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1 EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

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6
7 VOLUME I

8
9 PYKE'S FATERFRONT LODGE
10 Fairbanks, Alaska
11 March 3, 2026
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16 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

17 Robert C. Wright, Sr., Chair
18 Susan Entsminger
19 Dorothy Shockley
20 Eva Burk
21 Linda Evans
22 Andrew Bassich
23 Gerald Alexander
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30 Regional Council Coordinator, Brooke McDavid
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37 Recorded and transcribed by:

38
39 Lighthouse Integrated Services Corp
40 877-261-2495
41 Info@lighthouseonline.com
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 03/03/26)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Do we have everybody in the room, we're going to have a prayer and then we're going to get started. Thank you. Good morning to everybody.

MS. EVANS: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for all the blessings and the wonderful things you give us each day. We ask you for your guidance and blessings upon this meeting where we're talking about resources for our people, and help us to make good, sound decisions because they're going to affect our life as we go on. We ask your blessings upon our families and upon our children and grandchildren, great grandchildren. Just continue to watch over us and thank you for helping us to be mindful of the needs of others. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, good morning again. Thank you so much for that, Linda. Appreciate it very much. Okay. I'm going to call the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m., and next we'll do the roll call and establish a quorum. Please, Coordinator.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke McDavid, for the record. We'll start online with Sue Entsminger.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for joining us, Sue. Dorothy Shockley.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Linda Evans.

MS. EVANS: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Eva Burk.

MS. BURK: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Andy Bassich.

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MR. BASSICH: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Chair Charlie Wright.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Present.

MS. MCDAVID: Gerald Alexander.

MR. ALEXANDER: Here.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, with seven out of nine Council members present, we have quorum. And Mr. Chair, I did want to make everyone aware that Member Woodruff was not able to join us today because of his health and Andy suggested maybe we could take a few moments to recognize him for his contributions. He might not be with us very much longer, and we thought perhaps we could go around and council members could say a few words, and I'd be happy to pass those words on to him and his wife.

MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Member Bassich. I live in Eagle. I live in the same community that Don has lived in for many years, and I just wanted to say a few words just to kind of let people know a little bit more about Don. He's always kind of been a quiet guy. He's pretty modest about a lot of the things that he's done in his life. When I first met Don, he was living down on the (In Native) River. He spent many, many years of his younger days down there, living in a cabin at a place called Peace Creek. He was a trapper down there. He would come to the Yukon River. I think it was about 15 miles upriver or so and fished for his dogs on the Yukon River. An avid moose hunter. As everyone who lived up that drainage depended on moose and salmon. He had a really good life down there. And as many of us who live out in the bush know, life changes. And sometimes you have to move to different places, but he brought a lot of those skills with him to Eagle. As an AC member, he worked with -- alongside myself and a number of other people at the AC for over 35 years contributing to protecting fish and wildlife resources for subsistence lifestyle, which he knew better than anyone. And anybody that's lived remote in Alaska understands that relationship really closely and how important those resources are to people and how important the sustainability of that lifestyle is on those resources. It's a symbiotic relationship.

1 I'm really going to miss Don because of
2 his contributions to the community. He served as mayor
3 of Eagle for a number of years. Again, he served on the
4 AC for many, many years. Very consistent. He served on
5 this RAC for, I believe, 21 years or so. I don't know
6 the exact number, but he's been on this RAC for a long
7 time. Several decades. Recently, even when he was
8 struggling with his health, he was very active in helping
9 to develop and promote some sheep management
10 recommendations for this area. And I know when he got
11 his book -- I know firsthand when he got his materials
12 book here, he was still reading it. And so, he's been
13 very committed. The point I'm trying to make, he's always
14 been very committed to serving the public, serving the
15 people, serving people that live a subsistence
16 lifestyle. And I'm going to miss his contributions not
17 only to the RAC and to our AC, but also to our community
18 and to all the people of Alaska who live a subsistence
19 lifestyle. Having a strong voice at the table to advocate
20 strongly for those resources is becoming more and more
21 rare. And having that many years of experience living
22 that lifestyle brings a great deal of knowledge and
23 wisdom to the process. And so, I just wanted to recognize
24 Don for all of those contributions to people. Thank you,
25 Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
28 Andy. Anybody else want to say anything? Well, I will -
29 - oh, go ahead, Dorothy.

30
31 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Thank you for
32 this opportunity. Dorothy Shockley. On my way into --
33 on my way here, I was thinking about him, and I didn't
34 know him, probably as long as most people. But throughout
35 the years, I had the opportunity to see him, to visit
36 him and truly appreciated his dedication, his passion,
37 his -- just respect, you know, for his land, for the
38 animals and the fish and the people and yeah, it's
39 becoming rare to find people like him and just, yeah,
40 just really appreciated -- appreciate him. And, you
41 know, sending lots of blessings to him and to his wife
42 and, yeah, just thanking him for the years that he spent
43 you know, taking care of the land and the animals and
44 being so, so generous with his time to do that. And
45 yeah, just going to miss his quiet presence. So, thank
46 you.

47
48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else want to
49 say anything? Oh, go ahead Linda.

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1 MS. EVANS: Yeah. I didn't know Don that
2 well, either, but I was just a lot of times amazed at
3 all the knowledge that he had and that his -- when he
4 spoke out, he was very knowledgeable on the land and the
5 resources and where he lived and what was going on around
6 and also around the state. He just kept himself aware
7 of things in regards to the resources that help feed us.
8 And I really appreciated that. I appreciated his
9 presence at the meetings, just listening to him speak.
10 I just ask for continued blessings for him and his family
11 and just hope that everything will be peaceful for him.
12 Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Linda.
15 Sue, are you online? I think I understand you want to
16 be next. Okay. Go ahead.

17
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Yes. I wanted to
19 especially give my condolences to the family at the
20 sickness that he's going through. I honor him. He was -
21 - I've been on the Council with him all of his tenure
22 here and Don is a -- he's so dedicated and so amazing.
23 Reading all the material. He's very -- he was just always
24 into it. I just dearly love the guy. I had the
25 opportunity to go up and stay with him in his cabin up
26 in Eagle during a dog race when Isaac Unabe died, there
27 was a big sled dog race. And, I mean, everything that
28 he has dedicated in every part of his life is very, very
29 special. And I appreciated him and his wife so much and
30 send my love to them. Thank you.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
33 Sue. Anybody else online want to say anything at this
34 time?

35
36 (No response)

37
38 Okay. I just wanted to echo what
39 everybody else said. I've known Don for a few years but
40 never spent a lot of time with him on the land or
41 anything like that, except for in this room. I know that
42 he was very dedicated and knowledgeable about the
43 resources. He had great local knowledge even in
44 traditional knowledge, that he was there for so long
45 that he had his own going on. And I really appreciated
46 all his knowledge and dedication, and his voice will be
47 dearly missed here. As we said, he's a very modest man.
48 But when he spoke, it always meant something really good.
49 I know he really cared about the resources. So, we really
50 send a lot of love and prayers to him and his family

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1 right now, and his wife, for all their continued work
2 over the years. Thank you very much.

3
4 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
5 is Brooke. And I first met Don, I think in 2016 or 2017
6 on my first visit to Eagle when I was working for the
7 Subsistence Division with Fish and Game, and we were
8 doing household surveys, and at that time there were
9 still some salmon fishing going on. It wasn't at the
10 levels historically, but people were, you know, starting
11 to get pretty frustrated and with, you know, the windows
12 and closures and adapting to having less of a staple
13 resource in their life. And Don shared some of those
14 frustrations when we did his interview. But as I got to
15 know Don more over the years on subsequent trips back
16 to Eagle and you know, especially since becoming the
17 Coordinator of this Council, I've really come to
18 appreciate him. You know, he's a straight talker and he
19 has a wealth of knowledge and information from, you know,
20 his lifetime of living on the land, living in rural
21 Alaska. And he, I think as he's grown older, he's wanted
22 to share that knowledge with others and help preserve
23 the continuation of subsistence for the future. And like
24 others have said, he cared deeply about the resources.
25 He was, you know, involved in the Fortymile Caribou
26 Harvest Management Coalition for a really long time. He
27 cared a lot about sheep and salmon, and I know he's done
28 a lot of work with the Park Service, and you know, they
29 have a Subsistence Committee there in Eagle. And he's
30 done some work with place names throughout Yukon Charlie
31 and helping the tribe and the village folks document
32 some historic sites and yeah, we're really going to miss
33 Don. I'm going to miss exchanging books with him. He
34 would always share some really good historical books
35 with me about Alaska. And if I found something that I
36 thought he might be interested in, I would share it with
37 him. So, I'm really thinking a lot about him and Jan and
38 I know this is a hard time, and I just want them to know
39 that we love them both and just sending that love on to
40 them. Thank you.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. There's
43 nobody else want to say anything, we'll move on with the
44 agenda. And next on the agenda is Election of Officers.
45 Coordinator, please.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
48 is Brooke again for the record. So, at every winter
49 Council meeting, we do election of officers for the year.
50 And so, folks that are elected will serve until the

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1 following year. And I will help run the election for the
2 Chair. And then I'll turn it back over to the Chair who
3 is elected to continue with elections for Vice Chair and
4 Secretary. Just a little bit for process. Anyone can
5 move to nominate someone for Chair. We do not need a
6 second. And then someone can say they moved to close the
7 nominations whenever you're ready to move towards a
8 vote. So, with that I will open up the floor to
9 nominations for Chair. Andy.

10
11 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. For the record, Andy
12 Bassich. I'd like to nominate Charlie Wright as our Chair
13 for the Eastern Interior RAC.

14
15 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. Are there
16 any other nominations for Chair?

17
18 (No response)

19
20 MR. BASSICH: For the record, Andy
21 Bassich. Close nominations. Call for a vote.

22
23 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Andy. This is
24 Brooke. Nominations for Chair are closed. And since
25 there was only one nominee, Member Wright, do you accept
26 the Chair position?

27
28 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I accept.

29
30 MS. MCDAVID: Congratulations. And I will
31 turn it back to you.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for your
34 vote of confidence. Thank you. Thank you. Moving down
35 here. The Vice Chair next. Do I have any nominations for
36 Vice Chair to open at this time?

37
38 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, Member Bassich.
39 I'd nominate Eva Burk for Vice Chair. She's been serving
40 in your absence very well and very knowledgeable of all
41 the issues that we're dealing with and understands the
42 process better than most. So, I think she'd make a great
43 Vice Chair for the Eastern Interior RAC. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more
46 nominations at this time?

47
48 (No response)

49
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1 Not hearing or seeing any. Yeah. Eva,
2 if you're online, do you accept Vice Chair position at
3 this time?

4
5 MS. BURK: I do. This is Eva. Thank you.
6 Thank you for the nomination. Appreciate it.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
9 Eva. We'll see you when you get here. Okay. Moving.....

10
11 (Simultaneous speech)

12
13 MS. BURK: Very close.

14
15 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yep. Thank you so
16 much. Moving down the line, we'll go to the Secretary.
17 Nominations for Secretary at this time, please.

18
19 MR. ALEXANDER: For the record, my name
20 is Gerald Alexander. I'd like to nominate Linda. Linda
21 Evans.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more
24 nominations?

25
26 (No response)

27
28 Hearing none. Seeing none. Looks like
29 Linda's with us for a while longer. Do you accept, Linda?

30
31 MS. EVANS: Yes, I accept.

32
33 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. We
34 appreciate you so much for being here with us. Okay. We
35 have new Chair being myself, Charlie Wright. Vice Chair,
36 Eva Burk. Secretary, Linda Evans. Moving on, Meeting
37 Announcements. Thank you, Ms. Madam Coordinator.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
40 name is Brooke McDavid, and I am the Council Coordinator
41 for the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council, and
42 I'm also the Designated Federal Officer for this
43 meeting.

44
45 I just have a few housekeeping
46 announcements before we get started, so please bear with
47 me. I know most of you have heard all of these before.
48 To start, welcome to the Winter 2026 Eastern Interior
49 Regional Advisory Council Meeting. We are at the start
50 of a fisheries regulatory cycle in the federal program.

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1 And so, one of the main items on the agenda will be to
2 consider whether or not the Council would like to submit
3 proposals to the Board for federal fisheries
4 regulations, and then yeah, we'll go through the rest
5 of the agenda here in a few moments.

6
7 I do want to note that this is a public
8 meeting, and it is being recorded, and it will be
9 transcribed. So just be aware that anything that you
10 state will be part of the record. We are having a hybrid
11 meeting today. We're here in the room at Pike's
12 Waterfront Lodge in Fairbanks, and the meeting is also
13 available online via Microsoft Teams or teleconference.
14 For folks online, you can find meeting materials at
15 www.doi.gov/subsistence, and you can navigate to the
16 Regions tab and find Eastern Interior, and then you'll
17 find a link for Meeting Materials. We do ask if folks
18 online could please keep yourselves muted if you're not
19 speaking, and you can do that by using the mute button
20 on your phone or on your computer or pressing star six
21 if you're on the phone. And also, on the phone to unmute,
22 it's star six.

23
24 Folks in the room, could please remember
25 to sign in on the sign in sheet at the public information
26 table each day. That'd be great. It helps us keep record
27 of attendance. And as a friendly reminder, we do try to
28 follow Robert's Rules of Order to the best of our ability
29 during these meetings. And so, if you would like to
30 speak, please be recognized by the Chair. And please
31 remember to state your name each time for the record.
32 We do have our AV extraordinaire Gabe with us today
33 who's helping record the meeting. And it will be
34 transcribed by separate transcriptionists. So, they're
35 not here with us. They can't see who's speaking. And
36 that's why it's really important to please remember to
37 state your name each time. And then just a conduct
38 reminder, we try to have -- maintain a really respectful
39 meeting even when there might be topics that people are
40 really passionate about. So please, yeah, no name
41 calling or anything like that.

42
43 Yeah. Andy asked if we can cry, and I
44 have cried personally in these meetings before, so I
45 think that's fair game. If you're sobbing too loudly,
46 we might ask you to mute your microphone.

47
48 There will be opportunities for public
49 comment throughout the meeting on agenda items. If you
50 would like to comment on an agenda item, we will take

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1 comments on those items as they come up throughout the
2 meeting. If you're here in the room, you can fill out a
3 green comment card that's on the public information
4 table. You can pass those to any of our staff members
5 or just come up here and put it in the basket or hand
6 it to me, and I will make sure the Chair gets those and
7 he will call on you when the time is appropriate.
8 Additionally, we will have comments on non-agenda items
9 and that will be each morning of the meeting. Today it
10 will be after the Council Member Reports. So, it'll be
11 a little bit later. But tomorrow and the following day,
12 it will be first thing in the morning after roll call.

13
14 If you're online and want to comment,
15 you can raise your hand on Teams or if we don't see you
16 for some reason, you can respectfully interject and say,
17 Mr. Chair, and we will call on you when the time for
18 comments comes up. Written comments can also be emailed
19 in. Those can be sent to me at Brooke, that's Brooke
20 with an E on the end, brooke_mcdavid@ios.doi.gov or they
21 can be sent to subsistence@ios.doi.gov. Written comments
22 can also be handed in to me. We do ask oral comments,
23 if you could please try to keep to 3 to 5 minutes just
24 for time's sake.

25
26 And some membership updates. So, as you
27 all are aware, on the Council at least, and I know Sue
28 is very well aware, we did not receive the appointments
29 for new Council members yet at for the -- usually we get
30 them in December. So, folks whose terms were expiring
31 at the end of 2025 are still serving on the Council. And
32 so those folks were Sue, Dorothy, Linda, and Eva, and
33 Sue decided not to reapply, and she thought the last
34 meeting was her last meeting. But we're really grateful
35 for Sue to join us again for this meeting unexpectedly
36 and help us make sure we have quorum. And then Dorothy,
37 Linda, and Eva, we should hopefully after this meeting
38 is over, be hearing about reappointments. And then maybe
39 a new appointment to fill Sue's seat. At the end of
40 2026, we do have Charlie and Andy's terms are coming up,
41 and so I've spoken to them about their incumbent
42 applications if they would like to reapply.

43
44 The open period right now for it --
45 excuse me. The period is open right now for Council
46 member applications. That's open to anyone, any members
47 of the public. You can apply yourself or you can nominate
48 someone if you know someone who would be a good council
49 member. And that application period closes on April 2nd.
50 There are applications on the table in the room. Those

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1 can also be found on the Federal Subsistence Management
2 Program website, or you can reach out to me or any other
3 -- anyone else at OSM and we can send you a copy in the
4 mail or email you a copy. Additionally, we are currently
5 accepting applications for -- or not applications,
6 letters of interest from any young leaders who would
7 like to serve in the young leader non-voting seat that
8 was added to the Council. That is something that we'd
9 really like to fill. I know that council members have
10 talked a long time about the importance of getting youth
11 involved or young adults and helping them learn the
12 system. And so that's a really great opportunity. If
13 anyone listening or here in the room knows of anyone,
14 they can send in a letter of interest, and I believe
15 it's just two references. And then sort of a little bit
16 about why they're interested, yeah, on serving in that
17 seat. And so, Mr. Chair, I believe that concludes all
18 of my housekeeping announcements. Thanks for bearing
19 with me. And back over to you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much.
22 I joined an Emerging Leaders group meeting the other
23 day, and they asked me, when are we going to see this
24 come out? And I said, well, I told them I'll get right
25 on it. And I see you're already taking care of it, and
26 so they're going to be very happy. There's a bunch of
27 them in that Tanana Chiefs Conference Emerging Leaders.
28 They're amazing. They go to Juneau and they speak. They
29 advocate. They've been training real hard. So, I think
30 that they can work it out who they want to send forward.
31 And we appreciate some applications, and I will send
32 this information over to them also and open it up and
33 advertise. Thank you so much for that. That's so
34 important going forward to have our youth and to lift
35 our youth into these new positions. The youth are coming
36 to us now with college education and traditional
37 knowledge of their areas, so they fit right into what
38 we need going forward. So, I really appreciate adding
39 the youth to this Eastern Interior Subsistence Regional
40 Advisory Council. I thank everybody for pulling that.
41 Okay. Next, we'll go into Welcome and Introductions. I'm
42 just going to go right on to -- I guess this is not for
43 the Chair. So, it's out to the public.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke. If
46 folks could please come up to the mic and just state
47 your name and who you represent or where you're from.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Ladies first.

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1 MS. MONTGOMERY: Good morning. Members of
2 the Council, Mr. Chair. My name is Claire Montgomery and
3 I'm with the BLM. I work for the Eastern Interior Field
4 Office as the Ecologist.

5
6 MS. YEMMA: Good morning. My name is
7 Angela Yemma. I am currently the Acting Field Manager
8 over at BLM Eastern Interior Field Office. Normally, I
9 am an Assistant Field Manager for resources and
10 minerals. I work with Claire and Claire mentioned she's
11 also covering as the Wildlife Biologist. I think we
12 mentioned it last meeting, but Jim Herriges, who you all
13 worked with for a number of years retired. So, good
14 morning and glad to be here.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
17 for being here.

18
19 MR. SIMON: Good morning. Jim Simon. I'm
20 here just representing myself as a resident of the
21 Eastern Interior region. I live near Birch Lake, which
22 is near Salcha. Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for being
25 with us today, Jim.

26
27 MS. MUSOLINO: Morning, Council. My name
28 is Libby Musolino. I'm a Policy Fellow at Tanana Chiefs
29 Conference. So, I'm here to learn from all of you. Thank
30 you for letting me join.

31
32 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Appreciate your
33 time.

34
35 MS. GORDON: Press the button. Good
36 morning, Mr. Chair and Council. My name is Chaya Gordon.
37 I am a new PhD student studying at UAF in the Wildlife
38 Biology and Conservation Program, and my focus is on
39 wood bison ecology and looking at the big questions of
40 impact of wood bison on landscapes and communities.
41 Thank you for your time.

42
43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very interesting.
44 Thank you. I look forward to talking with you more.

45
46 MS. OKADA: Good morning. I'm Marcy
47 Okada. I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for Yukon-Charley
48 Rivers National Preserve. Good morning.

49
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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thanks for being
2 with us. Marcy. Appreciate your time.

3
4 MR. GRAHAM: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
5 Members of the Council. I'm Cory Graham, Fisheries
6 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thanks for being
9 with us today.

10
11 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
12 and Members of the Council. This is Liz Williams,
13 Anthropologist at OSM. And thanks so much for honoring
14 Don this morning. I just wanted to say how much I
15 appreciated his advocacy for TEK, not just from people
16 he learned as well as his own. And I really enjoyed all
17 of your comments.

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for being
20 here with us today.

21
22 MR. KOLLER: Well, good morning. My name
23 is Justin Koller. I'm representing OSM as the
24 Regulations Division Supervisor. It's my first time to
25 Fairbanks, believe it or not. I've been in Alaska in the
26 Subsistence Program for almost 15 years now. Most of the
27 time I was tucked away in Southeast Alaska, though. So
28 new issues, new people. And grateful to be here with you
29 all. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Very nice to meet
32 you, Justin. And thanks for being with us today.

33
34 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke.
35 We could go online if that's okay with you. And I'll
36 help. We'll start with folks from OSM. Anyone from OSM
37 online, please introduce yourself.

38
39 MS. PILCHER: Hello. This is Nissa
40 Pilcher, Council Coordinator for Western Interior.

41
42 MR. PLANK: Good morning, everybody. This
43 is Tom Plank, Wildlife Biologist for OSM.

44
45 MS. MCDAVID: All right, we'll move on.
46 Do we have any Tribal or Tribal organization
47 representatives online?

48
49 MS. PEREZ: Hello. This is Alissa Perez.
50 I am representing the Healy Lake Village Council as one

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1 of our members.

2

3 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks for joining, Alissa.

4 Any other NGO or Alaska Native organization reps?

5

6 MS. KOSBRUK: Good morning. This is

7 Deanna. Sorry. Good morning. This is Deanna Kosbruk. I

8 work for Ahtna Inter-Tribal Resource Commission and

9 thank you for letting me listen.

10

11 MR. TUNNELL: This is Andrew Tunnell. I'm

12 with the Doyon Lands Department. Just here to listen in

13 today.

14

15 MS. PATRICK: Hi, this is Taliylah

16 Patrick. I am from Ahtna Incorporated, the Land

17 Department, and I'm here to listen in. Thank you.

18

19 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you all for joining

20 us. We'll move on. Any Fish and Wildlife Service folks?

21

22 MR. MERRILL: Good morning. This is

23 Clayton Merrill, Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic and

24 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: All right. What about

27 Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

28

29 MR. POETTER: Yeah. Good morning. This

30 is Aaron Poetter with the Alaska Department of Fish and

31 Game. I'm the Subsistence Liaison to federal government.

32 Good morning.

33

34 MS. MCDAVID: Good morning, Aaron. Thanks

35 for joining us. All right. What about Park Service?

36

37 MS. PATTON: Good morning. This is Eva

38 Patton, Subsistence Program Manager with the National

39 Park Service, at our regional office in Anchorage. And

40 just thanks so much for honoring Don Woodruff. And my

41 thoughts are with him and his wife, Jan, and their

42 family. So, thank you.

43

44 MS. COHEN: Good morning. This is Amber

45 Cohen, Cultural Anthropologist at Wrangell-St. Elias

46 National Park and Preserve. Thank you everyone.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Do we have

49 anyone else from BLM or any other federal agencies

50 online?

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MS. MILLER: Hi. My name is Dana Miller. I'm the ACE Intern for BLM in the Eastern Interior Field Office.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Dana. Are there any members of the public that haven't introduced themselves?

(No response)

Anyone else online, if you haven't introduced yourself, please do so now. And as a reminder, you can press star six if you're joining from a phone.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much, Brooke. So, at this time, we'd like to Review and Adopt the Agenda. Yes, sir, Andy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich. I'd like to move to adopt the agenda as presented to us and give the Chair the opportunity and the ability to change the agenda or modify the agenda as needed throughout the course of the meeting. Thank you.

MS. EVANS: This is Linda. I second the motion.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much. Question.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke. I just wanted to say a couple of things about the agenda so folks know when certain items might be coming up. We'll just be moving through the agenda as planned this morning until 2 p.m. This afternoon we do have a time-certain agenda item and that's to discuss Fortymile caribou. The Harvest Management Plan that's being drafted currently. You discussed that at your last meeting, so we'll be continuing that discussion and then hopefully the Council can solidify some recommendations for the Eastern Interior rep on the Harvest Management Coalition to take back to the Coalition.

And then following that, we'll just continue to move through the agenda depending on how much time we have left for the day. But tomorrow morning after public comments on non-agenda items, we will move

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1 into Wildlife Proposal 26-75 and that's that Unit 25D
2 remainder or East 25D, East moose closure to non-
3 federally qualified subsistence users. That was also
4 discussed at your last meeting. It is coming back before
5 you because OSM has proposed a new OSM modification to
6 that, that they would like you to review and discuss and
7 make a recommendation on that modification. We wanted
8 to schedule that as time-certain, since we know that
9 some folks might want to be able to call in and comment
10 on that. So, if you do know folks in the Yukon Flats who
11 might be interested, that will be tomorrow morning. And
12 that's the 25D remainder moose closure proposal.
13

14 Those are our only time-certain items.
15 I did get a message this morning from Gail Vick, who is
16 part of the BBAYK Coalition and the Fairbanks AC and she
17 would -- she said that she'd be available tomorrow if
18 you all wanted to discuss -- the recap sort of -- some
19 of the big fishery meetings that came up. So, just
20 putting that out there, so folks are aware. We may adjust
21 time to accommodate her. But other than that, yeah, we'll
22 be moving through the agenda as planned. If there's any
23 questions, I'd be happy to help answer them.
24

25 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions
26 about the agenda? Go ahead, Eva.
27

28 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Our Minto-Nenana
29 Advisory Committee just met on Friday, and we went over
30 some proposals, and I know, Andy, you're a big -- you
31 might be interested in some of the proposals that are
32 statewide, particularly 170, 171, 172 related to
33 hatcheries. So, I don't know if we want to discuss that
34 and add that to our agenda.
35

36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This is Member
37 Bassich. I think it would be very important for us to
38 discuss and get on the record.
39

40 MS. MCDAVID: It will be up to the
41 Council and the Chair if you guys want to add that, and
42 where you might want to add that. I do want to remind
43 you that you did submit Board of Fish proposal comments
44 for the statewide meeting. In your little binders, that
45 comment letter is on page 147, and I'm going to just
46 look and see. I know you commented on some of those
47 hatchery proposals. Let's see which ones. Yeah, 70 and
48 72. You'd be -- if there's others that you'd like to
49 support, the comment deadline unfortunately closed
50 yesterday. But I'm not sure if -- yeah. Any -- someone

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1 going to the meeting could potentially submit that as
2 an RC if you wanted to add any additional comments.

3

4 MS. BURK: Yeah. This is Eva. While we're
5 on it. So, I guess I don't have to worry. I'm still half
6 -- I've been in meetings for like six weeks. I have no
7 idea what's going on anymore.

8

9 MS. MCDAVID: Well, this is Brooke again.
10 When -- perhaps when we're talking about, you know, the
11 other fisheries meetings, and we're kind of recapping
12 those, this might be a good place to squeeze that in as
13 an upcoming meeting. And if you all would like to, you
14 know, add to your comments that you already submitted
15 to provide more justification or information, you could
16 potentially do that.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. For the record,
19 Member Bassich. I think it'd be really good for this
20 Council to hear a brief overview of the Tanana Manley
21 meeting. I think it's really important for us. We're all
22 trying to work together, and I think it's really
23 important for us to hear what each region is talking
24 about and what their concerns are and what their
25 recommendations are. So, if we can allow a short period
26 of time during this meeting to get an update on that, I
27 think it'd be really beneficial overall in addressing
28 our fisheries issues. Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie.
31 I'll reach out to the Chair of the AC and ask her to do
32 it, to show up, or.....

33

34 MS. BURK: She's right here.

35

36 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Oh, okay.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MS. BURK: Yeah. I'm the Chair. Co-Chair
41 now.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

44

45 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'm the Co-Chair,
46 and I have a quick summary if you need me to share.
47 Thanks. For Minto-Nenana.

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49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: He said Tanana
50 Rampart. If you didn't hear.

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MS. BURK: Thank you. Charlie, we've been meeting together, remember?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yeah. I was just about ready to say that. Thank you, Co-Chair. Okay. Moving forward. So, is that good enough on that? Are we all happy with that, or did you pick a time, or we can put that into the agenda? Are we going to talk about it in our comments or member reports, or where are we going to put that?

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, I've made a note for that to be brought up during fisheries reports. Does that sound good to everyone else? All right, I'm seeing nods, yes. And then other than that, if there's no other additions, there is a motion on the floor.

MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich, call question.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, I'll ask for unanimous consent. All those against please signify by saying, aye.

(No response)

Hearing and seeing none, passes. Moving forward. Review and Approve Fall of 2025 Minutes.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Brooke. I'm going to pass out the draft minutes to you guys, and perhaps we could take just, you know, a couple of minutes to look through them. I'm sorry for getting them to you at the very last minute. But as you all are very well aware, there's been a lot going on. So, we'll just give you an opportunity to look those over now.

(Pause)

This is Brooke again. Sue, since you're online, I did email you a copy. Hopefully, you received that.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Did you -- when did you send it? This is Sue.

MS. MCDAVID: I believe I sent yesterday a copy of the draft minutes and the draft annual report.

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MS. ENTSMINGER: Just now got it. Sorry.

MS. MCDAVID: Oh. That's okay, no problem. And this is Brooke. For everyone else, those were just posted to the webpage this morning.

(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: If everybody's okay with the review and approval of the fall 2025 minutes, we can move forward. We need to entertain a motion.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich, to make a motion that we adopt or accept the minutes presented to us from our previous meeting. Thank you.

MR. ALEXANDER: Chair. It's Gerald Alexander. I'd like to second that.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much for that, Andy Bassich first and second by Gerald Alexander and I will be asking for unanimous consent. All those against approving the fall of 2025 minutes, please signify by saying aye.

(No response)

Hearing and seeing nothing, it's approved and moving on. Thank you. Regional subsistence Reports. Council Member Reports. We always go at the sun, so appreciate you always starting, Andy. Thank you.

MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich with the -- always the most long-winded report. But I'm going to change that today. I was looking through the minutes, and the comments that I made at our last meeting are still pretty much the report I want to give right now. It's been a kind of a hard winter out in our country this year. We all experienced the cold weather this year, followed by a lot of snow and a lot of wind. I'm really kind of disappointed that the caribou have not shown up in the Eagle area this winter. To my knowledge, there were only two moose taken in the Community of Eagle and Eagle Village this year, and we were really hopeful that caribou would show up so that there'd be some harvest opportunity afforded us in our region. I did see very early on, I saw three caribou show up in the area that I mush in a lot, and I was really hopeful that the rest of the band would show up, but they never did. And now

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1 those three are no longer with us. So, there is a pack
2 of wolves that come through about every two weeks or so
3 in my region and obviously they probably dined on them
4 a little bit.

5
6 I am -- I would like to report that I
7 think the issues that I was bringing up with songbirds
8 and waterfowl is still somewhat there. I'm looking
9 forward to hearing a little bit more about the peregrine
10 falcon and what's happening with them, because I think
11 they are a kind of a barometer or telltale sign of early
12 indications of maybe ecological issues in the region.
13 Or maybe not outside the region. Effects of other
14 influences on long migrating birds. Maybe might not fall
15 on our table, but are things to be concerned about.
16 Songbirds are returning a little bit more after a year
17 or two off. And the rabbit cycle is pretty high, at
18 least locally around my area, which is good.

19
20 I'm not seeing a lot of furbearers out
21 there other than wolves. There are some lynx in the
22 country right now. Not real high, but they are out there.
23 I am not seeing a lot of marten sign in our area right
24 now, so they might be kind of on a bit of a decline. I
25 think that's about all I have to share, Mr. Chair. I am
26 -- I guess I'd just briefly like to touch on the salmon
27 issues that continues to be, from my perspective, the
28 most important resource to our community as a long term,
29 consistent source of protein and also cultural aspects
30 of it. I know there are a lot of people -- many people
31 sitting at this table that are working very hard and
32 very diligently towards trying to make those changes,
33 and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to begin to make some
34 changes for long term sustainable salmon populations to
35 help the people in rural Alaska.

36
37 And I wanted to just very briefly touch
38 on the Yukon River Panel. We met up in Old Crow about a
39 month ago. Had a really good meeting up there. There's
40 not a lot of activity with the Yukon River Panel, per
41 se. Right now, as far as the salmon being closed, both
42 fall chum, Canadian-bound fall chum, are at the lowest,
43 some of the lowest rates they've ever been at. And, of
44 course, the seven-year agreement. However, the Yukon
45 River Panel is working with Trinity, which is an
46 organization to help us develop a rebuilding plan. There
47 is a working group that has been working monthly, meeting
48 monthly to make recommendations to the Yukon River
49 Panel. There's been a lot of increase -- desire to
50 increase communications within the Yukon River Panel

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1 outreach. And we'll be taking up some of those
2 recommendations at our spring meeting in April,
3 recognizing that we're not going to necessarily fix the
4 fishing issues on technical merit alone, that it is a
5 combination of the technical data and what that reveals,
6 along with, probably more importantly, the social,
7 cultural, and economic aspects of the salmon fisheries
8 that we humans impose upon salmon. So, I think we're
9 making some progress in recognizing that and hopefully
10 funding that to the extent that we can be hopefully
11 successful. And that's all. I'll update in the fall
12 meeting on where we're at. There'll be -- hopefully
13 there'll be a lot more outreach during the summer. And
14 I think building coalitions and building cooperation for
15 the people out on the river is going to be key. So that's
16 being recognized. So, I wanted to just report that out,
17 that there is efforts being made and it's being
18 recognized as an important part along with the
19 traditional knowledge to move forward successfully.
20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
23 Andy. Go ahead, Gerald.

24

25 MR. ALEXANDER: Good morning. My name is
26 Gerald Alexander. I'm from Fort Yukon. Actually, there's
27 not very much activity up in Fort Yukon due to the
28 closure of the fish. Everybody knows that. But I've
29 noticed a lot of people been trapping, and I hadn't
30 touched base with them yet, but I just heard -- it's --
31 gossip is like wildfire up there. You say one word,
32 it'll be downtown in five minutes. But anyway, you hear
33 things. And who -- Charlie. Anyway, you hear things and
34 who got what. And, you know, I don't mention names or
35 anything like that, but our wolf population has kind of
36 grown a little bit, but we have a lot of trappers up
37 there. That's every time a wolf like yourself, Charlie.
38 I mean, you know, wolf coming to town, they go get it.

39

40 And the rabbit population is up. I
41 haven't seen much lynx around town. Normally, they're.
42 I mean, all the rabbits come into town, they hide, you
43 know. Anyway, I don't see no lynx around. And actually,
44 I haven't been going out for quite a while now. I didn't
45 have a snowmachine for a couple of years and had a string
46 of bad luck, and I'm still having that bad luck. But if
47 it wasn't for bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all,
48 you know.

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1 And the winter has been pretty rough on
2 us this year. It kind of fluctuates hot and cold, and
3 then the snow dumps on you. And so anyhow, that's our
4 life, and I'm sticking to it.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
7 Gerald. Linda.

8
9 MS. EVANS: Yeah. Same issues. No fish.
10 Resources are getting scarce out there. But I have to
11 agree, last I was in Rampart, I did see some birds flying
12 around my little bird feeders, so that was a good sign
13 to me. That was last fall, though. Just have a lot of
14 concern about, you know, how we can all work together
15 to help rebuild our stocks and, you know, take care of
16 our resources and our land so that it can sustain us in
17 our lives, our traditional ways of living that we cherish
18 and want to carry on with our younger generations coming
19 behind us. I think there's just a lot of change going
20 on that's just overburdening everything. And I'm not
21 sure, you know, I mean, we sit here and we talk about
22 these things over and over, and I just wonder if we're
23 making headway. But I'm still here listening and willing
24 to work and share ideas on how we can move forward.
25 Thank you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
28 Linda. Go ahead, Dorothy.

29
30 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
31 Shockley. Manley, Fairbanks. I think the past, I don't
32 know how many years I've been here. Three. Four. Looking
33 at the reports I've given. I mean, basically the same,
34 unfortunately, maybe getting worse. And it's just really
35 discouraging. Especially, I think, with not only the
36 scarcity of our food and our inability to feed ourselves
37 these days. We have, you know, state and federal
38 administrations who are not working with us or even
39 helping us. And so that makes it even harder. The other
40 day, I was -- well, you know, I think every day there's
41 a conversation about what's happening in the world today
42 and in our country and, you know, thinking about our
43 ancestors and our culture and realizing, I mean, things
44 are just -- seems things are just moving so quickly and
45 so fast in regards to regulations, administration, those
46 kinds of things.

47
48 And, you know, I thought about my mother
49 and her parents, you know, at six years old, she went
50 to school and was not able to speak her language. And I

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1 just, you know, imagine sitting there as a six year old,
2 sitting in a classroom where you don't understand what's
3 happening and being punished for speaking, you know,
4 your own language and then, you know, her life. You
5 know, when she passed away at 84. In fact, yesterday was
6 her birthday. You know, she had a cell phone and bank
7 accounts and all of that. And, you know, she was the
8 first generation in our family, on my mom's side, to
9 have a Western education and probably second generation
10 of use of alcoholism and, you know, we're -- when you
11 think about it in that respect, you know, how many
12 generations and she was probably first generation using
13 currency, money that we use today. And when you think
14 about it in that perspective, you know, all the changes
15 that she went through in her life and thinking about
16 what's happening today and all the changes that we're
17 experiencing, I mean, this whole anxiety and, you know,
18 what's -- not knowing what's going to happen tomorrow,
19 you know, probably reflects how they lived and, you know,
20 their ability to feed themselves. And then with, you
21 know, the federal and state administration and the
22 regulations and so-called management. You know, just
23 instead of helping the people, did the opposite to where,
24 you know, I say again, we can't feed ourselves. And I,
25 you know, I too sit here wonder, you know, like Linda
26 said, are we making a difference? And I would hope so,
27 but yeah, I mean, things out in the villages aren't
28 better. And so, you know, I guess all we can do is hope
29 and pray. So, thank you.

30
31 MS. BURK: Good morning. This is Eva.
32 Geez, you guys. I think I have a little different
33 perspective. I actually, I'm -- I feel a little bit
34 hopeful from actions that we're just taking for our fish
35 out in state and federal bodies. And I think unless
36 you're really involved with that stuff, like it really
37 in the weeds of it and the day to day in the meetings,
38 it's hard to really know what happened. And a lot of
39 people post things on social media, and I think even in
40 this past week, I've been looking at the different
41 comments made by folks, and I can see very clearly that
42 there's a lot of misinformation and miscommunication,
43 misunderstanding about the situation. And I think it
44 really is unfortunate, the state of ecosystem crisis
45 that we're really facing, especially in the lands that
46 are covered by this body. But -- and I also really
47 acknowledge the comments that Linda and Dorothy are
48 making as far as people's adjustment to rapid changes.
49 That has been testimony from several of the people
50 sitting on the advisory panel for these chum salmon

1 actions. You get quite a few people and it's very heart-
2 wrenching testimony, and it's really clear that the
3 science is lacking. I think that's another
4 misunderstanding, really. Even in the hatchery issue, I
5 feel like we have to look beyond science right now if
6 we want to work to preserve the resources of this state.
7 And I really think that some of the working groups that
8 are happening, like especially for Fortymile, I think
9 it's really important to really get involved with some
10 of these groups and stay informed, because otherwise
11 we're kind of just listening to other people.
12

13 And so, this past month, we've been
14 working on these different actions for years. And I
15 really see a shift in the people and the cooperation and
16 the collaboration amongst different groups and different
17 regions, different organizations. And I really see that
18 we're -- I really want to believe, too, that we're in
19 some type of new cycle. That all the different species
20 run on these different cycles that we don't really fully
21 understand, like with salmon, I believe it was a 30-year
22 cycle before where you'll see a big increase in harvest
23 and kind of abundance, and then you see a low. And the
24 State of Alaska barely has two of these cycles in their
25 data repository. So, it's really hard to understand what
26 was there to begin with, the baseline, and then to
27 understand our own impacts on the systems. And I'm
28 talking about fisheries, but I also think right now a
29 similar mindset and management approach exists in
30 caribou and moose. And for example, some of the statewide
31 proposals that are coming up, especially for antlerless
32 reauthorization, my mind is blown that we actually think
33 we should be reauthorizing antlerless hunts in this
34 state when we're in such a precarious situation, and the
35 climate can change and have these extreme events, and
36 it's really hard to plan and prepare. And I feel like
37 we're borrowing from zero, and that we need to be looking
38 at how to rebuild everything and looking at the
39 management of resources holistically, not just
40 fisheries, but fish and wildlife, migratory birds, all
41 of it together. Looking at the health of the land and
42 how it's changing.
43

44 I'm not surprised by what we're going
45 through, because I've been told it and I've been
46 listening to stories about starvation from the elders
47 since I can remember, and that our own, I would say
48 disrespect of the resources is also something to
49 consider. And so, I really hope that we're in a new
50 abundance cycle. But I also think our elders have been

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1 telling us that this time would come. And I really hope
2 that the state and federal governments and these
3 management bodies can really start breaking down these
4 jurisdictional boundaries and working together. Is what
5 we need for salmon. It's what we need for caribou. It's
6 what we need for moose. And I think we've been on the
7 attack far too long to each other. And I think that's
8 maybe where some of the negativity and hopelessness can
9 feel like. But I would say that even though we don't
10 always agree with each other in some of these spaces and
11 some people can definitely be disrespectful, I do see a
12 lot of relationships being built with tribal leaders and
13 management bodies. And I really am excited and
14 encouraged by all the educated young people that are
15 showing up in these spaces and informing themselves and
16 staying committed and staying present. And so, I'm
17 really hoping that we see a new cycle. I'm really hoping
18 that the Pacific Ocean stays cool and that the Bering
19 Sea transitions into a cool state, and we start to see
20 some things rebound. And I do think there is some prayer
21 involved with that as well. So, I know I've been going
22 on, but I just wanted to share a little bit, but I do
23 think things are hopeful. I have to have hope, right.
24 Or I can't sit at this table and get a 24-year service
25 award. Thank you.

26
27 MR. BASSICH: I really appreciate what
28 you just said. And I just wanted to read something to
29 the record that I try and bring to as many meetings as
30 I can because I think it's really important. And this
31 is a quote from a pretty smart guy from a long time ago.
32 And it said, the secret of change is to focus all of
33 your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building
34 the new. And I think that's what you were just talking
35 about, Eva. I just wanted to read that into the record,
36 because I think that's super important for us to stay
37 focused on, especially during the hard times. And by the
38 way, that quote was by a guy by the name of Socrates.
39 Pretty smart guy. Thank you.

40
41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sue, are you online?

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, I am.

44
45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Please give us
46 a report if you want to.

47
48 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I want to say I
49 heard Linda's comment about making headway, and I heard
50 Eva's comment about 24 years. Now it's 24 and a half. I

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1 -- there's a lot that I would like to share that does
2 get frustrating. The working together is the key. I've
3 seen that from the very beginning. It is totally -- the
4 key to our future, is working together. There are good
5 people, and all over the world the same. There are good
6 people in all these organizations. And then there's some
7 little rabble-rousers that might make it ugly. But we
8 got to remember, it's the good people that do want to
9 work together. And we had an attempt to work hunter's
10 education. And when I see how it -- okay, we meet, and
11 then it drops, and then we meet again, and then it drops.
12 And it's so frustrating to me. I feel like sometimes the
13 only way to make us -- not make but have the opportunity
14 to work together is if we do it on our own. Because the
15 government's always looking for funding, saying we can't
16 do this. And I find that that is frustrating to me.

17
18 There's got to be ways to continue on
19 the effort that we started, I don't know how many years
20 ago, Andy, but I also look at the history of the state.
21 I believe it was Senator Stevens in 1978 that brought
22 the word subsistence. And prior to that, our Native
23 people and our people, wee -- I feel like we did respect
24 each other and did work together. And most of the people
25 that's been around since then, they can see the history
26 of what has happened. And I listened to a podcast just
27 recently where it was Fish and Game Deputy Commissioner,
28 John Sturgeon, and he was that case in the Yukon and
29 then Karen Linnell and Ben Malott. It was just an hour
30 long over the review. And if you listen to it at the
31 end, Karen speaks about working together, that we have
32 so much in common, and John agreed. And that's a
33 beautiful thing to hear, that we probably have a lot in
34 common and we need to work together because even people
35 my age -- if you go back generations, people were living
36 without electricity, people were living lifestyles
37 that's similar to what we're talking about. And I mean,
38 my grandparents didn't have electricity. There was --
39 and they were living off of the food they could raise
40 and hunt. Anyway, I like you, Eva, I could go on and on.
41 It's working together. That means a lot to me.

42
43 And I just wanted to report in this area
44 that the Mentasta Village had a wonderful culture camp
45 with two of the schools in the area and that was a
46 positive thing. They actually invited me as an elder,
47 which I have to laugh. I don't consider myself an elder,
48 although the age is kind of revealing. And then I wanted
49 to also report there was a young golden eagle that has
50 spent the winter here, probably feeding on my son's

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1 carcasses from trapping, but it never left. They
2 normally leave and come back in the spring, and I have
3 to say, there's plenty of wolves around. Some that people
4 doing that aerial gunning are being highly successful,
5 and this has been a super reminder of where we live this
6 winter, how cold it's been all through December. And
7 then again, we've had 54° below and 52° below this past
8 weekend and 45° below. But the beautiful thing is, it's
9 a lot of daylight and it warms up to 0° or 3° above. And
10 the also thing about this weather is we have the Little
11 Tok River near us, and it overflows sometimes, but to
12 the degree it has overflowed this year is incredible.
13 It's right at the bottom of our bridge, which only one
14 other time it was like that. There's some cabins along
15 the river there that are halfway in ice right now. And
16 it seems in the past this overflow is really related to
17 the cold weather. So, thank you everyone. I appreciate
18 everyone that's on here. And I did want to say there's
19 a lot of great members on here. And had I stayed on, I
20 feel like we could have had some strong working groups.
21 But I believe there's younger people that can do the
22 same job. So, thank you all.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
25 Sue. Great wisdom. Appreciate your words always. Okay.
26 Going forward here, it says that I'm supposed to do a
27 little report now. And I want to jump right in and talk
28 about you people that sit around this table and all the
29 sacrifice that you do to be here. It's very much
30 appreciated. And the resources really need your
31 knowledge and your input. So, I really appreciate
32 everybody around the table and the sacrifices that you
33 do to be here.

34

35 And I'll go right into talking about my
36 winter. We know how fish is. But I want to talk about
37 the weather and the snow and the good things that it
38 brings. Going back to a cold weather is really good for
39 our salmon and our animals. It brings a time of hardship,
40 but it's also a cleansing. It pushes back bugs. Bad
41 algae for salmon that comes with warm weather. It makes
42 colder water for salmon. The ice coming down in the
43 Bering Sea down low brings nutrients that feed our baby
44 fish and our older fish. So, it's all a good thing. I'm
45 very happy to see it back. I hope that it hangs on. The
46 -- what I just heard from Sue about overflow is so
47 important to keep those creeks cold for salmon in the
48 Interior. It stops gorging. It stops cutting off. Some
49 of the creeks and anadromous streams have been kind of
50 straightened out and instead of having turns in the creek

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1 created by obstruction and over -- I mean permafrost,
2 some of them straightened out. So, this is going to firm
3 things up, bring better food. Glacier even brings more
4 nutrients to the creek and the rearing grounds in the
5 habitat. So, you could see it in the springtime when the
6 creek is starting to thaw out, and the ice is starting
7 to move and wash out. You can't drink the water no more
8 because it's full of algae. That -- all that stuff is
9 really important and it comes with that cold water.

10

11 So, I really like that. So also brings
12 us back into some uncertainty with our moose and caribou
13 calves. When you get a 0° and above in the daytime and
14 you have a deep snow year like this, when it's nice and
15 warm in the day, those calves and moose and caribou get
16 wet. Then it gets 40° below at night, they freeze to
17 death. They get hypothermia, they can't make it. So,
18 this is a beautiful thing to see but it's also hard.
19 Good and bad in different ways. Really hard on the moose
20 calves. And I thought I heard about caribou showing up
21 -- not showing up in some places, and they didn't show
22 up in Arctic Village just fall either, but they have
23 lately, the last couple of weeks showed up there. I'm
24 really happy for those people to be able to get some
25 food in this hardship, hard year that we're having.

26

27 I see that you're talking about cycles
28 that Eva brought up a little while ago. We've been really
29 pushing that, and I want to add a little bit more to it.
30 That -- Andy says he's not seeing -- he's seeing some
31 rabbits, but rabbits feed all kind of different animals.
32 They feed marten and lynx so they can't live together
33 at the same time. So, they have cycles going up and
34 down. When the lynx cycle gets up a couple of years,
35 then it starts going down, the marten starts coming up
36 only if there's rabbits. So, everything is kind of on a
37 cycle. And the salmon are also 30-year cycle with some
38 tens in the middle. You can just see them. They all --
39 if you put all the data up on the board, you could just
40 see the cycles on there. So, I'm hoping that the cold
41 weather that we had this year continues and seeing that
42 we're on the bottom of a cycle means that we might get
43 some good returns in the future. So, I'm really hoping
44 for the cold weather to stabilize and be with us again.
45 It really has caught a lot of people with their pants
46 down when it comes to wood pile and being prepared for
47 a real Alaska winter. And I'm sorry that people have
48 suffered but you better get ready for next year. That's
49 all I'm going to say.

50

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1 Yeah, that's about all I have to report.
2 And I hear some places are catching good fur. Good
3 marten. And there also was a couple of big orders for
4 fur that has brought prices up over \$100 for marten. And
5 I'm really happy because a lot of the people have lacking
6 -- little economics in our area and in the villages. So,
7 this really helps out with people being able to keep the
8 lights on and food in the cupboard when we're lacking
9 natural wild resources like we are.

10
11 And that's about all I have right now.
12 And we could talk as we go forward, but I think we better
13 take a little break after all of that and let people
14 move around a little bit. I see we have a little easier
15 agenda today, and it's really nice to see, after going
16 through all those proposals last time, that's a very
17 arduous duty. So, I thank you all for your time and
18 being here. And let's take a break and mingle a little
19 bit and get back here as fast as we can. Thank you. Ten
20 minutes.

21
22 (Off record)

23
24 (On record)

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. We're
27 coming back to order. And I just wanted to put on the
28 record that Eastern Interior has the coolest gavel of
29 any of the Councils.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I concur. Okay,
32 we're going down the agenda. Number 10, Public and Tribal
33 Comment on Non-agenda Items. Welcome, Jim.

34
35 MR. SIMON: Thank you. For the record Jim
36 Simon. I'm a resident of Goose Call which is a fire
37 service management area between Salcha and Birch Lake.
38 It is a major flyway. And I just want to thank your
39 Council and particularly Council Member Eva Burk and
40 Charlie and Andy for all your tireless work on trying
41 to address the chum bycatch reduction efforts. Where I
42 live in Goose Call is just downriver from the former
43 traditional fall camp of the Salcha Dene people and right
44 upriver of the Winter Village, at the mouth of Salchaket.
45 And near the Salcha people's fall camp there's a -- it's
46 a chum spawning area with a good upwelling and my
47 assumption has always been because of that and the
48 carcasses, the spawned-out carcasses that are available.
49 Until recent years, it was regular that dozens of eagles,
50 both bald and golden, would hang out through the fall

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1 at our -- near our place and like one winter there were
2 34 total, and they have not been around for years now.
3 And I'm really hoping that with the amazing actions that
4 have occurred with both a cap on chum bycatch and the
5 pollock fishery as well as some of the reductions of the
6 intercept fishery in Area M, that more chum returned to
7 the Tanana. I know a lot of that focus has been on
8 Canadian bound fall chum, but I'm worried about the
9 American fall chum. You know because of -- I want to see
10 a healthy habitat. And I just want to thank you all and
11 this Council's diligence and I will let you know if the
12 eagle start hanging out.

13

14 I think another issue that maybe this
15 Council might want to make some more inquiries about is
16 now that the avian influenza is endemic, you know, it's
17 overwintering. And I do know that eagles are getting it
18 from eating infected animals. And I have heard just
19 anecdotally that there are decreases in the eagle
20 populations. You know, maybe it's a combination. You
21 know, I'm not just saying it's the lack of chum that has
22 resulted in this reduction of what I see. But I just
23 want to thank you.

24

25 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I heard testimony
26 at Board of Fish about Tanana being one of the biggest
27 producers of chum historically, and I know that through
28 some of my research and I see lately it might be like,
29 you know, 37%, 40% of the overall Yukon fall chum run
30 for Tanana. Do you have any idea of what it might have
31 been historically?

32

33 MR. SIMON: I don't off the top of my
34 head. However, you know, having worked for the
35 Department of Fish and Game for 14 years, I have watched
36 the disappearance of all of the Tanana tributary chum
37 escapement goals and monitoring. There used to be, you
38 know, working with the villages some test -- fish wheel
39 fisheries to help monitor that. We know of the importance
40 of chum salmon to some of the wolves in Denali National
41 Park and Preserve, where one of the wolves had something
42 like 24% of its diet was based on salmon. The shift
43 because of budget reductions to just drainage wide
44 goals, I think is very risky because of the importance
45 of conserving the genetic stock diversity of our salmon
46 populations, so that because a low producing tributary
47 stock today might be the high producing stock in the
48 future under different environmental changes. And so, I
49 think it's a good question to ask. They still do some
50 of the spawned-out carcass enumerations I believe on the

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1 Salcha River. But we need to have more boots on the
2 ground monitoring these systems, I think, in order to
3 ensure that we are doing the best to not overexploit and
4 reduce the genetic diversity that we have if we want to
5 be able to fish one day again.

6
7 But I think the fact that you had the
8 communities of the upper, you know, upriver from
9 Fairbanks, you know, that used to be so dependent on
10 chum salmon, you know, there used to be a chinook run
11 in the Goodpaster River, you know, up by Delta. Tanana
12 Chiefs Conference ran an enumeration, you know, fish
13 monitoring weir, I think it was, there for a while.
14 There were so few king salmon coming back to that system,
15 it was not deemed, you know, economically feasible to
16 continue that. And I think if we just continue the status
17 quo, we're just going to see more reductions, more
18 reductions, and then the ecosystem trickle down
19 consequences of that, which is why I have mentioned, you
20 know. I miss my eagles, you know, because there'd be
21 fall time through December. I mean months, 3 or 4 months
22 that there should be dozens of eagles hanging out at
23 Goose Call Hill. Thanks.

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

27
28 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. For the record,
29 Member Bassich. Thank you very much for coming up and
30 saying those words. I want to take a minute just to
31 recognize your contributions. For many years, you've
32 been coming to RAC meetings, to AC meetings. I can
33 remember the first time I met you, you were on the
34 opposite side, sitting at the Board of Fish meeting as
35 an ADF&G Anthropologist, I believe, and I was really
36 impressed with your knowledge and capability, and you
37 were quite the adversary from my perspective. I'm glad
38 you're on our side of the table right now. I wanted to
39 ask you, there's -- you mentioned monitoring discrete
40 stocks. There's a lot of us that are very concerned with
41 the lack of monitoring of discrete stocks. And you
42 touched on that a little bit.

43
44 I guess the question I would ask is, how
45 important that is? And I guess I want to preface that
46 with, currently, I believe the Yukon River fall chum
47 drainage-wide escapement is 300,000 fish, and we got
48 about 275,000 fish this year. So, the point I'm trying
49 to make is that if we caught it -- if there would have
50 been another 25,000 fall chum past Pilot Station, they

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1 would have considered a successful spawning escapement
2 on the entire drainage. But as you say, there are no
3 salmon coming back to your region. From my perspective,
4 there's no salmon coming back to my area. Clearly, that
5 demonstrates that the system that we have in place is
6 not monitoring the importance of or not recognizing the
7 importance of discrete stocks. And I was wondering if
8 you could just elaborate a little bit more on that.
9

10 And the other thing I was going to ask
11 you about is, are you noticing changes to the forest or
12 the riparian ecology in the area with the loss of those
13 fall chum? Because I was just recently up in Old Crow,
14 and the Fishing Branch River has lost their fall chum
15 for several decades now, and there is noticeable changes
16 to the forest, which is critical habitat for fall chum
17 spawning habitat. So, the marine derived nutrients not
18 coming back is impacting the forest, which is then
19 impacting the viability of the spawning stream. So, if
20 you maybe could, with some of your knowledge, if you
21 could maybe elaborate a little bit about those two
22 things, it would be really helpful, I think.
23

24 MR. SIMON: Yeah. Thank you, Council
25 Member Bassich, for the question. I don't know that I
26 have real concrete answers, but I do have an interesting
27 hypothesis, you know, just from actually during the
28 break, speaking with Council Member Burk.
29

30 You know, the willows with the decrease
31 in the moose population through the cow hunts and the
32 Tanana Flats a number of years ago when there was a high
33 abundance of moose, you know, the willows didn't get
34 above where they could eat. And while it was particularly
35 about some of the tapeworms and stuff that the parasites
36 that are -- some of the moose are having, and I'm curious
37 as to how that lack of marine-derived nutrients might
38 be affecting the browse that the moose are using. And
39 are they missing essential elements? You know, 25 years
40 ago when I worked at Tanana Chiefs Conference, I had an
41 ethnoveterinary scientist working for us there, who was,
42 you know, explained to me how taste changes in meat or
43 toughness, etc., signal biochemical differences, and so
44 it's a hypothesis that I have, you know, that I'd love
45 to see some research on looking at that connection
46 between marine-derived nutrients. And Chairman Wright
47 speaks about this often, you know, and when he brings
48 up indigenous knowledge about how all of these things
49 are connected. And I think it'd be very interesting to
50 use some Western scientific tools to investigate that

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1 hypothesis as to how does moose health vary depending
2 on chum spawning abundance.

3
4 As far as the tributary discrete
5 assessment and having climate resilient fisheries by
6 conserving genetic diversity, I can -- and the
7 escapement goal. The Department regularly says we're not
8 managing for the bottom end of the escapement goal. But
9 then post season, it's hard. It's understandable why the
10 public thinks that they are choosing that because for
11 chinook salmon, for example, you know, having looked at
12 the Department's March 2025 salmon escapement goal
13 review summary report that is important for to share
14 with the other countries of the North Pacific, if you
15 look at Chinook salmon statewide under state management
16 that they've reached -- the chinook escapement has
17 reached the bottom end of the escapement goal ranges
18 established by the Department of Fish and Game 41% of
19 the time, they have failed to reach the bottom end more
20 than 50% of the time it's like 50.2%. And this is from
21 2015 to 2023, a nine-year period in the Monroe and
22 Chenoweth Report from March 2025 and that you can find
23 on the Department's website.

24
25 So of course, chinook are in decline,
26 right. And there's poor production, but there's still
27 chinook being sold, you know, in some places and closures
28 etc., whereas if you look at the Kuskokwim River, you
29 know, which is co-managed by the Kuskokwim River Inter-
30 Tribal Fish Commission and the refuge, the Yukon Delta
31 National Wildlife Refuge, for the past ten years, they
32 have met the midpoint or above of the escapement goal
33 100% of time in the past decade. So, I think that
34 demonstrates that we can do better. And the Kuskokwim
35 is actually having some limited fishing opportunities
36 throughout that ten-year period as well, versus a
37 complete closure. So, I think there are other models
38 that we should be exploring again in the context of
39 working together. The state used to participate, you
40 know, in those in-season meetings until they were --
41 became uninterested. But some of the statements being
42 made, you know, saying that there's overfishing and not
43 sustainable and, you know, claims even submitted to this
44 U.S. Supreme Court are not accurate if you look at the
45 actual data that the Department maintains.

46
47 The other issue is, you know, for chum
48 salmon, as we know so little, and since I have been at
49 the Eastern Interior RAC, I'm very concerned about coho
50 salmon. There is no coho salmon escapement goal in the

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1 entire Yukon watershed. And I know for years there have
2 been concerns about the decrease in the coho salmon. The
3 abundance of salmon compared to 23 years ago when I
4 first started working for the Department of Fish and
5 Game, salmon abundance is just down across the board
6 with different species, and we have many fewer
7 escapement goals. And so, the absence of information
8 gives the managers a lot of discretion, right. Because
9 they just have to use their best judgment. And so, you
10 know, I would hate to think that the state doesn't want
11 data so that then they can just manage as they see fit.
12 But I think that's why you've seen intertribal
13 organizations like Tanana Chiefs, Kusko Inter-Tribal
14 taking over weirs that the state used to operate. And I
15 hope that the funding continues to be available to
16 intertribal organizations to do that, because I think
17 that is what the most prudent and responsible thing is
18 to do if we are serious about conserving and making
19 sure, like my grandson has the opportunity to one day
20 subsistence fish as well as sportfish for salmon.
21 Thanks. I'm not sure if I answered your question, but
22 it's my best attempt.

23

24 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

25

26 MS. BURK: Thank you. Thanks for
27 answering these questions so thoroughly. I really
28 appreciate it. You're making me think of a lot of
29 different things. Especially, you know, thinking about
30 the discrete stocks and the kind of knowledge and
31 cooperation it takes to build the research, you know,
32 kind of the monitoring that is needed. Sometimes I think
33 this group of folks here has gone over like Yukon
34 priority information needs and community-based
35 monitoring came up as a solution. Do you -- through your
36 knowledge of the work that the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal
37 Fish Commission, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission,
38 that are very successful model moving forward could be
39 collaboration and pooling of resources by a tribal
40 organization who's interested in resource management,
41 kind of leading up things and cooperating with state and
42 federal agencies? Do you see that as a good model and
43 one that's being effective? Because I think the
44 Kuskokwim case is especially interesting.

45

46 MR. SIMON: Thank you. Through the Chair
47 for the question Member Burke. That's a great question.
48 And interestingly enough, in 2017 Governor -- then
49 Governor Sean Parnell established the Chinook Salmon
50 Research Initiative, where it looked at 12 or 13

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1 indicator stocks, you know, to look at whether or not
2 over escapement might be a problem, you know, and it
3 basically wasn't the only possible area where there was
4 some density dependent effects on chinook salmon was the
5 Kuskokwim potentially being there. And because of that
6 initiative the subsistence division, when I was the
7 Northern Program Manager, we received funding to be able
8 to do a feasibility assessment of in-season harvest
9 monitoring on both the Yukon and the Kuskokwim Rivers.
10 And both of those state-led projects failed. The -- you
11 know, as is customary with the subsistence division, you
12 know, there would be efforts to recruit local community
13 research assistants to help do that work. And that was
14 no different in these two projects on the Yukon and
15 Kuskokwim. And yet, just a few years later, the Kuskokwim
16 River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission established an in-
17 season harvest monitoring program that continues to be
18 extremely successful. Young local residents are
19 basically generally two young people per community are
20 paid to touch base with each boat that comes back to the
21 village to get catch per unit effort information, etc.,
22 for what their mesh size was, etc. And that all is
23 managed through phone-based applications that then are
24 sent in to the Biometrician and the Fisheries Biologist
25 of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission to
26 develop harvest estimates for their discrete openings.
27 You know, because they just have limited openings, maybe
28 24 hours or 12 hours, 16 hours of a set net or drifting,
29 etc., they are able to associate a particular harvest
30 estimate for each of those openings, which is served as
31 critical in-season information for the Fish Commission's
32 in-season management team from different villages up
33 throughout the river, including the state waters and
34 headwaters, as well as the federal in-season manager.
35 Because it gives them a real understanding of the quality
36 of the run, the quality of the fish, even the proportions
37 of males versus females of all species.

38
39 And, you know, the Kuskokwim is
40 fortunate that they have an increasing sockeye
41 contribution to their fishery that elders like the late
42 James Charles, who just passed away a few weeks ago, who
43 helped establish the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish
44 Commission, he said when he was young, they didn't have
45 hardly any sockeye going into the Kuskokwim. And so now
46 this is what generally they are targeting in these
47 limited windows, as well as, to continue to have a taste
48 of chinook salmon and then subsequently chum salmon,
49 because some people can't eat chinook salmon, you know,
50 it's too rich and so dry fish, they need chum salmon.

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1 But the in-season harvest monitoring project that the
2 Kuskokwim did should be used as a model throughout Alaska
3 as to how this can be done and how locals -- because not
4 only are they capturing the numbers, you know, and all
5 the information to do catch per unit effort so that then
6 that can be expanded to total harvest estimates. But
7 they're getting those observations of the fishermen and
8 the people. (Indiscernible) Traditional Native Council
9 has also operated a program. So, it's not just been the
10 Fish Commission. And then the Fish and Wildlife Service
11 does aerial surveys, you know, to count boats, etc., as
12 all part of that estimation process in-season. So,
13 working together is -- that's a really great model to
14 follow. I think I got it.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much,
17 Jim. Okay. Where are we? Any more comments for us today?
18 We have public and tribal comments on non-agenda items
19 right now, at this time.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
22 is Brooke. Just for folks online, if anyone would like
23 to comment on any subsistence related matters that are
24 not on the agenda you can press star five on your phone
25 to raise your hand. You can use the raise hand feature
26 on Teams, or you can simply say, Mr. Chair, and we'll
27 call on you to comment. Thank you.

28

29 (No response)

30

31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Not hearing or
32 seeing any, we will move on. Action Items and New
33 Business. Call for Federal Fisheries Proposal. OSM
34 fisheries.

35

36 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, Members of the
37 Council, my name is Cory Graham. I'm a Fisheries
38 Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I'm
39 here to announce our call for proposals to change federal
40 fisheries regulations. The Federal Subsistence Board is
41 currently accepting proposals to change federal
42 subsistence fisheries regulations for the 2027 through
43 2029 regulatory cycle. The Board will be accepting
44 proposals through April 3rd, 2026. The Board will
45 consider proposals to change seasons, harvest limits,
46 methods and means, and customary and traditional use
47 determinations for federal fisheries. The Board will
48 also accept proposals for customary and traditional use
49 determinations for fisheries and rural determination
50 proposals.

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If the Council wishes to submit a proposal, you will need to do so at this meeting. The public may also submit proposals to change federal fisheries regulations. The public can find more information about how to submit proposals on our website at doi.gov/subsistence/fisheries. And if you can't find that, you can contact anyone at OSM, and we'll be happy to help you out. The proposals will be analyzed by OSM staff and presented to the Council during your fall meetings for Council Recommendations. Proposal analysis and Council Recommendations will be presented to the Federal Subsistence Board for its action during the February 2027 Fisheries Regulatory Meeting. So, with that, does the Council have any regulatory proposals that you would like to put forward?

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. And just to follow up on what Cory just said, if you guys don't have any right this second and you want to think about it throughout the meeting, anytime during the meeting before we adjourn, you would be able to add or submit any proposal ideas.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any ideas from council members on proposals going forward? Or you can think about it and we could talk later. Yep. That'll be a good way to go forward unless Eva has anything to add.

MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. And the proposals are limited to.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Who are you?

MS. SHOCKLEY: Dorothy Shockley. The proposals are limited to where? And to what?

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, Cory Graham, Fisheries Biologist with OSM. So, they'd be limited to federal subsistence fisheries. So, fisheries that occur in federal public waters.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I have a question for you. Is your jurisdiction statewide on those proposals? So, I can make a proposal about Area M or the trawl or anything I want?

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: As long as it's
federal waters?

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5

MR. GRAHAM: So, Mr. Chair, again, Cory
Graham, Fisheries Biologist, OSM. So, it would be
federal public waters within the context of ANILCA. So,
those fisheries -- so, some of the bycatch fisheries
would occur -- I'm not as familiar with, you know, the
jurisdictions and everything, but they would be under
the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. So, you
would not be able to submit proposals to the Federal
Subsistence Board over those fisheries.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much.
I'd like that to be on the record so people can hear and
know, it's including myself. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I asked that
question because over in South Umiag, there's federal
waters there that they fished -- the Area M fishermen
fish in, and it's supposed to be a 3-mile limit, and it
appears South Umiag is 20 miles wide. So that's why I
was asking, because I was told about territorial
jurisdiction, and I want to know more about it. It'd be
to stretch territorial jurisdiction from federal waters
in the mouth of the Yukon over to South Umiag to cover
that federal water that's not in regulation properly.
Instead of 3 miles, it's 23 miles being allowed to fish

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1 in federal waters right there. I just have that question.
2 I've asked that question of a few other federal people
3 during the meeting, and I don't really get an answer.
4 They say, oh, we'll look into it. Including the
5 Commissioner himself told me the same thing, he didn't
6 know. And I find it hard to believe because he's the
7 Commissioner. But he might not have. But I'm trying to
8 ask that question because that's one of the hottest spots
9 where the Area M Ofishermen fish. And it's only supposed
10 to be 3 miles. Every other landmass and island there has
11 only 3-mile marker around it, but that area has over 20-
12 mile marker on it for some reason. And it's federal
13 water. So, it has a big concern to me seeing how there's
14 a lot of our fish that are rearing there in that shallow,
15 warm water. That's why it's such a hot spot. And there's
16 a lot of young ones there that are going back and forth
17 with the migration every year and learning those areas
18 and where to eat and how to grow. And they're being
19 caught in all ages. They're in that rearing ground. So,
20 it's a big concern to me, and I look forward to trying
21 to find a way for us to get the regulation proper in
22 that area to a 3-mile circle around those islands to
23 protect those young ones there, the young salmon there
24 when they're in their migrations. Thank you. If you have
25 anything to say, please do. If not, then I'll keep
26 trying. I'll keep digging.

27
28 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, my kind of
29 expertise largely is with the Yukon, so I'm not as
30 familiar with federal jurisdiction in these other areas.
31 I know it's not the answer that you want to hear, but I
32 don't have any information about it right now. I'd see
33 if anyone else here does. And if not, I can.....

34
35 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I'll let you finish.
36 Then I'll ask -- Jim Simon's raised his hand to -- he
37 has something to say about it, but at this time we'll
38 let you finish. Any other questions?

39
40 MS. SHOCKLEY: I have a question.

41
42 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

43
44 MS. SHOCKLEY: Can you tell me how many
45 miles of federal waters is on the Yukon?

46
47 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, Cory Graham,
48 Fisheries Biologist with OSM. I don't have a mileage. I
49 know that's a checkerboard that stretches from, you
50 know, the refuge at the mouth all the way up the river.

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1 But I don't have a specific mileage.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, the federal
4 water is the parks of the mouth area and then the Yukon
5 Flats area and then there is state in between. So, it's
6 like you said, it's checkerboarded. Yeah.

7

8 MS. SHOCKLEY: I was just curious as to
9 whether, if you knew how many miles there were. I guess
10 my question is, what impact would a federal fisheries
11 proposal be for, you know, whatever we might propose? I
12 mean, you know, it's like most of it is state. So, yeah,
13 it just doesn't make sense, I guess, in some ways to
14 have a federal fisheries proposal.

15

16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Was that a question?
17 Are you waiting for an answer or...?

18

19 (No response)

20

21 In the meantime, I have a question about
22 the special action request that's been put in every year.
23 And I know that the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish
24 Commission put that in for years until it finally went
25 something that was kind of in regulation. I'm wondering
26 if we have to keep doing that on the Yukon River? Do we
27 have to keep asking or putting in that special action
28 request, or is the federal government going to do their
29 part and start implicating that special action request
30 in times of conservation, where we need the fish numbers
31 to come up before we can ever consider having a
32 commercial, let alone let people eat. So, I'm just
33 curious if you know anything about the federal side going
34 to put that special action request in themselves this
35 year or make it permanent until the fishing gets better,
36 or is that something that we, the people are going to
37 have to continue to put in on our own?

38

39 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair again, Cory
40 Graham, Fisheries Biologist with OSM. I think that
41 question would best be asked when the U.S. Fish and
42 Wildlife Service is presenting the report later on. I
43 just really don't want to speak for them.

44

45 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you very much
46 for that.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
49 is Brooke. I just wanted to follow up on what Dorothy
50 asked about the mileage along the Yukon. I'm not aware

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1 that that, like, analysis has been published anywhere.
2 Or not even really analysis, but we do have a GIS
3 Specialist with OSM now, and if that's something -- the
4 information that the Council would like to see in the
5 future, it's probably not something we can just get in
6 the next couple of days, but that's something you might
7 be able to request, and we could work on for the future.
8 I heard Charlie say that he would like to request that.
9 So let the record reflect. Thanks.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes. We want to give
12 Jim a chance to speak since he raised his hand on the
13 topic. Thank you.

14
15 MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the
16 record, Jim Simon. I don't work for anyone presently so
17 I'm just here as a resident of the Eastern Interior
18 Regional Advisory Council's region. But I -- as many of
19 you know, I've worked in this field for decades. Mr.
20 Chair, you had a question about the federal waters in
21 Area M. There are -- in the past ten years or so, there
22 has been litigation that has identified that the North
23 Pacific Fisheries Management Council must have, like
24 salmon fishery management plans in place in some cases,
25 at least in the past, those management plans have
26 delegated management to the State of Alaska. As far as
27 I know, there is no federal -- North Pacific Fisheries
28 Management Council federal salmon management plan for
29 the federal waters beyond the 3-mile limit in Area M.
30 There -- an individual who's since passed away had
31 mentioned that it could be a 1954 Act of Congress that
32 provided the state jurisdiction there in Area M, but
33 I've not ever had the opportunity to follow up on that.
34 Your question with respect to extending extraterritorial
35 jurisdiction, that requires a petition to be submitted
36 to the Secretary of Interior and the Secretary of
37 Agriculture, the Southeast Regional Advisory Council has
38 pursued that, I believe, 4 or 5 times in the past, and
39 it's my understanding that the process has been worked
40 out that those are petitions not to the Federal
41 Subsistence Board, but to both Secretaries.

42
43 Your question regarding the need for
44 annual special action requests, I think based on my
45 experience on the Kuskokwim when I worked for the Inter-
46 Tribal Fish Commission there, yes, that does need to be
47 done annually, because those are either temporary or
48 emergency special actions so that they have a time limit
49 and they can't exceed 120 days for a temporary. What
50 happened on the Kuskokwim is the Federal Subsistence

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1 Board was like, okay, we're getting this every year. So,
2 they amended the delegation of authority letter to
3 provide the federal in-season manager with that
4 authority to close the river to non-federally qualified
5 uses. However, I also know that there are concerns about
6 just the delegation letters and that there's been
7 efforts, at least on the wildlife side, to move some of
8 those delegated authorities specifically into
9 regulation. So that may be specifically what you want
10 to ask more questions about and pursue. But otherwise,
11 if you want to provide for the federal priority for the
12 continuation or the conservation of salmon resources on
13 the Yukon, it's important that someone submit a special
14 action request before each season.

15
16 The process becomes easier, you know,
17 because they don't have to recreate all the analysis for
18 that special action request each year because it's just
19 updating it with the most recent year. But there are
20 avenues of making it more efficient and building a good
21 relationship with the federal in-season manager, which
22 I think I've seen some evidence that that is improving,
23 working with Holly and the Fish Commission in
24 particular, I think is really a route to pursue so that
25 really the focus now can be on rebuilding the salmon
26 stocks, now that the U.S. Supreme Court has sort of
27 identified that Katie John legislation, the trilogy
28 there, is good law. And so that this whole issue of
29 state sovereignty and navigable waters etc., can sort
30 of move off and we can focus on the resources, which I
31 think is why we all signed up to do this kind of work.
32 But I do think that it is important to know what
33 proportion of the Yukon River drainage is federal, now
34 that the issue has been resolved legally so that you can
35 really have a better understanding of where the
36 authorities of federal management could be there.

37
38 A lot of the efforts on the Kuskokwim
39 began with a proposal that was submitted to establish a
40 federal salmon management plan on the Kuskokwim to work
41 in combination with the state's management plans and
42 regulation. And that may be something you want to look
43 at. There's also, of course, the extending
44 extraterritorial jurisdiction of the federal government
45 is not just restricted to federal waters, it's actually
46 to extend it to state waters. So, within the drainage,
47 that may be also something that you wish to pursue,
48 if you want to try to really be proactive in
49 pursuing co-management, co-stewardship relationship, to
50 really get the information you need to ensure that future

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1 generations will be able to fish one day. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
4 for that very, very good information. I appreciate you
5 very much.

6

7 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
8 is Brooke, and I just wanted to follow up on what Jim
9 said with a little more historical context or
10 information. He talked about the ETJ positions in
11 Southeast. Also, the Yukon Councils and a number of
12 tribes petitioned the Secretaries for extraterritorial
13 jurisdiction of Area M in the early 2000s and that was
14 denied in 2004. But just for the record, that has
15 occurred.

16

17 (Pause)

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Proceed. Thank you.

20

21 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, Members of the
22 Council. Cory Graham, Fisheries Biologist with OSM. So,
23 I'm going to briefly touch on the closure reviews that
24 are on your agenda. So just really generally the Board
25 has asked us to review closures every four years to make
26 sure they're still necessary. If they're not necessary,
27 they should be removed to provide federal subsistence
28 opportunity. You'll be making recommendations on three
29 closure reviews during your fall meeting. All three of
30 the closures your Councils will review are in the Western
31 Interior region, and all three are salmon closures. We
32 bring these in front of you now so you can submit
33 proposals related to the closures if you want to. For
34 example, maybe you want to remove the closure, but you
35 want harvest limits or gear type restrictions in place
36 to prevent conservation concerns. To do that, you'd need
37 to submit a proposal. And then you can't do that at your
38 fall meeting.

39

40 So, Western Interior met last week. And
41 again, these closures are in their region. They chose
42 not to submit proposals because they want to keep the
43 salmon closures in place due to the poor run sizes on
44 the Yukon. So, that's the really broad overview. If the
45 Council wants to defer to the home region and not submit
46 any proposals, that's fine. If the Council also wants
47 more information on the closures, I can provide you all
48 with that. But I just wanted to give the broad overview.

49

50 (Pause)

1

2 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke, for the
3 record. Charlie stepped out. So, council members, does
4 that sound okay to you to defer to Western Interior
5 since those closures are in their region? They didn't
6 want to put in any proposals to adjust those. You will
7 review those closures in full at your fall meeting and
8 you'd be able to vote on them at that time. We don't
9 need any motions or anything at this point. If you don't
10 want to take any action. Okay. Not seeing any. And then
11 Charlie did say next we would break for lunch. You do
12 have a time-certain at 2:00, so I'm not sure how long
13 do folks want for lunch. Hour, hour and a half?

14

15 (Talking)

16

17 1:30? Okay. 1:30 sharp. That way, maybe
18 we can talk about one item before we jump into Fortymile
19 Caribou at 2:00. Sound okay to everybody? Okay. Oh,
20 Dorothy has something. On their mic, please.

21

22 MS. SHOCKLEY: As far as for the whole
23 agenda, I mean, should we speed things up? Or -- I mean,
24 we seem to be pretty relaxed. Is that -- because, I
25 mean, this winter we met till, like 9:00. So just want
26 to be -- recognize that our time is important. Just.
27 We're good?

28

29 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Just following up on
30 our last discussion, I'd really like to stay appraised
31 of what the Western Interior does in regards to the
32 three closures that they're discussing. Just maybe kind
33 of a brief update to us if they take any actions or if
34 they make any recommendations moving forward. That'd be
35 helpful for us. Just a request from OSM on that. Is that
36 clear?

37

38 MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, through the
39 Chair. Yeah, that is clear. So, you'll both be making
40 recommendations during your fall meeting. I guess it
41 just matters if you meet before them or they meet before
42 you. If they meet before you, we'll definitely provide
43 you with that information. If they don't, they will not
44 have acted on those before you meet, so.

45

46 MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

47

48 MS. MCDAVID: And just to follow up, this
49 is Brooke. That was Cory for the record, and Andy asking
50 questions. Just, friendly reminder, please try to

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1 remember to say your name. I know we all forget from
2 time to time. But for the fall meeting Western Interior
3 and Eastern Interior are unfortunately overlapping. You
4 guys could -- we could arrange your agenda. So maybe
5 that's towards the end of your agenda, voting on this
6 closure review so we could get word from what WIRAC did.

7
8 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This is Member
9 Bassich. I'm not concerned with maybe making changes. I
10 think our decision to defer to the region is the proper
11 one, but it may have implications farther down the line
12 on other fisheries closures. And so, I think it's really
13 important just to understand the mindset from our
14 partners in this process, and also for the entire process
15 in reviewing fisheries proposals. And so that's why I'm
16 bringing this up. It's not for us to really take action
17 on so much, but more to be informed so that we are
18 prepared in understanding strategies in trying to
19 improve our fisheries as we move forward. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you so much
22 for that, Member Bassich. It's really important that we
23 stay up -- to keep talking. And I really enjoyed our
24 meeting together with them this past meeting, and it was
25 worked out so well when it came to the fisheries part
26 of it. And since we're all in line on the Yukon, it's
27 very important. I'd like to see more of that. Thank you
28 for bringing that up.

29
30 MS. BURK: Thanks. What about the Yukon
31 Delta? Yeah. What about the YK Delta RAC? Aren't they
32 meeting right now? And I wonder how would we respond to
33 any proposals? We'll just cover them in our fall meeting
34 if they put them in?

35
36 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you for the question,
37 Eva. This is Brooke. Yes, YK Delta meets the week after
38 next and if they put in any proposals you guys will see
39 those at your fall meeting. Yeah. But you all always
40 have the option if you want to request, you know, to
41 meet with Western Interior again or meet all three Yukon
42 RACs. It's just we have to plan kind of far in advance
43 for those things logistically and sometimes given budget
44 cuts that's not necessarily an option. But the request
45 could always be made, or a teleconference or virtual
46 meeting would be an alternative too if there wouldn't
47 be a way to get everyone together in the future.

48
49 MS. BURK: This is Eva. Andy, when -- I
50 should know this, but when do you think that that group

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1 who's working on this draft rebuilding, what's their
2 plan for presenting it to the public? Could they present
3 that to, like, all three RACs so we could weigh in on
4 it or something like that?

5
6 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich,
7 Chair. I did bring that to the attention of our
8 Coordinator and put them in touch with Trinity. And I'm
9 bringing that up at our working groups on the monthly
10 meetings. So, I think after the Yukon River Panel meeting
11 in April, we might have a little bit more definitive
12 action plans for outreach and communication, which I'm
13 bringing and highlighting very strongly that that goes
14 to the Yukon River RACs as well as the ACs as much as
15 possible. Very strongly identifying the need for keeping
16 people engaged and up to speed on the rebuilding plan,
17 which will not be a speedy rebuilding plan. It will take
18 some time, but it's keeping people engaged and informed
19 and hopefully hopeful. So, I guess the short answer is
20 stay tuned. But yes, hopefully this fall we'll be able
21 to have some presentations from the Yukon River Panel
22 to the RACs. I can't promise it, but we're working hard
23 to make that happen. Thank you.

24
25 MS. BURK: Thanks. This is Eva. I
26 appreciate that because I think one thing that I really
27 see when you have different RACs and regions meet is a
28 -- there's a lot more cross pollination for good ideas
29 to come up and a lot more diversity in the thinking. So,
30 I would really hope that -- I've seen us do an all AC,
31 all Fish and Game Advisory Committee meeting before when
32 the moratorium came out. So, I think we could arrange
33 that. And then on this side, we should think about it
34 all the three Yukon River RACs coming together,
35 especially for something so critical and important and
36 really needing the people. Fourth RAC? Oh, I was thinking
37 about all the ACs together. And then there's three Yukon
38 River RACs. Okay.

39
40 MR. BASSICH: Just a follow up. Member
41 Bassich here. The Yukon River Panel has representation
42 from the full Yukon River. And many of us wear many
43 hats, as we all know. And so, there is representation
44 at the working group level from the Lower River on that
45 working group. And there is representation, obviously
46 on the Yukon River Panel from the full Yukon River Panel
47 -- I'm sorry, from the full Yukon River wide perspectives
48 when we're in both bilateral and delegation section
49 meetings. So that information will go out there. But I
50 think what I'm trying to identify is there is a greater

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1 need to the broader public for more communications and
2 outreach. And that's where the effort's going to go to.
3 But just reassuring you that there are voices at the
4 table that are making decisions for the Yukon River panel
5 that are represented throughout the Yukon River
6 drainage, both in Canada and Alaska.

7
8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, with our agenda
9 being short this afternoon, and not really short, we're
10 going to call lunch now and we want to be back here
11 before 2:00. So, I guess like 1:45-ish, we should all
12 be in the room and get ready for 2:00. Yeah, shoot for
13 1:30 if you would, and we'll see what happens. So, it's
14 12:05, so yeah, 1:30 will be plenty of time. Can even
15 go across town.

16
17 (Off record)

18
19 (On record)

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, everybody. I
22 hear we have all the right -- all of our ducks in a row.
23 So, we're going to start with the Fortymile Caribou
24 Harvest Management Plan. Thank you. You have the floor.

25
26 MS. YEMMA: Good afternoon. My name is
27 Angela Yemma. Again, I'm the acting field manager for
28 the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office and here to talk
29 to everyone about the Fortymile Harvest Management Plan.
30 And I believe we also have Jeff Gross online from the
31 state. So, as you guys might recall, at our last meeting
32 in the fall, we talked about the harvest management plan
33 and forming a federal working group to work on
34 suggestions for the recommendations to federal managers
35 to present to you. And then, depending how it goes, for
36 then the EIRAC representative to take to the back to the
37 Harvest Management Coalition for incorporation into the
38 Harvest Management Plan. So, with that there's 4
39 documents we passed out. One is the draft federal
40 suggestions. It's just a 1-pager. A map just for
41 reference that OSM made, that I think is great, just a
42 few land stats. And then passed out again, our handout
43 from the fall meeting, where we talked about what
44 happened in the fall of 2025 RC860 hunt. So just for
45 reference we weren't going to go through this, but I
46 have it here on hand in case we need to talk about that
47 some more. So, with that, as I said, we formed a working
48 a fed group that consisted of BLM, Park Service, Fish
49 and Wildlife Service, OSM. And then we also coordinated
50 with ADF&G with Jeff and then also with Andy, in Don's

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1 absence. So, with that, I don't know if anyone has any
2 questions, but we could get started going through the
3 draft federal suggestions. So, Andy, did you want to say
4 anything before I start rolling through them?

5
6 MR. BASSICH: No. For the record, Andy.
7 Other than I thought it was really productive, time
8 spent. I think there's a lot of great focus on trying
9 to improve the management -- harvest management plan in
10 an equitable way for everyone. And also, I think there's
11 a lot of great ideas. Hopefully we'll be able to talk
12 about today to maybe help make the plan work for everyone
13 as best as we possibly can, given that the herd's in
14 decline right now. Thank you.

15
16 MS. YEMMA: Great, thank you. And then,
17 Jeff, just wanted to see if you had anything to say
18 before I get going. I just totally put you on the spot
19 but if you just had any other Fortymile info for the
20 group.

21
22 MR. GROSS: I think I'll go ahead and --
23 Hi, this is Jeff Gross, for the record, Alaska Department
24 of Fish and Game, Tok area Wildlife Biologist. Yeah, I
25 think I'll just -- I'll let you go there and I'm happy
26 to answer any questions or if folks would like to request
27 any information, I'm happy to help.

28
29 MS. YEMMA: Great. All right, this is
30 Angela again. So, looking at the draft federal
31 suggestions just keeping in mind, we kind of tried to
32 keep this consistent with the nature of the plan, kind
33 of higher level. And then really keeping in mind, as
34 Andy just said, that we're in a rebuilding phase and
35 this plan is for now through about 2030. So, that's kind
36 of just the context that we're looking at here. So, with
37 that, we worked on just adding just this background here,
38 this Alaska Harvest Management, just kind of a short
39 synopsis on just that it is the -- setting the hunt is
40 delegated to the Eastern Interior Field Manager. So,
41 that's me at the moment, acting for subunits 20A, 20F
42 east of the Dalton, and south of the Yukon and 25C. And
43 then referring -- folks reading the plan to go on to the
44 federal subsistence website to look for regs and any
45 other information. So that's that piece that would go
46 in the plan if adopted, kind of in the middle of it. So,
47 I have a copy of the reference, copy of the plan, but -
48 - well, separate section in the recommendations to
49 federal managers. With that, there's lots of other info
50 we have on the hunt, which we've talked a lot about

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1 doing that through other outreach. So other background
2 information so on and so forth that we can talk about
3 as we move along. So, before I get to the next part,
4 does anyone have any thoughts or questions?

5

6 MS. SHOCKLEY: I'm just curious, you know
7 with the -- oh, Dorothy Shockley. I'm curious, as the
8 state is turning over land to BLM, how, I mean, does
9 that affect any of this at all?

10

11 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela. Not so much
12 at the higher level, but certainly I think with outreach
13 and doing more of stats like, hey, these lands are open,
14 closed, where can you go, following up with a lot more
15 outreach on that separately. So, plans [sic] a little
16 higher level but keeping up with letting the public know
17 where they can and can't hunt, what's changed and so on
18 and so forth. So that's kind of -- this map was kind of
19 a start to that. But we can certainly do more and more
20 detailed maps of changes separately. Go ahead, Brooke.

21

22 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. Thanks, Angela. I --
23 correct me if I'm wrong, Dorothy, but I think Dorothy
24 was referring to the BLM lands that were selected by the
25 state that are being transferred to the state. And know
26 that has happened in the Dalton Highway corridor. But
27 if that is applicable in this area and/or will that be
28 coming in the future and what will that mean?

29

30 MS. YEMMA: Yeah. So, I think you're
31 talking about 2150, like you said, Dalton Highway, which
32 we'll talk about a little bit more on Thursday, I think,
33 with general updates. But in the Fortymile area we have
34 different lands being transferred. But right now, I
35 think we'll just have to see how things change and as
36 things get transferred. So, I don't think at the level
37 of the plan at this point, it's something that would be
38 -- something we need to incorporate. But I think just
39 referring folks that if land status is changed where you
40 can't and can't go, that we just keep up with that. If
41 I answered your question right.

42

43 Okay. Thank you. All right, going into
44 the suggestions for recommendations to federal managers,
45 there's about 7 bullets here. So, starting with the --
46 again as we move through it, a lot of the focus is on
47 when, you know, being on this rebuilding phase, when
48 numbers are lower. The 1st is just making sure federal
49 subsistence harvests are considered in the annual quota.
50 So, we already do that but just making sure going forward

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1 that we continue to do so. And then at the last EIRAC
2 meeting there was a motion made to actually allow us to
3 set up federal subsistence quota. And a lot of that came
4 from what happened in the fall hunt. So, if the if that's
5 approved by the Board, we should have that ability. And
6 then that will be the same for the zones when we get to
7 that in a second. But, just again, keeping in mind that
8 we have a joint permit, we're working together with the
9 state and making sure that we're thinking about, you
10 know, making sure that subsistence is in there, too. So,
11 does anyone have any questions or thoughts on that first
12 bullet?

13
14 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I don't know if
15 my question is specifically to this bullet, but I was
16 looking at Zone 2 and the number of state harvest at
17 121, and then there's no harvest -- no federal harvest
18 in that same area. And I thought -- I remembered a --
19 that some of this harvest in Zone 2 was from non-
20 residents. So, I guess I'm just -- and then I'm looking
21 at the state didn't open for 1 in 4 zones and there was
22 a 0 harvest. So, I'm wondering if non-residents were
23 given an opportunity to hunt and were successful in
24 hunting and in residents were not because I'm not totally
25 sure what I'm seeing from the number here. Thanks.

26
27 MS. YEMMA: Thanks, Eva. This is Angela.
28 So, you're referring to the handout from the fall, you
29 mean, right? Okay. Good deal. So that again, looking at
30 the fall handout, that 1st table, basically we opened -
31 - just as a recap. We opened the federal hunt early on
32 August 5th, and there were caribou on the Steese Highway.
33 We had a 2-bull limit, because that's kind of what we
34 had done in the past. And then we suddenly had a lot
35 more folks coming out. And so, as you look at it going
36 through there the state never opened Zones 1 and 4 for
37 the fall RCA60 hunt. They did open it for Zone 2, 3 and
38 they opened them on the 10th on Zone 2, and then August
39 20th on Zone 3. So, Zones 1 and 4 -- all the harvest in
40 1 and 4 back in the fall was federal subsistence, since
41 the state just never opened that one. Going to Zone 2,
42 what happens is, once the state hunt opened if there's
43 federal subsistence users out there and we've -- they
44 just kind of start to blend into the numbers if I'm
45 capturing that right. So, like, there's no more 2-bull
46 harvest. So, you might have users out there who are
47 federally qualified, but they're more hunting under the
48 state season. Does that make sense? Okay, good deal.
49 Just let me know if I answered your question or not.

50

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1 MS. BURK: I think I recall out of that
2 harvest in Zone 2, though, that a fair number were non-
3 resident and I can't -- I don't have my hand out handy
4 from December, so I can't reference back to that. But I
5 do recall there being a high number of non-resident.

6
7 MS. YEMMA: I'd have to ask -- I'd have
8 to defer to Jeff on that one. I don't have that in front
9 of me. Yeah, we had some -- I don't see the non-resident
10 here. We had a couple of people in the federal hunt that
11 looked like they were non-resident, which was a separate
12 issue that was -- but not I don't see a in my hunt as
13 far as what the state's non-residents proportion of that
14 was. So, sorry I can't answer that one. Sure.

15
16 MR. GROSS: Yemma, this is Jeff Gross. I
17 can address that if you'd like. Can you hear me okay?

18
19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, yes. Go ahead.
20 Thank you.

21
22 MR. GROSS: Okay. So, the -- in Zone 2,
23 you are correct, there was there was about 70% of that
24 harvest that occurred in Zone 2, occurred or was non-
25 resident harvest. Zone 2 is a remote area, primarily a
26 fly-in area with virtually no access to hunters I mean,
27 there's a little bit of boat access, but you'd have to
28 have a really, you know, specialized boat to get to
29 where the caribou are. But no other non-resident harvest
30 occurred in any of the road accessible zones this year.
31 So traditionally, where we see our subsistence hunters
32 hunting is along the highways and trail systems off the
33 highways. And -- so there really was no non-resident
34 harvest there. The other thing related to non-resident
35 harvest is in the harvest management plan draft, there
36 is wording in there with recommendations to limit non-
37 resident participation in this hunt related to the level
38 of quota that's available. So, as quotas drop the
39 recommendations are to limit or limit or eliminate non-
40 resident participation. Those will also require a Board
41 of Game and Federal Subsistence Board proposal, which
42 will be drafted and put in on behalf of the Harvest
43 Management Coalition. So anyway, there is something
44 there to address that. Thanks.

45
46 MS. BURK: This is Eva. That was very
47 helpful, and I appreciate that. I'll take a look. Thank
48 you very much.

49
50 MR. GROSS: Thank you.

1

2

3 MS. YEMMA: All right. This is Angela
4 again. Going to I think -- so, we're kind of on that 2nd
5 bullet there, which is utilizing the Fortymile zones to
6 manage federal hunt openings and closures. This is
7 another item that we discussed at the fall meeting that
8 hopefully will get approved by the Board. So that we can
9 use that and have that because when the fall -- as you
10 recall with the fall 2025 hunt, when the numbers were
11 getting really, really high there and Zones 1 and 4, we
12 just couldn't close for the federal side, the zone like
13 the state would. So, trying to get that in place will
14 be helpful. And then this is basically just recommending
15 us to do that. So, to utilize the zones to open and
16 close. Kind of be creative there and try to distribute
17 the harvest better, especially considering the highway
18 areas where harvest can get a lot higher, a lot quicker.
19 And it would also it's kind of similar just, you know,
20 being on the same page with the state as far as zones,
21 I think it's just easier for the public to be able to
22 track that and see what's going on. So, anyone have any
23 questions or thoughts on that?

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MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair. Yeah. Thank you.
Member Bassich here. In regards to the bullet point,
utilizing Fortymile zones to manage the federal hunt
openings and closures. That's -- if we make this change,
this will make it to where both state and federal
managers can manage the hunt by the zones. And given
that the pressures in different zones are very varied
during the season, this gives a lot more latitude for
the federal managers to adjust for potential overharvest
when we're in a conservation mode. So that's going to
be a really good improvement to the in-season management
ability from the federal managers perspective.
Basically, it allows the federal managers to respond
more quickly to movements of hunters. One of the things
that's happening now in all across Alaska is that with
phones, social media and all of that the word gets out
when animals are being harvested in an area, word gets
out and we get quicker movement of larger abundance of
hunters into an area. So doing this -- by putting this
into the plan, this gives the federal managers
opportunities to curtail what might end up being a
negative impact to the herd in-season.

And then I just want to remind us the
last Eastern Interior RAC meeting, we motioned to
include the ability for the manager to manage by zones
in a delegation of authority to the eastern manager. So,

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1 just wanted to get that on the record for the Federal
2 Subsistence Board. This will be a really good
3 improvement to the Fortymile harvest plan.

4
5 MS. MCDAVID: And this is Brooke, for the
6 record. And just to follow up on what Andy just said.
7 As a reminder, at your last meeting that statewide
8 Wildlife Proposal came before you, that was about moving
9 the delegated authority letters from the letters into
10 the regulations, and we had a big discussion about that.
11 And then you all asked to modify the delegated authority
12 for Fortymile Caribou and Chisana Caribou. But we'll
13 just focus on the Fortymile for now. To let the manager
14 have the ability to set quotas and manage by zones, and
15 also to request consultation with TCC and AITRC in
16 addition to those that they already consult with. So
17 just as a reminder, that will be going to the Federal
18 Subsistence Board at the April meeting. So hopefully
19 we'll hear back on that. Thanks.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Sue, you
22 had a question.

23
24 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, I did. I had a
25 question of Jeff Gross. I will say that my husband was
26 responsible for getting back in 1990, that coalition
27 started. And, in the zones -- when the zones were
28 created, Jeff, wasn't the one with the Zone 2, is it
29 with the high harvest of non-residents? Weren't those
30 zones created to give other opportunity where
31 subsistence users might not be getting into those areas?

32
33 MR. GROSS: Member Entsminger through the
34 Chair. Yeah, that that's in part that's what I recall.
35 It was -- again, because this harvest management plan
36 is -- in this hunt is a joint state/federal hunt. And
37 most of the members on the Harvest Management Coalition
38 also qualify for federal subsistence, they've always
39 worked hard to try to accommodate, you know, all the
40 user groups. And that was one thing that they did discuss
41 when they were choosing the boundary of Zone 2 was that
42 that area was very remote. Likely not utilized by federal
43 subsistence hunters very often. And so, it was an area
44 that that was kind of identified to provide opportunity
45 maybe for non-resident harvest, as long as there was
46 enough quota. And again, in the harvest plan, the draft
47 harvest plan as the quota declines overall hard quota,
48 you'll see in there that that one of the recommendations
49 is to limit the harvest to for -- by non-residents to
50 only Zone 2. And then as it -- if it falls further then

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1 it would be to eliminate all non-resident harvest, so.
2 Zone 2 was kind of identified in the current draft plan
3 as an area that could potentially provide some non-
4 resident hunting opportunity if the quota -- harvest
5 quota was adequate to, you know, meet some subsistence
6 needs. So, I know that's a -- that's sort of a subjective
7 thing, but anyway, that was the intended discussion.
8 Thank you.

9

10 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Thank you, Jeff.
11 Just 1 more follow up. Yeah, this is Sue. I would just
12 like to remind the RAC members that in an effort to work
13 together and get along, we need to recognize areas like
14 this across the state. When we get into 25D, I'll speak
15 more on it. But this -- we need to be able to work
16 together because hunters, in the end, have similar goals
17 for the resources, number one. Thank you.

18

19 MS. YEMMA: All right. Thank you. This
20 is Angela again through the Chair. Okay. Going to the
21 next bullet, the 3rd one. You'll see an asterisk there
22 by the number 1000. And you'll also see an asterisk on
23 the next one by 800. Those are kind of placeholders.
24 Basically, those are -- it would be a number that is
25 kind of the trigger point for being in the rebuilding
26 phase. And those are going to get basically confirmed
27 with Jeff, Andy, everyone's going to work on that and
28 just make that consistent across that harvest management
29 plan. So right now, it says 1,800, but that might change
30 a little bit or it might not. So just letting you guys
31 know that as we move through these. So going back to it,
32 this is when the total quota is at a 1,000 or wherever
33 at the rebuilding phase that we're only going to do bull
34 harvest. You know, limiting cow harvest while the
35 population is recovering. So, does anyone have any
36 thoughts on that one?

37

38 (No response)

39

40 Okay. Going to the next one then. So,
41 sorry.

42

43 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Hold on.

44

45 MS. YEMMA: Holding on. All right.

46

47 MS. BURK: This is Eva. I'm -- I don't
48 know if I'm just not reading this right, but it doesn't
49 -- it says up to 3 caribou in the reg book. Does that
50 need to be updated?

1

2 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela again. I think
3 in the reg book, my understanding, I'd have to ask OSM,
4 is that is just it -- it could be up to 3, but that
5 we've been, you know, we've been doing 1 to 2, but that
6 -- it could be 3. But we don't usually do 3 if I'm
7 reading that right, it's kind of the -- it's the same
8 way the dates are. I think it says the dates anywhere
9 from what? August 1st to -- I don't have the reg book
10 in front of me to the end of September. But we can kind
11 of work within that, that framework. That's how I
12 understand it, at least.

13

14 MS. BURK: I like how the state -- this
15 is Eva again. I like how the state has like a Fortymile
16 hunt section and kind of says this can be closed quickly.
17 I think that would be important for people to, like,
18 actually just have it in their face. And then I'm trying
19 to think about -- I'm looking at reasonable opportunity
20 for subsistence, and then looking through some of the
21 history of the hunt was closed early because the quota
22 was reached. Is that something that's still happening?
23 Like, is -- how long is the hunt staying open for?

24

25 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela again through
26 the Chair. I think -- so the 2nd you're asking, how long
27 is the Fortymile hunt usually staying open for? Prior
28 to fall of 2025, I believe they were open most of the
29 time that's allowable in the regs. I think that the hunt
30 -- let me look at the handout from the fall. We have
31 here on the 2nd page of the fall handout. So, this one
32 is focusing -- again, the handout from the fall meeting
33 is really just focused on the last 5 years from 2020
34 when the population has been lower. But it's been
35 typically August 1st is when we've opened -- we opened
36 a little bit later on August 5th. But it had been open
37 really -- I don't think it had closed early during that
38 time. Until this fall, 2025 was when it was very
39 different than previous years. So that's the 1st time,
40 unless anyone knows it better that it's been closed
41 early. Just because it was so much harvest so quickly.
42 Hopefully that answered your question. Okay.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I think one of the
45 things we have to keep in mind is, this management plan
46 is not going to mirror exactly what the reg books are,
47 because the managers have a lot more tools in their
48 toolbox. And the design of the harvest management plan
49 is to be more flexible in-season to adjust for hunting
50 pressures and populations. The other thing we have to

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1 keep in mind is that there are 2 separate hunts. There's
2 the fall hunt, which is more utilized by the general
3 public and subsistence -- federally qualified
4 subsistence harvesters. And then there's the winter
5 hunts, which are designed a little bit more for --
6 allowing for remote communities to obtain their quotas
7 throughout the winter, which is oftentimes a better time
8 for them to hunt. A lot of that depends on caribou
9 movement, but the plan is designed specifically for
10 those 2 parts in mind. And the federally qualified aspect
11 of reaching quotas is probably more favorable the way
12 it's designed for the winter hunt. So, we would not
13 expect everyone, say, in Eagle or Central or some other
14 remote community to get their full quota in the fall
15 hunt, because many of them recognize that they have a
16 greater opportunity in the winter hunt, and oftentimes
17 there's less pressure and competition. And then
18 oftentimes for people that don't have electricity or
19 whatever, it's just a better time to get meat in the
20 wintertime. And a lot of that depends on the way the
21 herd moves. But I just want to remind the Council that
22 that's kind of the way the hunt -- and the design of the
23 caribou plan is set up for allowing some equity between
24 state and federal hunters taking their harvest limits.
25 Hope that helps.

26
27 MS. SHOCKLEY: Okay. Thank you. That
28 reminds me, when we were talking about this last fall
29 or whenever it was. We were talking about the quotas and
30 how some of these really big families can get several
31 of these permits. So, what can we do about that? But
32 then the other question is when -- on the recommendations
33 to federal managers, why? I mean, maybe I missed this
34 somewhere, but when you're talking about the total
35 quotas, why are there just numbers put in there? I mean,
36 at what point and who puts those numbers in there?

37
38 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela again through
39 the Chair. So, I think going back to the first comment
40 on just you know, kind of having more -- a larger
41 population harvest, you know, we had more interest in
42 the fall hunt, perhaps. I think how we permit, that's
43 not really part of this, but it's trying to distribute
44 the harvest out right. So, like, what happened in the
45 fall hunt is it opened up, we saw, as we showed in the
46 handout, a big increase in Delta harvesting. Right now,
47 we're not proposing to change anything for that
48 particular, like, you know, doing something like, you
49 know, a different type of permit for them or anything
50 like that. But this is more of like being able to close

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1 and open zones if you have a lot of people going up the
2 highway and trying to distribute out that harvest
3 better. Does that make sense?

4
5 Alright. But kind of recognizing that,
6 right, I think it's just that, you know, if you have a
7 larger population and the animals are easy to access,
8 that you're probably going to have a lot of harvest
9 there. So, kind of keeping it at that high level in the
10 plan, using the zones. And as we do it kind of, you
11 know, implementation level year by year, figuring out
12 how we're going to deal with that, where the caribou
13 are, what the trends are, and so on and so forth. So, I
14 don't think we can do everything in the plan. This is
15 kind of a higher-level framework, if that makes sense.
16 All right. And so, then your 2nd question was, can you
17 remind me again, what was the 2nd one?

18
19 MS. SHOCKLEY: Quota numbers.

20
21 MS. YEMMA: Okay. So, the quota number.
22 So, you're talking the 1,000 and the 800 numbers in
23 here. That is what we're going to get with Jeff and
24 everyone else to get those defined. Whether they stay
25 1000 or 800 or they change a different number that that's
26 consistent across the entire Fortymile plan.

27
28 MS. MCDAVID: And mister -- through the
29 Chair. And Dorothy, if this Council, you know, wants to
30 suggest different numbers for those thresholds, for Andy
31 to take or, you know if you, if you like these, I mean,
32 all of this is up for discussion. And so, Andy will be
33 taking these suggestions to the Fortymile Coalition for
34 further discussion.

35
36 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Andy Bassich. So,
37 Dorothy. Yeah, I think what you have to keep in mind is
38 that this is a draft plan. None of the numbers here are
39 set in stone right now. We've recognized that we need
40 to develop what we're calling a matrix, that will be
41 trigger points. So, it's certain animal levels -- at
42 certain harvest quotas we will allow -- we'll have
43 trigger points for when openings can hunt, what those
44 quotas will be. And then the managers will decide on
45 which zones to allow that opening to take place, so that
46 it can be done in a good way, in that we're not going
47 to hurt the herd. The overall goal of the plan is to
48 make sure that we keep a herd at a healthy level
49 hopefully to allow as many people to take place -- state
50 and federally qualified users in the hunt. That's the

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1 goal of the plan. As we all know, animals are going to
2 fluctuate as animals drop. We have to have trigger points
3 to start restricting how many animals we're going to
4 harvest. And then who would be able to harvest those
5 animals. That will be -- much of that discussion will
6 be discussed at the coalition level, but feedback from
7 the RAC is super important. That's what we're having
8 this discussion for, is so that that this RAC can weigh
9 in on what's important to the RAC so that that message
10 can be carried to the coalition to talk about making
11 sure that those concerns are addressed and identified
12 in the plan. If that makes sense. Hopefully that helps.
13

14 But there will -- be there is a lot of
15 work. There's nothing set in stone with numbers right
16 now or this draft. So, the bottom line is there's going
17 to be, I think what would help me going -- moving forward
18 in the coalition is to just get some general high-level
19 feedback on the importance of subsistence numbers and
20 harvest and opportunity. Those are the 2 things that are
21 going to be really important to be able to bring to the
22 coalition so that we can then set numbers to try and
23 match that. And also, gives [sic] the managers a better
24 idea of when they need to make decisions on which zones
25 to open and who's going to be harvesting those animals.
26 That would help guide them in making good decisions too.
27 Does that help?
28

29 MS. SHOCKLEY: Yes. Through the Chair,
30 yes, thank you. That's helpful. I -- you know, when we
31 talk about rebuilding the herd and you know, the decline
32 at a certain percentage over the years. The 1000 and the
33 800 just seems like a lot to me and I don't know if we
34 wanted to recommend a smaller amount. But yeah, just
35 wanted to put that on the record. That's -- to me they're
36 high when we're talking about rebuilding and the decline
37 in the herds. So, thank you.
38

39 MS. YEMMA: All right, this is. Oh, Eva.
40 Did you...?
41

42 MS. BURK: Yeah. This is Eva. I may have
43 to go soon. I'll be on the phone, but I'll be unavailable
44 for a little bit. So, I wanted to add some comments. I
45 think that there should be -- I agree with the
46 recommendation for matching bag limits. I feel like
47 there should be 1-bull bag limit for caribou. That may
48 be why they reached the number so high and had to shut
49 the hunt early, was being able to harvest that. I was
50 able to get the Fish and Game 2025 season summary, and

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1 non-resident hunters, even though they primarily hunted
2 in Zone 2, they still harvested 85 caribou of the 213
3 that were harvested overall. So, they're very
4 successful. And then you see less success in the other
5 zones. And I know that caribou move around. And I know
6 that some areas are more inaccessible. But if you're
7 rebuilding and just thinking about some of the
8 subsistence issues that folks are going through and the
9 availability of other subsistence resources not being
10 there for a lot of different species, I get really
11 concerned when I see that many caribou taken by non-
12 resident hunters. So, when I go into the 2025
13 recommendations on page 12 of the harvest plan, I would
14 want to see more restrictions on the non-resident
15 hunters.

16
17 And then back to Dorothy's point about
18 the quota. I think it's like 2-3% of the overall herd
19 size is where the quotas comes from, and you're probably
20 adding a buffer. So, I would be if -- so, when the quota
21 -- right now as it reads, when the quota is 400 to 1000,
22 allow non-resident in Zone 2 only. Well, that's kind of
23 where they are. But I would maybe bump that bottom quota
24 number higher. Maybe it's 800 to 1000, I don't know. I
25 would want to be a little more restrictive there. Also,
26 I guess I don't have enough information here to
27 understand contextually what's the long-term use of
28 caribou in these areas by these communities. Are they
29 meeting their subsistence needs for caribou, especially
30 knowing that some of these communities might not be
31 meeting subsistence needs for salmon or other species?
32 So those are some of the questions and comments I have
33 for right now.

34
35 And then, just historically, some kind
36 of general comments. I was looking at the history figure
37 2, Fortymile caribou herd population estimates from 1920
38 to 1924, and I had to bring this up to Andy that it's
39 really interesting that this kind of population graph
40 mimics the -- these like cycles that we see with salmon,
41 where you'll get an increase and then it's followed by
42 a decline. But sometimes what you see in that in kind
43 of in the increase right before the decline, what we saw
44 in salmon is that the health was poor. So even though
45 the numbers had jumped up, and then that's kind of what
46 it reads in this document is similar -- you guys were
47 having -- the caribou were having a nutrition issue as
48 well. And so, I guess if we're thinking about looking
49 forward into manage and making smarter, you know,
50 harvest rules when a -- and then kind of having this

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1 data to look at what are our long-term trends [sic], I
2 guess what I know happened was there were -- people were
3 like, oh, there's too many caribou we need to go get
4 people out there and take this number down. And I think
5 that was a bad move. Like, in retrospect, I think it's
6 more important to leave more of the biomass in the stock.
7 Don't think of it as an unharvested opportunity or a
8 opportunity left on the table over escapement, whatever.
9 Don't think of it like that. Think of it as, hey, the
10 ecosystem is in shock right now, and a few more animals
11 on the landscape isn't going to hurt anybody. And animals
12 have a way of having natural cycles of decline in
13 abundance, and they have a way of kind of weeding out
14 the unhealthy ones, survival of the fittest and changing
15 times, those kind of climate survivors is -- that's why
16 we're protecting every salmon right now. We need those
17 genetics, the climate survivors. So anyways, those are
18 just some of my general comments on the caribou harvest
19 management plan. Thank you.

20
21 MS. YEMMA: Alright. This is Angela
22 through the Chair. Thank you, Eva. Alright. Back -- going
23 back to the federal recommendations -- suggestions. So,
24 we are on that 4th bullet on, again, the number with the
25 asterisk might be adjusted via a matrix with the --
26 consistent with the rest of the plan. But the 1st sub-
27 bullet is limiting the number of days that the federal
28 hunt may precede a state hunt. So just being you know,
29 thinking about when we open hunt early, kind of what the
30 impacts are, trying to allow for or allowing for a
31 federal priority, but also being -- you're thinking,
32 again about distribution and where the animals are,
33 migration patterns, roads and so on and so forth. So,
34 an example could be something like open the hunt -- open
35 the federal hunt 5 days before the state hunt. That
36 could just be an example of how you could do that. Does
37 anyone have any thoughts on that one?

38
39 (No response)

40
41 All right. And then the second sub-
42 bullet again is mirroring the state bag limit during the
43 fall RCA60 hunt. So that would be if the state bag limits
44 1, then we would do a -- the recommendation be for the
45 federal managers to also do a 1-bull bag limit. Any
46 thoughts on that one?

47
48 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question, I guess. So, the
49 state and feds are kind of going back and piggybacking
50 on recommendations sounds like. Which, you know, is

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1 something that they usually do. But I, you know, again,
2 I just want to make sure that we're -- we are or they
3 are operating on the goal of increasing the herd. And,
4 you know, I agree with Eva and everybody that, you know,
5 when, you know, they see abundance, it's like, oh, let's
6 hunt more, let's fish more. And so, you know, that's
7 just not a good way to do things. I mean, it's just not
8 our way. And so, we only take what we need regardless
9 of how big, you know, the run or the herd might be. And
10 I think, you know yeah, just I mean, you know, just like
11 with everything else. I mean, we really need to be
12 conserving at the highest level. So, thank you.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: It's Charlie, for
15 the record. I, I like to say that opening early is one
16 of the only ways to have a real priority, a successful
17 one. I just want to add that comment as we go forward
18 through this bullet. Thank you.

19
20
21 MR. BASSICH: You know -- this is a
22 Member Bassich. I think, you know, I've been thinking a
23 lot about caribou movements in our region for many
24 decades. I've been watching them since the 80s. And one
25 of the things that I keep bringing to the table, I'm not
26 -- I don't really have any hard data to show it, but my
27 gut feeling and my observations show that, potentially
28 one of the reasons why we're having some problems with
29 the caribou herd is it's not moving into the ranges it
30 used to move into. They used to move over into Canada
31 more. They seem to just stay between the Taylor Highway
32 and the Steese Highway with a little bit of movement
33 north into what's called Zone 1. But they're not moving
34 in large numbers across the Taylor Highway into Canada
35 like they used to. There is a fair amount of good
36 habitat, feeding habitat there that hasn't been hit hard
37 by fires. The areas where they're calving that were hit
38 really hard by fires back in 2004 and 2005, burning the
39 tundra. And one of the concerns that a number of us have
40 had for a while is that when we have these hot burns and
41 the thunder gets burnt. We've had presentations to this
42 RAC in the past from fire ecologists that state that it
43 takes 30 to 50 years for that tundra, that lichen, to
44 rebuild into a viable food source. So, a big concern
45 that I have is I think we are, by action of opening up
46 very early in the season when caribou are sending their
47 leaders out to blaze the trail of where they're going
48 to be traveling. I think we are inadvertently
49 restricting some of their movements by having hunting
50 pressure early on to the caribou. Stopping them from

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1 maybe migrating past the Taylor Highway into Canada more
2 and extending their range a little bit.

3
4 The other thing that I've observed over
5 years is that in smaller bands, when the caribou are not
6 in super high masses and numbers. You know when you see
7 these. Photo census of 20,000 caribou or 30,000 caribou
8 moving through, herd animals have a lot of confidence
9 when there are big numbers. Herd animals don't have a
10 lot of confidence when they're in small numbers and
11 smaller groups. When those early caribou come through,
12 they are much more, in my opinion, in my observations,
13 easy to turn or move or influence what they were
14 intending to do. And so, I am a little bit concerned
15 about these early openings. I think one of the things
16 that people don't realize is that the vast majority of
17 the people are pretty much federally qualified. When we
18 say we're going to not allow federally qualified people
19 to hunt, we're basically impacting the people in the
20 Anchorage region and the people here in Fairbanks, but
21 the rest of the state has a pretty big opportunity there,
22 a lot of population. And so, the impacts -- when we say
23 we're going to close something to non-federally
24 qualified people, I think the impacts are actually much
25 greater in action than we think they're going to be, if
26 that makes sense to people.

27
28 So, there are a lot of people out that
29 are after the -- harvesting these animals that don't
30 live in Fairbanks or don't live in Anchorage. There's a
31 very large group of people that will come up from
32 Southeast Alaska even to hunt, that are federally
33 qualified people. So, I think we have to be a little bit
34 cautious moving forward. I'm going to propose -- I want
35 to share this with you, and I'd like to get some
36 feedback. I'd like to propose to the coalition that we
37 start looking at modifying the harvest plan to clearly
38 designate when we are in -- what a herd population is,
39 when we are in a healthy zone where there's a lot of
40 caribou, it can take more harvest. And then to clearly
41 identify when the herd is in a rebuilding zone or phase,
42 so that we can be more restrictive in our actions to try
43 and bring that herd back up into the range. It's not
44 going to be a set number. It'll obviously be a range.

45
46 And I think if we did that, it's going
47 to do 2 things. One, we can put in more measures for
48 conservation that will be acceptable to all people,
49 because we'll be recognizing and hopefully doing
50 outreach to make people understand that we're in a

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1 rebuilding mode. When people hear rebuilding mode,
2 they're going to be a little bit more receptive to
3 restrictions and lesser bag limits. The types of tools
4 that managers might have in their toolbox. So, I'd like
5 to hear a little bit from you if you think that that's
6 something that we should try and incorporate into the
7 plan, because right now it doesn't really clearly
8 delineate that. And I think that's what's missing. And
9 I think that's what may have contributed to what we
10 ended up doing to the herd. If you remember, I don't
11 remember how many years ago we were up around 80,000
12 animals and the herd was growing and everybody was like,
13 we want 100,000 animals, right. And then we went into
14 this big decline, and we started taking a lot more
15 animals.

16
17 So anyway, I would like to propose that
18 because I think that's something we need to work on. I
19 don't know what the numbers are. I don't know what the
20 management actions are, but I think that that's a
21 fundamental part of the plan that we should start
22 identifying and working on as a coalition to have more
23 abilities for managers to help us to get the herd to a
24 level to where there's actually more harvest --
25 harvestable surplus for everyone in the state. That's
26 kind of the goal in my mind, personally, anyway. And
27 that takes some pretty strong measures from time to time.
28 And the public has to buy into that. So, I just -- I'll
29 leave it at that right now. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
32 Brooke. I just wanted to clarify one thing that you
33 said, Andy, about if it was closed to non-federally
34 qualified users. You said, like, folks from all over
35 rural Alaska could come up like Southeast. That is not
36 correct. It would only be folks who have a C&T for
37 Fortymile Caribou. So just wanted to clarify that for
38 the record. And then Sue has her hand up, Charlie.

39
40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Sue.

41
42 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, thank you. I was
43 thinking that very thing when I heard it, so thank you
44 for clarifying that, Brooke. I just want to agree with
45 you, Charlie. I would much rather see a longer season
46 for subsistence. And keep in mind, it's only on the
47 federal land. Then I would see closing things down to
48 non-qualified federal subsistence users. And looking at
49 that restricting on the non-residents, aside from maybe
50 changing a number on the 2ns one from 400 to 1000, maybe

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1 that works out just fine. But I agree with those ways
2 of dealing with non-residents. So, that would be my
3 input. Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Sue.

6

7 MS. SHOCKLEY: Excuse me. In regards to
8 Andy's possible proposal or recommendation, is that
9 what? Yeah. I mean, that makes sense to me. I mean, we
10 have to have a baseline right of some sort to go by, and
11 you know, looking at, you know, the herd dropping, you
12 know, by 50,000 in 7 years. I mean, I don't know -- I
13 don't know that much about caribou either. And how they,
14 you know, what their cycles look like. But again, you
15 know, I think -- I mean, you have to have some kind of
16 baseline. And so, I agree that I think that's a good
17 idea to have, you know, certain -- a range of numbers
18 to go by when -- and I and I think in any kind of plan
19 of, you know, I mean, it just is common, I think to have
20 those. And so, I would agree with that. Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. This is Member
25 Bassich. I have a question for you, Sue. In regards to
26 the longer seasons, I think -- I understand that, and
27 I'm not opposed to that. I think where my concern is and
28 what I'd like to get some feedback from you is
29 traditionally the hunt was opened up around August 10th.
30 And so, opening up the federally qualified 5 days
31 earlier, say, August, anywhere from August 1st to August
32 5th for the opening is pretty darn early in the season.
33 And so, I -- the 2 things that I'm concerned about is
34 what I spoke about as far as those lead animals coming
35 through, depending on their timing. And the 2nd is what
36 we're noticing with climate change is that it's staying
37 warmer into to August than it ever has before. And I
38 also worry about just the quality of people taking care
39 of the meat and so on and so forth. So maybe if you
40 could just kind of elaborate a little bit on those 2
41 topics. So, I have some kind of feedback from your
42 perspective on that, which I respect highly. Thank you.
43 You and Frank both.

44

45 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, this is Sue. Thank
46 you. I think I got your questions in my brain, what
47 you're asking. I understand. All I'm saying earlier was
48 I would rather see longer seasons, if it's on the front
49 end or the back end. You know, people like us, we like
50 the back end. There's usually more movement with

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1 caribou. So, it's just a matter of giving a little
2 preference for the rural user that in the past has been
3 extremely helpful in a lot of these seasons and bag
4 limits. And it gives opportunity for other hunters. And
5 with that state land and federal land not being the
6 same, it's a man, you better have your land survey or
7 know all your maps to know where your season is, but it
8 just seems like people have gotten used to that pretty
9 much. And I would say that yeah, a longer season on the
10 end or wherever it works for the users I would be in
11 favor of. And you said 2 topics. I don't remember the
12 other one, Andy.

13

14 MR. BASSICH: This is Andy. You answered
15 my questions. Thank you.

16

17 MS. ENTSMINGER: All right. Thank you.

18

19

20 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie for
21 the record. I have a question probably for Andy. I mean,
22 I'm not a caribou expert, so I really lean on the people
23 who are. And I heard earlier said that the caribou have
24 been kind of like sitting in between roads up there on
25 the mountains sometimes and kind of not moving. And so,
26 I've been seeing a pattern, and I don't know about
27 anybody else if the managers are paying attention or if
28 they have those animals collared, but they've been going
29 -- they've been staying put while other ones lead off
30 to look for food. And I've been seeing them in places
31 where they weren't -- haven't been for a 100 years and
32 they're Fortymile Herd. So, I think there's a reason
33 that they're sitting still between there and they're
34 looking for food and they're sending small bands out.
35 And I've seen them and run into them more than once in
36 the last few years in their old migration route. And I
37 won't say where, but they're in their old migration
38 route, and I think they're looking for a new way to go.
39 And people are in their way. So, I think that's the
40 reason for the halt. But I just want to put that out
41 there and see if anybody can answer that and say that
42 that might be what's going on. Thank you.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. I guess maybe for the
45 record, I'll just kind of reiterate that's been my
46 observation too. And I equate it to small animals are
47 much more subject to being influenced. Small groups of
48 animals are being subject to non-movement as opposed to
49 large bands. And so, I think the secret long term is to
50 try and hopefully let -- hopefully encourage these

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1 caribou, if that's the right word, allow them maybe to
2 get out and start expanding a little bit more. I think
3 the herd, when it was expanding into all the ranges, its
4 historical ranges, where it was always healthier and
5 larger. And I, you know, there may be some really subtle
6 things. I'm sure Jeff and the Biometricians can, can
7 talk to us a lot about their -- what they've learned.
8 But I guess what I'm trying to share is what I would, I
9 guess, consider local knowledge from my region. And
10 that's what I'm hearing from you as well as local
11 knowledge. And so how do we integrate that into this
12 plan is what the challenge is.

13
14 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you for that,
15 Andy. And I look forward to talking with them this
16 afternoon or tomorrow whenever that happens. Thank you.
17 Anybody -- any other questions, anymore, you got more
18 to present? Let's go.

19
20 MS. YEMMA: Alright. This is Angela again
21 through the Chair. Just real quick, back on the
22 communities and folks that can hunt this particular
23 hunt. On this map, there's an in-set, that has the
24 communities, so that's -- which is -- I think it's really
25 cool to see that. So, it's the C&T from the regs and
26 then just you know, digitize there on the map. So just
27 something to use for outreach and so on and so forth as
28 we move forward. But getting back to the
29 recommendations. So, we're almost done. The next one is
30 increasing federal subsistence education outreach
31 efforts. So, I think there's a need for that. I know I'm
32 certainly very interested that from BLM standpoint. And
33 Andy and I have talked a bit about that. So, continuing
34 to do that, just as things change and routing
35 information. Anybody have any feedback on this
36 particular item?

37
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie, for
39 the record. I also agree that it's very important with
40 all the new people coming into the area, especially
41 military and the youth, through that and our own youth,
42 that there really needs to be education. Because even
43 rifle use, people using the wrong caliber, caribou can
44 take a hit from a 300 Magnum and run half a mile before
45 they fall over. They got really good adrenaline. So,
46 when people go out with a 0.223 and with 30 rounds and
47 keep shooting into the herd, there's animals with 3 legs
48 and dying over the hill, you know, running 2, 3 miles
49 with hit with a 0.22. So, I think education is really
50 important going forward. Very important. And I'd like

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1 to see the Eastern Interior RAC get more involved with
2 that. Like they were, like Andy said earlier, we start
3 and it goes away and it keeps coming and going. But I
4 think it's something that needs to be steady and a part
5 of the program. Thank you. That's my spiel.

6
7 MR. BASSICH: So, question for you,
8 Brooke. I think it would be incumbent upon the Eastern
9 RAC to seek at least a small amount of funding to help
10 get some outreach done through the Federal Subsistence
11 Board. It sounds like BLM has the desire and hopefully
12 some money. And I think really what needs to be done is
13 a coordination between the federal programs and the
14 state programs. And if there's any tribal money to start
15 maybe coming up with 1 or 2 meaningful, and I want to
16 stress meaningful, outreach initiatives to the general
17 public prior to the hunt. And a lot of that can be just,
18 if nothing else, based upon educating the public as to
19 the health of the herd and the need for rebuilding,
20 because that is a foundation for people accepting some
21 of the actions that may need to be taken to rebuild the
22 herd. So, I don't know what that process is to ask
23 formally for that from the Eastern RAC, but I think no
24 agency is going to have the money to do it on its own.
25 But I think if agencies can kind of partner and begin a
26 dialogue together along with tribes. I don't see it as
27 a big-ticket item dollar wise to start making some
28 progress. And I know there's a lot of great ideas out
29 there. We've worked on this in the past, and it's kind
30 of fallen to the wayside, but I'd really like to see
31 some energy put into it. Even if it's in a small way
32 right now.

33
34 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
35 Shockley. Yes, I totally agree. And, you know, I shared
36 a 1-page flyer that a group from up north came up with.
37 And it was very simple, you know, just traditionally
38 what and how, they used to hunt. You know, to let leaders
39 go and each, you know, they were talking about hunting
40 by boat. And, you know, you let the first boat, you
41 know, shoot and then they draw back and let the next
42 one. So, it was just really simple, but it just was so
43 meaningful, you know, for people to understand this is
44 the way that, you know, we traditionally hunted. So, and
45 it was, you know, just 10 bullet points or something on
46 a flyer and, you know, very simple but very, very
47 effective and meaningful. So, thank you.

48
49 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Brooke.

50

1 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
2 is Brooke. I just wanted to respond to Andy. So, you
3 guys, as EIRAC included that exact thing request in your
4 annual report to the Board to ask for a small stipend.
5 We'll be going over that draft annual report later in
6 the meeting. So, we can talk about it a little bit more
7 then. In regards to the hunter ethics outreach and
8 education initiative that has pretty much stalled, I
9 mean, one reason is funding and also just at OSM, we are
10 very understaffed at the moment and overworked. And it
11 really is going to require a champion from the RAC, or
12 from an organization that can really help make sure that
13 continues to move forward. I am always happy to help
14 where I can and support and bring people together. But
15 you know, we had a meeting, we came up with some -- a
16 draft flyer like Dorothy mentioned, this whole idea
17 around 'hunt like an Alaskan', you know, 'hunt with
18 respect'. And what does that mean? Okay, respect the
19 resource, respect fellow users, etc. I think that's
20 what, you know, we were really hoping for is just a real
21 clear take home message. And so, all that is out there,
22 it's been, you know, talked about over the years. And
23 so anyway, yeah, that you guys have more ideas about who
24 might take off running with something like that. Given
25 sort of the state of staff levels and everything right
26 now you know, we're all ears and however we can support
27 and just not sure at this time, it's something that we
28 at OSM can be the leaders of. But so just wanted to
29 throw that out there. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I
32 want to say that if we can come up with something to put
33 out those 10 points, then we have platforms that are
34 already working toward getting messages out to people.
35 So, I think if we could just come up with that 1-pager,
36 I can help get it on to a couple platforms that go far
37 and wide. Thank you.

38
39 MS. MCDAVID: So, this is Brooke again.
40 So maybe what could happen is that we get that working
41 group back together, just kind of revisit what was --
42 what, what folks came up with. And then see if it could
43 be at least, in enough of a draft state that we're ready
44 for someone to take the reins and polish it and make it
45 look nice and maybe start doing more of the distribution
46 and publication side of things. As long as we had or the
47 working group had the content that you kind of -- the
48 message that you wanted to see. I think that would --
49 could be a path forward and that's just a suggestion.
50

1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: That all sounds very
2 well. This is Charlie. And I think it could be a working
3 document, and we can build on it. Something that's not
4 set in stone. We just get something started and then
5 just keep adding. I think [sic] would be a really good
6 way to go forward with everybody's okay, of course,
7 that's involved. Thank you.

8
9 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, thank you. I really
10 believe strongly in public outreach and communication.
11 I think that's really the tool that's going to solve a
12 lot of our problems. So, I'd be willing to work with
13 you, Angela, on maybe drafting a few basic ideas and
14 then trying to pull kind of that working group back
15 together. And, we have a very short time frame to do
16 that. Months go by and days, amount of time, it seems
17 like. So maybe that's something we can try and jump on
18 here pretty quick this spring and then I guess, focus
19 on 1 or 2 small, easy to achieve starting points and
20 what it might take to fund those. And then get that out
21 to the different entities. All right. Thank you, I
22 appreciate that.

23
24 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela through the
25 Chair. That sounds great, Andy. Yep, we can get together.
26 And if you would like, BLM can help facilitate that.
27 Claire's here. So, she's nodding her head yes, too. So,
28 get some things in place, and then we can always --
29 we're about to go through again, planning for fiscal
30 year '27. So, if there's something we want to look at
31 trying to obtain funding for the BLM can contribute to
32 looking into next year. Also, this is kind of the time
33 to get something in place for this year and think about
34 going ahead. Like, what would we want to do and what
35 would we do for funding requests. So, I'm totally
36 supportive of that so we can get together on if we want
37 to just get a working group or another meeting rolling
38 and seeing kind of what your flyer looks like, what we
39 can do, working with our public affairs and so on and
40 so forth.

41
42 MR. BASSICH: A quick question for
43 Coordinator. Could you maybe quickly identify our
44 working group? Yeah, and if you can't do that right now,
45 then just get that to me. Just so we're not starting
46 from scratch and we know who to contact.

47
48 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke again. I
49 think some of the folks to -- might no longer be with
50 us on the RAC. So, I know Andy, you were involved in

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1 that working group, and Sue was. And I think other folks
2 have popped in and out throughout the years.

3
4 MR. BASSICH: Okay, I guess -- this is
5 Member Bassich. I guess what I'm then seeking is, do we
6 officially need to have people from the RAC on that or
7 -- I see this as building kind of a regional coalition
8 of people to work on it. So, you know, someone from TCC
9 and tribes hopefully an ADF&G specialist and outreach,
10 BLM, Park Service and then maybe a few members if there's
11 anybody else on the RAC, or even former RAC members who
12 are willing to participate for input. So, I don't know
13 if Sue, if you're still interested in performing outside
14 of the RAC or whatever, but your representation and your
15 insights and your thoughts are always highly valued by
16 me. So, I don't know if you are interested in
17 participating. I don't think this is something that's
18 going to take a great deal of time, but I think just
19 doing some brainstorming would be really useful to have
20 some input from a few of the different regions within
21 the Eastern RAC area.

22
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. This is Sue. Yeah,
24 I would.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, I'm the Chair
27 of many different Boards and commissions, and I know 3
28 of them that have really good outreach programs. YRDFA,
29 the Fish Commission, TCC. So, I think there's plenty of
30 platforms that they can go out on for us in the social
31 media that they have running, also. I think it'll be
32 really good and easy to distribute. Thank you.

33
34 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela through the
35 Chair. All right. We are getting close to the end here.
36 The last bullet is increased efforts to verify federally
37 qualified subsistence user qualifications. What that
38 comes from really is kind of in the fall hunt, there
39 were several hunters reported that based on how the
40 reporting to the state, it looks like they weren't
41 federally qualified. That's on page 2 of the handout.
42 So, just trying to get some ideas on trying to -- it's
43 kind of, it also ties a bit into education, I guess to
44 on whether it's some additional language when hunters
45 apply on the ADF&G website. Maybe folks carry proof of
46 rural residency when they're hunting to help law
47 enforcement. Just some ideas to try to verify that --
48 improve our verification of that. So that is what that
49 one comes from. If anyone has any comments or questions.
50

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1 MR. BASSICH: This Member Bassich. I
2 guess this is something that obviously, bring it before
3 the Fortymile Coalition and let them kind of talk about
4 the issue and come up with what may or may not work.
5 Hopefully what will work. I guess I'll just leave it at
6 that. Obviously, if there's input from the RAC here,
7 that would be helpful. But I think it's a discussion
8 that needs to take place at the coalition level.

9
10 MS. ENTSMINGER: Hey, this is Sue. I have
11 a comment.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go right ahead, Sue.

14
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thank you,
16 Charlie. You know, this is an interesting topic, where
17 somebody made the mistake of being on federal land and
18 not a qualifier. I'd like to mention that this I'm
19 hearing about more often. I -- hunters I know that grew
20 up in bush, actually, and moved to Fairbanks for work.
21 They told me, you know, there's no place in the state
22 regulations to indicate, since they're non-qualified
23 subsistence users, they're not carrying the federal
24 handy dandy. And if there's an area where it's closed
25 to non-federally qualified subsistence users, there's
26 no way for them to know that from state regulations. And
27 you know, I don't know if the managers really like
28 hearing this, but 25D west, for instance I'm not going
29 to say any who, but there's been people that went into
30 these areas where it is closed and didn't even know it
31 was closed. And it's all, I think because there's no way
32 of non-subsistence users to find it in state regs. So,
33 we -- that's a problem. I see that as a huge problem in
34 the future that we need to address. So, I just want to
35 put that on the record. Thank you.

36
37 MS. YEMMA: This is Angela through the
38 Chair. All right. Our very last one is just a slight --
39 just a little bit of a word change to -- this is outside
40 of the recommendations of federal managers towards the
41 end of the plan. Just noting that with predator control
42 it isn't always permitted on all the federal lands within
43 the range. And it's in the bold there. That's just that
44 draft suggestion. And that is the last one.

45
46 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, I'm Member
47 Bassich. I think looking at this, it's kind of more of
48 a housekeeping thing, just recognizing that there are
49 different mandates and by different agencies and the
50 areas that they regulate. One thing that I didn't mention

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1 that I think might be good would be to put in the Yukon
2 territory. It might be a little confusing if wording
3 went in that just said the Yukon. Because I think, quite
4 frankly, a lot of Alaskans don't realize that the
5 coalition also brings in the Canadian perspective on
6 Fortymile Caribou. So just a suggestion moving forward,
7 but I see this more as a kind of a housekeeping thing.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Anybody else have
10 anything to say?

11
12 (No response)

13
14 Looks like you're free. Like -- looks
15 like nobody else. Anybody online?

16
17 (No response)

18
19 Okay.

20
21 MS. YEMMA: Thank you. This is Angela
22 again. Just to make sure I have the right follow ups
23 then. This is great. I really appreciate everyone today.
24 I'll work with Andy and Jeff and see what -- just it
25 sounds like the main point is that matrix, getting that
26 in the plan and otherwise we'll just go forward and be
27 in touch and work on outreach. And is there anything
28 else I've missed?

29
30 MS. SHOCKLEY: Do you have your contact
31 information (indiscernible).

32
33 MS. YEMMA: My contact information. It's
34 not on here, but I can certainly send it. It's Angela
35 Yemma over here at the BLM, and my email is alyemma --
36 so, that's a-l-y-e-m-m-a@blm.gov.

37
38 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Well, thank you so
39 much for your presentation. We appreciate you. Thank
40 you.

41
42 MS. YEMMA: Great. Thank you so much.
43 Again, appreciate all of you, I appreciate all the
44 federal agencies, ADF&G, on working on this. So, thank
45 you again.

46
47 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
48 is Brooke, and before we leave or Jeff leaves us. Jeff,
49 do you have any updates about potentially when HMC might
50 be meeting and stuff like that the EIRAC might like to

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1 know? Thanks.

2

3 MR. GROSS: Hi, Brooke, thanks. This is
4 this is Jeff Gross. I don't have a meeting date yet.
5 We're going to need to try to meet before the end of
6 April in order to get Board of Game proposals kind of
7 reviewed and submitted. So, I'm anticipating it'll be
8 sometime in April and probably these next 10 days. Now
9 that the RAC has had a chance to discuss this and Andy,
10 hopefully will be equipped with what he needs to go to
11 the HMC with the RACS position. We should be able to
12 start working on getting it set up in the next week or
13 10 days.

14

15 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Jeff. Appreciate
16 it. Thank you for joining us today.

17

18 MR. GROSS: Thank you. Thanks to the RAC,
19 and thanks for all your hard work. Thanks.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Jeff. Is
22 there any more questions for Jeff today from anybody
23 around the table in the room?

24

25 (No response)

26

27 Okay, I'm hearing none. Thank you.
28 Appreciate your time.

29

30 MR. GROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31

32 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke again. And
33 then at your guys' fall meeting, Andy will be able to
34 bring back to you all, you know, what happens at the
35 Harvest Management Coalition and they'll probably be a
36 updated draft of the plan, or maybe a finalized version
37 at that time. So, you guys will be able to take a look
38 at that. And there might be the Board of Game proposals
39 to consider as well. So, thanks.

40

41 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I
42 want to reach out and say thank you, Sue, for taking
43 your time to be with us today. Appreciate you. We're
44 going on a 10-minute break. Thank you.

45

46 (Off record)

47

48 (On record)

49

50

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1 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, we're going to
2 get back to order here. Thank you. Call for
3 Rural/Nonrural Determination Proposal, OSM.

4
5 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair,
6 and members of the Council. I'm Liz Williams,
7 anthropologist with OSM. And if you'll indulge me a
8 moment, I'm just going to look at my notes since
9 someone's testing my patience.

10
11 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I just want
12 to preface this agenda item while Liz is getting her
13 notes. So, the Call for Rural/Nonrural Determination
14 Proposals only comes up every 4 years, and it's not
15 something that this Council is super familiar with. So,
16 this is really just an opportunity for you to hear a
17 little bit more about what that means. Doesn't mean you
18 need to really consider putting anything in. But I think
19 it's just -- it's a good training and awareness
20 opportunity. Thanks.

21
22 MS. WILLIAMS: Thanks, Brooke. This is
23 Liz Williams again. And this is considered an action
24 item if you want it to be. And this is just like Brooke
25 said, a brief overview of the current Call for Proposals
26 for Nonrural or Rural Determinations in federal
27 regulations. So, as somebody said earlier, everything
28 changes all the time. And there are specific parts of
29 the state that are considered nonrural. And of course,
30 the most obvious are Fairbanks and Anchorage. When we
31 get into the Southeast and the Kenai Peninsula and places
32 like that, it gets -- and even in your region on the
33 road system, it gets a little more complicated because
34 of the change in populations, all sorts of things. And
35 so, this is -- there's a little flyer like this on the
36 table in the back and on tab 7 of the Council book that
37 Brooke put together for you. And so, this is a process
38 for formally changing in federal regulations, a
39 community status from nonrural to rural or from rural
40 to nonrural. And any valid nonrural determination
41 proposals submitted this year will be acted on by the
42 Board in 2029. The call for nonrural determination
43 proposals occurs every 4 years, and it's at the same
44 time as every other fishery cycle. So long time ago it
45 used to be every 10 years, but this way -- we don't want
46 people to always be in flux and worried if they're going
47 to go from rural/nonrural, but it's also good to do it
48 maybe a little more often than every 10 years. And some
49 Councils will not submit a proposal about this at all.
50 We don't get very many.

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3 So, the next call will be in 2030. So,
4 as Cory mentioned earlier, the call for proposals opened
5 in mid-February and it was announced in the Federal
6 Register, which I know everyone reads the minute it comes
7 online. And then the proposal opening closes April 3rd,
8 2026. And like I said, there's a flyer. But if you want
9 more details on the proposal process, I can provide them
10 and you can mail proposals in. You can submit them. The
11 general proposal way through the internet, through
12 www.regulations.gov And more information can be provided
13 by us or whatever you would like to do. Thank you.

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MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
Brooke. Thank you so much, Liz, for that overview. And
for council members information. And just to give you a
little familiar about where this information is found
about rural -- the nonrural areas. In your federal
regulations book and the wildlife one, starting on page
6, you'll see the information about the rural residency
and then the non -- the maps of the nonrural areas
throughout the state. On page 8 is the nonrural area for
the Fairbanks North Star Borough. So, you'll probably
remember from our discussions about the Secretary Review
at the last meeting, that being rural is really at the
heart of being a federally qualified user. So, this is
really important information and just -- yeah. Wanted
you to be aware of where it's located. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Andy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich here.
I had a question. I'm just kind of curious. With
population changes and so forth in the State of Alaska,
are we seeing communities that are considered rural at
this point in time where populations are growing, which
may trigger them to become nonrural areas?

MS. WILLIAMS: And as far as I know,
there are not. Some other people might know. And if
Robbin La Vine our Subsistence Policy Coordinator is
online, she might tell us. Sometimes we hear people say
things in Council meetings about certain places getting
bigger or spreading out. But we haven't received a
proposal thus far. The last time there was a call for
proposals, it was from Ketchikan Indian Community that
wanted Ketchikan to be rural, and that was driven largely
by the tribal nature of the Ketchikan Indian Community,
and not necessarily a population threshold. And what's
really important is that prior to the change of the

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1 Federal Subsistence Board policy on rural/nonrural,
2 there were very specific measures like population and
3 things like that. You know, number of businesses
4 factories, companies, whatever. But that was changed and
5 now it's more of a community characteristics thing. It's
6 not exactly like customary and traditional use
7 determination, but it's more of a holistic,
8 comprehensive picture about the rural or nonrural
9 character of a community. Now you can imagine that saying
10 people in one community could have totally different
11 perceptions of what that could be. So, although we don't
12 use specific measures, there are still some
13 requirements, such as showing new information that shows
14 a dramatic change one way or the other.

15
16 Another point is that there is a white
17 paper about the Board's policy on this, and I can send
18 it to Brooke, and she could pass it out to people. But
19 the changes began after the last -- it used to be
20 connected with the census, and so the last one was 2010.
21 And so, after that, there was so much public complaint
22 about how arbitrary it seemed just because of you know,
23 strict population numbers and aggregations of
24 communities. Another good example is Saxman. They were
25 lumped with Ketchikan, and then later they became rural,
26 even though Ketchikan did not. And so, it was this policy
27 change that led to that. And if anyone listening needs
28 to correct me, please do.

29
30 MS. SHOCKLEY: Hi, this is Dorothy. Isn't
31 this what we're talking about in the Delta area last
32 winter?

33
34 MS. WILLIAMS: It's definitely related.
35 That's a specific -- and I can read you the threshold
36 requirements from the policy, if you would like. Okay.
37 So, let's see. I usually print things, but the hotel
38 took their printer away. So first, in submitting a
39 proposal, you are supposed to provide information that
40 may not necessarily be measured specifically to judge
41 against you, but some of your request for change includes
42 information such as rationale and supporting evidence,
43 population size, density, economic indicators, military
44 presence, industrial facilities, use of fish and
45 wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation, and other
46 relevant material. And when it says use of fish and
47 wildlife, we would look at subsistence division data and
48 see how many pounds per person, but also the breadth of
49 species and additionally the absence of species, which
50 is what we talk about more often than not these days,

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1 would be also a consideration. A detailed statement of
2 the facts that illustrate that the community or area is
3 rural or non-rural using the rational evidence -- using
4 the rationale and supporting evidence stated above, and
5 any additional information supporting the proposed
6 change. So, these are subjective comments that come from
7 communities or people involved. And so, it's the
8 traditional knowledge, the local knowledge that we don't
9 know. We don't live there, but local people to -- what
10 a ferry service is cancelled for all Southeast?

11
12 So, in addition to the requirements that
13 I just told you, there's some threshold requirements.
14 So, they would be new or different relevant information
15 than was used by the Board in its most recent decision
16 about the status of a community or area. So, something
17 that showed significant change. Substantive rationale
18 for the rural or nonrural character of a community or
19 area that takes into consideration the unique qualities
20 of the region, and the proposal provides evidence
21 supporting the proponent's rationale that a community
22 or area is nonrural. And then the Board will determine
23 whether or not the proposal reached the threshold, after
24 considering the recommendation from the affected
25 Regional Advisory Councils. And if the Board determines
26 the proposal doesn't satisfy the threshold requirements,
27 the proponent will be notified in writing. And let's
28 see, there's also another caveat here.

29
30 Yeah. Well, that's just, sorry. This
31 just kind of goes back to the old process and what's
32 different. So basically, it's trying to create a more
33 meaningful role for the Councils and to really look at
34 subjective sides of rural/nonrural apart from just black
35 and white measures. So, it's pretty subjective, and it's
36 probably a lot of work. And that's not to deter you.
37 It's just that, you'll -- they'll need to be a case made
38 and the staff will work with you on that or will do the
39 work. What you tell us we need.

40
41 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Yeah, you know,
42 you mentioned a few threshold requirements, I guess, and
43 one, of course being military, right? And so, and I
44 think, you know, the increase in population, especially
45 around the Whitestone area, and I think those are the -
46 - that's the area where, you know, you have a huge, huge
47 population, but also huge families who are getting
48 multiple permits. And so, I don't know, I mean, it's
49 definitely something to think about in regards to
50 expanding or adding, you know, Delta, the delta area, to

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1 nonrural areas. Something that we can consider.

2

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, and thank you,
4 Member Shockley. Staff member from the National Park
5 Service asked me if that was why this was on the agenda
6 as well. And it's certainly an example of what could be
7 analyzed. And I think military bases are handled
8 differently in different parts of the state. And so, I
9 mean, not arbitrarily, but there's different natures of
10 the way people go in and out or how long people are
11 stationed. And then whether they live on the base or
12 rather -- if they've established residency in the
13 community. Kodiak felt very strongly that the people who
14 lived off the Coast Guard base, if I'm correct, and who
15 had made a home in Kodiak, some don't leave after their
16 time is over, that they should be considered residents,
17 at least in the past.

18

19 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Any more questions?
20 Comments online, Sue. Anybody want to say anything? If
21 not, thank you.

22

23 (No response)

24

25 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
26 is Brooke. And Dorothy, I just wanted to follow up.
27 Since you brought up Delta, and I know that was in
28 relation to some of the discussion we had in the -- at
29 the last meeting about the Fortymile hunt and that
30 increase in permits for the federal hunt. And I'll just
31 also remind you and other members of the council that
32 there are other ways besides through the non --
33 rural/nonrural determination process to consider that.
34 You know, you can look at the C&Ts for the hunt and
35 modify customary and traditional use determination to
36 potentially, you know, exclude a military base. I
37 believe that is the case for the Nelchina Herd, but it
38 is not the case for the Fortymile Herd. There's also on
39 the federal side when there is a need to restrict because
40 there's not, you know, enough harvestable surplus to --
41 for everyone, there's the 804 process that looks at the
42 communities with, with the greatest need and the, and
43 the closest proximity to the resource. So just wanted
44 to remind you all of that. Thanks.

45

46 (Pause)

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48 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. So, we can
49 work on -- this is Charlie. We could work on a date for
50 our next meeting since we got the going to get done

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1 early today, I think that'd be proper thing to do to get
2 that out of the way. Just take a few minutes. Okay.
3 Thank you.

4

5 MR. BASSICH: I think our next meeting
6 should be tomorrow morning.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. Determined.

9

10 MR. BASSICH: Well, Mr. Chair. I'm going
11 to put my 2 cents in. I've always found that the --
12 you're talking about the fall meeting, correct, of 2026?
13 That time frame has always been good for me. Once we
14 start getting too much later than that, sometimes that
15 becomes an issue for me traveling the Yukon River. It
16 hasn't been for a year or two, but every year is
17 different. I don't know if it's a problem to piggyback
18 when Western RAC is happening, but that week with October
19 6th, 7th, 8th. That time frame has always been really,
20 really good for me, but I'm flexible for an old man.

21

22 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I
23 like the dates also 6th through the 8th, and I like this
24 place also. Yeah. Thank you.

25

26 MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. I just
27 wanted to let you guys know that I did talk with Gerald
28 a little bit about Fort Yukon as the location and we
29 kind of came up with a plan the -- I believe the council
30 -- the Gwichyaa Zhee Council is going to be having some
31 new members and have -- maybe are able to meet quorum
32 here soon. So, Gerald and I were going to work to, you
33 know, write up just a real short letter that he could
34 take to the Council and just let them know that EIRAC
35 would love to meet in Fort Yukon. And if we could -- if
36 they could accommodate us these dates, and then we could
37 start talking logistics once, you know, we get the
38 community approval.

39

40 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: This is Charlie. I
41 think that sounds wonderful. Thank you.

42

43 MR. ALEXANDER: This is Gerald. On that
44 topic there on the Council, I might be appointed, so I,
45 I'll have a little pull.

46

47 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Good. That's
48 wonderful to hear and I look forward to it.

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1 MS. MCDAVID: Yeah. And this is Brooke.
2 And I just, yeah so, for council members, because that
3 would be traveling out of you know, Fairbanks and into
4 a rural area, you would need to probably plan for you
5 know, being a travel day ahead and behind so on the 5th
6 and the 9th. So, it would be a -- it's a bigger
7 commitment to have those meetings out in the community.
8 But it really gives the Council an opportunity to meet
9 with folks that don't get to be here for our meetings
10 in Fairbanks, and you know, discuss issues with the
11 community. You know, we could even talk about having,
12 you know, a community gathering of sorts or, you know,
13 some sort of potluck, bring some food from town or
14 something like that. So, thanks.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Sounds good to me.
17 Anybody else have anything to say?

18
19 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Yeah. The fall
20 meeting looks good. And if we're going to be looking at
21 the winter 2027, I just would suggest -- March is such
22 a busy time. Unless it's late March, yeah, it's just
23 really hard to yeah, to meet in March the first 2 or 3
24 weeks anyway. Thank you.

25
26 MS. MCDAVID: Thanks. This is Brooke.
27 I'll just remind you that you had some discussions about
28 potentially trying to overlap with Western Interior
29 Council. I know there's already two RAC meetings that
30 week, but we did do that overlap this past meeting. And
31 it, it seemed to work well so you could consider that.
32 But it's not a requirement.

33
34 MS. SHOCKLEY: Those dates look good. I
35 think, either the first part of the week or the last
36 latter part were you overlap at least one day.

37
38 MR. BASSICH: This is Member Bassich. Is
39 that a -- is that an issue for staff for OSM, if they
40 were to have 3 meetings at the same time? I'm just
41 curious. And then I guess I just throw out there, you
42 know, the -- this week is reasonable. You know, the
43 first couple of days of March. I agree with Dorothy, I
44 hate breaking up my March. But this meeting date that
45 we're having right now was worked out pretty good for
46 me, as far as you know, not getting too much into March
47 and having the spring and -- so, I'm flexible, but I
48 just wanted to -- I was concerned that maybe 3 RAC
49 meetings the same 2 days would be pretty stressful on
50 OSM staff.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Could we have a -- this is Charlie. Could we have a mixed day again like we did with the WIRAC last time, since it's the same time? Go ahead, Eva.

MS. BURK: Did you say Eva?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, go ahead.

MS. BURK: Which meeting are you guys talking about?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: We're talking about this meeting in '27. Next year.

MS. BURK: Did you guys already went over the fall meeting dates?

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Yes, ma'am and we agreed October 5th.

MS. BURK: If our meeting dates are -- well, that's when the North Pacific starts. And I'm still on the advisory panel, so I missed -- I had to get off the phone there. It was very important. So, I will -- can't be in 2 places at once. And I will have to do the advisory panel, I think.

MR. BASSICH: Eva, this is Andy. Can you clarify, are you talking about the fall meeting in October or the meeting a year from now?

MS. BURK: The fall meeting in October. The March 1 should be okay for me, but I was trying to jump on to -- to speak up about that fall meeting that wasn't good for me.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay. This is Charlie. Are you talking about fall 2026, October 5th through the 9th in Fort Yukon.

MS. BURK: Yes. Yes, I am.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, just to clarify. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Eva, this is Brooke. What are the dates that you are not available or what dates are North Pacific Advisory Panel meeting?

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MS. BURK: It should be the 6th through the 9th. October 6th through 9th. Yeah.

(Pause)

MR. BASSICH: This Member Bassich. Given Eva's conflicts, there may be pushing back 1 week to the October 13th, 14, 15 in Fort Yukon as a suggestion. That still would work for me. I usually call October 20th my end date for traveling on the river due to ice, but that would -- that week would probably work.

MS. MCDAVID: This is Brooke. Does anyone know when AFN typically is? Because I know it's.....

(Pause)

MS. SHOCKLEY: AFN next year is going to be around October 26th. They're going to try to schedule it so that people can early vote during AFN next year.

MS. BURK: It looks like it's the 22nd through 24th. This is Eva.

(Pause)

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: October. The week of October 12th through the 16th. That's all good enough for you, Andy? You said that? Yeah, that's good enough. So if that'll work for everybody, then we could decide on that week for now.

MS. MCDAVID: All right. It's Fort Yukon going to throw me a 40th birthday party.

(Talking)

Okay, so I'm hearing the Council would like to change their fall 2026 meeting dates to October 13th through the 15th in Fort Yukon, with Fairbanks as a backup. If for some reason the community can't accommodate us.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay. That's -- people are nodding, yes.

MS. BURK: Thank you everybody. I really appreciate it. Sorry I had to change things up last minute.

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CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: No, we appreciate you very much and we need you there. So, we'll accommodate. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: All right. I'll just help keep us moving. This is Brooke. So back to winter 2027. It sounded like there would be some interest in overlapping one day with Western Interior, or at least, you know, part of a day, depending on you know, how many issues you might be able to, to cover together. So that would probably be the 24th and 25th. But you guys usually do 3-day meetings just in case, so.

MR. BASSICH: This is I'm Member Bassich. I think that at this point in time, penciling in any of the dates from February 23rd to the 25th, and then depending on what the Co-Chair and their Council Coordinator come up with for an agenda, we would be able to determine whether we need 2 or 3 days and identify one of those days as a potential overlap with Western RAC. I think we're far enough off right now in time that that building a little flexibility in there. And if mainly I think when people are scheduling, if you can give them that week to make sure there aren't conflicts, that usually takes care of the issue this far in advance.

MS. MCDAVID: All right. So, this is Brooke. So, Winter 2027. Just penciling in the 23rd, 24th and 25th here in Fairbanks trying to overlap with Western Interior. And revisit that at our next meeting. So, fall 2027. Because I'm sure you can all predict what's going to be going on then. But I think, yeah, if you have a general time that works for you, like Andy said for him before, you know he can't get out of Calico Bluff or when.....

(Talking)

Late September, still -- people still hunting then?

(Pause)

MR. BASSICH: I think at this point in time, penciling in the week of October 5th and 6th would be good, and being flexible to move to October 12th and 13th. I mean, do we need to set it that far in advance right now hard or what's the process that works best for you, Brooke?

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MS. MCDAVID: Well, I'll just say that ideally, we try not to have 3 RAC meetings in one week. If -- unless there's a reason to like you, you know, want to meet with Western Interior Council. So, you know, penciling in that -- the 12th, 13th, 14th how would you guys feel about that or...?

MR. BASSICH: Member Bassich. I'm fine with that. I just can't go much later in the week -- in the month than that. But either of those 2 weeks, I'm flexible and I'll accommodate. Thank you.

MS. MCDAVID: Okay, so, Dorothy, did we hear you say the 12th through the 15th will probably be AFN that year?

MS. SHOCKLEY: It could very well be. Or it could be the next, but I don't know. Yeah.

MS. BURK: Well, AFN usually starts on Thursday but -- doesn't it or Friday. And then I just put a chat that I -- this is Eva, that I -- if I'm on the (indiscernible) still, which I think I'm going to be then (distortion). That first week of October is a pretty standard meeting. It's the 1st week of April, 1st week, October, 1st week of December, and then 1st week of June.

MS. MCDAVID: So, do you want to pencil in the 12th through the 14th, and then when AFN comes out with the dates, change it if you need to? I will say though, once all the other Councils select their dates, it's harder to shift things around. And that was Brooke.

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I like what you said. This is Charlie.

MS. BURK: This is Eva, I don't.....

CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Go ahead, Eva.

MS. BURK: This is Eva. Well, one thing that I've been really thinking about is the real need to protect the Bering Sea and to stay engaged in that North Pacific. I wasn't really going to stay on the advisory panel, but it's such a critical area for our fish. The majority of where they in their life. So, I think it's really important to stay engaged in that arena. So, I just wanted to add that I tend to be staying

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1 engaged with the North Pacific Ocean other stuff over
2 the next few years, so I plan to stay on.

3

4 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: So, the North
5 Pacific will be around 11th of October and 27th.

6

7 MS. BURK: No, what Brooke said was good.
8 Brooke suggested, like playing the 12th through the 14th,
9 and that that work because it'll be like the 5th, 6th
10 and 7th, that I would probably have a meeting.

11

12 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Thank
13 you.

14

15 MS. BURK: October.

16

17 MS. MCDAVID: All right, so we're hearing
18 suggestions for fall 2027, October 12th through the 14th,
19 to pencil that in and then you'll be able to revisit at
20 future meetings. Does that sound okay? Okay. We will get
21 that noted down, then. Thank you.

22

23 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: I think it's a good
24 point where we can recess for today. Some of us are
25 going to show up a little early to talk about bison, but
26 everybody else, I think everything will start at 9 same
27 as every day it says on the agenda. So have a good
28 evening. Drive safe.

29

30 MR. BASSICH: Can I make a quick comment
31 here? I wanted to just get on the record. This pertains
32 to some of our Fortymile discussions, and it also
33 pertains to fishery measures. I've been thinking a lot
34 about the strategies and some of the tools that we may
35 need. It's okay. That we may need into the future. And
36 I'm wondering if we could put a request in to the federal
37 program to start strategizing on how we might be able
38 to develop the equivalent to the ANS needs that the
39 state has for communities within our region along the
40 Yukon River here. And part of that would be, amounts
41 necessary traditionally speaking for communities for
42 fish and then also for wildlife resources such as in our
43 case in our region, caribou and moose. And the reason
44 why I think this is going to be important is as these
45 resources become more and more scarce, we need to be
46 able to build a record for us supporting why the federal
47 program was created, and that is to make sure that the
48 resources are available for people who live a rural
49 lifestyle, subsistence lifestyle. And I feel that
50 without that data in hand from the federal perspective

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1 we're not going to be able to pass the regulatory
2 processes that we need.

3
4 And so, I just like to bring that up
5 to the Council here to just maybe start thinking about
6 making that that request and trying to explore what
7 avenues the federal program might be able to do to begin
8 to collect that kind of data. It's something that's not
9 going to happen overnight. I know the state does it to
10 a certain extent with ANS, but it's very outdated. I
11 realized listening to some of these fisheries meetings
12 and everything, that when they start talking about what
13 Eagle needs, in my case, oftentimes we haven't had the
14 opportunity for over 8 years to get that. So, I just
15 wanted to throw that out to the Council. And looking
16 forward, I think that's going to be really valuable
17 information to have from the federal perspective. And I
18 think it would be very advantageous to serve the people
19 in the rural communities to begin to collect that kind
20 of data, recognizing it's not going to happen quickly.
21 It's probably going to take community surveys. It's
22 probably going to take some household surveys. I'm not
23 really sure what the methodology would be, but maybe to
24 begin to explore what that might be. That's all I had.
25 Thank you.

26
27 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Andy.
28 Anybody else have anything? Closing comments for today?
29 Go ahead, Brooke.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
32 Andy, I -- you must be reading your own mind because you
33 guys put this in your annual report last year to the
34 Board. This request in the Board did respond to you and
35 I would be happy to either read that response now, since
36 it's in our minds. But I also think because this keeps
37 coming up with this Council and I actually had a
38 discussion about this exact topic with our policy
39 coordinator last week or the week before. And it perhaps
40 we could invite her to call in to have a little bit more
41 of a discussion about why the federal program does not.
42 If you want more background information but I'd be happy
43 to read -- there's just 2 paragraphs the reply that the
44 Board provided last time you brought this up and it does
45 include some of that background information. So, if you
46 think that would be helpful.

47
48 MR. BASSICH: Well, one other thing that
49 I wanted to bring up, not to go down a rabbit hole, but
50 the other aspect that I'm kind of concerned about and I

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1 think would be advantageous is the development of
2 household quotas as opposed to individual quotas when
3 there are times of low abundance on species. So that
4 that's the other thing I wanted to bring up to the
5 federal program. To consider if those avenues have been
6 done in the past or could be possibly developed in the
7 future. Again, that refers -- I'm thinking in terms of
8 caribou. If the caribou don't come back for this Eastern
9 RAC region. And I'm also thinking about salmon, both
10 fall chum and king salmon in regards to that if there
11 is hopefully some limited harvest into the future, so.

12
13 I think it's something -- I brought it
14 up 10 years ago, and I really think we should have done
15 something about it then. And I think it led us to the
16 path that we're on. And so, yeah, I guess maybe too much
17 gray hair. I don't even remember the things that I
18 suggested. It's been there so long, but it's on my mind.
19 And I think it's really a smart move moving forward
20 strategically. Sometimes these things don't seem that
21 important right now, but when you look in the past, you
22 kind of wish maybe you had done some of these things and
23 it's okay to make mistakes, but you gotta learn from
24 them. And I think part of the problems that we're having
25 is we don't learn from some of our mistakes. And maybe
26 that's turnover with people on Councils or agencies or
27 whatever. But anyway, I just wanted to bring those up
28 because I think those are -- they're always rolling
29 around in my mind.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: Through the Chair. This is
32 Brooke. Andy just about the household permits or quotas.
33 I -- Lisa Grediagin dropped off, but we had discussed
34 that a little bit when we were having these Fortymile
35 Caribou discussions, the working group. And she did
36 mention to me that there are examples at least for
37 wildlife and for hunting of household permits. I believe
38 she referred to a Unit 1 moose hunt. So, there are
39 precedents for that in federal hunting regs. I'm not
40 sure about fisheries regs and I'm not sure if anyone
41 here knows if household permits or quotas are
42 implemented anywhere in the federal program.

43
44 MS. SHOCKLEY: In Southeast they do. In
45 some of the fisheries I think there are like 25 fish per
46 family or something. Right? Yeah.

47
48 MR. KOLLER: Thank you. Justin Koller,
49 Regulations Division with OSM. Yeah. There are Southeast
50 -- you're absolutely right, Southeast has some household

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1 limits but I think also other areas have household
2 limits. For instance, Southeast sockeye limits. For
3 instance, you could maybe get like 25 per for, for the
4 1st person in the household permit holder and then ten
5 for each additional household, for instance, something
6 like that.

7

8 MS. SHOCKLEY: Question. Do you know if
9 there's some for deer and other animals?

10

11 MR. KOLLER: Yeah, through the Chair,
12 Justin Koller again. I'm not exactly sure on the wildlife
13 side if there's household harvest limits. If there are,
14 they're very --I think they're few and far between.

15

16 MS. SHOCKLEY: Sorry. Dorothy Shockley
17 here again. I think it's definitely worth talking about,
18 for sure, the quotas. And if you could read those 2
19 paragraphs, that would be helpful.

20

21 MS. MCDAVID: All right. Well we'll
22 continue the discussion about the household harvest,
23 quotas and permits, if you guys want, tomorrow or the
24 next day. But alright, back to the discussion of using
25 ANS or amounts necessary for subsistence on the federal
26 side. I'll just remind you in your annual report for FY
27 2024 the Council asked the Board to begin the process
28 of developing and adopting federal subsistence use
29 amounts. And you went on to provide some justification
30 for why you think that's needed, similar to what Member
31 Bassich just mentioned. And this is the response from
32 that you received from the Board.

33

34 We understand the Council wants to
35 ensure that subsistence needs are being met,
36 particularly when there are shortages of salmon along
37 the Yukon and Copper Rivers. The Federal Subsistence
38 Management program has explored both adopting ANS and
39 developing federal subsistence use amounts, or SUA, as
40 the federal equivalent of an ANS. Ultimately, the
41 development of metrics for assessing "subsistence needs"
42 conflicts with title -- with ANILCA Title VIII, and it
43 was determined that the federal regulatory process is
44 more appropriate for addressing subsistence priorities.
45 In 2006, a working group consisting of staff from OSM,
46 other federal agencies, and Alaska Department of Fish
47 and Game drafted a plan for incorporating SUA into the
48 federal subsistence program to help ensure that
49 subsistence receives priority in harvest allocations.
50 ANS was to be used in the interim, while SUAs for fish

1 and wildlife were developed. During public comment
2 opportunities, the majority of Councils and those who
3 submitted public comments did not support the
4 incorporation of either ANS or SUA, and therefore the
5 workgroup stopped its efforts. Additionally, it had
6 already been determined in court that providing a
7 reasonable opportunity to meet needs through ANS or SUA
8 is inconsistent with ANILCA which more broadly protects
9 customary and traditional ways of life. And it
10 references the court case which is interestingly Brooke
11 versus the State of Alaska, 1989. That was not me, by
12 the way, I was only 3 at the time.

13
14 The federal subsistence protections
15 under ANILCA are extensive and cover such things as
16 customary and traditional timing, patterns, duration of
17 subsistence activities, methods and means, and seasons
18 of harvest. And so that's kind of some of the things
19 that we were talking about, about how to provide a
20 priority when we were looking at the Fortymile Caribou
21 is, you know, we were talking about the season and
22 providing additional time for that harvest to occur
23 potentially outside of the state season. But the reply
24 goes on to say; furthermore, the Federal Subsistence
25 Management Program regulatory process is an adequate
26 mechanism for addressing changes in harvest patterns and
27 other concerns about taking fish and wildlife for
28 subsistence uses on federal public lands. We make
29 decisions on each proposal to change subsistence
30 regulations based on information received from public
31 and tribal comments and testimony, state
32 recommendations, OSM analysis and Council
33 recommendations. OSM staff provides comprehensive data
34 on resources, the harvests and uses of those resources,
35 and traditional ecological knowledge in the analysis.
36 The Council's recommendation and testimonies from rural
37 and subsistence users -- from rural subsistence users
38 come from the lived experiences of those who rely on the
39 resources for subsistence and are therefore timely and
40 informed data. This decision-making process provides us
41 the flexibility to quickly adapt to changing patterns
42 and opportunity and ensure that it provides rural
43 subsistence users with their rural priorities.

44
45 And that's the end of the Board's reply
46 to you. And I don't think we ever had the opportunity
47 to really discuss this reply. And it doesn't mean that
48 you can't continue to recommend that something
49 similar to ANS be adopted, but that's a little bit more
50 of the background of why the federal program does not use

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1 subsistence use amounts. Thanks.

2

3

4 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, Andrew Bassich here.
5 Thank you for that. I think what's being missed here and
6 I guess this is my interpretation, is the federal program
7 doesn't have any metrics involved as far as numbers of
8 a resource. It basically just reverts to open or closed.
9 And for 20 -- how many years have I been on this RAC?
10 The thing that I say at every meeting is the most
11 important thing for subsistence is consistent and
12 reliable access to a resource. And so, when you shut it
13 off, that's the absolute worst thing that you can do to
14 a subsistence person, even if they can get 5 salmon or
15 even if they can take 1 caribou, pr maybe it's only 1
16 caribou every other year, or -- the point I'm making is
17 I don't -- I understand, maybe it's gone to court. I
18 think times are changing. I think everything seems to
19 be based on numbers, harvestable numbers or surplus. And
20 so, if you're going to play that game, you have to be
21 armed with the data of what that need is. And I
22 understand the thought process behind the decision and
23 I'm not saying that it's wrong. But I think one of the
24 important things of any program, federal or state, is
25 to be flexible and to be able to adapt moving into the
26 future. And shutting people off completely is the
27 absolute worst thing you can do to subsistence people
28 because they have no other means economically to replace
29 that.

29

30 And I'm personally feeling that with dog
31 mushing. It's something I built my entire life around.
32 Fishing on the Yukon River and a dog team and living
33 with the resources that are available. Trying to be a
34 good steward of the planet, trying to be a good steward
35 of those resources. And I'm to the point where I'm
36 getting kicked in the teeth and I can't follow something
37 that I spent 30 years developing because I had confidence
38 back then, that that is the one thing that I would always
39 be able to rely on. And now I can't. And that's the
40 perspective I'm coming from. And that perspective is not
41 going to just stop with me. It's going to go to a lot
42 of other people and to the lifestyle that people choose
43 to live. And so, we're being forced to make a decision.
44 Do we want to follow our heart and live the way we
45 designed our life to be, or are we going to be forced
46 to go work at Walmart as a Walmart greeter as we get
47 older because we can't afford to go out unless we want
48 to be a bandit and take the resources that we need to
49 live the life that we built for ourselves. I just wanted
50 to share that perspective because I don't think people

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1 are getting it. And it's pretty hurtful. And it's, you
2 know, when I hear about people that fish for 3 weeks and
3 go spend the rest of their time on the beach in Mexico
4 or Hawaii, and they're taking resources that are
5 destroying my entire work of life, trying to develop
6 something that is sustainable or could have been
7 sustainable, that's a pretty hard pill to swallow.

8
9 I just wanted to share that. Sorry for
10 going off on a tangent here, but that's the perspective
11 I'm coming from. And that's the perspective that's not
12 being considered, because the people who are making a
13 lot of these decisions have never had the experience of
14 living that lifestyle or living that philosophy of life.
15 And until you do that, it's pretty hard to understand
16 where that's coming from. That's the one flaw in the
17 federal -- OSM or the federal program. And it's not
18 meant to be a negative comment. It's just meant to be
19 an observation of that's the reality of what's
20 happening. And I think the people -- I have a lot of
21 faith, and I have a lot of respect for the people
22 involved in the systems, and I think they're trying to
23 look out for us the best they possibly can. But I see
24 that's the crux of the problem. They don't have the
25 intimate knowledge and the intimate experience of what
26 that lifestyle means to people, because that's hard to
27 put into words and that's really hard to put onto paper
28 in a court setting. So just wanted to share that
29 perspective for the record. Thank you.

30
31 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you, Member
32 Bassich. I think we have Eva on that want to say
33 something too before we end here today. Go ahead Eva.

34
35 MS. BURK: Sorry, I'm not going to -- I'm
36 not going to go on but I just -- I guess I have a couple
37 comments kind of questions to is, you know, a lot of
38 times we get frustrated with the past management and
39 actions, you know, on the Yukon River, when we do -- we
40 do basically a retrospective analysis, right? We're
41 looking at what was harvested? What management decisions
42 were made? And, you know, now we're putting in the
43 special action request to have federal management of the
44 parts of the Yukon River that are adjacent to federal
45 lands. So, you know, all these years, the federal system
46 has delegated their authority to the State of Alaska.
47 And I think that does not clear the feds from their
48 responsibility in the situation that the Yukon is on
49 today, in the situation that Yukon is in today. And so,
50 I don't know, I -- I'm a little disappointed, I think,

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1 in some of the responses about the subsistence amounts,
2 I guess I get it. But then I do see like, how do you put
3 language about our duration? Our duration has changed
4 so radically that how can we maintain a subsistence way
5 of life? I'm confused with the dicing of words here in
6 the response. So, I'll just leave it at that.

7

8 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you. Go ahead,
9 Dorothy.

10

11 MS. SHOCKLEY: Thank you. Dorothy
12 Shockley here. Thank you, Andy, really appreciate that.
13 And I agree you know. I mean, yeah, all these 50 some
14 years or 60 or however many years it's been that, you
15 know, management has been working with numbers, not with
16 people. And what they really are doing is managing people
17 and their lifestyle. And so yeah, I just -- I feel like,
18 you know, these hard things need to be said and
19 considered. So, yeah. Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: All right. Any more
22 comments? Go ahead.

23

24 MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. This is Brooke.
25 I mean, it sounds like this is something that the Council
26 still feels pretty strongly about or, you know, maybe
27 would like to discuss more. And you could, you know,
28 request perhaps or we could work out at a future meeting
29 to have you know, a little bit more in depth discussion
30 about this if you wanted, or, you know, if you want
31 these views, you know, sent to the Board again through,
32 you know, a letter or a future annual report you know,
33 there's opportunities to continue this discussion. You
34 know, it has been what, 30 years since that court case?
35 And like you mentioned, there's been a lot of things
36 that have changed. I mean, what hasn't changed, though,
37 is ANILCA. And so that -- just putting that out there,
38 but yeah, I don't want you guys to feel disgruntled. You
39 know, if you want to continue the conversation, happy
40 to hear feedback about what that might look like or what
41 you would like to see. Thanks.

42

43 MR. BASSICH: Yeah. Member Bassich. I
44 appreciate that. And yes, I am frustrated. But I also
45 understand the process moves slow. Sometimes for good
46 reasons. And I also feel that the only time change --
47 my observations of humanity is the only time change
48 happens is when there's catastrophic collapse, and
49 that's probably what it's going to take. And so, I guess
50 looking forward, what I'm trying to do is present some

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1 food for thought for when, and I hate to be so damn
2 doomsday-ish [sic] but for when those stocks of fish or
3 those caribou go away, we have to be prepared with some
4 seed material on how we want to move forward. So that's
5 what I'm trying to share. I understand the process. And
6 I do think that there -- everybody has their best
7 intentions. I don't think it's a malicious thing that
8 happens, and it's just the human side of dealing with
9 this issue. So, I'm just trying to offer some seeds to
10 put some water on moving forward. Thank you.

11
12 MS. SHOCKLEY: Chair. Yes. Can you send
13 this -- can you email us those 2 paragraphs you just
14 read? Okay. Because sometimes I mean, there -- the word
15 crafting is kind of hard to understand. But you know,
16 the Safari Club can send proposals to the Department of
17 Interior and Ag and then, you know, we're supposed to
18 respond. So why can't we? You know, I mean, the Safari
19 Club is requesting changes to ANILCA. I mean, that's
20 what laws are. They can be, you know, changed if needed.
21 And just because something was written, you know, 40
22 years ago or whatever, however long that was doesn't
23 mean it, you know, it can't be changed and, you know.
24 Yeah. If The Safari Club, so can we. Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Okay, with all that
27 said. I'm calling it a day. We'll see you here bright
28 and early at 9:00. Anybody else wants to talk about
29 anything sooner? Show up sooner. We'll be here.

30
31 MS. MCDAVID: And in true EIRAC fashion,
32 we wanted to end early, but we like to chat.

33
34 CHAIRPERSON WRIGHT: Thank you all for
35 all your time today. We appreciate you all.

36
37 (Off record)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 93 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 3rd day of March;

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

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

DATED at Isabela, Puerto Rico this 20 day of March 2026.

Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager