I still yet to have a lot to
10 learn of the rest of the region and I feel like I do
11 learn a lot from you guys. And I do look forward to
12 these meetings. They mean a lot to me. We have, you
13 know, the one of the few spaces where we -- our vote can
14 go somewhere as indigenous people. And when it comes to
15 our -- for our food security and, and thank you, Guyana
16 for trusting me and believing in me to do another term
17 as your Chair. So, Guyana can't wait and can't wait to see
18 you guys next time.

19
20 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madam Chair. I
21 know I'm not a council member, but I want to do a closing
22 comment to and just also say Guyana can't wait to all of you
23 for taking your time away from your families and your
24 communities. Some of you have jobs, young ones,
25 grandkids that you look after. So, we really appreciate
26 it. Your knowledge is so valuable to our program, we
27 couldn't do it without you. The Federal Subsistence
28 Board really relies on you and all the information that
29 you have from living out in your communities and
30 observing and passing that on. So, thank you for sharing
31 that with us. I too learn so much from all of you at
32 these meetings. I know I can speak for the other staff
33 they agree to, and you guys always feel like family when
34 we get together. So, thank you for another great meeting
35 and it was really great to have you, Member Beans, for
36 the 1st time. I wanted to give you kudos for jumping
37 right in. And you, you really participated in some of
38 our other younger members are really starting to get the
39 hang of it now too and speaking up and I feel like
40 there's a really good rapport among the council members.
41 So, thank you again. And we look forward to seeing you
42 in fall time. I hope you have a safe breakup with not
43 very much flooding in your communities, a good fishing
44 season, good moose hunting season. And we'll look
45 forward to seeing you in October. Guyana.

46
47 MR. PETER: First time out those years,
48 I'm really happy that we have a quorum. And we make a
49 lot of action on these proposals, important proposals.
50 And, also, I'd like to thank Jackie Cleveland and Vice

1 Chairman and the Secretary and all the staff who are
2 helping us on these important issues. I hope you have -
3 - I hope everybody, Yukon and Kuskokwim have a safe
4 breakup. I always worry wary about breakup. A long time
5 ago, there used to be a 8 feet ice both Yukon, Kuskokwim.
6 But now it's only in my area, Akiachak area. I checked
7 that ice thickness, it's only almost 5 feet. I hope
8 everybody will have a good hunting on the geese and also
9 good luck. I hope, if God willing, we'll meet again in
10 fall time. Thank you.

11

12 (Pause)

13

14 MR. PARKS: Philip, sometimes we're kind
15 of clumsy, you know. Anyways, my name is Henry, for the
16 record. Sorry. (In Native). I would like to thank all
17 the staff, OSM staff and the council members here. And
18 then we know we do have hardship sometimes dealing with
19 our duties here, especially subsistence issues, but we
20 do solve things with everyone here, council members. And
21 I would like to request to the council members here and
22 who are online that are listening for us through our
23 prayers to remember those people that are in Iran and
24 Israel because they are human beings like us. So, please
25 remember those through our prayers and I hope to God we
26 will meet again if it's God's will. And I hope our family
27 members are doing good too, and I hope we all have a
28 safe trip home. Quyana.

29

30 MR. PRINCE: This is Francis from Kotlik.
31 I just want to say a quick thank you to everyone here
32 that attended, for taking their time out of their
33 families to come together and discuss about our
34 subsistence way of lifestyles. And I'm still trying to
35 process of how much entities it takes, you know, to get
36 on the same page. You know, thank you to everyone and
37 thank you to all those online that are listening as
38 well.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Thank you
41 everyone. Okay. So that's it for our 3 days. Sorry, we
42 went almost an hour over, and it won't officially be
43 over until someone motions to adjourn, though.

44

45 MR. BEANS: Madam Chair, this Frederick,
46 I move to adjourn.

47

48 MR. PRINCE: This Francis. I second.

49

50

000122

1 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: Okay. You all
2 heard that Frederick Bean's motion to adjourn at 5:48,
3 seconded by Francis Prince, Jr., All in favor of
4 adjournment, say aye.

5
6 IN UNISON: Aye.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON CLEVELAND: All opposed?
9 Same sign.

10
11 (No response)

12
13 Motion carries. Quyana, again. And see
14 you next time. (In Native).

15
16 MS. AGAYAR: (In Native).

17
18 (Off record)

19
20 END OF PROCEEDINGS

21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

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

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 122 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the YUKON KUSKOKWIN DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME III recorded on the 19th 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