WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME I

MORRIS THOMPSON CENTER
Fairbanks, Alaska
October 6, 2026

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:
Jack Reakoff, Chair
Donald Honea, Jr.
Robert Walker
Timothy Gervais
Jenny Pelkola
Tommy Kriska

Regional Council Coordinator, Nissa Pilcher

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska – 10/06/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, we've got Tim Gervais now arrived. And so, we've had an invocation. And so, we're going to call the meeting to order. And we're going to call the roll, establish quorum.

MS. PILCHER: All right, everyone. This is Nissa Pilcher, for the record. Roll call. Donald Honea, Jr.

MR. HONEA: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Jack Reakoff.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Robert Walker.

MR. WALKER: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Timothy Gervais.

MR. GERVAIS: Here.

MS. PILCHER: Darrell Vent, Sr., is currently not present. Mr. Darrell, are you online?

(No response)

All right. Jenny Pelkola.

MS. PELKOLA: Here.

MS. PILCHER: And Tommy Kriska.

MR. KRISKA: I'm here.

MS. PILCHER: So, with 6 members of 8 members seated, we do have a quorum at this time.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Meeting Announcements, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: All right. Welcome everyone. Again, this is the Western Interior Alaska

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting. My name is Nissa Pilcher, and I am the Council Coordinator for this Council, and the Designated Federal Officer of this meeting. I've got a few housekeeping announcements to go over before we get started. So, first off, for all of the folks in the room, if you could please make sure that you sign in. The sign-in sheet is located right in front of the door. There should be pens. If those go missing, just let me know. The meeting materials are all available either in the room or online. They can be found -- hopefully, my cell phone doesn't talk back at me when I try this again, www.doi.gov/subsistence. And under the Regions tab, select Western Interior, and then the Meeting Materials tile. Once again, if you are participating virtually, please make sure that you keep your phone muted. You can do that either by using the mute option on Teams or by pressing star six to mute and unmute as well. And that is all the announcements I've got so far.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're going to welcome and introduce our guests in the room and those on the phone. So, we'll start in the back of the room. Glenn.

MS. PILCHER: And we do have to come up to the mic as Glenn is going to demonstrate.

MR. CHEN: Good morning, Mr. Chair and Council members. My name is Glenn Chen. I'm the subsistence branch chief for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Always a pleasure to attend your meetings.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

MS. MORROW: Good morning, Mr. Chair, members of the Council. This is Kristen Morrow, anthropologist with OSM.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Kristen.

MR. RANSBURY: Good morning, everybody. My name is Shane Ransbury. I'm a fishery assessment biologist for U.S. Wildlife Service here in Fairbanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Shane.

MR. UBELAKER: Good morning, Council. Brian Ubelaker, typically wildlife biologist with OSM, currently acting state liaison for OSM, and today I'll

be serving as the LT lead for the meeting. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Morning.

MS. NEEDHAM: Good morning. My name is Chloe Needham. I'm a graduate student researcher from the College of Charleston. So, I'm here to watch the management meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Chloe.

MR. GRAHAM: Good morning. I'm Cory Graham, fisheries biologist with OSM.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Cory.

MR. HERRON: Good morning. My name is Keith Herron, Acting Yukon River Salmon Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Keith.

MR. SIMON: Good morning. Jim Simon, Subsistence Policy Research and Co-Management Strategy Director for Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Sorry, that's a mouthful.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Jim.

MS. MUSSOLINO: Morning. I'm Libby Mussolino. I'm the Policy and Outreach Intern with Tanana Chiefs Conference, working under Diloola Erickson.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Libby.

MS. PETROWSKI: Good morning. My name is Lori Petrowski. I'm here with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Lori.

MR. HAVENER: Good morning, Mr. Chair, Council members, Jeremy Havener. I am the Refuge Subsistence Coordinator, but also the Acting Deputy Refuge Manager. I'm with the Northern Interior Refuge Complex in Galena.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Jeremy.

MR. MERRILL: Good morning. Clayton Merrill, Subsistence Coordinator for Arctic and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Clayton.

MS. OKADA: Good morning. Marcy Okada, Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. And just wanna [sic] say thank you to the Council and to the staff.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Marcy.

MR. DOWDLE: Good morning. Mark Dowdle with the National Park Service. I'm superintendent of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Mark. And then we have people on the phone. Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: If I can take everyone through to try to organize those that are speaking. So, I'll call out groups or agencies, and if you could introduce yourself at that time. If I go too fast or you're unable to mute, just pipe up when you can. So first, do we have any members of the public online? And again, it's star six to mute and unmute, if you don't have those options on your phone.

MS. ERICKSON: Good morning. This is Diloola Erickson. I'm with Tanana Chiefs Conference Tribal Resource Stewardship. I'm online for a little bit, but I'll be over in person soon.

MS. PILCHER: Thanks, Diloola.

MR. CHYTHLOOK: Good morning. Craig Chythlook with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

(Pause)

MS. GILLIS: Good morning. This is Karen Gillis, Executive Director at Bering Sea Fishermen's Association.

MS. PILCHER: Thanks, Karen. Yeah, we're just troubleshooting a noise in the room right now. So, I guess we're -- so, how about any members of the public, Native governments, or organizations, or any non-government organizations that haven't introduced themselves yet?

(No response)

All right. How about the Alaska Department of Fish and Game?

MS. JALLEN: Yeah, good morning, Nissa. Can you hear me okay?

MS. PILCHER: Sure can.

MS. JALLEN: Hi, thanks. This is Deena Jallen with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Yukon River Summer Season Fishery Manager. I'll just be listening kind of off and on throughout the day as I've got some other stuff going on. Thanks. Hi, Jack.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Deena.

MR. POETTER: Yeah, good morning. This is Aaron Poetter. I'm the State's liaison to the Federal Subsistence Program. And like Deena, I'll be listening in this morning. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Aaron.

MS. PILCHER: If no one else from Fish and Game, how about U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

(No response)

(Pause)

All right. How about National Park Service?

MS. JOCHUM: Good morning. This is Kim Jochum at the Alaska Regional Office Subsistence Program. Good morning, everybody. Great to be here.

MS. PILCHER: All right. How about BLM?

(No response)

All right. How about U.S. Forest Service?

MR. RISDAHL: Good morning, this is Greg Risdahl. I'm the U.S. Forest Service Subsistence Program leader and Interagency Staff Committee member. I'm happy to be here today.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Greg.

MR. RISDAHL: Hi, Jack.

MS. PILCHER: How about BIA?

(No response)

And how about OSM?

MS. LA VINE: Good morning, everyone. This is Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator for OSM. And it's -- I'm sorry I'm not there. And I hope you have a great meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Robbin.

MS. SENECAL: Good morning, everybody. My name is Anna Senecal. I'm an OSM fish biologist and Acting Division Supervisor.

MR. FOLEY: Mr. Chair, members of the Council, Kevin Foley, fish biologist, OSM, calling in from Anchorage. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Kevin.

(Distortion)

We're getting quite a noise on the mics here, kind of a hazy sound, static. We're going to stand out for a couple of minutes while we work out this glitch, plus we've got two people walk into the room.

MS. PILCHER: Serena, do you want to come up and introduce yourself? And I'm sorry, I don't know your name.

MS. ALSTROM: Hi, good morning. My name is Serena Alstrom. Yup’ik name Cuucitcuar. I'm the

Executive Director of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning, Serena.

MR. MCKENNA: Good morning, everyone. My name is Brian McKenna, a fish biologist with Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Morning, Brian. The static noises has left. Cords get too close to each other. So, is that everybody on the phone then? Anybody else join?

MS. PILCHER: Anyone else.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. VENT: Hi, good morning.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MS. VENT: Hi, I just joined. This is Jazmyn Vent with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Hi, good morning, Jazmyn. Anybody else join the call?

MR. CHYTHLOOK: John Chythlook with Fish and Game Sport Division.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. Good morning.

MR. CHYTHLOOK: Morning.

MS. KLEIN: Good morning. This is Jill Klein with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Subsistence Coordinator based in Anchorage.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good morning. Anybody else?

MR. METZNER: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead.

MR. METZNER: Good morning. (Distortion) Keith Metzner with Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (distortion).

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We had -- a noise came over the top. Do you want to say your name again?

MR. METZNER: Sure. Keith Metzner, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. Good morning. Is that everybody?

(No response)

I don't hear anybody else. So, I think that's everybody that's participating so far. Review and Adopt the Agenda. That's on page one of the Council book. Or the pink, I guess, the pink form that we have in front of us, also.

MS. PILCHER: Yeah, I can run real quick through the changes between the book and the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. PILCHER: .....agenda in the room and updated agenda is available online. It is also available as you walk in the door as well. So, the action items was renamed Action Items and Fisheries Report to allow -- I moved the fisheries -- some of the fisheries reports up in the meeting to allow for better flow, and hopefully, information where it's needed a little better. There was one addition in that agenda item, which was to add Review of Relevant Board of Fish ACRs, as well as to add Review of Relevant Board of Game Arctic/Western Proposals.

Under Reports, I did add a report from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an update of the Northern Interior Refuge Complex, and there is an item as well for the update for the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, that's just included every year. It's an informational topic about the Mulchatna. It's not an actual oral report. And for some reason, I did have U.S. Forest Service report left on your guys' template. You guys generally don't get an update from them, as there's no Forest -- or Forest Service land in your region. That

was an oversight on my part.

And then under Other Business, I did add an agenda item under correspondence, so I can speak to a tabled motion from the last meeting regarding chinook salmon recovery on the Yukon. So, those are the changes between the one in the book and the new agenda in the room, pink for the ones at the table, of course, on regular paper for the ones in the back. This is an action item. So, I will turn it back over to you, Chair Reakoff.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any additions to the agenda from the Council members?

(No response)

Any additional items or...?

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, I make a motion to adopt the agenda with the additions, supplemental material.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thanks, Don. Do I have a second?

MR. GERVAIS: Second it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tim. Further discussion? It's pretty full agenda. Looks good to me. Those in favor of the agenda, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Did you join, Darrell?

(No response)

Apparently not. So, okay. We've adopted this agenda as -- known as the pink sheet here. Review and Approve the Previous Meeting Minutes from the fall of 2025, and that would be on page 7 of our meeting book. And the meetings were super close together. Our December meeting and then our February meeting. The minutes from the fall meeting weren't actually produced

yet. That's why we have both the fall and the winter meetings agendas. Fall of 2025, December, that was in Fairbanks, and then our winter meeting minutes also. So, the Councils -- did the Council members all get their books to have -- to be able to review the minutes?

So, we -- the first one we're taking up was at the Wedgewood Resort, December 18th, and that was of 2025. The minutes that I -- that were produced covered the meeting fairly extensively. And I don't see any problems with those. Any Council member comments on those minutes?

MR. GERVAIS: What page are you on?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I think it’s -- or it would be page 11.

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, but I find that Wedgewood meeting, I find -- I found that it was very good meeting because we have so much in common, especially when the Eastern Interior and Western Interior -- the border kind of is around my area, around Novi. So, we have a lot of light resolutions and concerns and stuff, and what affects them, you know, in that particular area to me is important, to us too. So, I think it was a real good meeting. We came out of there with some resolutions and with some suggestions too. I find that we work well together. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I agree with you, Don. That was a good meeting. We have a lot of common issues, you know, with the borders really close together like that. And so, we worked on those two or three issues that were affecting both Councils. We came to agreement on those which held more force before the Federal Subsistence Board process. And I would encourage OSM to, you know, to try to facilitate more or try to get Councils that may want to meet together, like EIRAC and WIRAC like to meet with each other. If one meets before the other, they set a place and a date that's not congruent, we should be aware of, you know, try to work together to have simultaneous meetings. Because it's also more cost-effective to OSM. OSM has tremendous budgetary constraints. This WIRAC meeting was supposed to be in Aniak. The funding wasn't there to go to Aniak,

so we had to move that meeting up here to Fairbanks. And I think it would be better for OSM's budget to have staff one recording -- one meeting for two Councils, that's cost-effective. Any other comments on this, on the minutes from the December meeting? Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: I did want to let you guys know, and you'll find out more further down on the agenda. But Eastern Interior did move their meeting at our last winter meeting to overlap with your winter meeting in Fairbanks. So, currently, we are scheduling a joint Eastern and Western Interior meeting at your winter meeting, which is in Fairbanks, as long as you guys don't change the dates or location, I guess.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah. I think the Western and Eastern Interior should have more meetings. As Don said, that it really helps us with our minds for the whole Interior, not just our part. And it gives us more, you know, I feel for them, they feel for us. And I think it'd be good to have more meetings. I mean, we call and talk to each other a lot, but just on record. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Tommy. Eastern Interior and Western Interior both have the Yukon as their sole salmon resource, whereas the -- as the majority of the salmon resource. Kuskokwim, Upper Kuskokwim, is -- a nominal amount of the fish is used on the upper Kuskokwim for the people of our region. And the Lower Kuskokwim has had decent fishing times. So, they have -- but the common issues of the Eastern and Western Councils with especially fall chum and Chinook runs being so bad, it's been fairly advantageous for both Councils to meet together. So, any other comments on these minutes?

MR. HONEA: Well, yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Just as a follow up to what Tommy says, I agree with that. And I hope in the future that we can have more meetings, specifically with Eastern. Because I just mentioned, you know, the borderline stuff, but overall, it affects us all as he mentioned. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we got a motion to adopt -- oh, go ahead, Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: I agree with the guys. I think we -- seems like we got a lot done. And I -- you

know, I like those kind of meetings where we're both working, or we're all working, for the same thing in life. And I also would like to see more meetings like that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Do we have a motion to adopt these minutes?

MS. PELKOLA: So, move.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Jenny. Do I have a second?

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion?

(No response)

Those in favor of adopting the minutes from the December 18th, 2025, meeting in Fairbanks signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those opposed, same sign.

(No response)

And so, the next meeting minutes are on page 19 of our meeting book. And that would be our winter meeting, which was on February 24 and 25, in the Pike’s in Fairbanks. So, we met pretty close together. And we -- Eastern Interior typically will have three-days meeting and Western has had two-day meetings, always pressing to finish our meetings. And so, if we do have three-day meetings, we should have three full day -- three-day joint meetings, we should have three full days. And there is quite a bit more workload with a joint meeting like that. So, these minutes have been out for -- these were sent out this summer, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: They were sent out to you guys in the book. So, about what? Month, month and a half ago.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any discussion on these minutes from the winter meeting in Fairbanks at Pike's?

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, I'm kind of -- don't forget whether we made a motion. What did we do on the -- did we request for a three-day meeting? Is that part of our review thing, or...?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, I was just commenting. We were commenting. There's quite a bit of discussion about spurring the memory of the -- fond memories we have of meeting with Eastern Interior and that -- you know, but I was noting, for the record, that when we do have a three -- joint meeting, we should have three full days -- two full days for our Councils to actually get through their agenda. Cause [sic] when we did that December meeting over down to like a half a day, that was a tough go. That was really hard to accomplish. So, I was commenting to OSM on the record, that's what I'm actually doing. But we're talking about these meeting minutes here from February 24 and 25 at Pike's this last winter. Did you review these minutes? You got your book on time? So, I don't see any problem with these. I haven't found anything that's not part of what actually occurred.

MS. PILCHER: No typos?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No.

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to mention that whether we even thought of the idea remotely or whatever, I -- you know, maybe it's something that we -- it could be an action item because I really believe that these two-day meetings are jam packed into -- we don't hardly have time to do very much at all. So, maybe -- I mean, it's part of our letter to present to whoever to -- I think that we should take it seriously and request that, not just with Eastern, but just a three-day meeting for ourselves, though. Because at the last day, we find ourselves crammed into the last hour, and we don't bring up some stuff that we really should. I mean, we are out there for the people, and sometimes we wanna be heard, and we wanna speak for them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. Yeah, you know, we have really -- we're getting inundated with a lot of different issues. And so, we need to be able to cover those. And so, whatever we're telegraphing to OSM is that this Council has workload gets so great. EIRAC gets three-day meetings routinely and we just do two. So, it's really hard for this Council to accomplish

all of our agenda items thoroughly without having enough time to do that. Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah, now I recall that me and Don talked about that last year, that we were cramped so tight in the second day and the first days. Like last year, me and Jenny was both weathered out, and it cramped everything into one day. And I agreed that we should have this meeting for three days, whether you got weathered out or crammed into the last day. And a lot of the thoughts, and like Don said, we speak for the people, and it's hard to put everything in the words in the right way and a lot of it is missed. And I feel that we should have three days to iron out a lot of this stuff. Because right now -- I mean, I got some things from my personal comments that I talk about, maybe I'll talk about it then, but I agree on this three-day meeting just for our organization here (indiscernible).

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, Member Honea and other members of the Board, this is true because when we do have two-day meeting compared to a three-day meeting, there are things that we didn't quite discuss or some of the audience had some questions that would like to be brought up too. And they can't do it because if you sign up, sometimes they get to their name and they're not here, but they'd like to be here. But so, I would look at have a three-day meeting. I mean, you know, the third day could always be staff and guests ask questions. Because there's going to be more and more questions out there about food, fish, caribou.

Something came up the other day when we were sitting down talking, Dall sheep, mountain goat. What about these guys? I mean, who's taking care of them? Why are they having such big meetings? Why are they being depleted? Why is the Department of Transportation and Public Facility putting the roads here and there and everywhere to have access for more hunting? I really look at the third day as something that we should have, or even one day before the meeting, have a workshop. So, we can sit down and discuss and put these items on the agenda. Because every time we come in, we just sit down, we talk, we put things on the agenda. Sometimes there are some things that should be put on the agenda that are not because somebody didn't have time or forgot to write it down that they were going to do this.

Good example, one of our members, Carl Morgan passed this summer, you know, and I was kind of surprised because he's the same age as I am. And I think, you know, we should send something to the family because he was very dedicated to this organization. And I really think that we should have a card or something signed by staff and everything, so -- to send to his family. So, that's one of the things that we should do. But like I said, the three-day, one-day workshop -- we used to have that day before the meeting start. And now we don't, we just kind of like rush through everything and half the things that we want to discuss are not discussed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Roberts. Go ahead, Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: I also agree with Robert and Don and Tom. Sorry. But it seems like when our staff started to give report too, at the end, they're just rushing and -- you got two minutes, or you got this, or you got that. So, I know they have a lot and they just skip a lot. So, these three-day meetings will work out very good. And I had liked the idea of getting together -- the Council get together before our meeting, so we can be ready. Like, in the mornings we talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. And then, by the afternoon, just like -- we're just rushing, rush, rush, rush, try to get done. So, I like the idea. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Jenny. Discussion on the minutes. Those are all the three-day meeting thing. We're going to adopt our new future meeting dates, we can make a motion about the length of the meetings at that time, which is agenda item 11.h. So, we can address that further down in the agenda here. Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: When we get to that portion, Mr. Chair -- this is Tim Gervais, for the record. Like, somebody on the staff member to address if there's going to be any financial restraints to have longer meetings or maybe -- and potentially, if we're having two meetings a year, maybe one meeting be three-day and the other one two-day, but we need to understand what the budget constraints are with extending out the meeting length.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim. Even a two-and-a-half-day meeting where we can do two full days, do a half-day, then we travel the other half of that third day. Something to get more time so that we can complete all of the -- you know, all of the issues that we're having. Numbers of caribou, sheep, fish, everything is climate change related. It's -- the climate keeps beating these resources up. We don't really have the resources to meet our subsistence needs. And we need to deal with these various issues through the Board process and the regulatory process. We need it. We're going to -- we just need more time.

This is part of -- it used to be a lot easier when we had 490,000 Western Arctic Caribou, when we had big salmon runs, everybody's fish racks were loaded in the fall. We had bins of fish for dog feed. Those were the good old days. I talk about that with younger people now, and they're like, "Really? Was it like that?" "Yeah, it was like that." So, it's a lot harder now. So, it's a lot harder for them. So, when we do discuss this issue, OSM should be prepared to give us a budget overview. OSM is going to give us a budget overview anyways. They always give us a -- it's part of their -- they're on our agenda here. So, we're going to discuss the parameters of the budget of the Office of Subsistence Management. But we're back to these minutes. We need to get a motion on the floor for the minutes from the February 24 and 25 meeting.

(No audible response)

Motion to adopt by Robert. Do I have a second?

MR. GERVAIS: Seconded.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tim. Further discussion on those minutes?

MR. HONEA: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Question's called, those in favor of adoption of the minutes from February 24 and 25, Pike's Landing in Fairbanks, February 2026 signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those opposed, same sign.

(No response)

So, we're -- I think we got that. Regional Council Reports, Council Members' Reports. So, would you like to start Don?

MR. HONEA: No.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: What's that?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm asking who wants to start first? Okay, Robert, go ahead.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I announced that a while ago, that we'd like to send or have a letter or a card sent to the Morgan family about Carl Morgan. I think that should be, and put in the record also that, you know -- he was not only that, but he was also one of our elected officials in Juneau, too. So, for our area. One of the things, yesterday, I didn't realize -- I didn't watch the news. So, you probably have watched news that we didn't know that Vice President was going to be in Fairbanks. So, right there, canceled three times and they called me up. Finally, they said they're going to send a plane out of Galena to pick us up. So, I went down and went to McGrath, and I didn't know this, and we didn't know it. But when we were in McGrath, I was watching the pilot fuel the plane, and I said, "How come we're taking extra, look like 100 gallons of fuel?" He said, "You haven't heard?" I said, "No, I was pretty busy all day." He said, "Well, the Vice President's at the international airport at Fairbanks." And he said, "Oh, we're going to have to detour." He said, "We're going to have to detour 20 miles outside of international airport." So, we went all the way by Clear Airfield, all the way along the mountains, and we went to North Pole Airport. It was like a four-hour trip. It upset all my plans, what I had for myself. But we landed on the runway, it had no lights. It was kind of like -- and there was like five other aircraft there, but I'm not holding anything against you, but somebody at the office should have known this and let us know what was going on.

So, that -- and that-- and plus, with our fishing last summer, we had a surplus of salmon all of a sudden that the ice apparently blocked off False Pass, and I believe one of the ladies here, sitting here, notified one of the other people and the word trickled down to us that Pilot Station had over 100,000 chinook salmon passed through the weir, which was great. And over 500,000 wild chum, summer chum. So, I told all our tribal members up and down the river, get all the fish you can while you can, because it's a surplus of almost 80,000 fish. A lot of people got very irritated with me. Keith Herron, Holly Carroll, they were all up in arms about this, that, and everything. And I said, "Hey, look, this is food for us." I said, "This is what we basically need." And he said, "Well, what about the Canadians?" I said, "Look, all these years the Canadians have been getting nothing because two weeks ago, a guy got on to the YRDFA meeting and stated that for three years they never had no salmon." So why? Why? It's not the Tribal people on the Yukon. The Fish Commissioner put a seven-year moratorium on the Yukon, but didn't do anything on the Bering Sea or False Pass or Area M. They gave us a four-inch mesh net. And one of our proposals we put in the other year is that why our Area M fishermen get half a mile of seine 750 feet deep? A lot deeper than normal other things. Correct me, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: I don't know about 750 feet, but it's -- they generally regulate the same depth by meshes. And I believe they're -- they can use 425 meshes. Anyways, it was a big -- it's a big net. And one of the biggest nets in the Gulf.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Tim. So, you see here where the Tribal people have -- we're the only say, really, what should happen on the Yukon River. Because of the Native land claims with -- OSM was created for this purpose, I believe, if I remember right. All the departments were supposed to work with all the RAC members of -- I think there's 13 -- 12 or 13 RACs and ensure that our way of life has been protected with moose, caribou, and fish. But it seems like that -- we are not being protected. We don't have ample amount of food, but for our own self.

It was interesting last summer, an elderly lady got on from the Russian Mission and made a comment on the Tuesday meeting, she stated that, "Why are we denied food or fish?" Because this is what keeps us from getting sick, getting cancer, et cetera. And

this really struck me here where somebody elder, older than me knew something that I didn't know, or I knew but I didn't thought was very important. So, I got on to the meeting with YRDFA. And I think it was Keith Herron was there also, with Holly Carroll. And I told him that we have a fish wheel. And I told all the Tribal members, they can catch as much fish as they need, but not to exceed a certain amount. And I am not a tribal chief anymore. I stepped down in Anvik. But after I did that, the Tribal Council made me their Traditional Chief. So, I could kind of guide them through issues where it comes to food and not money, but everything -- what I ever did all my life. So, I find this really where we're being attacked on the line here, is that we should be opening, or why, if you do that, all the other fisheries are going to -- community, Tribal communities are going to open up them fishing. I said, "Well, that's great. That's food." "But what about the Canadians?" I said, "Look, I'm not going to argue with you people. I am going to wait till we go to the RAC Board this fall, that you can come to the RAC Board, and you can explain, and we can talk it out. Until that time, the Anvik Tribe, the Holy Cross, Grayling Tribe, can get as much fish as they can."

And I believe they went up all the way as far as Kaltag and Nulato and everything, where -- I hear from them that they had so many Wildlife Troopers patrolling night and day almost that people were afraid to go out to go fishing. Something -- there is something here that we know that a phenomenon happened with the ice. Was that intentional, or was that the will of God or who? I don't know. But it did give the Yukon River a whole pile of fish. So -- and something, too, that I'd want to be derogatory, but to hear some of the villages on the river call "Why do we have to have the Board -- the Fish Board -- the fish manager, Charlie, come and tell us what we have to do?" It's almost like a white privilege, is it? How do we look at that? How are we gonna define this? And this is where I would go back to what Don had mentioned, a three-day meeting. I'd like to see those people sit here and tell us why. I mean, people are eating food that they never ate, canned food. I see the State and Federal government sending us more and more canned food. It's just something that I never thought I'd see that day, but it is here now in our villages.

So, you know, it bothers me. All my life I ever worked for was for food. I never worked for money.

But I had a job. When it come to elders, it was always food. So, when I look at things now, we have a new generation. We have new law. We have a lot of different things that somehow is kind of taken away from us. Maybe because we're brown skin, I don't know. But, you know, the Tribal Council -- we're not a government inside the government. We are a government for our tribes only. So, this is something where -- that somebody have to define these laws where we work. We have our tribal courts, they have their courts. We do what we have to do for our tribes, but we don't take felonies. We don't take anything other than that because I'm a tribal judge yet, too. We deal with our tribes, and we deal with people that come in and try to make issues and problems for our tribes. We ask them to leave. We have that privilege to do that. So, Mr. Chair, I think I am done with this here. Is there any questions for me while I'm here?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any questions for Robert? Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: This is not a question, but comment. That issue on white privilege, I've mentioned it a few times in these meetings regarding a lawsuit. I believe it started in '74. It's the Boldt Decision and it was -- let me just Google it real quick so I say it correctly because it's important to the discussion. Who are the parties in the Boldt Decision? Anyways, the tribes, some (indiscernible) the tribes, whether it was the tribes, or Bureau of Indian Affairs, or the Federal government sued the State of Washington. Because State of Washington was not managing the salmon runs in a sustainable manner and available catch to the various federally recognized tribes in Washington kept going down and down. So, this lawsuit came out and what this Federal judge decided -- his last name was Bolt [sic], B-O-L-T. He gave half of all the fish and shellfish in the State of Washington, the harvesting rights, to Washington Natives. And then, it was really controversial because it had a lot of economic impacts to the sport and commercial fleet and was appealed multiple times. Went all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court upheld the original decision of giving the Natives half of the fish and shellfish in the State of Washington in 1979. And due to lack of responsiveness from NOAA regarding regulation of the Federal trawl fishery, and Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska, and depending on the administration, lack of accountability on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on allowing for sustainable harvests and subsistence

harvests of salmon resources, I feel that Alaska tribes should -- could successfully pursue this type of action to take a higher precedence. Because I just see on this overwhelming economic force of the industrial trawl fleet, and unfortunately, positions like Commissioner of Fish and Game are political appointments. And depending on political donations and all the other inappropriate things that happen in the American political process now, the tribes, the rural residents, rural communities are not -- they're not getting the appropriate outcomes on the salmon management. So, obviously, this Council is advisory in its capacity only, but definitely something that the tribes and various Native entities should look at as an action that could get better escaping on the salmon grounds and get more salmon eaten by our rural communities.

So, that's -- this is one action that could happen, but yeah, I see it, from my perspective, as sport and commercial representative on this Council, is the rural subsistence user is not getting proper harvesting rights. And according to NOAA standards and just according to just common sense, so I feel like there should be actions taken beyond trying to work through the routes of influencing North Pacific Management Council or influencing Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I'd like to see a more aggressive actions taken by various groups in the State to get these salmon runs back. This lack of escapement goals, the extinction of the eight-year age class of king Salmon on the Yukon River, those are just terrible, terrible, tragic events, and they need to be resolved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Response, Robert?

MR. WALKER: Yes, I got a Marvin Deacon here. I told him to text me his thing here. And if I may read it, Mr. Chair. It says, good morning, Facebook. And what's on my mind? Well, I had hoped that some Fish and Game or State -- Alaska State Trooper could do more patrolling on hunting, taking of big game. Stop all of the camps that are on the small checkpoints for here for meat when they come out of the rivers. If in possession of antlers or hides, I don't see any State planes flying during this. My reason, we have no fishing, but about -- every day, Fish and Game patrol the river trying to bust someone that fishing for salmon to feed their families. I have not seen anyone out from Grayling fishing, still not fishing. Now is the time to take the difference for sure. Hunters are on the higher privilege

than the private people who live in villages. So, what he's saying is that they have more patrolling for people trying to fish for salmon than they do for big game hunters. And this kind of like -- I have it right here from Marvin Deacon, from Grayling. So, Mr. Chair, I mean, if you want a copy of this letter, I mean, you could -- we could take that out of here and put it in there.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I -- you read itinto the record. It's going to be transcribed.

MR. WALKER: Okay. Okay. That was my other comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any further comments, Robert? Any further comments?

MR. WALKER: No, Mr. Chair, thank you. I think I'm done.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Do you want to go next, Don? Do you want to go next, give your Council Report or you want -- no. No, we haven't gone all the way around, but you're on that end of the table.

MR. HONEA: Usually, it takes a little longer than that. I thought we had some long-winded people in here. But it's pretty good to be here. I'm not going to give a report on, you know, fishing and stuff. I'm just thankful that the fish did return. But I had a question for the State. I mean, why -- I mean, there's probably reasonings behind it. But why is the, you know -- did we have to wait so long for the whole Yukon to finally open up after we've had maybe 700,000 fish through or something? It seems like it's -- if you have an X amount cross at Pilot Station, and then you gotta wait a month or whatever to give these reports, is obviously something wrong. But, you know, I was just -- I don't know. I guess sometimes we wonder if we're really making any difference or -- I mentioned this before, whether we're just piecemealing stuff that we inherently should have already. I mean, you know, Robert and I talked about it years ago, are we making any difference? And, you know, if you look at it, the MOA or MOU or whatever the Feds have with the State, and this is just my opinion. I think the Federal government -- I think the Federal side has to beef up some of that, protect us on Federal lands with RACs and stuff like that. I think the language I always thought it was not very strong, not very weak. Because if we look at it, the

State has control over the fishing. It's a moot point. I often bring it up. Federal waters. What does that mean? That doesn't mean a darn thing. We're going to -- you know, the Federal waters in that. I'm glad it's working on the Kuskokwim. I'm glad that they have, you know, working co-management. I'm not saying that it's wrong. I'm not saying that it's, you know, it's perfect in any sense, but they have a better working relationship. Of course, you don't have to have I set amount to pass any, you know, like we do on the Yukon into Canada. But other than that, I mean, for -- I really like to, you know, see that the State -- I mean, the Federal government beef up their language. I really hope that they would be more -- I don't know what the term is for it but feel a little stronger in there. You know, because fishing is our depression, that's the State controlled.

And for -- I have a little concern about our moose population and around our area. And I just realized this is a game year. I've heard from locals about, you know, what about predator control and stuff, so -- and I think it's too late right now, correct me if I'm wrong, to put in proposals for predator control. I believe it passed already, but that's a concern, low population of moose, or maybe they just started moving a little later in the season. Other than that, I mean, you know, I guess I'm setting up, but I hope that, you know, some of the things that I just said, you know, we can at least ask. I guess we have not because we ask not, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to cover the Yukon River further down in our agenda, the postseason discussions. So, we can talk about some of the issues. So, any questions for Don on Don's report? Moose populations, questions?

(No response)

So, I'm going to go down to Tommy next, down in the end there. Work this way. So, go ahead, Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Thank you. I have a lot of -- I don't even know where to start. I've been writing ever since I got here this morning, and to cover on some of the Don stuff there. I start on here with that, you know, the Federal government, they're supposed to be working for us. They get paid for working for us. But

it seems like we're -- I've been going through this meeting since 19 -- I don't know. 85? Something like that. And we're still in the same boat, if not worst [sic]. I know a lot of you sitting in the -- no offense, but sitting here, every time we mention something or talk about something, seems like somehow that gets back to the way the system is built, and that controls us in the way of our lives. It's kind of hard to sit here. It's a frustrating thing. I've been sitting at these meetings for longer than any one of you have been in here in Alaska. And it seems like every few years the system changes, like the president changes, that whole -- everything changes with him. Everything changes with the systems, the way they set up three to four years. Biologists move there, that biologist move there. I don't know what they're up to and how -- what they learn or whatever, but it really affects us in a big way. It's really bad. I don't know, I'm kind of a little upset about this whole situation. I've been a sober guy for 43 years now, watching the system, watching the way we live, what controls us. It's like going to a college and, you know, on-the-job training thing. And then to know and learn all this stuff. And all our problems are not about us people, the Lord put us there. He put us there for a reason. He put that fish there for a reason. He put that moose there for a reason. But the way the system operates is money. Okay? So, they go after everything that will benefit -- I don't know how you guys are fed, or you eat, or what gets on your table and how you eat, but it's earned money. I know that. But for us, we're just trying to give us -- take what the Lord gave us to heart and only take what He allowed us to take. Now, I'm going -- not even looking at this thing. I'm just saying all these things because it frustrates me really bad. You guys look like a bunch of smart people, and I have to live with the way you guys -- like I said, I don't know how this information that tightens the noose around my neck gets back to that government up there who make decisions. So, it's got to come from somewhere and I don't want to blame you guys, and I hope it's not that way. It's kind of -- you know, I buddy-buddy system every day with you guys shaking hands. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And by the time I leave you guys, I'm choking up because I'm kind of swearing things in my mind about the way things are. You know, right now there's no fishing. There was enough fall chum that could have saved us. Saved a lot of the people for -- you know, like Mr. Walker said there that, you know, people get sick right there. There was enough time for the State or somebody to make a decision after at least 500-

or 600,000 fall chums went by, to make a decision for us to catch fall chums, not after the fact that they went by. What are we gonna do? I mean, right now we're fishing, but you're catching pike and everything else you want us to eat. I'm gonna say that because that's what it is. That's what you put there and that's what's on our table now. And it's kind of a bad thing and I don't like it.

The fall hunting permits. The -- you know, the way the system operates in our areas is they go up to a certain number for allowed moose in certain districts, okay? This is what I'm learning from you and this is what is done to me. So, with all these permits, once those allowed permits in certain areas are met, a lot of those guys with those permits were from Fairbanks, Anchorage, Wasilla, you name it, wherever they came from, went into our country, right? And put that number to ka-bang, okay? The locals here didn't get what they wanted, they needed. And it's kind of sad that we were all calling after the fact that moose hunting closed down because the high water -- it made -- the lower Koyukuk River in that area was all flooded out. It made for the locals on the Yukon, the Koyu area, hard to get a moose. At $10 a gallon, they're -- they can't go very far. And it's -- so, once these numbers are met, after the fact that hunting shut down everybody, I saw a boat with -- you tell me this is wrong. I saw a boat that passed and it was recorded in Rampart, that passed the Lower Yukon. They had five horns on that boat. I have a 28-foot Alweld that I could -- I'll put three moose in there. But that boat was -- the capacity of that weight that that boat should be hauling was no near five moose. No near those five guys in there with those horns on top. They were not hauling five moose at all. And I witnessed again, below the 15-mile checkpoint of Koyukuk, the boat floating down, drifting down, they were throwing bags of meat overboard after they passed the check station. That's kind of pissed me off. I mean, I was -- took off over toward them, but there was -- they took off. I mean, I don't know what I would have did but it's kind of frustrating to see that shit.

So, the system again, right there, fail us in our area. For -- there's a lot of people out there that don't have fish. They don't have meat. They're -- the gas at $10 a gallon. Now, their next obstacle is wood, right? So, at $10 a gallon, it's hard to -- with no meat, no fish, to go to a store and pay more money. I mean, it's kind of -- you guys have it hunky-dory

around here. You live in Fairbanks area where everything is cheaper. You try flying something out there to our villages from here. This morning, I sent 200-some pounds worth of stuff at $400, $18 a freight. Costs almost more than the stuff I sent. That -- this is frustrating. And I have to sit there and go to these meetings, I don't even -- what for? I've been here for a lot of years. And it doesn't do me any good. I'm getting more and more choked up, cut tight, I guess. Anyway.

Going down the line here. You know, the climate does make a change in different ways. All it did was make things a little later, the moose hunting and everything, by a few weeks, which causes a lot of problems in the area because you're trying to hunt moose on the day that it's open, while those darn things are back in the woods. They're -- this is one of my things I believe in. My uncle -- late Uncle Roger. He told me, the game will not move, the fish will not move because of the temperature. The temperature has to be right before they can do anything. So, that goes and tell you right there that if the temperature is later, well, everything is going to move later. And I've been seeing that, just to make myself believe in it, I watch it every year. What's going on? And it seems like he's right to the nail.

And Don mentioned that OSM -- you know, OSM -- I mentioned this right off the start, but I'm really kind of hoping that, you know, do what you're getting paid for. You work for the tribe, well, do something about it. Don't just let things go by and let the State talk you into whatever, because that is not good. I mean, I'm one of the -- probably a physical guy. I take care of myself, but it's a lot harder for me to do that in the village as the way the system has us in this control. But if you put -- you look at the old grandmas, there's some of the guys that can't really do anything, they can't do nothing. It's misery for them. You know, the State, like Don said again, the State -- Mr. Walker there -- they send food out. And they sent us food. You don't want to eat it. You look at it and half of it, you put it in the box, and you put it back at the laundromat or somewhere. So, it's not even good. If they're going to send food, you know, I hope this message gets to them that, you know, make sure it's edible and we could use it, instead of sending stuff out there that we're not going to eat.

Numbers of fish and moose, I put here. That's not the problem. I mean it is the problem that we don't have it, but it's a problem because that's the way the system allows it to be. A controlled fact from what I see, and that's what I'm going to say. I'm going to believe in myself rather than anything else. And then, we put out there -- Don put out their predator control. You know, and where I've been, where I live, I've been doing that all my life. And that's probably one of the reasons that we still have moose and the game in our areas. Because we go out there and we do what our late ancestors did. They did it themselves. They just had to follow the suit on that and keep it going. Because the Lord gave you that, again, and then you got to take care of it. Make it manageable. So, that's what we've been doing. But still, the way the low counts of moose go down, I notice wolves, and the bears, and everything got to eat, but then again, it goes back to the system, the way it's controlled. The abundance of moose in an area, the State will come in, look at that abundance, and they start putting permits on there, whether it's in our area or not right now. In our areas around the Galena, Bear Creek area, the Yuki area, the Bishop Slough area, on down to Koyu area. North and south of Nulato and Kaltag, there's over 200 permits that's allowed in those areas to no matter who put drawing in for those permits. And that's sort of sad there. You can't -- our people can't even go out the door without somebody parked in their hunting areas. They go there and there's big camping there, and the Native, they won't say anything. They're gonna turn around and go home. That's kind of the way the system is. There was airplanes over there, boats over there. And, you know, I don't have really a lot against personnel people -- buddies, supposedly, to be. But the way it is, is you have -- like, Robert said -- Marvin said, you have a State Trooper that's running around controlling and trying to catch somebody for fishing. You know that we're trying to eat something, but you get home and he walk in the door, boom! Slap you right in the face. You're under arrest for fishing. So, he's gonna take that food and take it out of your house. What about the kids that's in our house, the grandkids? You're taking it right away from them. It's something to think about. What if that happens to you in your places where you live, your grandkids? It doesn't happen, but it happens to us every day, every family. And that's not a good thing. So, something have to be done. I don't care about the numbers, about this fish and all that. They could make all that up. They've been made up and build a data thing over how many years to

put us in this situation for the way the system is. I don't know. I could go on and on. I'm not balling you out. I'm just telling you, this is where we stand today. And this is the way we live today. Because of the stupid wars and stuff that's going on, the price of gas and stuff in some villages out there, it's $25 a gallon. Imagine that. $100 for four gallons of gas and you've got kids to feed. I don't know -- like I said in the first place, I don't know how I wind up in this situation. You know, I was being, you know, happy person to go to your meetings in the first place. And that's where this problem started. The way they were written up, the way that we live, everything that we're doing. It's -- you got to turn this around and try to, you know, put it in your heart. If you -- I don't -- I just don't know. I mean, this today is election day and seem like everyone that's in those elections and you vote for it, no matter what happens, it's going to go back to the same thing. It just gets tighter and tighter.

So, I'll stop there, but I can talk here all day, and it'd be for the true facts. But anyway, I will stop there and thank you for listening. And that's just the way it is for us people that are sitting here, and it's really frustrating to -- you know? I don't know, it’s -- please do something about the system. We're not bad people. We were here first, in the first place, tens of thousands of years ago. You know, I was on the Yukon Drainage Fisheries Association the day it was founded in 1990 in Galena. I was on that Board for 11 years. When I moved from Koyukuk to here, I dropped everything. I was on a whole bunch of Boards. I had to drop everything because I could not represent them anymore. This is the way the system did -- what it did to me. I could have hopefully stayed on it and helped it out in a way, but you're cut off. You're cut off like every one of you. Once you're done with your three years or four years of biology in certain places, you're sent to somewhere else to learn about there or whatever. I don't know. Well, maybe I should say I know. But anyway, thank you. I'm just kind of frustrated here. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy. Appreciate all those comments. The subsistence users are all feeling exactly the same. You're expressing what everybody's stressed about. The stress of not being able to catch what you need. The expense keeps going up, and you'd have to hunt longer, which makes it way more expensive. So, it's just -- everybody's feeling the same thing, but Tommy's just expressing it. Appreciate those

comments, Tommy. Anybody got questions for Tommy? Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a question, but I do have a comment. I appreciate that heartfelt, you know, sentiment. I mean, that's probably why some of us maybe don't bring it up. I respect that. And for you people in the audience that don't know who Tommy is, when he talks about predator control, he knows what he's talking about because he's been doing that for years. And he's been bringing those wolves in and what -- it's always been something that irritates me, pisses me off, that we try to take care of those numbers out there. And when you talk about somebody coming in and going up the river, I saw it on Facebook, maybe Rampart or something, four or five racks and we don't have any meat, it means something. So, you know -- so, when he talks about predator control, he's been doing that for years. So, I respect that and take it to heart. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. Any other comments? Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: I guess it's my turn. I'm sort of a quiet person, but when I start talking, I do talk a lot, too, like my nephew here. Not as bad as him, though. Anyway, I just would like to say I feel the frustration. We all feel that frustration also about our animals at home and our fish. I mentioned this at a meeting about five or six years ago, maybe that -- maybe, after we were cut off from fishing, that a lot of the elders started to get sick in ways that -- and I am one that is experiencing that too. There's just a difference between the fish that we get on the Yukon in our area, around Galena area. And I'm sure down the river, people are used to the fish they get. But now we're eating this different kind of fish. Was this -- which has -- like, to me, when I eat it, it tastes like I'm eating weeds or something. There's just a different taste, there's no oil. And I think that we need that oil. You buy these pills in the store. What is it called? Omega-3 or whatever it is, and it's supposed to be fish oil, or you drink fish oil, and you do this and you do that, but it's not the same as what we get from our king salmon and our fish. So, I am frustrated that we're not able to fish in our area anymore. As I'm getting older, I can't really do the things that I used to do. And before you know it, they say, “Oh, put your fish net it.” “Well, heck, the fish are not even there yet.” You put your fish in and it's just -- when they start to get them,

they take it out. So, you have to take your nets out. And what do you get? Maybe four fish, five fish. That's for, you know, the area -- the people that are fishing. And I've seen that. They say, "Oh, we got two this morning." They're all excited about two. Well, a long time ago, we used to get lots in our fish nets, you know, and we don't waste them. We have to cut them, and preserve them, and take care of them, make sure -- because we know that it's -- we have to preserve it in ways that it's going to last us until the next year. And we don't see that anymore. When you talk fishing with these younger generation, they don't know what you're talking about. You tell them, "Oh, you know, we had good fish. We did this." Some of them do go out with their parents, but it's just teaching them. They're not really living it. They're just teaching them how to do this. But we lived it. We lived through all this fishing, hunting, moving from camp to camp. There's just so much. In fact, I started writing about my childhood. We never stayed in one area. In the fall time, we had a fall camp. We stayed there for a little while. Then we had a winter camp. We stayed there for a little while. Then we had another winter camp, which was like a -- we had a base camp, and then we had another camp where we had to go and do our trapping, not me, but my parents. And then from there, we moved back to our base camp, then we moved to our spring camp and stayed there for maybe a month or so. Then we moved to another camp. So, I moved from camp to camp to camp, you know, just like a nomad person all my life until I started school at a later age. But that's things that our parents did and our grandparents. Like, my nephew said, Tommy said, we've been here for many, many years and a lot of us experienced that kind of life. And then, until finally, I started going to school at -- I started at age nine to go to school. That's when we got school in our village. And then that nomad stopped, but the fish camp never did stop. Every summer, I'd go to a fish camp, and did all our fishing with the parents, and that's where we learned. We learned from our parents and we lived it. We didn't just learn it and forget about it until next season. So, that's what I miss.

And getting sick, I want to get back to that. And I believe that's true, that we don't have our fish that we used to have. There's -- we need that grease. We need that oil. And that's the best thing for your hair, ladies, that fish oil. I used to work -- climb around in my fish house. Fish -- what you call it? Smokehouse. And my hair was just full of grease every

day. And that's the best conditioner. You know, my hair was just nice, and beautiful, and always greasy, but that's -- you know, that's nature. It just -- you know, you work in the fish house and you're all -- you look like fish, you smell like fish. And -- but I loved it. I wouldn't trade that for anything. So, anyway -- no, I lost my train of thought. But anyway, that's what I miss, our fish camp. And fishing is just not like it used to be. But we just have to get what we have.

And anyway, I could go on and on too, but I'm not going to. I'm going to switch over to moose hunting. Last -- just a month ago or when it opened, my son and I went to our place, where we always go, by our fish camp. There was a guide in there. And I didn't know who that was. And I said, "What the heck is this guy doing in here? I've never seen guides in there." So, we stopped and find out what's going on. And evidently, the people that he -- the person was taking out, had -- the clients that got their permits for that area or something. I didn't quite understand that, but I was so shocked. And this is where we hunt and not only our people, but the Kaltag people come up, the Nulato people, Huslia people, Galena people come up. Some of them, not all from Kaltag, or Nulato, or even Huslia, but they go there. They know they could go there. And we went there, and big (indiscernible), fish camp with brand -- I mean, a camp -- fall camp or their camp. Yeah, with their thousand, a million-dollar tents, and generators, and all this whole bunch of stuff, you know, really frustrated me. But I didn't say anything and told them to move. Because it wasn't worth talking for the other people that, you know, we knew hunt there, but the water was high. Thank God for that.

And we didn't see any moose, but I don't know, you know, I don't even want to know what happened at the end, if they got any moose out of there or not. But I think we just have too many done -- guides that just go in and don't care about the people. Too many guides in Alaska. And that's all they want to get are those horns. Well, if they want to get horns, why don't they hire somebody in the area, and get the moose, and then get -- because we don't eat the horns. I got no -- I never tasted a horn in my life. I don't even know what it tastes like. And I never want to try it. I hope -- it hangs on the wall, but it gets dusty and you know, whoever wants -- I don't know. I don't -- it's just not my way of life. But with the guides again, I don't know how that works, but I think the State of Alaska needs

to look into that and get on those people. That's our hunting. I say that's our hunting area. Not only my family, but our whole area. It just frustrates me. And I know we had -- thank God, we have people that now that can -- that gave us some meat. Otherwise, you know, somebody gave us two pieces of ribs, and we were so grateful for that. Just two little, tiny pieces. I was so grateful for that. You know, we can't go out and get moose anymore.

Somebody brought us their first moose, usually in our area when a young gentleman or a lady would get their first moose or anybody, they'd usually like to bring it to the elders, and in return they get like a blessing from the elders, and it's like a sign of -- you share it with the elder, you'll be lucky in the rest of your life. You'll always have -- you know, go and get what you get. So, we got that, a couple of people dropped off of that, and then somebody else dropped us off a hind quarter. And I was so -- I was just kissing up that little hind quarter. I was so happy, but you know, it just -- it means a lot when younger people look after our elders. But anyway, I just -- I've been on this Board, too, now for many years, and my term is coming up. More ailments coming in, you know, as you get older, they always say -- what's that word? The golden years. Don't believe those people. They lie. Every day now, it's a new ailment here and there. And that's the golden years, I guess. So, I'll just tell you, your golden years, it's not going to be golden. You better enjoy it now. But that'll be my report for our area.

I know what predator control -- also, I just want to thank Tommy for going out and doing this thing, and the other guys that do that. Because we do need that controlled -- you know, controlling our predators that go after our animals that we do live on. I just want to thank everyone here for your report, and you all gave a good report and, you know, we've been sitting on -- some of us been on this Board on and off for many years, and I know Jack has been on here since the beginning of it. He's our elder board member. So, I want to thank all of you and you're doing a good job, but don't give up. Because I'm not giving up, but I feel I have to move on. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Anybody got questions for Jenny? Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Thank you. Anyway, going back to the predator control, this is another thing that really frustrates me when you talk about -- everybody talks about predator control, okay? So, in our area, me and there's a bunch of us, bunch of guys. Huslia, Nultato, Koyukuk, Galena, Kaltag. We control our own areas for moose with the wolves, the bears, and we're not out there to kill every last wolf. We're out there to lower the numbers so that the moose can stay at a level. Okay? We've been doing that -- I've been doing that all my days. I shot -- I don't want to say, probably not on record, but I shot like 400 wolves myself for this to happen, all through my life. Not only me, if it added all those other hunters on there, it's thousands of wolves and bears, which protected the area. And the Koyu area, that's an area that they said there was 5 -- 5,600 moose or 6,500 moose, something like that. Well, it's not because of anybody else but us. They say the way the train is, the forest fires, all the stuff that you use in your data, the way you wrote it up and believe in yourself to that's why it happened. No, it didn't. You put all those -- if we added all those wolves and those bears up to what they would have survived on, those numbers of moose and all those areas would not be there. But the thing that really gets me is that Galena guys help out, the Koyukuk, the Nulato, the Kaltag areas, this is areas around our villages, okay? So, for us doing our work, the State benefits on this. You guys are whoever makes money on our work. We're not -- like I said, $10 a gallon of fuel, and we bite that and eat that ourselves, but we protect our moose for our future. They not once tried to help us in predator control or even benefit us from any way to help the situation, but they'll take the money for their -- once they go to the Yuki area, they look at that area, they count the moose. Okay, so they're right there. They got -- I think it is 12 permits there. The Bishop Slough area, they count the moose there. They had allowed 15 permits in there. The Bear Creek area, they count the moose and did everything there. They got 12 or 14 permits there. The Koyu area, they have that all mapped out or whatever. And the count of abundance of moose, they have 31 permits in there. The north in between Koyukuk and Last Chance, they count the moose there too, I guess. So, they have 5 permits in there. Then in between Nulato and Kaltag, they have, I think it's 7. Between Kaltag and Nulato, there's 12 more on the Nulato River. But they put these permits on there on behalf of what we're doing. They should never do that. We’re -- they're stealing, I mean, $10 a gallon, I bit that by over -- I don't know, maybe over a thousand

gallons a year for snowmachine only to be doing this work. And that's just me. We have about six or seven of these guys there. That's our 6- or 7,000 gallons that we're paying for, you imagine that, at $10 a gallon. And you still have no respect of us for what we do, and to go into these areas and do what you do to pay yourselves or whatever, I don't know. I'm just going to say that because that's what I see. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy. My question for you is, has any hunters that got the permits ever come to you and ask to buy a wolf from you? The people of your guys that are taking these wolves, do you get anybody that comes to buy wolves from you? They should be buying wolves from you. Do they do that?

MR. KRISKA: No. The -- just the respect -- out of respect to all of us, we never sell those wolves. We have so many loss of -- you know, death in the villages from things that happen, so we have a lot of memorial potlatches. Probably more because the way the system is that they don't have to fish to get this cancer and all this stuff, so we're burying more and more people, which maybe that's the State or the government's wishes, I'm not sure. But we -- all the wolves that we catch, we don't sell them or -- the wolverine or the wolves, we give them to the folks that are having memorial potlatches. And last year, kid you not, there was a memorial potlatch in Nulato for, I think it was 24 people, and that's three or four years. Then there's another Stick Dance for -- and it goes on and on, and we're losing. So, think about it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have to congratulate you, Tom. That is a heck of a job to do. Thank you, Jenny. That's something that should be brought forward. You know, when I was younger, too, me and another guy with the Super Cub, we killed over 250 wolves from all the way up to mouth in Mud River all the way down to Holy Cross. I mean, the wolves were just like -- they were like 20 and 30 in a pack then, too. And from all the way from Eagle Slide down to Grayling. That's the Same thing too. Some of the packs were like 50 in a pack. So, we went -- we shot 220, I think we killed. Then there was a guy buying wolf skins from the Los Angeles Lakers. His name was Lew, not Lew Alcindor, but the other guy.

MR. GERVAIS: Kobe Bryant.

MR. WALKER: No. The big, tall guy, seven-foot guy. He was a center for Lakers. He was buying wolves hides for his blanket. What the heck was his name? Anybody remember his name? A Laker center back in the 70s, 60s. Anyway, yeah, he had a broker. And so, we went and we did that. And after that, I mean, you kill over 400, I shot over 300 myself. And that's not including grizzly bears or whatever. But yes, we did predator control. And it was nothing personal. We took the hides and we salvaged them. We gave them to people. I had a lot of friends who lived on the coast that wanted wolf skins. I would just send it to them, and they would tan them, and take care of them. So, everything we did might have been illegal, but what the heck? I mean, you know, it was used by humans in the end, where for ruffs and whatnot. People in Barrow, I would send them wolf hides, too. And they would get them tanned, so they could have wolf ruffs. Just interesting, because I would trade for muktuk from people, and still right to this day, I still trade muktuk from one of the people, Charlie Brower, who was on the Federal Board. He'll send him muktuk, and I'll send him jarred fish. So, these things still go on. And one of the things that I find too, this year we have more bears back in our village. Even though there was 200 and something chum salmon that went up the Anvik River. The bears just never got the message, a lot of them. So, they're back in our villages. Just the other day, we made everybody get their own security cameras, so they can look into their yard before they go out, see if there's bears. And they do see them walk into their yard at night. Because people who have dogs bring their dogs in the house at night now because they can't leave them outdoors. So, we do take care of that issue. So, it's something that somebody just never sent the bears a memo, I guess, on that there was fish up the Anvik River.

I'd like to thank you again for that, Tom. For that -- you know, that is something that we never ever talk about, is that what we do -- because it's not meaning to do harm, whatever, just do it to protect. Because we're afraid that the bears would take one of our children one of these days, because we can't -- and if that ever happened, I don't think the State would have enough money to try to get away with that, you know, because they had a chance to take care of it years ago. Again, Mr. Chair, thank you. And thank you, Jenny, and Tom, and Don, and Tim.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. And thank you, Jenny, for all your years of service and your -- all your very meaningful comments you've made over the years.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don, go ahead.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I could say something, I appreciate the views of everybody on this Council. And I -- you know, it must be kind of a lonely feeling to be the only lady on here. But, you know, in the past, ladies that were on here brought a down-home view. I mean, you know, fish camp kind of stuff and I -- common sense kind of stuff. And I really appreciate that. Just for the record, Tommy and Jenny are both my cousins and, you know, we grew up in kind of alike situation and when we talk about, you know, moose populations and stuff like that, it's real. I mean, you know, the mouth of Novi, one time my father and this guy used to trap in that area. And they flew over -- like in the late 60s, flew over the mouth of Novi. There was a big thing there. Jeremy knows what I'm talking about. But he said back then, you know, it was like the Serengeti. You know what I mean? There was so much moose. And, you know, it's so -- you know, we -- I guess my point is, you know, that I don't know what's happening on the Kuskokwim. I wish we could build those. I wish we could get the word out to McGrath, Stony River, Red Devil, Georgetown, all those villages down there that we haven't had a representative from that area. So, I don't know whether their moose population is good. I don't know if it's bad. I don't know if that's part of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd or not, but we as a Council, you know, ought to encourage these people to get on here. And I really miss representation, at least from McGrath. But again, I appreciate you, Jenny, and you know, your years of service. I don't know if you're stepping down or not, but I appreciate all you guys on this Council. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Don. So, yeah, Jenny has not reapplied and she's -- this is your last meeting. So, yeah. So, yeah, that's why we're -- but we're -- we should go for a break. I mean, it's about quarter to 11. We have Tim's final member report

and my report. And then we'll go to Council Members Service Award. Then we'll go to public comments after that, tribal comments. That's at some point during that. Yeah, as far as I know, the lunch is on your own here. Somewhere, but they're not providing lunch. We'll go for like a 15-minute break. Come back at 11.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to come back to order. So, we're going to continue on with Council Members' Reports. That'll be -- Tim Gervais is going to be giving his then the Chair report. I'll give mine. And then we're going to move to a Service Awards. So, go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, a lot of great comments from all the -- all my fellow Council members. And I am deeply saddened that Jenny's not going to re-announce or re-apply. Just -- your guys' comments and experiences are really the highlight of being a council member. Some of the comments that came up today keeps coming back to nutrition and food quality. And yeah, other than the cultural destruction, other than.....

(Pause)

Excuse me. I've been -- I had a really difficult journey getting here. So, I didn't get any sleep last night, but. So, with the reduced salmon runs, Yukon-Kuskokwim, kind of destruction of fish camp culture beyond just people having a sense of purpose, sense of worth of being able to feed themselves and their families is -- it's just -- a really big aspect of it is nutritional quality, and without the omega-3 oils from king salmon and to some extent the chum salmon, there's not that many sources for omega-3 intake for residents of these areas. So, omega-3s have been proven to be critical to the well-being of our body and our minds. And I know for a fact because I've heard it in other areas. I've heard it from people in the trawl industry. I've seen that. I've seen the attitude on North Pacific Management Council where they think, “Well, it doesn't matter if we -- if they don't have a good salmon run on the Yukon or the Kuskokwim because they can just get food from the government.” But the foods that are coming into the Tribal Councils, or that are available

for TWIC, or the -- some subsistence user might be mailing groceries down from Fairbanks, none of that food is as good as what can be procured from traditional, historical hunting and fishing. So, to realize that all Americans are affected poorly by ultra-high processed food, hydrogenated oils, high levels of sugar, but people that are carrying high Native blood quantums are even more effective because they haven't been around substances like sugar for centuries as compared to my DNA and stuff like that. So, really a lot of tragic health outcomes derived by trying to eat what's now standard American diet. Just incredible amount of diabetes, have elders losing their eyesight before they should. Have people in Ruby die from infections, foot infection, from bad cases of diabetes. So, other than the cultural genocide, it's a -- it's just a bad tragedy on nutrition.

Just a few comments going back to that Boldt Decision that I looked up on the break. It's B-O-L-D-T and it was United States versus Washington. Okay. So people talk about being on a Council and not being able to make a difference. What are we doing here? There's laws, whatever, I'll stay away from United States possession of Alaska or United States buying -- paying Russia $7.2 million for Alaska. I'll just say, United States Constitution provides people access to life liberty, pursuit of happiness. ANCSA, in my understanding, guaranteed Native Alaskans access to fish and game resources in perpetuity. And at this current State, with these diminished salmon runs, that access is being denied. ANILCA, it has strong language in it for rural subsistence users to have access to fish and game resources, which they do not have. The North Pacific, or NOAA's National -- 10 National Standards, they have provisions about communities and six or seven National Standards that can, you know, be relevant to different aspects of the salmon crisis. And I'm just going to call out these three agencies that should be dealing this and they're not. And that's why I'm saying that people need to think about other methods of getting stuff done, getting regulations or fishery management done differently. But like in OSM itself, I question and I still haven't received correct response, yet. Why isn't the solicitor for OSM -- why isn't he going directly to Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of the Interior, Murkowski, Sullivan, Begich about what's going on? Why do we have a seven-year moratorium on Yukon River? How come we haven't been able to consistently meet escapement goals since 1998? And still, there's a

BSA, Bering Sea-Aleutian Island trawl fleet, that's out there 10 months out of the year, harvesting bycatch. And why is NOAA releasing studies that say -- for the sake of time, I won't read it directly into the record, but they stated that they don't recognize any kind of bycatch as being detrimental to -- or causing the deficiency of salmon on the Yukon River. And then, North Pacific Fishery Management Council that -- so, those members, the Alaskan members, some are designated seats, like Commissioner of Fish and Game, and then some are designated by the governor. And then there's seats for Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, in addition to the Alaska ones. But the Alaska -- the most -- most of fisheries that are being regulated by North Pacific Managing Council are in Alaska. And Alaska's seat should have -- be the most prominent, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner should have the most prominent voice on that Council. And they don't use it to support sustainable salmon.

I remember during the Amendment 51 deliberations, where they were setting out bycatch limits. Essentially, I went to the meeting thinking it was going to be about salmon conservation. And what it turned out to be is just about legalizing bycatch. And then Commissioner Denby Lloyd came up with his preferred alternative that made the motion to the rest of the Council, but 50,000 king salmon annual allowable bycatch by the fleet. So, those kind of actions/behaviors, indicate that from the upper levels -- the management levels of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, they're not being good stewards of the resource. They're not putting subsistence users in a good position when you're allowing that much bycatch. And that's just reported bycatch. During that time, around 2008-2009, the reported bycatch, in my opinion, from talking with several fishermen, dozens of fishermen, if not hundreds of fishermen that have been on decks of trawlers and observers that the actual bycatch levels were -- the reported bycatch was about 40% of what was actually going on. So, the numbers themselves are staggering and depressing, but when you look at it as actual bycatch, it's just unfathomable.

Okay. Moving on to the next point. May 20th of this year, we know there are several proposals that went through the Board of Fish process in February of 2026. They were trying to limit fishing time, gear depth, gear length. All kinds of things to promote chum salmon escapement in the AYK regions; reduce

interception. And there's five proposals, 126, 127, 141, 147, 148. They were all disapproved by the State Attorney General because of perceived conflicts of interest with Board of Fish members. So, we needed to take corrective action to try to get these issues back in front of the regulatory bodies, such as the Board of Fish. And there is agenda change request meeting occurring October 28th and 29th of this month. The deadline is October 13th to make comments, and it's in your green packet. It says, "Potentially relevant Alaska Board of Fisheries Agenda Change Request." So, there's one, two, three, four, four -- five from Fairbanks AC, one from Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, and one personally by me regarding these issues. So, I hope on our agenda we have -- are we going to address this stuff?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeap.

MR. GERVAIS: And make comment? Okay. All right. That's enough on that for right now. So, we went through a whole Board of Fish cycle. Over, you know, over the course of several years to get these things in and then they got thrown out because of -- there is pushback. There's pushback from the Area M fishermen because it does affect their livelihoods. I have been -- this summer, in the course of my fishing, I -- my boat was damaged and I had to go to Sand Point to get work done on my boat. And the main communities of the Area M region are Sand Point, King Cove, and False Pass. And so, I was able to meet a lot of people from Sand Point while I was there for four days getting my boat fixed and stuff like that. And I met some people that are influential in their decision making and policy making process. So, I'm becoming familiar with them and I'm starting to have directed dialogues about some of these bycatch or -- not bycatch, but interception issues. And so, hopefully we can have some meeting of our two opposing concerns and see if we can get something workable out.

Okay. Next item is fur prices were up pretty significantly this past spring in the auctions. They were -- they're getting $230 for a marten and between $490 and $550 for wolverine. So, that's up quite a bit from what it had been in prior years. So, that is good news for harvesters. I don't know, I haven't been paying that much attention to it. I don't know what country is buying the fur up but last I knew, it was Turkey, and China, and a little bit of Russia. Okay. And then -- so, I talked about these ACRs and I just had

written on my list here. I put in an ACR for reducing hatchery production. It's ACR 3, and it's a reduced statewide private nonprofit hatchery, egg take capacity of less than a hundred million eggs annually.

Okay. So, when I was fishing late season, in September, seining, and I was having a discussion with the management biologist about having an opener, where it could go. And she was saying, "Well, those might not be" -- the management area I was fishing in, when I'm licensed to fish in, is Chignik. And she said, "Well, I don't know if those -- if you fish there, I don't know if those are Chignik fish." And I said, "Well, let's just -- let me go fish, and then take a sample of it and do genetics, and we'll find out whose fish they are rather than just, like go off people's opinion." And she said to me -- she says, "Well, we don't want to do that because if we start defining where those fish come from that that might become an allocation issue later on in the Board of Fish process." So, that was a situation where Department of Fish and Game was telling me that they don't want to do genetic work because they don't want to get the information out there about where the -- whose -- what stocks are getting caught at what percent. And I feel like this Council should keep pursuing that kind of information. Like these stocks, they need to be managed based on science and truth. And it is well within the realm or the capabilities of the Department to do this testing and find out what these home areas for these fish are. And as we come up to proposal cycles and stuff like that, I think we should try to -- as a Council, we should try to submit proposals and discussion directed towards trying to get better genetic analysis to try to find -- gather more information about what stocks are going where.

They had at one point -- where -- I can't -- it's WASIP. I can't say the -- I can't name the acronym exactly. Western Alaska Salmon Identification Project or program. But that WASIP is pretty old. And the genetics information that can be derived now, I think, is more accurate too. So, I think that this Council should -- to lead with the -- not lead but promote discussion of getting better genetic sampling done and find out whose fish are getting caught where, so that everybody understands what's going on rather than a bunch of finger pointing and kind of homemade theories about it. So, that -- we hear from NOAA, Dr. Diana Stram, all the time with the pollock. "So, we use

best available science." Well, best available science would have genetics on where -- who's catching fish on interception? Who's catching fish on bycatch? So, these agencies, ADF&G, and North Pacific Fishery Management Council, they are not collecting the data, in my opinion, purposefully, because they don't want to create allocation issues, or they just want to keep everything in the research mode. And they say -- like, we hear in this election cycle with Sullivan and Peltola, they're talking -- Sullivan has a bill out for -- he says reducing bycatch, but what it is, in my opinion, is -- it's just like promoting more research and all these research projects take three, to five, to six years out, and so that's like three, to five, to six more years of the BSAI and Gulf of Alaska industrial trawl fleets catching salmon 10 months out of the year with their -- in the course of their pollock fishing. So, yes, there needs to be research, but there needs -- at this point that we have these run failures, we have age class extinctions on the Yukon River. The 8-year-old chinook salmon which are basically biologically extinct. They need to -- there needs to be more restrictive management now and the research can come along with the restrictions on gear, or on fishing time, or fishing area. But if they need a -- there's a crisis and extinction event going on that needs to be dealt with immediately and not further down the road with the -- when the research comes out in six years. And let me just check my list. I think I'm about done.

Oh, in a positive note. On Alaska Department of Fish and Game Management Action. So, there has been pressure from some groups trying to get Gulf of Alaska king salmon listed as endangered species. And I notice in my fishing and incidental conversation with Area M fishermen that they are -- both the Chignik management area and the Area M management area that -- there are certain areas that are closed off during a certain amount of time. Fishing time is restricted. So there has been some significant conservation measures taken by Alaska Department of Fish and Game to try to rebuild chinook salmon in their regular fishing plans. So, that's -- I don't want to sound like everything Fish and Game's doing is bad. They do do some positive things, but regarding their address, or lack of address, of holding the BSAI fleet accountable for their bycatch, that's not -- they're not doing the correct job, in my opinion. And also, one other thing on this bill of Dan Sullivan's is, he wouldn't get us.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have to be cautious about political stuff because we're under the Hatch Act.....

MR. GERVAIS: We can.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we can't be like beating up on them, on our senators and stuff. So, gotta be.....

MR. GERVAIS: All right. I was just saying we're not.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's a cautionary from this Council.

MR. GERVAIS: That bill was not getting support from representatives from -- I won't say it if I can't say it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I mean, we do have certain limitations under the Federal Advisory Committee Act about getting into political issues. We get sort of -- don't want to go there. So, we got to stay on track. We're an advisory to the Federal Subsistence Board. And we're part of the process with the State management also. So, we can discuss proposals and aspects like that, but we can't get into legislation and.....

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. I just was bringing it up because it would -- at some point, it may have effects on the management or the research basis of these endangered or critical stocks of concern.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. GERVAIS: All right, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any questions for Tim? Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim, you brought up a lot of conversations here, a lot of information. And I think we're fortunate as to -- on this -- on the Western Interior to have Tim on our Council to report on, you know, what's happening in Area

M. I think we're fortunate to have that information. And so, that being said, exactly what specifically -- I mean, you know, I guess some of the things that were shot down by the Attorney General, and I don't know protocol. I don't know where it goes. And the Attorney General, I guess, supposedly has the power to knock that out. Specifically, what was your proposal? And another thing, are we right? Like, Fairbanks Fish and Game, you know, and others are powerful committees here that, you know, we're trying to knock down the numbers in the Area M, and do we just keep on doing that? Do we have any recourse to try to affect those numbers that maybe, supposedly, are causing our numbers on the Kusko and Yukon River? Do we have any other recourse? Appreciate your answer. Thank you.

MR. GERVAIS: Well, I can answer that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: In less than a minute.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Member Honea. So, one thing we have to realize with any of these kind of time area or gear restrictions for Area M is the fishermen down there, the people down there don't want for -- they're just opposed to it. And so, Aleutian East Bureau sued the State of Alaska saying that they can't enforce these five proposals. And then the State's response, rather than just having the proposals be law, is they disapproved them, and I guess they're off the table. So, there's nothing that prevents Fairbanks AC, or WIRAC, or anybody else from like resubmitting these proposals and trying to get them through. And they brought it up. The Attorney General said there was people on the Board of Fish that had conflicts of interest. And the State's working through that process right now. They brought up three members of Board of Fish that had conflict of interest right now. Two have been cleared and there's one more that's still -- is being investigated. But that information is not available because it's privacy concerns. But basically, those five amendments that I mentioned are not in effect. And as far as I understand, they're off the table and they're no longer -- do no longer have potential to be law, as approved last February by Board of Fish. So, if you're gonna reinstate stuff like that, you're gonna have to do it through the ACR process or another Board of Fish cycle.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. Any other -- Robert.

(Pause)

MR. WALKER: Oh, sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Member Tim Gervais. Is AI has been discussed here at any time with any of this thing that happens out on the fisheries here, or where do you fish, or does anybody -- the staff know of AI being used yet on fisheries or anything at this time? Thank you, Tim.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm unaware of that. Any -- when fisheries give presentations, they could discuss that issue, whether AI is being utilized and analyzing data and so forth. But that's -- we don't want to get into that. We're on the Council Members' Reports. Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: I saw -- one item I missed on my report is the subsistence harvest of moose around the Ruby Region was sufficient this fall, which was critical considering the lack of salmon resource.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Any other questions for Tim?

(No response)

Thank you, Tim. Appreciate that. It's good to know what's going on down there in the Area M fisher's perspective. And then the perspective of where the Board -- where the Attorney General's office went, these ACRs that are being resubmitted again. And we're gonna be addressing these ACRs under 11.e of our agenda. And so, that'll be later on today. So, it'll be my Chair's Report.

We met in February of 2026 in Fairbanks. And the last part of the afternoon of the 25th, we were told by the Bureau of Land Management that the Secretary of Interior was lifting the Public Land Order 5150 for the Dalton Highway Utility Corridor, which is 2.1 million acres. And that we had until March 26, one month implementation, to continue to hunt under Federal subsistence regulations. And at that point, I went to State regulations only, which precludes any subsistence priority hunts with the use of firearm or other means. The State of Alaska has a firearm restriction. The

statute is for big game only. And so, because of that, I went home and I had to hunt caribou. We had caribou, so I hunted caribou at 40 -- down to 48 below zero, trying to get enough caribou ahead. And I normally run one freezer. We're off grid. I had to run two freezers this summer to stock up on caribou to get me through the fall hunt. Because with the fall hunt for moose, the moose -- we live in a valley in the mountains and there's a lottery draw permit, and nobody in the community had a lottery draw permit. So, there was no chance of even taking a moose this fall. So, I did stock up on caribou.

The State of Alaska was allowed to -- what top-filed on 2.1 million acres? But then, they only took 1.4 million acres. And so, during a discussion -- online discussion this summer, there was a nice -- I went to the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission meeting and in mid-April. And discussing this issue. And so, I motioned to submit a special action request before the Federal Subsistence Board to get a -- there's a December 15 to December -- or, correction, April 15 moose -- winter moose hunt, bulls only, antlered bulls only. And so, we submitted -- Gates of the Arctic submitted special action request, which was adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board to -- for Unit 24A, which there's a divide and that would entail the drainage where I actually live on as part of that hunt area within the Gates of the Arctic National Park. So, that was adopted. I was trying to get our ducks in a row because this fall we had a tiny, small sliver of land that we could actually hunt, except the water was up to your knees and the moose were a half a mile out. Anybody in their right mind knows that you don't pack moose in mud to your knees. Now that's not going to happen. So, no one in the village got a moose.

And I hunted for 10 days looking for moose. Trying to find a moose. Trying to find a sheep. We looked for sheep on top of the mountains. Our sheep population has restructured to younger animals in the population, but it's super low. I talked to pilots that told me that they're seeing fewer sheep in some areas, but they are seeing lambs in some areas. So, we went through our four-year closure for the ram component. We protected that, so we got younger sheep in the population. People did hunt, and we can hunt in Unit 26B, which is in the Atigun Valley. But the sheep that anybody found were basically ewes, lambs. And I saw that myself. And the lamb sizes looked really good. They had a cold, rainy summer. And with a rainy summer, the rain

doesn't allow the insects to pollinate the flowers. Sheep eat flowers. That's more than 50% of their diet. They have high protein intake. So, the ewes put a lot of protein into those lambs. So, we got excellent lamb sizes, but so few. Nobody took a sheep either.

So, during the Federal Subsistence Board process and a discussion online, I asked a Solicitor for the Office of Subsistence Management, but since the State has only taken 1.4 million acres, there's 700,000 acres of lands that are still encumbered. And under the definition is that those lands are not being selected by the State, but they're still under top-file, and they still can be off limits. I don't agree with that. I don't agree. There's all kinds of top-file lands on all over Alaska. And if the State of Alaska doesn't actually accept the lands, they have to divest themselves or relinquish lands. And they relinquished five point something million acres, but they were 11.5 million acres selected in 2024. They were 126% overselected. I'm talking on the record. This is going to be transcribed. That's why I'm going to tell you a bunch of stuff here. Under this Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, 906 of that statute says that the State of Alaska can top-file on top of Public Land Orders, but they can also -- that's F, but G does not allow the State to be overselected by 25%. You can't be 126%. You can't be any percent over 25% overselected.

The State is still overselected, yet they're encumbering 700,000 acres in the utility corridor. And I told the Director of the BLM, Kevin Pendergast, at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting. What does that mean for me? That means that this mountainside that I normally hunt sheep on, that is within the Utility Corridor, the State -- if the State doesn't take it, the subsistence users should be able to take wildlife until such time as the State takes it. And I'm gonna continue to say that until I'm blue in the face. Because the reality is, the State cannot be overselected by 25%. And they're way, vastly overselected at this moment. So, I asked the solicitor, and this summer, when they come to the Council meeting, she was not prepared to make any kind of a statement. I wanted the solicitor to tell this Council what the position of the Federal Subsistence Board process is regarding overselection and encumbering lands that are not going to be taken but still encumbering them. There's mining claims that they claim that are -- there's the -- all the Federal -- all the claims that are mining

claims, extensive mining claims, this mining areas -- it was a big thing around Wiseman. There's lands that were not selected, they're still Federal mining claims. There's thousands, hundreds of acres of lands that are mining claims that I have -- that we traditionally use, that is -- they have subsurface right, they have mineral right underneath the ground, and we utilize the surface lands for harvesting fish and wildlife on those mining claims. Those were not selected.

The State didn't take those, they didn't wanna get cross-threaded with the miners. So, I'm of the opinion, and I'm going to state it for the record, that those mining claims and all of the lands that the State did not select, did not take in the 1.4 million acres, those lands should still be eligible for subsistence use by the Federal subsistence users, which is me and the community -- members of my community, and the people from Nuiqsut, Anaktuvuk Pass, Wiseman, Coldfoot, Bettles, Evansville, Allakaket, Alatna, Stevens Village, and Rampart. Those are the communities that utilize those lands. So, if the State wants to take them, fine, but the State can't just sit on the pot and not go. They have to take those lands because they're in violation of the ANILCA law that gave them the ability to top-file, but they also are under the constraint to select the lands and not be overselected by 25%. So, I'm stating that for the record.

I still want a response from the solicitor's office, and you can get a hold of -- OSM can get a hold of their solicitor because we want a response by the end of this meeting. And I told them I want a response before the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council, the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council next week, and it should have been before the North Slope Regional Advisory Council. If it wasn't before the North Slope Regional Advisory Council, the solicitor is not doing -- acting to the request. This is a very important issue for subsistence in this region. And so, this is something that has to happen. This overselection thing, the State of Alaska, they got millions of acres to select from. They have to do their selection now, not just drag this on for 60 something more years. I don't want to die of old age and not being able to hunt on Federal lands that are being encumbered illegally by the State of Alaska. That's my position. So, I'm stating that on the record. Yes, go ahead.

MR. WALKER: Is that what we pre-selected in 1959?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: State of Alaska was eligible to select one -- I don’t know if it is 104.5 million acres or something to that effect. They had been dragging this on since 1959 for decades. They say that they’re not -- the Federal government was impeding their ability to select. No, they weren't. In 2024, I looked at the selection map, they were -- there was 11.5 million acres under their selection -- the State selection process that they were filed on as selections. All they had to do was prioritize it. They had 5.2 million acres to go in 2024. There were 11.5 million acres to select from, let alone the Public Land Order areas. The State of Alaska claims that they're not excluded from -- receive lands. It's like, no, they haven't been. They've had the ability to select on 11.5 million acres for decades. They won't do it. They just keep goofing off. And the goofing off is starting to affect subsistence users in my area. And so, I'm getting -- that's what I'm getting really concerned about. This has drawn on too long. The State of Alaska has the ability to take their lands. Take them. If you want the entire Utility Corridor, go ahead and take the 2.1 million acres. But at least we know what we got. Right now, they're cherry-picking things, and they're encumbering land. 700,000 acres in the Utility Corridor is still not taken, and they're trying to impede the subsistence users from utilizing those lands. That's the -- that is a major issue. That's not a little issue. That's a major issue throughout the entire State of Alaska, for all regions of Alaska. And I want all the other Councils of the State of Alaska Regional Councils for this office -- of the Federal Program to understand that this is becoming a big issue.

This should be added to our Annual Report with discussion -- further discussion to get the Federal Subsistence Board to request a solicitor to analyze the law. I'm not a lawyer, but I can read black and white, and 2(f) of 906 and (g) of 906 of ANILCA is black and white as to what the State of Alaska can do, and what the impendence to subsistence users has got to stop. I'm not opposed to the State to selecting their lands, but they got to get on it and start taking it. They're going to take and encumber the entire Utility Corridor. They took what they wanted, give the rest back. Go move on to the next area. There's 28.5 million acres in Western Alaska that they're going to lift -- that are

top-filed on. There was -- 6.8 million acres were top-filed on top of -- and they were only eligible for 5.2 million acres. There's a whole bunch of lands in Western Alaska that are going to be effective because when they top-file, they stop you from subsistence hunting until such time as they take the selection. They took the selection now. Okay. And in February, it was 2.1 million acres but in May 5th -- I think it's May 5th, if my recollection is correct, they took -- they accepted the 1.4 million acres, leaving 700 million behind. Those should be eligible for harvest. I should be able to harvest this fall on those lands, and I could have. I could have took a moose on those mining claims, but I couldn't. I didn't want a risk of a ticket. I was not going to do that. I want this clarified sooner than later. So, that's one of the things that happened.

So, the other thing was we were called for proposals for the State Board of Game. And so, I got back from meetings for basically a week. I went to Gates of the Arctic meeting. I went to the Federal Subsistence Board meeting. I did a Koyukuk River Advisory Committee meeting. I came, went home, and then I wrote proposals before the Board of Game. These are -- our caribou populations are in critical condition right now. We have no room to have any cow harvest at all for caribou. I had to write it -- I wrote it into the ecology, into the proposals, for cow closure -- closure to cow caribou in the Western Interior -- correction, Western Arctic Caribou Herd, Central Arctic Caribou Herd, and the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Porcupine Caribou Herd is down 30%. From the 2017 survey to the 2025 survey, they're down 35%. Cow caribou don't have a calf until they're three. If they have a hard winter, they don't have a calf until they're four. Why don't they have a calf? Because they're stressed in their first year of life. That's why sheep will do the same thing. If they're stressed in the first year of life, they don't have a calf till they're four years of age. Moose will do the same thing. So, we have caribou that are declined. Cow caribou never have a twin calf. The general population of Alaskans seem to think that caribou are like jackrabbits. They must have thousands of babies per season. They only have a calf after their three years of age, and they only have one. And the reindeer herding industry, if they have a twin, it usually is a stillbirth. It's one in a million. And the second calf is so much stress on the cow, it usually kills the cow reindeer if they have a twin. So, that’s -- therefore, twins are never part of the reproduction process. And

the general public doesn't seem to know that. And in 2016, I had a proposal before the State Board of Game to close cow caribou harvest in 26B. I wrote a AC -- record copy to the Board and stated all the ecology. And I had seven members of Board of Game. In 2016, four of those members told me they read the ACR, and they didn't know that they only had one calf. The Board of Game who makes the decision does not know the ecology of what caribou eat or what their -- and what their reproductive abilities are. And of course, the Department of Fish and Game, conveniently, doesn't tell the public that they only have one calf. That they don't have calves till they're three or four. So, why wrote proposals for Unit 24D, Unit 24C, Unit 24 -- the Central Arctic Herd for Unit 26B, 26A, 24A, and portions of Unit 25, to eliminate cow harvest with the capacity -- and so, Department of Fish and Game is way on board with this cow caribou closure. The area managers are now seeing the light that they need to have reduced -- and the emergency closed cow harvest for Unit 26B, 24, 25. They closed those units down for cow harvest.

I also submitted a proposal -- there's been a closure to the use of firearms for subsistence of hunters -- State subsistence hunters of big game and small game and waterfowl. The reality is, the State legislature passed a -- legislature in 1980 passed a regulate -- statute that closes it to big game hunting with firearm only. Not the small game, not the waterfowl. So, I submitted a proposal before the State Board of Game to repeal the small game and waterfowl harvest. And I made it real easy for the Board that have -- the public can use -- residents of Alaska, can use rimfire and shotgun to take small game, and shotgun for waterfowl. That makes it real easy for the Board to basically allow the public, me -- when they did a subsistence survey in Wiseman, we had more harvest, more use of birds than we had of fish. Because we have really poor fisheries in the upper drainage. So, this -- that proposal has no standing with the Board of Game because the Archery Association wanted their complete archery only hunt for -- all with archery equipment. The reality is, I've never seen archers hardly ever take a small game animal or a bird. They -- I would be astounded if they kill over 100 game birds annually, when there's hundreds of thousands of grouse, spruce grouse. There are hundreds of thousands or millions of ptarmigan, and there are millions of waterfowl that come to Alaska in the summertime. So, the reality is the State of Alaska residents -- okay, we're all Alaska residents. State of

Alaska residents can go up the road with their kids and shoot ptarmigan with a .22. Big deal. There's millions of them. Literally millions. And ptarmigan are migratory. Spruce grouse, their camouflage bird. They're never gonna -- so, they can shoot animals with a firearm south of the Yukon River? "Oh, it's to protect the pipeline." No, it's not. It was a conservation measure for big game only. It has nothing to do with protection of the pipeline. People shoot moose right underneath the pipeline. In fact, the Alaska Pipeline Bill of 1973 requires that the permittees, the pipeline companies, cannot impede subsistence under the 1973 Alaska Pipeline Act. So, they shoot most with a firearm right underneath the pipeline or adjacent to the pipeline pad. It has nothing to do with the protection of the pipeline. So, I have a proposal before the State Board of Game, which will be out in our -- in the Board packet. Eminently haven't got my Board of Game packet, but we're going to have meetings with the Koyukuk River Advisory. It's important issues. And so, I would encourage Fairbanks AC to support the fall small game and -- I intend to. Because Alaskan residents, if they're -- they take small game, they're not going to travel to the Dalton Highway to shoot grouse. They might shoot ptarmigan with a .22 if they're camped out hunting moose or caribou with a bow.

So, I had a joint all-RAC meeting. I forget when that all-RAC meeting was, I was on conference call. That was in early August, and with all the Councils, and it was a discussion. Basically, it was a facilitator trying to get consensus on salmon management crisis. I'm of the opinion that the trophic level or the marine system has high years and low years. But the problem is, and I will state it over and over and over again. Pink salmon have a high year, and pink salmon have a low year. When the low year comes -- it's in the data that when the low year comes, that gives the surge to the chinook and the other species of salmon for the low year. But the State of Alaska allows a hatchery release for every year at this -- about the same amounts on an annual basis. The problem is not the number of eggs that's taken, the problem is eliminating the low year release. In Washington State, they released 200 million pink salmon for the high year. They released zero pink salmon for the low year. That's hatchery release. They're -- they stay in step with the natural cycle. If we went back to -- I talked to hatchery people down there out of Valdez where they released 350 million pink salmon out of one hatchery. What are the fishermen

gonna do? I said, "They're gonna be on restriction just like the rest of us of AYK, who are starving for chinook salmon." It highly affects the Chinook salmon because it's a six-year fish. It needs those three cycles of down cycles to survive. The chinook runs are augmented. Look, the trophic level come back, the fall chums come back. And the chinook salmon are still languishing. We need to go to a high-year release, eliminate the low-year release. And I say to that at the all-RAC meeting, but nobody seems to understand. You got to look at Washington State. You got to look at what other -- that's actual real fisheries management letting 1.2, 1.4 billion pink salmon for the low year is not -- should not be happening at all. If a Board member is sitting right there, she's probably heard it all before, but we have to eliminate the low-year release. That's the only way we're going to get king salmon back. I'm dug in on that one. You start reading the data on what those pink salmon do for the phytoplankton, zooplankton regime. It's catastrophic for long-life fish, like king salmon. So, that's my report. I did that. Those are the meetings I attended. Those are the proposals and the issues of legality of State being overselected in areas that they've -- that they should divest themselves or relinquish Federal lands. The 700,000 acres should be released back under Federal management. So, any questions from the Council members? Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: What's the best method of dealing with this overselection by the State? Like, who's going to pay attention and what's the likelihood that anybody's going to do anything?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, the Federal Subsistence Board process has to recognize that lands that were not selected, like the rest of the 11.5 million acres that were selected, nobody stopped anybody from hunting on those for the last several years. In 2024, those are lands that were eligible to select and they didn't take them. But they don't want to let them go either. They're encumbering lands. And so, those solicitors got to look at the statute, and the Federal Subsistence Board has to come to the conclusion that until lands are actually selected, they become State lands. If they're not selected, they're not State lands. That's the conclusion. That's the only logical conclusion. Therefore, Cody there can't write me a ticket for shooting a moose on the mining claims because they're Federal lands. So, that's where that goes. Any other questions? Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa Pilcher, for the record. There -- so, there were two things that came up during your guys' conversation that you may want to make action items. So, the first one is this letter that you're speaking of. I did get some feedback online. So, the Federal Subsistence Management Program solicitor can only advise the Board and the Program on issues within the Board's authority. And obviously, this is within that authority. So, that -- what you guys are speaking to needs to go to the DOI solicitor. So, what could happen is the Council could take -- make it -- take action to request that letter get drafted based on what you said, you did put quite a lot on the record. And so, that letter would be sent to the Board with a request to be transmitted to the Secretaries for their guidance. So, that could be something that you guys do right now if you'd like.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. The solicitor didn't tell me that at the time, but apparently, she's researched that.

MS. PILCHER: I've thrown Robbin under the bus. That's what Robbin said that we could do, so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, this would behoove this Council to submit a letter through the Federal Subsistence Board process to the Department of Interior's solicitor to realize that they're under the ANILCA statutes. That's how they're allowing the State to top-file. That they're under -- that DOI is under this -- under ANILCA statutes and that they have to adhere to the principle that Federal lands -- if they're Federal lands and unselected, they're eligible for Federal subsistence harvest. And if they're unselected, especially when they were top-filed on and then not accepted, that those lands are not excluded from Federal subsistence priority. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to have that letter transmitted through the Federal Subsistence Board to the Department of Interior.

MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Tim. Do we have a second?

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion?

(No response)

The issue is fairly clear. It's statutory. Do I have a question?

(No audible response)

Questions called. Those in favor of transmitting that letter to the Department of Interior solicitor regarding subsistence eligibility on Federal public lands that are still in selection process with the State of Alaska, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

And I did want the Council to know that I got a message here that Darrell is not going to be attending because he has lost one of his -- one of his families [sic] passed away. So, okay, we've got a hand up here.

MS. PILCHER: I have -- Nathan, you have your hand up?

MR. ELSWICK: Thank you. Can you guys hear me okay?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, Nathan, go right ahead.

MR. ELSWICK: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Nathan Elswick, I serve as the First Chief for Anvik Village. Since you guys were discussing lands a little, I just wanted to touch on the announcement that BLM had made on May 22nd of this year on the intention to lift the D-1 lands. I'm not too sure if this body had addressed that or not, but you know, if they lift those lands, that's really going to affect the rural subsistence priority. So, I'm just wondering if you guys plan on taking that up at all and maybe addressing that issue.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: What I'm referring to are the D -- they are referred to as the D-1 lands. The Public Land Orders are also referred to as the D-1 lands. So, they -- that was D-1 of ANCSA. So, they did lift the Utility Corridor, the 2.1 million acres. And they were also -- the executive order was to -- for the Secretary of Interior to lift any other Public Land Orders or D-1 land withdrawals that are under State interests, quote unquote. Well, that was the 6.8 million acre total. And many of those are in Western Alaska. That would be, you know, over there on the western Interior and Bering Sea Coast areas. There's many Public Land Orders over there that may be lifted also. But we have -- those haven't been highlighted yet. We don't know what those are going to be until they would actually do that. So, that's where we're at. Well, that's the letter that we're writing in regards to the subsistence use on -- during -- on D-1 lands that have been not accepted by the State. That's what our last letter was about, that you just heard us on a motion. So, does that answer your question, Nathan?

MR. ELSWICK: It does, Mr. Chair, and I thank you. I thank the body for putting out that letter. And just real quickly to any tribes that's either on the call or listening in, you guys can still request consultation on those D-1 lands, that is still open. Anvik, we are one of 18 tribes that have did that consultation with BLM, so I strongly encourage if there's any tribes on the call to request that consultation to retain the D-1 land. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Nathan. I appreciate your interest in that and I would like -- I feel that our letter should be CC'd to other regions, Alaskan regions. We should also CC that to all the Native Tribal Councils that are within the D-1 areas that are going to be affected, right? Because if -- once they attach or once the Public Land Orders are lifted, the D-1 land orders are lifted, then they attach, and you're excluded from subsistence hunting there, Nathan. So, that’s -- this is what we had to go through. We had to go through -- once those are under selection process, we can't hunt there. And what we're trying to do is once they make their selections, that they have to release any of the D-1 lands that they don't want. So, that's where we're at with this whole issue. That's going to be an ongoing issue. Thank you.

MR. ELSWICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Any other questions, comments?

(No response)

We have a Council Member Service Award and that would be Brian. Are we going to do that? Oh.

MS. PILCHER: So, if -- Brian and I decided that -- actually, I asked nicely if I could at least read the Service Awards out since I know the Council members a little better than he does. So, he's going to be handing out the plaques. So first, there's two. First is Tim. We hit 15 years a couple years ago. I think you were on teleconference at the time and somehow it just hasn't happened when we were in the same room. And I have the actual plaque. So, I just wanted to note that Tim will make any meeting he possibly can, and he moves heaven and earth in order to get to us at times, including also calling in bobbing in a fishing boat in the middle of an ocean on a satellite. So, his service to the region over the last 15 years has been exemplary and his commitment to the Council and the region he represents is as well. Not everybody will jump through the hoops that you have jumped through in order to attend these meetings. His lived experience is a very different kettle of fish, and I did intend that pun, than any other members that currently serve, which does help round this Council out very well. And we do thank him for his service to the region and the program.

(Applause)

All right. And then the next one we've got is Jenny. Jenny is -- she hit 20 years. So, unfortunately, as she noted that she's probably not going to make her 25th plaque. So, I'd like to celebrate her a lot right now. She will leave some very big shoes to fill when she does finally step down. Her quiet energy helps keep this Council in line. And as the only female on this Council, her lived experience is also very different and also a very highly needed one in this room. So, thank you, Jenny, very much for your service to this Council, to your community, and the region, and the program. And your presence and your voice will be very missed when your term is finally up.

(Applause)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Congratulations, Jenny. Job well done. So, I think we're kind of in a -- we're going to go to Public and Tribal Comments on Non-Agenda Items. And so, we got Gale Vick, she's signed up here, and then I got Jim Simon also.

MS. VICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Council. My name is Gale Vick, and I am here to talk about the Fairbanks AC. I serve as the fisheries chair for that. I'm only talking about fish for the Fairbanks AC today, not the game side. And also, the BBAYK, which represents most of Western Alaska. It's a coalition and I want to talk to people about that. So, the first thing this morning will be about the BBAYK, which stands for Bristol Bay, Arctic, Yukon, Kuskokwim. And we started this at the Area M meeting in 2003. It was a coalition of people got together from Western Alaska. And we've been going on ever since then. We meet once a week. It is an invitational meeting. It's open to people from Western Alaska or people who represent them. At this time, not agency people, although we do invite agency people, occasionally. And that is so that we can keep -- people in the room are comfortable in talking about some of the issues that are affecting State and Federal issues. We do appreciate all of our representatives. And when I was listening to all of you this morning, I was thinking, we have a problem and this is one of the reasons that BBAYK exists, is that subsistence is not taken seriously. We know that, especially for fish. And so, now we have to explain to the world, not only is that a legal priority, but it is the protection that we need for the resource. So, all of the agency people that we work with are wonderful people, except at the top levels. And that's where I take issue. And that's where a lot of us take issue. And that's all I'm going to say because we have this legal requirement. So, I want to say, anybody who wants to join us, we can get a hold -- you can get a hold of Karen Gillis at the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association. They host the zoom meetings. They're Thursday morning at 9 o'clock. They usually go for an hour and a half, sometimes a little over. And we have -- normally, we have about anywhere from 20 to 40 people that are in the conference call. It does rotate. We have a very large group that does -- is on the invitational list that goes out every week. Or you can get hold of myself and Nissa knows how to reach me. So, I won't say too much more about the BBAYK, except that it's a really, really important informational group. And I encourage everybody

in the room who can participate to do so. So, thank you.

So, as far as the Fairbanks AC report for the fisheries report, we will be talking about the ACRs a little bit later on. The Fairbanks AC did submit five of those ACRs. There's a long history behind it. And we'll discuss that when that conversation comes up. And Jack, I didn't realize that you were a fisherman out of Chignik. I assume that's with a seine. I mean, not Jack. Tim, yeah. Yeah, no, that's -- I know. I apologize.

MR. GERVAIS: For the record though, Jack is a commercial fish -- was a commercial fisherman in Bristol Bay for several years.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Oh yeah, I knew that. Right, yeah. Are you a seiner out of...?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I am.

MS. VICK: Yeah.

MR. GERVAIS: My goal is to fish in front of my cabin on the Yukon River, but in the meantime, I fish other places.

MS. VICK: Yeah, I understand. I fished commercially for 21 years myself. I would like you, especially, to join. Jack is already on the invitational list, but if you're interested in joining our weekly meeting, because you've got all that background in Area M, that would be great. And everything that you said earlier was spot on. So, thank you. So, the Fairbanks AC -- the first fishery subcommittee meeting of the season is going to be on next Monday night. We meet two days before the regular meeting and the regular meeting is the second Wednesday of every month. So, we meet Monday night for the fishery subcommittee. It is a virtual meeting only. It's going to be a very lively discussion. We have to approve the ACRs. And thank you, Tim, for yours. Yours was exceptionally well-written on the hatchery issue. So, I want to thank you for that. I have a feeling it's going to be an issue of whether it should be taken -- not taken out of cycle. That's my only concern on that one. Because we're going to support it no matter what because it's such an important issue.

We -- I won't go into this too much right now, but we have to comment on the ACRs and the ACRs that we submitted. I want to say one thing because I will reiterate it later. And that is that because of the AG's decision this year, the Area M intercept for chum salmon was almost 500,000. That's four times the Bering Sea trawl fishery. We don't get enough press on that. We're pushing for that. I just wrote an op-ed, and I hope it gets sent to ADN soon. That's outrageous. And we knew that was gonna happen. We knew we could have taken bets on that because of the situation down there. And that is only the reported chum. There's a lot of history down in Area M of chum chucking, and there is no -- virtually no surveillance in that area. And Chignik is part of our BBAYK group, so we talk to them quite often, and we're very well aware of the Chignik issues that you face down there. Another issue on the Chinook is that we're not getting a reporting out of Area M for chinook that we need as well. This year, the Board of Fish turned over, I -- they don't require retention of kings right now, which is -- the State was really actually very upset about it because then that messes up our -- the reporting of what we're getting. So, we don't have really any idea of what we're getting for a king bycatch out of Area M. And one of the factors in -- and those of you who fish and have fished under -- probably would have just roared at this. But during the Area M meeting in February, there was a seiner from Area M that got up and -- Tim, you might have seen this. That he was holding up his hands like he was holding up a big king seiner. And he was saying, "We gently take our kings out of the seines, and we put them back in the water, so they get to their spawning grounds." Well, all of us understand that maybe that fish will make it 10 miles at the most. And it's certainly not going to make a couple of thousand miles getting up to the Yukon River.

And then the third thing I wanted to emphasize is the genetics. And we're not getting the genetics out of Area M that we need for both chinook and chum salmon. And we've got a couple of people here in the room who could even speak to that even better than myself. But we have requested the 225 or -- I'm sorry, the 2025 chum genetics. We haven't gotten those yet. And we don't have a realistic idea on our king salmon, we -- and like you discussed earlier on the WASIP studies, that in 2009 we haven't really had a comprehensive study on kings. So, we need to understand and where those kings and chum are going, and one of the reasons the State doesn't want to do this is because that Area M is

-- if you look at the map, it's just a huge swirling area for chinook that are from, not only Alaska, but from Canada and from the Pacific Northwest. And the State doesn't want to highlight that.

So, there again, I want to emphasize that we really appreciate the real assistance that we get from Federal and State agencies at the staffing level, and -- but not in other areas. And I do know that very often, especially with the State level, the staff are not allowed to speak outside of what the commissioner wants them to say. So, I'm going to get that on the record. Anyway, that's all I have for the Fairbanks report. We'll talk about the ACRs later. I do want to say, as some personal comments -- because I do some writing for the Northern Environmental Center on the Ambler Road issue. And I'm writing a series of articles on the challenges to fish. And they're huge. And I -- any of you who have anything that you want to add to those articles or ideas, please call me. Because I would really appreciate the information that you guys have on the ground because, of course, the Koyukuk is one of the biggest areas that's going to be affected by far. And that includes all species of fish, not just salmon. And I'm also doing a lot of writing for other things. And also, as far as the BBAYK, all these things work together. And the ACs as well.

We need a statewide salmon management plan. We desperately need that. We have -- we manage our salmon regionally. And one of the problems that we have with Area M is that it's an intercept fishery. It's the biggest one in Alaska. There's three of them. But that intercept fishery is only visited every three years. And it's not managed in-season. And we all know from all our other fisheries, they're all managed in-season. And of course, they're managed in-river for the Yukon and Kusko. That's a huge problem because salmon go everywhere, and they make a wide berth between Federal and State waters. So, we have this problem between the Feds and the State, and we can't seem to get a good handle on our genetics, on where the salmon are, and how we are going to take care of them. That's the biggest issue right now. All of you have noted before that we've lost those big genetics, and we have -- we're never going to get them back. They're not going to get them back on the Kenai River either. So, as far as taking an aggressive stance towards salmon management, we have to do something that is much more aggressive than we're doing right now, so. And the last thing is, I just want

to have a caution on the on the chum coming back and the chinook, that we really need to be careful. The numbers look good, but those -- that fecundity level, that level of ASL, age, sex, length, may not look good. And that bodes poorly for the future. We don't know -- we don't get enough data on that. And we could really push for getting more data on ASL in order to understand our fecundity levels. So, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Anybody have a question for Gale? Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess this is on. Gale, thank you for your report. I'm just kind of interested, what concerns Fairbanks AC more? You know, I mean, the bycatch numbers in Area M or the hatcheries? You guys must have pretty good conversations about both of them. And do you have any proposals that's going forward this year concerning either one of those, either one of those subjects? Because I mean, to me, the hatcheries is -- you know, I don't have very good feeling about the hatchery or the hatchery fish at all. And I'm just wondering, especially here in Fairbanks, you know, what's concerning to you guys the most? Those numbers, the bycatch numbers in Area M, and are you going to just keep proposing we cut those numbers or -- it'd be interesting. Thank you.

MS. VICK: Through the Chair, Don, excellent questions. There are a lot of factors that affect salmon decline. And of the top five, we consider bycatch, intercept, and hatcheries in that top five. And then there's habitat and ocean conditions. We have put proposals in for hatchery egg reduction for 15 years and have not gotten anywhere with it. And we're probably not gonna get anywhere. I think that's either gonna have to be the legislation or even considering a lawsuit. As far as Area M goes, it's a similar situation. We've been trying to get a reduction in time. We did get a little bit of reduction in time in '23, but in '26, we get a significant reduction that -- and that's a very lucrative -- you're only talking three weeks in that fishery. And that's -- it's a prosecuting sockeye. And so, the bycatch problem for us is chum and chinook salmon. And we -- the proposals that we had that were vacated by the AG were decent proposals and allowed for fishing time, but not the, you know, the enormous time that had -- that the Area M fishermen wanted. And the two sectors that are affected, of course, are the Area M seiners and the -- about the directors. So, we're

going to continue, and we're going to continue to work through the BBAYK to reduce Area M as one of the decline factors. But all of our attention right now is on bycatch in the Bering Sea. We're not paying any attention to Area M and we should be. I know a lot of the people down there. I know you do, too. You're probably related to some of them. And we understand fully the problems that they are facing in terms of not wanting to reduce their fishing time. But half of those fleets are not from that area. Half of those fleets do not live in Sand Point, or King Cove, or False Pass. So, and a lot of those fleets are outside of Alaska, the big seine. And Tim probably knows this better than I do, but the big seine fleets are the highliners and the money makers, when you look at the quartile percentages of what they take, they're largely outside of Alaska. Ownership of our fisheries, whether it's salmon or halibut or whatever, is probably close to being pre-statehood conditions in terms of the ownership of our fisheries. And that's why we can't get traction. Because those politics are driving all these decisions, and money decides, drives the decisions. So, one of the reasons the State of Alaska -- they didn't want to pursue that lawsuit. They dismissed the lawsuit from Area M. But by doing so, they vacated those proposals. So, they gave the Area M people what they wanted, and they didn't give us any chance for discovery. And now the Board of Fish is in this untenable position where -- is this going to happen when the State doesn't like what our position is from now on? So, I'm sorry. That's a tirade. I could go on for a long time. I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Gale. My question is, as Fairbanks AC say that the objective is to catch 7.7 something percent of the Bristol Bay sockeye run. That's what the objective is. Does Fairbanks AC actually looked at moving the fleet from the -- away from Area M's predominantly interception zone, which is the stocks moving through the False Pass and moving into the Bering Sea, and moving the fleet. Bristol Bay ends at Cape Mentschischkopf and move them down to Port Heiden. You move the fleet during this critical time to move them on the north side of the peninsula. They can intercept all their 7.2% of the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon till they're blue in the face. They're not going to nearly have the effect on the chinook passage and the chum salmon passage that's moving north to the AYK's systems. It'll affect some of the chum that go into the -- you know, the Nushagak system, because they will follow that sockeye or go into the Nushagak. So, there's

quite a chum run in the Nushagak system. As there's been discussion about moving the fleet out of the way, move them up onto the north side of the peninsula, during that critical time frame when they're intercepting a lot of that fall -- summer/fall in chinook passage.

MS. VICK: That's an excellent question. And I think it deserves a really big discussion for a future proposal. There's a lot of discussion down in that area about that. And of course, that does affect the north side, and it'll affect Nelson Lagoon in that area. And they have a concern over that. But that's a question to ask. And that's the question that should be asked for the CFEC and for other arenas. So, thank you. That's a good one.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It was super concerning to see that chum salmon go way up like that this year. You can bet your bottom dollar there's a lot of chinook or cod in that also. So, thank you very much. Appreciate that. Oh, Jenny, go ahead.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. PELKOLA: I just have a question. Who are Fairbanks AC? I mean, is it just Fairbanks?

MS. VICK: Thank you for that question, Jenny. We -- essentially, we represent the Fairbanks North Star Borough area, but we encourage -- and we have been for a couple of years, Jack's been in a lot of our meetings. We encourage a lot of the Regional ACs to join us. Because those issues are -- that we work on are -- affect all of our communities.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you for your information, Gale. A lot of good information and congratulate you guys on being so organized and pragmatic on trying to increase the salmon stock. My comment -- and I was watching it this summer because we were under a new regulation where we had to release all the king salmon that weren't mortally injured. And my impression was that less than 5% of the king salmon survives based on what I observed. And I have read some articles on some other fisheries, such as Columbia River, where they're fishing kings in tangle nets. And I believe they're trying to harvest hatchery kings and release wild kings. And they have like a resuscitation

box. They have to flow water through this box for 5 or 10 minutes or something like that. And there's no -- nobody's doing that kind of practice in the Gulf of Alaska right now with any of this king release. And I feel like the salmon management group -- we've asked -- this AC has asked and talked about it a lot with -- like, 10 years ago when the Lower Yukon was still fishing kings, and they were trying all these different dip nets and beach seines and all this catch-and-release stuff. And Jack and I kept saying there's like -- you can't count those fish released and alive without doing a study on it. And we never got any traction with the Department, to -- or a research group that wanted to study that. But my basic statement is, any kind of king salmon or whatever -- any kind of salmon that's been molested through any kind of harvest method is probably injured beyond its ability to survive.

MS. VICK: Right.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Live boxes were found to be, you know, with wheels -- live boxes were found to be highly detrimental to releasing fish. There's a disentanglement studies done by Dr. Schindler.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Schindler, right. Mm-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: .....down in Bristol Bay, all those dropouts and that "Oh, they get out to go up the river." No, they don't, they just lay there and they don't even turn color, they just die. And so, when they're molested like that, they have a high likelihood. And that's what we wanted with the beach seining thing on the Yukon, was to stuff some of the esophageal instruments down them and let them go, see how many -- what they actually do. Do they actually go down the same river? Do they turn around and go back up? But that would have cost too much money. Nobody wanted to do that. But they're just making the assumption that even small mesh gear, six-inch gear -- if you got too small a net, the fish drive in, they pinch their gill plate, they die, they drop. Everybody that gillnet fish knows this is happening. But the general public seems to think that they bounce off the net, and they swim happily up the river. It's like, "No, that's not what happens"

MS. VICK: No, they don't do that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, I saw on one Yukon River salmon emergency order this summer where they said that fishermen should use the term fish-friendly fish wheel. There's no such thing as a fish-friendly fish wheel. They're all -- so, apparatus of death.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, thanks so much, Gale. And we'll look for you for this ACR sale.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: ACR sale. Mm-hmm. Yeah, thank you everybody.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Jim, come on up.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Jim Simon. I'm with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, but I'm just speaking on my own behalf. I really appreciated the discussion about trying to meet with the Eastern Interior RAC, and it reminds me actually of 23 years ago, a Tri-RAC meeting in Wasilla, which I think is where I first met Chief Walker and Chairman Reakoff, and maybe some others, but the memories are a little fuzzy. Back in those days, there was also the YAC, for those of you who might remember, where it was a committee, basically of all three Yukon River Regional Advisory Councils that had a charter, et cetera, if I understand it correctly under ANILCA Section 805(a)(2), I think is the statute that authorizes such groups. And, you know, just as your charter has to be renewed, you know, so does that. And it's my understanding that it just basically petered out. There may be some old-timers at OSM who remember more of the details. I wasn't savvy enough at that time to really absorb all of that information, but as Member Pelkola and others who have been serving on these issues for a couple decades plus, like myself, it takes a lot of time to really get the big picture.

And so, my real point of -- my second point, to try to stay only on non-agenda items, is the issue with the State overselections that Chairman Reakoff was talking about. This has been an issue in my home, my childhood region in the Ahtna territory for

many years. And it is, you know, it's surprising how many years it took me to even know about it, that there's all these Federal lands out there way above the State's entitlement that they've filed for, which puts them off the table for the Federal subsistence priority, even though they are Federal lands. And it also speaks, you know, I have not been at this Council meeting for a couple of years because I have had different roles recently, so it's good to be back. I did hear only because I was working in my home region last year that the -- lifted -- the repeal of the PLOs, 5150, et cetera, are headed south of the Yukon River also, in the next year or two. And a now-former employee with the Federal service had given me some insight into the fact that all of that paperwork began last year already to do it. And that the Secretary of Interior, as I understand it, you know, wanted to know what the State wanted. And they, of course, want all of those lands along the pipeway corridor, even in excess of their entitlement. And again, reportedly, the Secretary of Interior was okay with that.

So, I think it's definitely time for -- you know, Chairman Reakoff, I'm sure you've probably already had conversations with Karen Linnell, the Executive Director of the Ahtna Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, as well as on the Ahtna Incorporated Board to have these conversations because you've lived the experience that is about to take place in the Ahtna territory, as well as south of the river within the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Doyon. Doyon's -- one of Doyon's attorney has been aware of this for over a year or so, but these are all serious things. And the other issue is the best available science and something that Chairman Reakoff spoke about, like with respect to genetic stock identification. I first became a proponent of trying to get more tributary-specific and as fine a scale resolution on salmon stock of origins information, you know, more than 20 years ago. And it was sort of my entry to understand that agencies do make decisions about scientific information they do not want to have. And that is sort of difficult to juggle with the rhetoric that we hear all the time of the best available science. And we know from the Sitka Herring Protectors litigation that a portion of it that went all the way to the Alaska Supreme Court has told us straight up that the best available science means that information that the Commissioner of Fish and Game chooses to share with decision-makers. And that's also very concerning, and that that approach does not fall counter to the

sustainable -- sustained yield principles in the State constitution.

So, I think it was the member of the public before me, Gale, who mentioned that some of these issues in regulation have to be addressed in statute. And I think it is -- you know, we're -- as a State, we have come full circle as to why we became a State with outside interests having a very significant impact on the ability of Alaskans to feed themselves salmon. It's time to revisit that history, I think, and one of the things that some of you have probably -- are gonna get sick of hearing me say it, but the very first Commissioner of Fish and Game after statehood, Clarence Anderson, in 1971 -- in 1961, which is -- he told all of the area salmon managers that in order to rebuild salmon populations, salmon stocks, he expected every manager to meet the escapement goals. And that if a manager over-escapes salmon, they might get a bunch of grief from commercial fishermen and others, but that if their management actions resulted in an under-escapement, they would be fired. And I don't know, we should maybe get some real neutral, like academic scientists, sort of revisiting that context. I mean, I think that over-escapement may have an issue, but it seems that a lot of the science suggests that that is maybe an overblown rhetorical issue to promote the financial industry. And I think I'm done. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Jim. Any questions?

(No response)

At this point, the Yukon River system, the trophic levels of the system have been decimated. You know, we got chinook stocks, fall chum stocks, summer chum stocks, those bring lots and lots of nutrient to the system. So, they use this over-escapement scenario all the time down in Bristol Bay, but heck, they just got overwhelmed. The fleet completely was overwhelmed. The systems were way oversupplied, it puts a lot of nutrient into the water and the runs continue to come back large. But you under-escape, bad things happen. And if you go to this level with the kind of a flushing action that we've had from climate change, it's decimated the systems to where the point where whitefish and other species have to be taking a beating. They have to be taking a beating because those stocks are used to having all this phytoplankton, zooplankton blooming off

of those dead carcasses. Skilak Lake -- many years ago, Skilak Lake was a Kenai Peninsula system that was -- they were trying to get every fish they could in there, it wouldn't come back. So, they literally -- the Department of Fish and Game flew with helicopters with fertilizer and dumped it into the water. And it made the run come back. It caused the phytoplankton zooplankton to bloom and the run came back. That's the -- they had to basically give it a shock of the heart to get that run to come back. Going to under-escapements is really, really a bad thing. And the Department of Fish and Game should remember this. Skilak Lake is a glaring example how fish traps and various harvest methodologies wipe those populations out, and how they had to rebuild those with -- literally, with fertilizer.

So, that's what's been happening in the upper river parts of the Yukon River system. They're under-escape for so long. Over-escapement is not going to do anything to it because we need to get -- we need to start rebuilding the amount of trophic back into the upper river systems. We're never going to see large fish again if we don't start doing this stuff. We need to have fisheries resource enhancement development in 1974. That's where hatcheries came from. It's not hatchery enhancement. It's now dominating the trophic level of the entire North Pacific, is what the hatcheries are actually doing. It's not enhancing the resource. It's actually destroying the wild resource. It's exchanging the food resource and giving that to the hatchery fish. And you see the dead salmon in front of the hatcheries of Valdez by the hundreds of thousands of dead pink salmon laying, doing nothing for the landscape. They don't go up the river. They don't spawn up the streams. They don't feed bears. They don't do anything. They just die in the ocean. The crabs and stuff eat them. Now, that's a -- over-escapement is -- escapements have to be met, otherwise your runs will continue to decline. It's graphic and a lot of different -- because they had to recover these properties. And they did it strategically at statehood because the hatcheries had decimated the run strengths, and they caused over -- under-escapements for so long around the river. But Bristol Bay was a sailboat fishery. You couldn't out-fish the sockeye in Bristol Bay. That's why it maintained itself. Because it was a sailboat fishery. There was -- actually, that was one of the fisheries where they actually had management to reduce the impacts to the -- to overharvest. Other fisheries, they didn't. So -- oh, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was very moving, Jim. I mean, and -- I was just thinking here, just all this time that we have put in so much hours, so many days, so many years, we've talked about it. I'm going to put a question to you. I mean, maybe it'd be hard, maybe it'd be easy, I don't know. We're under a Republican governor right now, and how and why aren't we moving forward with this on all these issues? Seems like everything we do is wrong or it's not into our policy to look at the issues that are bigger than money. We have a Democrat who's running for governor, I think his name is TKC [sic]. And he's the only person that came out to rural Alaska and came down the river with a boat. He went to the Yukon. He came down, stopped in every village and talked to people. He didn't talk to a lot of people, but his name is mentioned now. Because I talked to the tribal chiefs down in the Lower Yukon River. And they said, "TKC is a Democrat." I said, "Yes. But you have to look at what the Republican governor did for us."

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're going to have to stop this conversation because it's getting into politics again.

MR. WALKER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're under the Hatch Act.

MR. WALKER: Oh, we're voting on.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we don't want to go to endorsement of political candidates or anything like that. That's not what we're supposed to be doing. I hate this -- to do that, but that's -- I don't want this.....

MR. WALKER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: .....Department of Interior.....

MR. WALKER: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: .....oversight. We don't want to get crossed out with stuff like that.

MR. SIMON: Mr. Chair, if I could respond to the first point that.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. SIMON: .....Chief Walker mentioned, just given, you know, all these years that many of us have been working in this system, I think Member Kriska really summed that up pretty darn well. I, you know, as a scientist and someone who has worked in professional positions for, you know, many well more years than maybe I want to admit; 27, I think, and this system -- as you know, Professor Carrie Stevens from the Department of Tribal Governance at UAF often shares in her classrooms, these systems were not designed to support Tribes and Tribal citizens. They're designed actually to do the opposite. And I think Tommy summed that up really well. And for someone who has been trying to work on supporting Tribal natural resource capacity development for 27 years, I'm pretty demoralized because these systems don't have a memory. The people -- all the great people that we have working on the Yukon right now, you know, on the river, the managers, you know, both the State and the Federal in-season managers are high-quality human beings, as well as I believe salmon managers. But the systems within they work, which I spent 14 years inside the Department of Fish and Game, they, you know, I just -- I'll speak for me. I have watched the continual erosion of the original intent behind the State subsistence law, ANILCA Title VIII, you know, all of these issues continue to be kicking the can down the road from statehood, to ANCSA, to ANILCA, as embedded within all of those processes was supposed to be ensuring the protection of Alaska Native subsistence. What's now called subsistence. And what I am pleased to see more of is people abandoning that word and talking about ways of life. And ANILCA Section 801 lays it out pretty clearly, right? And so, when I was talking with one of the deputy solicitors for DOI, I was pointing that out. And he was like, “Jim, that's only a policy. There's no meat in Section 801 of ANILCA.” It was just the policy decision. And then one of my home region, childhood region's elders, Roy Ewan, Sr., four days before his

passing, he was at a Tribal Governance class in the Native Village of Tazlina Tribal Hall. And he told all of us the story of how ANILCA became a rural priority at the last minute, basically. It was an Alaska Native priority. And that's -- but in order to not have opposition from the State, it became a rural priority. And now, because of these short time memories of people elected in or hired in, and then they go and take all the experience with them, you know, now we have the State of Alaska attempting to undo the rural priority. You know, because -- you know, someone kids or wife can't go home to hunt because no longer rural. And well, it's sort of a dog chasing its tail kind of a situation. And yet in the meantime, there continues to be no recognition by either the State or Federal government that ANCSA only extinguished aboriginal title to hunting and fishing with no compensation. The compensation in ANCSA was for land, not hunting and Tribal hunting, and fishing rights, or aboriginal hunting, and fishing rights.

And a former now, a DOI solicitor who had defended Katie John, you know, in all of the litigation, I mean, he has many publications about how Alaskan tribes have Tribal hunting and fishing rights. It's just -- they're not recognized. And so, I really appreciate Chief Walker's comments, you know, going first in giving his regional reports. It's -- I am able to try to bridge it because as a salmon conservationist, of course, I'm concerned. Even though we had all these salmon come back greater than the State or Federal managers anticipated, we're still meeting no king goals in either country, as far as I know and as far as the data suggests. And yeah, we might be getting a little bit of fall chum back and it was good to have some selected harvested of summer chum, but we're still missing millions of chum. You know, it's not like that it's back. And this continual decline as Chairman Reakoff was talking about, you know, I'm happy that the Tanana chum -- fall chum run is so good because I actually saw 10 eagles just over the weekend at my place upriver from the Salcha, where there's a fall chum spawning bed just near the old Salchaket fall fish camp. And it's been eight years since I've seen any congregation of eagles at that place. So, that's a really good encouraging sign to me personally. But the fact that we are not meeting king goals, and I believe 2025, both at Pilot Station -- I can talk more about that during fish report. Sorry, getting me going. But smallest size documented on the river in 2025. We're not

meeting escapement goals and there's no decomposing carcasses to feed the fry for the next generation. That's not helping. There's very little good news for chinook salmon, unfortunately.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I agree. I think our Council members are probably hungry now. So, we're gonna break for lunch. And so, we got five after one. How about back here at 2? Is that good, Nissa? 2 o'clock?

(No audible response)

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're going to bring the meeting back to order. We've got kind of a lot of agenda. Looking at the next agenda items is under category 11, Developing Recommendations For Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews. The Regional Councils and Closure Reviews is Cory Graham. There's three closure reviews for the Kanuti, Bonanza, and Jim River. I'm going to state right up front, these areas were conveyed to the State of Alaska under the state conveyance. These are no longer under federal subsistence jurisdiction. And so, I am inclined to bundle these closure reviews to lift the closures because they're not valid anymore. And just to devote those forward to the Federal Subsistence Board to be in the, basically, in the -- not -- the Federal Board would basically not have to just take a blanket action with us with no contest from the State. Cory, I would like you to give us an overview of these closure reviews, these came about with the federal subsistence process and the bag limits changes, but just a brief overview of these three closure reviews. Go ahead, Cory.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, Members of the Council, my name is Cory Graham. I'm a Fisheries Biologist with OSM. So, as Jack just said, we're gonna, kind of bundle the three closure reviews. So, we have the Kanuti River Closure, FCR27-01, Bonanza River Closure which is 27-02, and the Jim River Closure which is 27-03. And sorry, I'm having chats pop up I gotta mute. So, all three cover salmon subsistence fishery closures along the Dalton Highway Corridor near the communities of Wiseman and Coldfoot. Wiseman residents traditionally harvested small amounts of salmon locally, but recently they've harvested salmon in more distant

locations, including elsewhere on the Yukon and in the Copper River, at least in part due to these closures. So, kind of turning to biology, we have really limited information on salmon in all three of these systems. We had some aerial surveys down in the Jim River, but in general we don't have abundance of estimates. However, zooming out, Yukon River chinook and chum salmon have been in a period of prolonged decline resulting in our significant conservation concerns. We did see that runs improved somewhat this year, which we were happy to see, but they still aren't where we want them to be.

So now, returning to the closures themselves, salmon fishing in all three of these systems have been closed since the beginning of the federal program. State subsistence fishing for salmon is also closed. State sport fishing for salmon is allowed in regulation outside of the Dalton Highway Corridor. Although when the runs have been poor, the state has closed sport fishing and the federal manager has closed to non-federally qualified subsistence users. So, there really hasn't been any sport fishing happening. But this does mean that based on regulations currently in place, we have a situation where we could have a state sport fishery open, but we can't have a federal subsistence fishery open. And another important consideration is that the extent of the federal closure areas are reduced after the State recently selected lands in the Dalton Highway Utility Corridor, excuse me. So, there still are small slivers of federal land, but they're much smaller. They're really difficult to access. They're no longer road accessible. So, we don't expect there to be a lot of harvest or people trying to fish there, I should say. So, with that in mind, OSM's preliminary conclusion is to rescind all three of the closures. Removing the closures would provide a federal subsistence priority in the area, consistent with Title VIII of ANILCA. And yeah, I think that pretty much covers it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the preliminary conclusion is to rescind the closures. I concur with OSM and bundle them. The distant lands that would be -- still remain inside of these drainages are so hard to get to. Nobody ever goes to them. And the salmon that -- it's doubtful that there are any salmon that actually would reach the Upper Kanuti, the Upper Bonanza Creek drainage or the Jim River drainage, but it's possible that nobody is going to go to those. In those drainages, these particular drainages in particular, salmon was never harvested there because

they're on the spawning ground. And so, they're literally laying eggs. And so, they're not actually -- weren't actually taken there.

There's subsistence harvest at Wiseman for salmon, because we still got about 60 miles of drainage to go upstream of us, where there's some springs and so forth, up to 60 miles. So, there are salmon that would go up the middle fork of the Koyukuk drainage, but not in these particular drainages. So, these were valid closures in their inception, but now the State regulations does not allow harvest of salmon in the Utility Corridor. So, you can't harvest salmon within five miles of each side of the road. So, that they will, basically -- the salmon closure will still be in effect under State regulations. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to bundle all three FCR-2701, -02 and -03 as one motion to rescind them or repeal those from Federal regulations.

MR. HONEA: I move.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Moved by Don.

MS. PELKOLA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. Any further discussion on those?

MR. HONEA: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Questions called. Those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Thank you, Cory. And so, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, Kristen Morrow.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, this is Kristen Morrow. I'm an Anthropologist with OSM, and Cory and I are going to be walking through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the information needs for your region in this upcoming funding cycle. Before we get into talking

about those information needs, I wanted to lead off with a quick refresher and an update on the Monitoring Program itself to help contextualize why we're having this discussion today. So, as a reminder, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, which we also often refer to as the FRMP, is a response to Section 812 of ANILCA, which requires the land management agencies in Alaska to study subsistence uses and to seek out, consult with, and incorporate specialized knowledge of rural residents who depend on those resources. The Monitoring Program, which is a funding program, fulfills this research by providing funds for research and monitoring projects that generate scientific and traditional knowledge needed to manage subsistence fisheries resources responsibly, while also increasing engagement with federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native organizations. So, a core part of this program is the FRMP works with the Board, with OSM and the Councils to carry out these broader goals outlined in ANILCA. This is an interagency, interdisciplinary approach that aims to make sure the research that's funded has practical value for on the ground managers and reflects local and traditional ecological knowledge.

Funding is awarded every two years in this program. But before we announce a funding opportunity, Councils from each region contribute to identifying the most important fisheries information needs in their area. And projects that are funded by this program have to address at least one of those information needs. So, the basic idea here is that people will be applying for funding to support projects that directly address information gaps that community members and land managers have flagged as most urgent. After people submit their proposals, they're reviewed by a Technical Review Committee, commented on by all of the Regional Advisory Councils, and then reviewed by the Board. The Board finalizes what we call a monitoring plan, which authorizes which projects receive funding.

The funding application process is competitive and not every proposal that is submitted ends up receiving funding. And applicants can choose which of the information needs they wish to address through their research. So, what that means for the Council is that there's never any guarantee that every project on your list of information needs will end up getting funded. Shortly after your meeting last March, the 2026 to 2029 modern plan was finalized, and this plan was disappointing for many. The 2026 funding fell far short of what we'd hoped.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I stop you for one second there? I want the Council to get on Tab 1 in our supplemental packet here. So, we don't get too far behind. It's on the supplemental packet. It's on the supplemental packet. There's two. Maybe the other guy, that smaller packet there. It's got the same. Tab 1. Yeah, that one. Tab 1.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Kristen Morrow, that Tab 1 is the list of draft information needs, which we aren't quite there yet. But getting there very soon.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I want people to get there.

MS. MORROW: Yes, I will pause until we're ready. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I think it can continue.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Kristen Morrow. So, in the last monitoring or funding cycle that we had, we'd hoped for $9 million in funding and we had 5.3. So, our funding was much less than we'd hoped. And as a result of that, we were not able to fund as many projects as we would have hoped. And for the Yukon region, we received five proposals for funding and only one of them received funding. And that was for a project titled Application of Mixed Stock Analysis for Yukon River Chum Salmon. And for the Kuskokwim River, there were a total of eight proposals submitted and only one was funded. And that was a project titled Salmon River of the Pitka Fork Chinook Salmon Escapement Monitoring. So, before we move into.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I stop you there for a second.....

MS. MORROW: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: When we had this All-Chairs meeting at the Park Service before the Federal Assistance Board, there was discussion with the Councils about this funding reduction. But then Southeast had its own pot of money from the Forest

Service and there was discussion about breaking them out as one region with their own funding sources to give more opportunity for projects for the other nine regions. Was that part of this funding discussion?

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's a great question. I don't have any information about whether that change will be made. I haven't heard any discussion about that. I'm going to pause and see if Cory or anyone else online might be able to speak to that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, Robbin might know what's going on with that but continue.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Kristen Morrow. I was actually going to pause at this point and see if the council members had any sort of broad questions about the program before we jump into talking about your information needs for this upcoming cycle.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have reviewed this Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Does the Council have any questions about how the program is working and what it's actually accomplishing? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais. Do you think -- can you explain what happened to the funding and is it going to be at this reduced level going forward?

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Gervais, through the Chair, Kristen Morrow. In terms of what happened to the funding, the budget is set and we do what we can. In terms of what we can expect in the future, we are anticipating likely continued low levels of funding. But of course, as Jack was just discussing, the Council sort of voicing their support for that program. So, we are optimistically hoping for more funding, but I think, realistically, we can continue to expect low levels of funding, which the Council may want to consider today as they're selecting their information needs for this upcoming cycle.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Cory.

MR. GRAHAM: this is Cory Graham for the record. I just wanted to clarify. So, when we're talking about Southeast funding, their allocation, they get essentially a hundred percent of their money through the Forest Service. DOI funds really aren't used there so we wouldn't expect them to be used in other, you know, be available for other reasons -- regions.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The discussion point revolved around at that All RAC meeting is that some of this FRMP money would actually be used for Southeast projects. And so, that was what the discussion was since, you know, the other nine regions don't have a, really a small pot of money this year, whether they would not take any of the funding from the other nine regions this year. And that was in, you know, discussion with the Southeast Regional Council Chair was there also. So, I would like a response as to that. None of the highly coveted funding that's currently available is going to Southeast where they had, like, I forget how many million it was, it was a bunch of money.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair.

MR. AYERS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go right ahead.

MR. AYERS: Hi, thank you, Mr. Chair and Members of the Council. This is Scott Ayers with OSM. I can speak to this a little bit more directly. Thanks for the question. For this last cycle, and in most cycles, there's an allocation of funding between the various different regions. And much of that is spread between whether or not it's DOI lands or USDA lands that are in question. For Southeast, all of the areas that are open for subsistence through the federal program are USDA lands. And so, they have allocated funding directly from the pot of money that they get for subsistence to those areas when it comes to FRMP. Whereas for the rest of the state, excluding Southcentral, there's more of a divide, or it's all DOI lands. In Southcentral, there's obviously the Chugach National Forest, as well as all the other areas that are parks and refuges and what have you. So, there's a little bit of a divide there. And it depends a little bit from year to year on how much funding the Forest Service has available to contribute to that side. And it also depends on what projects are submitted and how they scored since this is all a competitive process. Let me know if you have any additional questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. That clarifies that some more. Thank you. So, continue.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the record, Kristen Morrow. So, I think at this point, we're ready to start discussing the information needs for your region for the upcoming funding cycle. As a quick reminder, there are three types of research projects that can be funded in this program. There's harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, and stock status and trends projects. The harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge projects provide information directly about subsistence users, their harvest practices, and their knowledge. And the stock status and trend projects address topics like fish abundance, migration, and behavior in specific fisheries. There are some constraints to be aware of as we're identifying the research needs that are important for you all. First of all, we can't fund projects for species or areas that are outside of federal jurisdiction. And so, that is a big limitation that we need to be aware of. It means, for example, we can't fund projects focused on marine waters or exclusively marine species. Some other types of projects that we're not able to fund are those focused on habitat protection, mitigation, restoration and enhancement, hatchery propagation, restoration enhancement and supplementation, and containment assessment, evaluation and monitoring. And that's really just because those projects are most appropriately addressed through the land management agencies themselves. And these projects should be focused on providing information to land managers to help manage subsistence resources. So, with that in mind, we can get into the draft list of information needs for your region, and that is what's on tab one of your supplemental materials. The Western Interior Council.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Page 6.

MS. MORROW: Thank you. The Western Interior Region spans two fisheries management areas, the Yukon and the Kuskokwim management areas. In the past, your Council has contributed to the Kuskokwim region list of information needs, but that did not happen this cycle, because you don't currently have any council members from the Kuskokwim region. Volunteers for that

group have not met yet, so we don't have a draft list of updated information needs for the Kuskokwim region to share with you at this time, but I wanted to pause and see if the Council would like to provide any general comments for those volunteers to consider when they do work on their list.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Council members, comments on Kusko River issues. Since we have been at a lack for membership from the Kusko River drainage and have been wanting to get representation. That's not happened. The Kusko River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission has been doing a great job on nominating various projects. Kevin Whitworth, who was on our Council, is now the director of that so, I have a fairly high confidence that that entity can suffice for our comments. I have their performance on working with Federal staff and balancing subsistence harvest and escapement has done very well. And I'm well pleased with the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission's performance. Any other comments regarding Kuskokwim?

(No response)

No? Go ahead.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Kristen Morrow. Okay. So, volunteers from the Western Interior, Eastern Interior, and Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Councils worked with OSM staff to develop this draft list of information needs on page 6 of Tab 1. In this iteration of this process, the volunteers decided to condense some of the existing information needs into a shorter list. And part of that was thinking about the expectation for funding in this upcoming cycle. The volunteers also felt very strongly that any projects submitted in this upcoming funding cycle should be grounded in community engagement and include things like community-based monitoring, co-management, and incorporation of local and traditional ecological knowledge related to fisheries. And so, that's sort of what went into generating that list you all are looking at now. If you'd like, I can read through them one by one out loud, or I can give the Council a minute to just review those materials. And then the next step of the process is to open up for public comment on this draft list.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Council, have you read through these various bullet points here? Or

would you like Kristen to go through each one and then ask questions independently on each bullet point? Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Apparently, you already have a committee to do that. I mean, from this Council, from the Western Interior, on this committee to go through this?

MS. MORROW: Thank you for that question. For the record, Kristen Morrow, there were Council members from the Western Interior Council, the Eastern Interior Council and the Yukon Kuskokwim Council present at this sort of pre-meeting that we hold in the summer before the funding cycle. And so, we have volunteer members from the Councils get together ahead of the fall meeting, discuss the information needs and come up with this draft list. And then what we're doing now is reviewing that list, revising it. We can add to it, we can subtract from it, discuss it, edit as needed, and then finalize it. But there were members from the Western Council present.

MR. HONEA: Okay, thank you. Mr. Chair, I'm still kind of confused on this whole thing here. Are you selecting people from these committees that have to do with some of these projects within their area or is it relegated to, like, Kuskokwim or something? Because we're talking about a lot of projects here and it's time consuming. I don't – you know, if we were to go through this, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don, and who was our members on the committee? That would be Jenny. And then it was Robert. Was it Robert? I thought -- oh, Tim. Tim was on there. Okay. So, you went through these. You want to give us an overview of what you actually were doing there, Tim and Jenny?

MS. MORROW: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Sort of clarify-- you got a comment? Go ahead.

MS. MORROW: For the record, Kristen Morrow. One brief clarification. We are not selecting projects. We are identifying a list of topics that could be researched in the next couple of years. And so, this list determines what projects might be funded, but there's no guarantee, necessarily. It depends on who

applies. So, we aren't selecting projects for funding at this stage. We're generating ideas about what could be studied.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, when you have your joint meeting, do you -- these were the ideas that were floated to the surface. This was a kind of consensus with the various EIRAC and YKD on the Yukon River management informational needs? And so, is that a synopsis of what happened, Tim?

MR. GERVAIS: Uh-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Jenny? Oh. So yeah, Jenny and Tim were part of this process to get these subjects here. These -- some of these are probably have more merit than others. And so, did you want to continue, Kristen?

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I could read them out loud if that's helpful, or we could move on to -- we're doing this cycle as providing an opportunity for public comment on this list for anyone who may wish to provide some insight on information needs. So, however the Council would like to proceed.

CHAIRPERSONB REAKOFF: Okay. So, these are some -- these are the projects that were thought of by the committee. Now, you need comments from the public about their feelings on these particular subjects. And so, do we have anybody in the room that wants to speak to these issues here? And the public -- can the public members be given copies of this if they're wanting to speak to these issues? Where are they?

MS. PILCHER: Copies of -- this is Nissa Pilcher, for the record. Copies are available online. It does appear that all of the hard copies are no longer here, and they are in the supplemental material, so they wouldn't be in the meeting book, unfortunately. I did post a link in the meeting chat, and if you'd like, I can try to get them up on the screen as well. It'll take some shuffling now, but we'll go to try.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, do you just take a picture of these? Just take a picture of these copies. If you want to speak to these issues, it's not going to be in the book. Then you can see the list. And I do want public comments on these. So, did you want to...?

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: If you take a picture of a list, then you can look at it real easily and analyze. Did you, is it out in the chat also?

MS. PILCHER: Yes. Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: If you log into this meeting's chat, you can see it there. Another way of getting that. So, Nissa's got you filled out. Go right ahead Jim.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, my name is Jim Simon, I'm the Subsistence Policy Research and Co-management Strategy Director for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I'm just taking a quick look at this online. And yeah, I really appreciate the work that the group put together on this. One thing that's been frustrating for me since the last Yukon River Panel meeting is that there's no more funding support for the chinook salmon mixed stock. You know, the genetics to support chinook salmon mixed stock analysis in-season, as far as I know. And I don't, I see that in the third bullet for chum salmon, but just because of the seven-year agreement and moratorium for rebuilding purposes for chinook salmon, I don't think that means we shouldn't be still doing that analysis so that we know where those chinook are returning to. And some of the information gained recently from the genetic analysis that had been done after the season was over, it looks like there should have been a lot more chinook salmon reaching the Canadian border. And I think that's something we should keep our eyes on. So, it'd be nice, unless I'm missing it in the list, to get genetics for chinook back on the list. Because I know it has been a priority for many years. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Back in, I think it was 2009 through 2013, I was under contract with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to take genetic samples. Danny Evetson was running that project. And I took as many -- the chinook were in decline, I went to the Jim River and I had a license to snag or any way I could get a hold of a king salmon, carcass or otherwise, and clicked those pubic fin tines. I collected a bunch of those, mainly on summer chum, is what I was catching a lot of. And I got genetic samples from the Middle Fork, Koyukuk, and the Jim River drainage. And those,

there are DNA out there in the department's -- in their archive, apparently. And that was, that project was running all over the State of Alaska at that time because they were building this DNA profile of the whole Yukon River. And they really wanted some up-river genetics. They were taking them off of Henshaw, maybe Gisasa and some of the other drainages in the Koyukuk but I'm in the upper drainage. They wanted to know what was getting up there.

What's his name? Kevin Farley was -- he was asking me about where I actually found those. He returned to those sites this summer. He found zero summer chum while I had fairly significant presence of summer chum on the Jim River. He could find zero summer chum or like one spawned out carcass, and he only found a pair of chinook on the entire Jim River. He found none of the summer chum on the Middle Fork where I had actually collected. So, at this point, though, some of those stocks are really low, but there is genetic information in the archive of the Department of Fish and Game. I'm sure. I know they were doing them on the Tozitna drainage and a whole bunch of different drainages. Of course, the Chena and the Salcha, there's probably mountains of data on that. But there are archives of these genetic samples of chinook stocks. And I was targeting chinook and summer chum. There are no fall chum in the upper drainage, where I'm at. There just -- there are fall chum below Jim River mouth in the South Fork Drainage, the Alatna River Drainage, the Malamute Fork, and down at Helpmejack Creek. There are salmon that come -- chum salmon that come in late September and October. They are fall chum, but their genetic signature is related to summer chum, but they show up late.

So, there are other geno stocks that are basically unknown or little understood, these fall chums that come into the Henshaw as a summer chum. It's like a major summer chum run. But there are other fall chum stocks that are present on the South Fork and the Alatna River drainage and actually in the John River drainage also. A lot of those stocks are really close to where the Ambler Road crosses, also. Because that's the alignment is really close to those upwelling waters is where those are at. So, this genetic stock analysis stuff, I think is a very important issue. So, that we know, like Tim was saying, if we got some genetic stock markers out in the Area M, where are these fish going? Well, we get -- the more data we have, the more we know

where these fish are going. If they're affecting a recovering population. I refer to these as now as recovering populations. Near extinction populations in the Upper Koyukuk, we need to know if they're affecting those when those actually are coming up, which would have to leave the ocean fairly early in the spring migration. The further up they go, I'm 1,186 miles from the mouth of the Yukon River in Wiseman, Alaska. I'm with, the Jim River drainage is at least 1,075 from the from the ocean. So, they have to leave fairly early in the -- an our esteemed elder that we had here, Benedict Jones told us that the quarter point of the chinook run at the mouth was the Koyukuk stocks and he used to open commercial harvest at the quarter point. And he was decrying that practice because it was highly affecting the chinook stocks by being commercially harvested, targeting them because that stock was discreet as far as he was concerned. And he was a respected elder.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I agree with him.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That was a great prelude to my next comment regarding the PINs because I certainly was not suggesting eliminating the chum discrete stock analysis with genetics because, you know, the Fish Commission had really great in-weekly in-season management meetings with the Federal Subsistence Program as well as the State managers and we got to see some of the, probably the results of your sample collection, actually, Jack. I'm speculating on that point. But the fact that there is so much genetic diversity in the summer and fall chum populations is a good sign. And, as you've pointed out, we need to conserve that diversity in order to make sure that our chum continue to be, you know, climate resilient.

And so, I'd like to see more sampling occur. And we're actually had some conversations about how the Fish Commission might be able to help fund some research to get more specific genetic information throughout the run in order to have more management precision and accuracy to try -- because there has already been said in in Council Member Reports, you know, there were a lot of chum that came through, both -- more than expected for both summer chum and fall chum. But there wasn't sufficient harvestable surplus on the American stock to be able to have limited fishery opportunities because we, you know, in most areas, there

aren't permits, you know, that then can have a harvest limit imposed on them in order to not overfish. I guess the department has tried to collect genetics on chum in the past, in throughout the, you know, by sampling subsistence caught fish and they really didn't get sufficient sample sizes on that, but it's one of the things that I hope we can continue discussions with -- between the State and Federal programs of how the Fish Commission might be able to help and have resources, you know, to help subsistence fishermen not be burdened with that opportunity as they're trying to put up fish for the winter, by maybe training staff or having our staff go out to help with that effort. And anyhow, so, I like both the conduct a community-based monitoring aspects of what these draft PINs are as well as the chum genetics. So, thank you, just wanted to explain why I am supportive of those PINs being in there.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you.

MR. SIMON: And a lot of those, you know, some of what I've just put on the record. There is something that we have yet to be able to have robust conversations with our Executive Council or our full body of commissioners. Because our recent Executive Council meeting had to be canceled because of -- I forget why, actually, but. Yeah, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. Olivia.

MS. IRWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Members of the Board, For the record, my name is Olivia Irwin. I work for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission as their Project and Watershed Operations Manager. I apologize, Mr. Chair, I didn't get to see the list beforehand, so I just wanted to speak to some research needs that I think would be beneficial. I concur with my.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Would you like to see my book?

MS. IRWIN: Sure, thank you, Jack. I'd like to concur with the comments of my colleague on some of the genetics and the importance of understanding the discrete stocks within our river system and the drainages. And specifically understanding the genetics

of those tributary specific runs, many of which we don't have a great understanding of those numbers at this time. With State funding, you know, always on the -- never know how state funding is gonna go for research needs. There is a lot of weird and counting data that has projects that have gone underfunded and we no longer have escapement goals for those tributaries. And oftentimes the reason why escapement goals are taken off the books for those tributaries is because we just have no way -- the state has no means or methods to count those and to understand those numbers. So, it's not for a lack of needing that information, it's for a lack of funding. And I think that the more that we can begin to prioritize understanding these more discrete stocks, we can have a better idea of the ecosystem as a whole.

This summer, I was able to go out with Charlie Wright, the Chair of the EIRAC, quite a few times throughout Nenana to many of the tributaries. And what we saw were very healthy spawning grounds. And we were seeing lots of fry. We're not -- I can't say for sure those were chum or chinook fry. But the spawning grounds were healthy. And I think that there's a false narrative that has been going around about our waters and our spawning grounds not being healthy or conducive for spawning, which again, places the blame back on in-river users for our spawning grounds. And so, I think that surveys of -- spawning ground surveys -- I recognize that habitat -- sounds like habitat isn't funded by this. But spawning success, I think is very integral and so carcass surveys are a great way to do that, as Mr. Chair was mentioning before. We have really great examples of tribes doing this type of work in our First Nation relatives over there, coming together and doing a lot of carcass surveys. And I think it's important for us to understand the health of the salmon when they get to our local areas, so that we can ensure, you know, when we are looking elsewhere, seeing where the other problems are, we know that we're taking the best care of them at home that we can. And when they're returning to their spawning grounds that they have a reasonable opportunity for success. So, that's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: My question is what drainage were you with Charlie, that had all those -- those were in the summertime, mid-summer?

MS. IRWIN: Yeah, they were mid-summer, in late June and, or maybe probably actually more July

and early August, and that was in the Tanana drainage, off the Tanana and the Nenana River.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. Usually if they're along the gravel bar, they, like, go out from the beach like that. There's a little fry, little smolt.

MS. IRWIN: We didn't -- I didn't see them directly on like the banks of the main channel of the Tanana. They were more so on the smaller streams and tributaries. We would go as far back as until the water was -- we couldn't drive a boat anymore back there. More like the grassy or tundra area was where the spawning grounds that we were looking at. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Jim River drainage though, there'd be right in the gravel bar. You know, there's all this algae and stuff there and it's really warm and they'll just be shooting up. A lot of those, I thought, were cohos fry, what that was. Because they will stay in the system. Chums will be gone. So, it should be coho or chinook, possible. But we've got real fisheries guys out here. I just observed like something like an '09, there was lots of those right on the beach. And they weren't grayling. They were definitely salmon. So, go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Are you going to do a review of this, too?

MS. IRWIN: I'm sorry, Chief Walker, could you repeat your question?

MR. WALKER: Are you going to do a review of this, too?

MS. IRWIN: Are you looking, you're looking at the Kuskokwim River Report, is what you just pointed to me. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission will be giving a report after this.

MR. WALKER: Oh!

MS. IRWIN: I'm just speaking to the research needs right now. Thank you.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the bullet points or whatever number three on here estimates salmon escapement. And I think that's really, you know, the crux of the whole situation is, you know, we have

an X amount that passed the sonar. And it's shockingly low that went over to the border. So, I think, you know, Mr. Simon, too, and I think, you know, it's kind of weird, over the years I remember we had a, whether it was -- we met up at the university and they had a study where they knew the numbers and stuff of all the tributaries. And it was interesting because I saw how much went up to Nowitna, the Novi, and stuff like that, the streams around me. But I think, you know, whether you want to pinpoint one or two of the things, I think so your, the main goal, I guess, is to try to figure out where are these fish going. If I got 700,000 chum go by Pilot Station and, you know, 70,000 cross the border, that's really important. I mean, so I think, I mean, you know, and I'm not going to, you know, wonder about all these different projects, how old they are and such, but I really think that's a really good strong point that we should be pursuing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we have Keith Herron and Shane Ransbury. There's another chair over there.

MR. HERRON: Good afternoon, Council. My name is Keith Herron, I'm the Acting Yukon River Salmon Manager. It's nice to see you all again. We'll be giving a management report in a second so, let's focus this on the Priority Information Needs. So, I want to just come up here and highlight this wonderful list that you and your other RAC members created for us to look at. I'd also like to point out, this is a very important program and it helps fund all the chum genetics that we currently use that's essential for fisheries management. And so, when you hear about summer versus fall chum or where these chum are headed, it's because of this program funded the work. So, thank you to this program for that information.

So, just highlighting a few of these for you today that I think are very important for management. The first one I think it's really important for future, for all the work to be community based and support the local monitoring of the tribes, whether they are collecting their own types of traditional and ecological knowledge or indigenous knowledge that integrates the Western science to think about spawning, the distribution of salmon, the age, sex and length of the returners of the harvest, thinking about how that can be impacted by the types of gear we use that might have selectivity on our fish or the future returns. I think

there's a point in here about delayed mortality and dropouts. I think that's still a big thing about the types of gear that are currently in the water and the impacts that they can still have. So, not only the harvest, the types of gear, but also environmental factors like stress or disease that might be causing mortality. So, I think that first bullet is really well written and I just wanted to highlight that.

Also, supporting the interagency and tribal and co-management that we just heard from Jim Simon that has been occurring or trying to increase that. I think the escapement -- the salmon escapement getting -- having more of that monitoring for all the species. For this region in particular, I think like Koyukuk River assessment for the Western Interior is pretty important. Understanding what type of escapement is happening into the Koyukuk. It's a pretty big river within Alaska. And we can have our own type of management on Alaska-bound stocks in that system. The genetics. I think anything we can do to improve our genetic understanding of these stocks and migration patterns, timing, so we can create and get creative with management scenarios where we can protect stocks that are low and provide opportunity on others without it having to be a complete closure. So, I think we need a better understanding to be able to use that in-season maybe at more of, say, each unique area because each district is going to have different harvest compositions of different stocks. So, to get that specific, we probably need more information or more baseline data. And that's also related to like calculating our total allowable catch when it comes to Canadian fisheries, management of Canadian-bound fish.

And then also lastly, my last point I wanted to highlight, the last bullet talks about Anadromous Waters Catalog. We've been getting really creative with allowing more whitefish opportunities in these low salmon runs. And a big part of doing that, we use the Anadromous Waters Catalog to look at presence, absence of salmon. It's not perfect. We've heard from locals, like, what are you doing? There's salmon in here. Why can I use my gill net when they're being conservative? But thinking of ways to get more traditional and indigenous knowledge within that database will only help future fisheries in the future. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Any questions for Keith?

(No response)

No? Shane.

MR. RANSBURY: And I'll just add more on to what Keith has said and, kind of, echo it a little bit, but. My name is Shane Ransbury, I'm a Fisheries Assessment Biologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And I guess I'll just break it down by species and, as it applies to something that OSM could actually fund with this grant, right? So, with king salmon, our major issue in the freshwater is that we get this estimate of Pilot and then a significant number of those fish don't show up at Eagle, right? Because we're getting a count of Pilot, but then we're also getting genetics, in-season every single year. This year, there was some difficulties with them getting the genetics in-season itself, and it ended up not being that big of a deal. But in the future, kind of, what Jim said, like, it would be nice to just make sure we get that genetics consistently year after year. Okay, the other thing is that, when they, you know, right now, we're not even meeting the Eagle goal anyway. But once we start meeting it, then we need a way to calculate the total allowable catch in-season. And so, we need -- we just need a really good understanding of why there's that difference between Pilot and Eagle and how to, you know, to estimate exactly what it'll be so we can calculate the TAC and actually let people go fishing.

And we think it's that the fish are dying naturally. So, understanding more about why that's happening is a big deal. For summer chum, you know, we're having a few years now where we're getting the drainage wide escapement goal met, but then we're missing every single tributary goal for summer chum and, you know, in some ways like the chum salmon move around a lot, particularly the summer chum and so, we don't necessarily think that's a huge cause for concern but we do need to have a better understanding of how we're getting drainage wide but then missing all these other areas. And it's particularly concerning in places like the Anvik, where Anvik used to be an enormous contributor to summer chum and now it's not and we need to understand, you know, at least why that's happened. So, anything that could, you know, kind of, break up our understanding of the summer chum run, whether that be looking at the Koyukuk or looking at Anvik more closely or something would be really helpful.

Then for fall chum, you know, we're finally starting to see recovery. Fall chum has a larger component of four-year-olds. They're primarily four-year-olds with a few age five, which is different than summer chum, which is like split four and five more or less equally. So, we have this big crop of four-year-olds. We see it in the summer fish, and then we know, okay, fall fish are coming, we should expect to see a high component of four-year-olds. And they did, and they came back way better than we would have expected. But we're not seeing that component return to Canada, and so we're having a similar issue to the chinook in that, we need a better way to calculate TAC, or, like, a more precise way to calculate the TAC for the allowable catch. Because right now, you know, this year we saw a tremendous amount of fish go to the Tanana, and that's great if you live on the Tanana. The Tanana was open for a lot of the year. We're seeing a lot of fish go to border U.S. so, it's great if you live in Venetie or something. But we need to understand exactly what our allowable harvest is out of the main stem. And we're struggling with that. And there's a good chance that we'll miss Eagle this year, despite having what was a pretty good fall chum run overall. And part of that backs onto a habitat issue. We know that a glacier rerouted in Canada in 2016. And, you know, when the four-year-olds started coming back, well, all the salmon were doing poorly. So, it was kind of hard to know, will the Canadian fish come back or not? Now we're having a decent year. But those fish going to Kluane were basically non-existent in the run. So, most of the problems, I think, kind of revolve around TAC and estimating what the allowable harvest should be. So, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Those are important aspects to consider. I was wondering if you are looking at, you know, the National Weather Service for the Koyukuk releases flood warnings. And when you get flood warnings in 2023, where the river goes over the top of the -- it floods, out in August events, that's just after spawning of all the summer chum stocks and the chinook stocks, they get ripped out. So, one of your -- for something to do in your spare time this winter, you should go back to the National Weather Service, start looking at those flood warnings in correlation to actually scouring events that are ripping the bottom out of the drainage, that's what's -- one of the, you know, the Henshaw drainage hasn't been

coming back like it used to. Yeah, we had a hot water event in 2019. But we've had some deep snow years, which makes really nice overwintering, good spawning survival. But then you get these flood events for any returns during the floods that get ripped out. Because all those summer chum spawning spots have high velocity waters. There on that, basically, the cutbacks, cut bank side of a of a water -- of a groundwater channel that's moving through that bank, they get stripped out of there.

So, that's more than likely what's been happening up in Canada, some of those highwater events stripped out some of those prime spawning habitats are mudded, you know, the main stem get mudded in can be a major effect. Especially for chinook, that have to stay in system. Highwater events in August, they actually have to get out of the river. They have to go up over the banks, and they get stranded out there. It's a major problem for grayling. Our river graylings in the Upper Koyukuk have been decimated by these highwater events. They're getting to where they're, like, you hardly see them. They're getting pretty scarce now. You had a point, go ahead.

MR. RANSBURY: For the record, this Shane. Yeah, I mean, I'm really glad you brought that up. I think that's a major problem in the drainage and it's more than just scouring. It's also, you know, kind of fundamental to our assessment of escapement. We struggle to get any weirs to stay in during the summer season because the water is so high and it's part of why we started looking at, like, the Koyukuk Sonar. And just in general, we're having, you know, a sonar is just a lot easier to run during highwater. And so, the more we can do that relies on a sonar instead of having to pick it off a whole tributary like Henshaw or like a Gisasa or like Andreafsky, the better off will be for summer chum in particular, but also for other species like kings. So, yeah, it's a major issue.

MR. HERRON: Thank you, Shane. And this is Keith Herron for the record. I just wanted to make one more final comment about the language in here. I think it says, I can't find it now, but one of the bullets says, like make sure there's like non-lethal sampling. And I just wanted to make sure in here like it is possible like there could be legal opportunity to harvest fish and it would be great to get samples from community members. So, if the list could be like an 'and or' non-lethal or, like legal, like, community-based

monitoring, I think it might be covered, but just to clarify that it doesn't all have to be non-lethal if it is taken by a subsistence user maybe.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Keith, you know, we had a discussion on a Tuesday, YRDFA meeting, do you remember that? So, I, as a traditional chief, I did tell the people to go get fish. We have a tribal fish wheel. And I told you we would talk about it at the YRDFA meeting. I mean, at our RAC meeting. Do you remember that? So, anyway, we didn't go out and get 100 or 200 fish. We got enough to last us through the winter. And one of the main things, like on Friday, we (indiscernible) out fish. That's the religion. And that's what the federal government gave us. We were pushed into it. We didn't ask for it. So, the doctrine of the churches does mention in their Bible that we have to eat fish on Friday because that is the church law. And then, when I spoke with the tribal people and the Tribal Chief and everybody, I said, we can get enough for 52 weeks. That's how many weeks in a year. I have fish. You and Holly disagreed with me on that. You said, well, why don't we just tell everybody to open this all up? Well, that would be your job, not mine. You work for me. I don't work for you. So, this is something that you have to realize that we, the people, have to have what we want.

I mentioned earlier in our meeting that they're sending us food we don't even eat. We eat fish and that's what it is, moose and caribou. So, when -- I know you're an OSM person, too and so is Holly, but I just don't like to be attacked like that because I think how I speak as a Tribal Chief, you got to have respect for me for that. We're all Tribal Chiefs, for that matter, because we are here to lead our people. We're not leading them into crime or anything. We're leading them into food. And that's what our value is. So, Mr. Herron, you know, I'm not asking for an apology, but I would think that you would go and talk to your staff again and have a discussion like what you just had with us here. And I think that would really be appropriate. Don't you think so?

MR. HERRON: Yes, Chief Walker, I remember that. Yes, I remember that conversation and I was going to be happy to address it, probably shortly, in the management update. If that's okay, if we could

table it for a second to wrap up this PIN conversation. And I never did mean to disrespect you on that call. I was more going to make the comment generally just so everyone knows king harvest is closed. Your decision was your decision. But on that call, I never meant to single you out. I said a very general statement that it's closed in the drainage. But we can get back to this conversation in a few minutes, if that's okay, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Now, that's fine. Now we're going to have that update pretty soon. So any -- Robert? Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Questions and confused about a lot of things and there's a lot of disrespect when you make phone calls in the summer and you get a no, no, no, no. And I think that's a bunch of bs because a lot of things are going away and right now, the way your system is set up again, we're not allowed to fish. And we were not allowed to fish before the moratorium even was there. So, by the time the 7 years is up, it's going to be 10 years. And right there you have a zero tolerance in indigenous knowledge. Zero, because we can't even fish, we don't even have a fish. So, that's another way of the system is going to probably attack us in that time because there's zero tolerance or zero involvement of the Indigenous people that should have more knowledge than any one of you. I know I can say that because like that fish been there for thousands and thousands of years and the system been there for 200 years. Well, I think if the system left it alone, it would have been right back to -- we still have fish, we'll still be fishing. We wouldn't be sitting here today talking about this stuff, but money goofed it all up. Money is still goofing it up. There should be some way that we can come to some sort of agreement rather than have a whole you call elders and elders, the youth and everybody.

MR. CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's -- we're going to save this discussion for the for the update.

MR. KRISKA: Okay, well, the update I'm just saying that I want to say to this all it's in my mind because by time to update it, I'll be -- mind will be somewhere else and probably directed in a different way. So, anyway, I'm going to talk about that.

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Everybody's frustrated with the whole salmon situation. But we need to address this PIN paper here, where I took the public

comments. And there's no -- is there action?

MS. PILCHER: This is Nissa, for the record.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, Kristen. Go ahead.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kristen Morrow, for the record. I would like to propose that we come back tomorrow with a revised list based on these public comments. There were about five new information needs identified in the public comments that we could draft up some language, present to the Council in writing so everyone has time to think and process and then vote on whether they want to accept that final list with the additions made in public comments, or if there's anything we need to revise, if that would work for the Council.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's a great idea. I mean, there was a lot of Council input plus the public input. So, we'll put that. We're gonna have.....

MR. KRISKA: Mr. Chair, I was just, you know, just real briefly. Could somebody clarify that? What is the PIN adoption?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's this paper that we're on right here. These are Priority Information Needs. PIN, Priority Information Needs. That's this list here.

MR. KRISKA: So, I'm a little confused. Are we endorsing that? Are we -- is that an action item?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You know, we've made a lot of comments here and the room made comments so, she's going to add to this list tonight, type it all up. Then we'll look at that new list and then we're going to take action on that. And that should be where at on our agenda here, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: So, as it stands right now, the first thing out of the gate would be public comment. Then we did have a time-certain at 9 a.m. for the Board of Fish agenda change requests. Gale was going to come back and then we could do that right after.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. So, I put that.....

MS. MORROW: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, go ahead, Kristen.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Kristen Morrow, the record. Just before we wrapped this part up for today, did any council members have any other possible research needs to add to the list and we can try to work on that language tonight and bring back to you tomorrow?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Not offhand. So, I think that covers it. So, we'll look for the amended list tomorrow. So, then we're Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Update. All right. Go right ahead.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kristen Morrow again. This update will be very brief. Just a quick update on the Office of Subsistence Management Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. So, we just discussed the funding program that funds research projects. This funding program funds positions. So, the Notice for Funding Opportunity for this particular program, which is a little bit different from the program that funds projects, it will be coming soon in this upcoming winter. And this is a competitive grant for Alaska Native and rural non-profit organizations. So, the goal of the program is to strengthen involvement in federal subsistence management by providing salary funds to these organizations so that they can hire biologists, social scientists, or educators. The grant can also provide funds for science and culture camps and paid student internships for up to four years. So, the next round of funding would begin in spring of 2028, but it'll be this upcoming winter that that opportunity is announced and the applications will open. There's more information about this funding opportunity on grants.gov and grantsolutions.gov. And if anyone has questions, you can come find me and we can get into the weeds of where to find all of that information. But the main points of contact at OSM are Jarred Stone and Liz Williams. And again, I'm happy to provide phone numbers and email addresses for staff if anyone has questions for them specifically. And unless anyone has any questions, that is the end of this update. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks so much, appreciate that. And so, we're going to move into Council Chairs Workshop on Salmon Crisis, that'll be me and Nissa. And so, you want to give that overview, Nissa, go right ahead.

MS. PILCHER: All right. So, I believe on, I no longer have -- I think on Tab 2 of your guys supplemental materials, if I didn't carry over from, yep, there we go, Tab 2. There's a summary of what happened at this meeting. That's that meeting that Jack mentioned in his report at the beginning of the day. That was in early August. This was the first meeting of its kind where the Council representative met to discuss a single topic. And in this case, it was the Alaska salmon crisis. But because it was the first meeting of its kind, but because it was the first meeting of its kind, the Council -- excuse me, the Chairs spent time finding some common ground, looking at common strengths and challenges facing the Councils, as well as discussing opportunities for Councils to work more collectively together. I believe every single Council was represented at that meeting, as well.

One of the immediate outcomes of this meeting was a request for the Board to pursue a meeting between the Council Chairs, the Board and the Secretaries of the Interior and the Agriculture to discuss the salmon crisis. For your information, that request was just sent up the chain to the Secretaries in the beginning of September. The rest of the summary documents the activities and outcomes of the workshop. among them, the desired vision, some obstacles along the way. Alaska is a pretty big State. There's different issues, even in one region, much less across the entire State. There were also three main strategies that could lead this group forward that's outlined in that document. So, before I continue, I'll pause for questions from the Council. And then after that, I can continue.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any questions? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, on that makeup of the group, you said Interior, Agriculture. What about Secretary of Commerce?

MS. PLICHER: So, the reason that the letter was forwarded to Interior and Agriculture is

that's what makes up this group. So, in order to get letters to Secretary of Commerce, they have to go up that chain. So, they were not specifically requested to attend the meeting, but I do know that this Council has previously sent many letters requesting such meetings happen. And so far, that has not occurred, as you're well aware.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That answer your question?

MS. PILCHER: It was a non-answer.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's a non-answer because the Federal Subsistence Board, DOI and Department of Agriculture hasn't entered into a definitive conversation with the Department of Commerce. So, that's my understanding that we're sort of in a holding pattern until such time as they can get, you know, the issue that far forward to get, basically, get at the cabinet members to start talking to each other about how to deal with the salmon issue. Commerce doesn't want to deal with it. They're like catch fish and make money. So, that's what right -- the agencies, AG and Interior, they got resources and they need to be aware and they're becoming aware of the issues with the resources. So, they haven't gotten to that part yet, what the Department of Commerce. Have a comment?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Yeah, I think even though they don't want to discuss it or be part of the process, I think they should. I think we can -- this Council could definitely justify it. I mean, we have millions of salmon that have been harvested under the Secretary of Commerce as a prohibited bycatch so, it shouldn't be left out. Even if they don't want to participate, they should.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This Council has had that in our annual report for the Federal Subsistence Board to get to that point. But the Federal Subsistence Board answers to the Secretary of Interior and Secretary of Agriculture. Federal Subsistence Board hasn't had success yet in actually achieving that higher level of communication. And while we can continue to highlight that issue that the Commerce Department in charge of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council needs to be aware that they have a problem and they need to address the problem, but they haven't gotten there yet. It's an ongoing issue. So, we'll continue to make that --

highlight that issue in the annual report process. And of course, the Federal Subsistence Board is well aware of the issue. So, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: And hopefully if that meeting is able to happen, either between the Federal Subsistence Board and the Secretaries or hopefully the Councils, the Board and the Secretaries, that is definitely a topic that would come up with all the documents, with all the receipts.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: I had second comment. I don't feel it's appropriate to have a meeting on this topic in August. That's during a salmon season and a lot of harvesters are not available to -- I mean, the Chairs are in the group but I would, in my opinion, most -- a lot of the Chairs would be involved in some form of salmon harvesting at that time.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I had to take -- I'm working at that time of the year, it's a super busy time of the year for me. I participated virtually. I says there's no way I can take four or five days out to go travel to this meeting so, I participated online and took time out to do that. And, so yeah, it wasn't the best time of the year, but they wanted to have this ready for the Fall Regional Council Meetings is what the objective was, to get the Councils, you know, back into the loop on that. That was -- so, this was, basically, a consensus building exercise. I did this with the State Board of Game with the sheep management planning strategies. They had liaisons that try to build consensus with the group, little breakout sessions. Those things were exercise in building concession, because there is the diversion between the Councils. There's Councils that are highly in favor of hatchery programs and the hatchery harvest of fish. There's Councils that have real deep concerns about the hatchery programs. And, you know, the overall other aspects of the whole salmon ecology aspects.

So, yeah, you know, we were all talking, but, you know, we weren't exactly agreeing on certain specific aspects. I didn't feel that I was. And I'm sure that there were other Councils Chairs that were also, you know, we agreed to disagree on specific issues also. So, but that's to bring it back. This process here was to come back before the Councils for the fall meetings.

(Distortion)

Anything else there, Nissa? I think we kind of covered that one that. So, that's -- go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: I guess that some of the prompts that I have in that in the document that are in front of you, is this something that Council wishes to continue to participate on, basically. So, this was -- there wasn't a lot of action items that came out of that meeting, but the intent behind that meeting wasn't to solve the problem, because it’s a very big problem. It was mostly to start building relationships and try to go figure out what little things the Councils as a whole could work on together. So, my assumption is that the Council, well, I shouldn't say my assumption. So, I believe Jack felt it was an appropriate use of his time granted, at a very bad time of year. So, at least the feedback can be.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I don't want to paint it as a lost cause. It was good for all the regions to understand that the extreme hardships that's occurring that, you know, that there's need for improvement. So, there was a -- that that happens anytime you have these kinds of meetings. You will bring groups together, you'll get close, but you might not actually achieve a final product. But we're only, in the week -- if this would have, continues, we can work on strategizing for the Board process to actually get the, you know, these are measures that have to occur to get the salmon to come, you know, reduce bycatch in the Bering Sea, reduce hatchery program. If we could get, sort of, a packet before the Federal Subsistence Board, which is the AG and the Interior, get Commerce to go, “here, we got a problem, you have to address this issue.” And so, that's how this could move forward. But this isn't going to happen overnight because we get, you know, there's quite a bit of pushback at the higher levels on this whole stuff also.

So, but that's what -- this -- that's, this occurred. This occurred because before the Federal Subsistance Board, we had a meeting, pre-board meeting and so, all the Chairs were in one room at the National Park Service and we went over fisheries issues, was a big part of our discussions at that at that joint Chairs meeting that augmented this whole process here. You know, OSM decided this is a broad enough issue that's

affecting all the regions that we needed -- they needed to do this and so, it had positive aspects to it. Understanding were some of the aspects.

MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair, what I don't -- I'm looking at the bullet points in the circle. What are the berry picking with aunties? What is that? Is that addressing the issue that the meeting was in August?

MS. PILCHER: So, that circle represents what is success look like? So, I was kind of a -- it was put out to the group. If we are successful, what does it look like? And that was one of the things that came up is, instead of being at meetings right now, we're out berry picking.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Roger.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, these were things that people said, wrote down on little slips of paper, they put them up on the board. Some of these things were pulled into groupings, you know, what the meeting was about. For a successful meeting, you know, these are things that people were sacrificing or that people were looking forward to benefiting from the meeting. It's a social science of exercise.

MR. GERVAIS: Well, I'd like to thank you for your time to attend this even virtually in the middle of summer. That's a lot of extra effort.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah.

MR. GERVAIS: So, we all appreciate it. And so do the subsistence users of our region.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It was worth my time to do this process. It wasn't worth my time to travel. And I've participated virtually. It would have been better if we had that camera in the room. That camera right there should have been in that room, because it was like far distance, because I could hardly even see anything on the board or anything else. But it was, at least I could see people in the room and was aware of what was going on. So, it was worth my time. So, I think we've covered that particular ongoing issue. Fisheries Reports. And so, these time limits of 15 minutes and less approved in advance. Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. And who's representing that? Of course. So, go ahead, Olivia.

MS. IRWIN: Hi, Mr. Chair. For the record, my name is Olivia Henaayee Irwin, and I am the Projects and Watershed Operations Manager for the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

MR. SIMON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Also participating with Olivia is Jim Simon with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. I've already put my title on the record.

MS. IRWIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll be giving the initial report, and my colleague Jim will be expanding on some of the items and then we hope to leave time for plenty of comments and questions. Good afternoon, members of the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. Thank you for the opportunity to update you on behalf of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission was formed in St. Mary's in 2014 to create a unified tribal voice on fisheries management concerns. Our tribes later ratified the Constitution, reaffirming our commitment to stewardship, unity, and meaningful participation in fisheries management. Our Constitution recognizes that Yukon River fisheries are essential to cultural, nutritional, economic, and spiritual well-being. It recognizes both our responsibility and our authority as sovereign tribes and First Nations to steward our traditional territories and resources. The Constitution directs us to act with a unified voice for the conservation and restoration of Yukon River fisheries, to advance management grounded in indigenous knowledge and practices, and establish co-management that ensures meaningful tribal participation in fish stewardship.

Some of the engagement that we've had with tribes throughout the summer have elevated some of our tribal concerns and requests. So, from conversations with our tribes, our tribes are requesting and looking for recovery efforts that result in fish returning to communities and meeting subsistence needs, greater equity and representation in fisheries decision making processes, stronger government to government relationships with federal and state agencies, meaningful tribal participation before management decisions are finalized, increased recognition of indigenous knowledge alongside Western science, and a stronger tribal role in long-term stewardship and co-

management efforts. Over the past year, the Fish Commission has continued to strengthen our partnerships throughout the watershed, including collaboration with the AYK Tribal Consortium, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments, AVCP, Denakkanaaga, and Tanana Chiefs Conference.

This year, we had direct engagement this summer at some of the community culture camps. We were able to attend Ninana, Nelato, and Healy Lake culture camp. And I was able to attend Nelato's culture camp, and it was really special to see people putting fish up in the smokehouse. They were able to -- the summer chum run was open there for selective gear when we attended. And it was really beautiful to see our cultural values and traditions actually at play. How people were getting the smokehouses ready. You saw everybody taking on their individual roles and hearing some of the commentary from the youth was really indicative of where our runs are compared to where they used to be. There were chinook that were, you know, about this long and children saying, "Oh my God, is that the biggest chinook you've ever seen?" And it was, you know, it was met with the appreciation that they're noticing these things, but also sadness that, recognizing the elders who were there remember days where there were chinook bigger than those children standing before them.

Throughout the fishing season, Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission maintained weekly engagements with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in-season managers and the Alaska Department of Fish game local area managers. These conversations allowed tribal observations, community concerns, and local knowledge to be shared in real time throughout the season and helped ensure community perspective remained part of the ongoing fisheries discussion. These were really integral meetings for us. We didn't miss -- every week we met with -- staff met with the managers to discuss potential upcoming management decisions, closures, openers. And while our staff is not the formal consultation or the formal in-season managers of our organization, we truly appreciate the opportunity to be consulted with on those topics. And I will say that we felt very much so that the managers appreciate and respected what we had to bring to the table and the comments and concerns that we would have for potential upcoming management decisions.

Looking forward, many of our priorities remain the same that they have been before. To recover salmon populations, ensure subsistence needs are met, advance indigenous stewardship, strengthen tribal unity, and support youth and future generations. The tribes are here because we have a responsibility and an authority to steward the lands and fish that have sustained us since time immemorial. And with that, I will go ahead and pass it along to Jim, who will be expanding on some of the points that I brought up in the report.

MR. SIMON: Yeah, thank you. Just to be clear, Olivia and I are sort of winging it. Our Executive Director, I think, has a concussion and I'm trying to get him to go to the doctor. But yeah, just wanted to stress the point that what -- it was a great set of interactions between the State and Federal managers, but really, what was missing in those interactions was representatives of our commissioners themselves, people who are out on the land and selected by their tribes to represent them in the tasks that our 45 member tribes have tasked us with in -- and the purposes of the Constitution. I think there's going to be the need to have a lot more conversations about the 2026 salmon season. And, just from looking at some of the information myself on this season, it looks like while passage at Pilot Station rose about 73% and passage at Eagle about 49% relative to 2025, the Chena rose only about 24% and the Salcha count only about 8%. And that's concerning.

I can recall when I was at the department, it was sort of a switch scenario that the returns were poor for Canadian origin stock, but U.S. stocks we're doing well. And, at least, comparing 2025 and 2026, it looks like we have the reverse going on. I'm particularly concerned about the Salcha because, of course, I live right upriver from the mouth of the Salcha. And, as Gale had talked about the older fish, we have lost six-year-old females on the Salcha and, you know, some had already -- had talked about the seven-year-olds that doesn't even really come up in conversation much anymore because they're so gone, for the most part. And yet eight-year-olds, even maybe another generation back of when they basically disappeared. And all of those changes, you know, really affect the resiliency of our salmon stock because when you have those different year classes out there, it means when there's a real warm water in the ocean, that impact is spread about. And the more constriction in our age classes that we have, the more -- the less resilient our

stocks are. And that applies to chum salmon, as well.

Let me jump to the other thing that, I think, Olivia wanted me to put out there is -- yeah. I wanted to share, I don't remember now what Olivia wanted me to do, but I do want to give some reports just that I was still working on earlier this morning of passage in Canadian tributaries, because the Takhini Sonar is, I think as of September 11th, 860 chinook which is 195% above the historical average, and 55% above last year, 2025. We've also got 193% increase over average in the -- I don't know quite how to pronounce it, Nisutlin River with 1,190 chinook through September 3rd, when the historical average has been 617. So, just those examples of the rebuilding plan seems to be working, you know, at least there's getting to be more chinook, even though we're not really meeting our treaty objectives, we're still seeing some improvements on the spawning grounds. And that's good for Canadians and Americans because so much of our harvest has been of Canadian stock through, well, forever. And I think I'm going to just, rather than trying to wing it anymore, just stop and leave more time for you guys to ask us questions.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any questions for Olivia and Jim? Go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Are you going to give us an overview of this too, also? Are you going to give us an overview of this also?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: A handout?

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MS. IRWIN: We don't have a handout for our report, Chief Walker, but are you referring to the statement? So, we do however have additional materials that we can bring forward and speak into the record. I believe what Chief Walker is actually speaking to, which he saw out in the hallway prior to, is we have an official statement that staff has drafted based on conversations and consultation with our Executive Council with regards to protests and illegal fishing that took place this summer along the Yukon River. Mr. Chair, may I read that into the record?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You can, if you would like.

MS IRWIN: Okay, thank you. So, the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission official response to Yukon River summer protest fishing. And to give context to anybody who's unaware of the situation. This summer, there was a -- on a YRDFA in-season -- weekly in-season call, there were individuals who made statements on the record saying that they were going to go ahead and fish, even though there were fishing closures. And we did have tribal members and member tribes of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission engage in that. So, this is the response statement that was formulated.

When the State of Alaska issues arbitrary shifting guidelines that systematically suppress our constitutional and federally protected subsistence priority, fishing is no longer just an act of traditional practice, it becomes a direct matter of survival and peaceful resistance. And when the Attorney General's Office overturned the strongest conservation effort in over 20 years to protect migrating Western Alaska chum in the South Alaska Peninsula, it again disproportionately left the burden of responsibility for conservation of the resource on in-river Yukon subsistence users. Subsistence users who were already further restricted earlier in the cycle when at the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Board of Fish meeting, the Board passed regulations taking away three days of fishing in the summer season and required gear modifications to fish wheels to protect Canadian bound chum and chinook. We stand in direct lineage of Katie John, who refused to let the state bureaucracies sever her connection to the salmon, of Billy Frank, Jr., whose fissions proved that direct action is sometimes the only language a deaf regulatory system understands, and of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe who fought relentlessly in the courts to ensure indigenous customary ways are not erased under the guise of state control.

When state and federal management favors commercial sport or outside interests while leaving our indigenous smokehouses empty, and when federal spending cuts forces families to choose between basic necessities and food, our people have a duty to cast our nets. That duty is especially urgent at a time when federal cuts to SNAP benefits and food security programs are leaving remote tribal communities hungry. Alternative food sources such as moose and caribou are declining. Outside interests continue to encroach on subsistence needs and threats to lands that sustain our people continue to mount. What some call protest fishing, we call the

ultimate expression of tribal food sovereignty, a continuation of our inherent right to feed our families, care for our elders, and defend our rivers as our people have done since time immemorial. We are the original stewards of this land and have been in relation to salmon relatives for over 10,000 years. We know these rivers, we know what they can sustain, and we take only what we need.

Tribal leaders and members who chose to fish this summer did so with full knowledge of the fragile state of our salmon runs and the tremendous responsibility that comes with harvesting during time of scarcity. The decision to fish was grounded in generations of ancestral knowledge of local salmon runs, fishing places, timing, abundance, and the needs of our communities. Our people understand that exercising our inherent right also carries an obligation to protect the salmon so that future generations may exercise those same rights. This assertion of tribal sovereignty should not be interpreted as an open invitation to disregard fishing regulations or conservation measures. The Fish Commission works closely with and respects the local fishery managers, biologists, and scientists who have dedicated their careers to understanding and protecting these fisheries. We recognize both the difficult decisions they are tasked with making in the face of unprecedented salmon declines and the critical role that Western science-based regulations play in conserving and rebuilding the runs we all share responsibility to protect. Tribal food sovereignty is not a loophole, an excuse, or an open invitation to fish. It is the exercise of an inherent responsibility and right that predates the State itself. We do not fish to break the law. We fish because government systems have time and time again failed to protect the resource and the people along the river who rely on it for their cultural subsistence and way of life. This time we assert our tribal sovereignty and inherent right to steward our lands, waters, and animal relatives in accordance with the traditional values, tribal laws, and ancestral practices. Thank you.

MR. SIMON: Yeah, and just to give some numbers behind that statement. The Eastern Bering Sea Pollock Trawl Fishery is allowed to have even the lower cap on chinook salmon is 45,000 chinook. Now granted, not all of those would be returning, pardon me, to the Yukon River. However, based on some of the recent data on the genetic stock composition of chinook salmon bycatch, we do know that in 2024, about 50% of those

chinook in the bycatch were from the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Bristol Bay reporting groups. In 2025, that proportion was 71%, were from the Kuslokwim, Bristol Bay reporting group, and the Canadian origin and American origin Yukon chinook. So, while the overall numbers may be small because they're being scrutinized right now, because -- there definitely is a pattern that I have seen in my career of like when you move into an Area M meeting and the intercept, they do better at avoiding the stocks. And then, after the Attorney General helped them out, we saw how many they got. You know, because there's -- we even heard rumors through the rumor mill that they were going to be more retaliatory because of those Board of Fish proposals and all of this effort. But the point I want to make is 45,000 with chinook bycatch cap, yet the exception to the moratorium for cultural education and funerary ceremonial harvest of chinook salmon is capped for the entire season at 300 chinook salmon. So, that just hopefully gives some numbers behind what our Vice Chairwoman and, as well as contributions from staff and Executive Council Members Stanley Pete from Nunam Iqua representing those lowest river and coastal communities have put together. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any further...? Go ahead, Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah, no offense there, Mr. Keith. This is just some of the things and I'm thankful for that letter. Made me understand more of what I was trying to get at was that, you know, what I was wanting to do or thinking about was, I know you guys are trying your best to do test fishery in the Yukon here and there, because we can't all just depend on one sonar way down at the mouth of the river. You have thousands of miles of river and what's going on there? You can't determine what's going on with just one sonar down there. And read a lot of data about where all the fish are going and everything like that. I was thinking that, you know, a lot of the people are frustrated like me. A lot of them are worst off frustrated because it's going to be worse this year. They have no fish to eat. The moose got run off in a different direction, I guess. By the regulations and permits allowed for the locals, they -- probably 50% of them didn't get moose so, that's a big thing there. There's zero fish. 50% of the moose. Then the hardship of $10 a gallon. The way the wooden stuff is gonna go this year.

And you know, the fish -- the thing that a lot of things that are happening, and I see it happening, is some of these guys are going out there fishing. And I feel for them. I want to go fishing. I mean, looking at the 81-year-old grandma, and she's saying, I want fish. And hurt me here. But then another thing, I don't want to get caught. I own a business, a transporter business myself and do one wrong thing and it's going to kill me for the rest of my days with my license. So, I'm kind of a -- I can't do anything, but she's going to starve for that fish. She's 81 years old. She just fell down the other couple of weeks ago and cracked the vertebrae in her back. Now she's worst off like my Aunt Jenny here. Just you know they're having back problems and you look at stuff like that and then think what can I do about it? And there's really nothing I could do about it. So, I was -- I don't know how to ease things amongst the people on the Yukon. I would be telling you the same thing, Mr. Keith, that, you know, on one hand, the criminals are there and these people are just trying to live as well as you. But they can't, there's no -- the way it is, they're shot down. Technically right now, 60% of what they need is not gonna be there. The stores are 10 times higher prices than here. I don't know what we're gonna do, but I think there's, you know, you try to satisfy people way up to Yukon that, I don't know what they do with their fish or they just need to count. And that's it. I don't, I'm not sure, but they're killing a lot of people in a smooth way. Literally killing them and (indiscernible) that's too, you know, that's what's happening. I don't know what to think about it. So really, something needs to be done.

And, all this bycatch and people making money, money over matter is happening and I don't know what to do about it. There's, I mean, I wish there was some way. Well, tell you the truth, there's none of you in here that can do anything about it. You do what you're told and that's what it's gonna happen. You need your bread and butter too. But, you know, higher up there, all these rules and regulations are set. And even though -- they're set, there's proof right here. All this stuff, right here. Is all written. I imagine all the books for next year are written. You know, you can say one thing, then I don't think anything that was said over the years change anything in these. I don't see it. I never seen it. I looked at it for years and years, but it doesn't do any good. I think that, you know, take it in your heart when you think of -- me, I don't worry about me

or anybody else because I know my frustrations and everything else already, but I can't tell my grandchildren, "There's going to be nothing for you." And I hope that you look at your grandchildren and I know you're not going to feel this way. You won't have that heart. You don't have that feeling because you're well-off, well taken care of. But us, the Native, out there in the villages, it's really sad.

I don't want to really get into stuff like that, but you know, making criminals out of a lot of good people. I see people that are chiefs in some of these villages. They're fishing because they have older grandmas and they have a bunch of kids. I don't know. It's just sad that, you know, we're friends. Just good friends all our days. And these last few years, they have to take a different route to take care of their kids. It puts like a little head-to-head thing in between you and your good friends, which is not good at all. For the community to try to help everyone, it's the saddest thing ever, I ever seen in my life. And for me, for a guy like me to be saying that, it's not good. Because I have a lot of powerful friends out there. And a lot of them will just say, "Well, the hell with those guys. I gotta feed these kids. There's no way around it." So, there's just something to think about it and put that to heart. Don't just use these books and all this data and everything, I should just say, against our people. This is stuff that are designed, like I heard today, and I know it for a fact, this is designed to kill us off, the way it seems. In 43 years of being, you know, no drugs, no alcohol, no nothing like that. And then to -- this is what I'm coming up with. There's nothing. Nothing to be proud of.

But anyway, I just have to say that and that's what I was gonna say anyway, Keith, because I didn't wanna, I mean, I say a good guy one day, one time ago, I guess, but now I'm finding myself looking like a bad guy. And that's not -- that is that breaks my heart. But anyway, I just quit. There's a lot to go through here. Why I'm saying that right now, because it looks like once this category of this meeting right here, that's the end of fishing within a few minutes from now. And the rest of it is going to be on other things so, you know that -- I'm not worried about the moose and everything yet, that I know it's coming to that and our caribou and all of that other stuff is pretty much gone. Sheep and whatever is all who got the most money is going to get it, not us. And the fish almost -- I don't know. Help us out somehow. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Tommy.

MR. SIMON: Yeah, Mr. Chair, if I may.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead.

MR. SIMON: Again, for the record, Jim Simon. I really listen to every word that you say, Member Kriska. It's hard not to just call you Tommy. And just for the audience and the rest of your RAC members, you know, two of our fish commissioners sit on your RAC and then we have an alternate fish commissioner on your RAC. And I want to implore you guys to get the rest of the commissioners and executive council members to come up with a plan to have an in-season management team to join your staff and Keith's staff and the state summer and the fall managers because the whole season we met every week and I can tell you that it's the best team I've seen since 2002 when I started working at the department. They're all good-hearted people. Deena, you know, the summer season manager, spent part of her childhood in Tanana. She is not unfamiliar with this river. And, if our commissions and season managers, once they exist, could participate in those weekly calls, it's a huge time investment, right? It's a pain. And I was involved with the Kuskokwim when they first started and it was tough on them to commit so much time. But if you had been in those meetings every week this summer, you would know that this -- I am not disagreeing, Tommy, with your intent of these systems are like seemingly, like handing out blankets and killing lots of buffalo of times gone by. It feels that way. It looks that way. But that is not happening among our managers, you know. They're putting the fish first and subsistence next. And if you saw the struggles that they -- that we saw them go through, it would at least appease some of that angst, that frustration, that anger somewhat. It doesn't fix anything, right? But at least we have good humans trying to rebuild our salmon stock. But we need our commissioners there too, because it's gonna take all of us.

And I think back to when I was a young man and people from the lower river saying, this is a Yup’ik traditional knowledge as I understand it, you can't fight about fish because the fish know and they will not come back when people are fighting over fish. And I'm not saying we stop fighting, you know, to make everyone bear the burdens of conservation so that our

salmon can return. But I am working on, sort of a book and it's taking me longer than I had hoped, that tries to capture some of this stuff. And I finally found the equivalent of, basically, a salmon boy story from Teslin, on the Canadian side. And it's got similar components to my childhood home region of Ahtna, the (In Native) story. And so, I'm going to try to bring indigenous knowledge as well as the salmon assessment information and just other observations, bycatch intercept, all the variables. As well as -- want to bring to your attention a report from 2025, if none of you have looked at it, that happened in Canada, that basically went through all of the factors affecting Canadian origin chinook salmon on the Yukon River. And it involved in First Nations representatives, salmon scientists, you know, domestic fishermen, etcetera, that put all of that together. And then they ranked them according to risk and concern and data gaps and where they have confidence in the data about the impacts of a particular factor. And I think it's about time we do something like that. We have all these task force, etcetera, that just get one or two people from the Yukon. But we, as the Yukon River residents, need to all come together and build some team approach to really understanding what all the various factors are that are affecting chinook salmon and chum salmon.

And, hopefully, the Yukon Panel can, sort of, make that happen with their chinook rebuilding plan, but gee, they've been planning the plan for over almost three years now, and I don't know if any of you have even heard of it or been part of it, but maybe between the department and OSM, you know, we can do something where it's not just RAC Chairs in closed meetings that the public can't even attend, to get the public and you all as RAC and tribes together in a room to really go through this. I don't know who's going to fund it, but maybe the Fish Commission can do something about that. Part of our Executive Director, who, as I mentioned before, can't be here because of medical concerns, he's very good at bringing in resources, fiscal resources, and really a big priority of the Fish Commission under his leadership is built getting people together. And so, anyhow, enough, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have to conclude this section. We got a Kuskokwim Inter-Tribunal also. Final comments?

MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Final comment. I'm actually glad you brought that up. I mean, if there's something that we can come away with to work on, you know, I see three people here on our Council. And hey, give it -- give us that. I mean, at least we could try something. And you brought up something kind of interesting. The Yukon River panel in Ruby, just a few days ago, there was a couple of people that did a study a year ago and they came back and gave us the findings and whatever. And she mentioned the Yukon River Panel. Well, they just signed a seven-year moratorium, seven something. And I sit on a RAC and I sit on local AC, whatever. I've never heard of it. So that's kind of interesting. And hey, it's all fine and good. But, like I said, we don't know what this group is doing. And I have nothing against it. But it's just funny that I have never heard of it. So, I mean, if I come away with the intention of working with Tommy or whoever's on our, you know, hey, let's do it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: One final comment. Robert, go ahead.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jim, you know, we, we've talked before and you know, like we always let the first run go to Canada that hits the Yukon. And then we have like two or three other runs after that. But it seems like most of these runs have been depleted over the years with the bycatch and with False Pass and other places. But the question I have is that, with these five different species, we have these called jack salmon and like almost 70% of them are non-breeders. And why, I mean, when we had a discussion about this, we said that we took only jack salmon, we didn't take the females or the big males, we just took the jack salmon, just to pass out among our tribe. And, you know, like, well, every salmon count. I said, "Well, what's the difference, if it's a non-breeder? We know it's a nonbreeder." We could take, well, the fish count. Well, is this lying to the Canadian government that we're sending them all these non-breeder salmon? I mean, this is, so far out to the left, you know, I was thinking about it and I talked to the tribe about it, and they couldn't believe that the state biologists are saying that every fish count. Well, they got us believing, for a while, every fish count. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. SIMON: Yeah, Mr. Chair, very quickly. I think that's more coming from the tribes and Tanana Chiefs Conference, that slogan, every fish

counts, that some of the state managers have taken up. And it's my understanding that jacks do breed. They're those ones that, at least from what I've seen, I'm not a biologist, but I've seen those are the ones that sort of move all around and can do their little business in the redds. But the smaller age classes and the proportion of, like most of the fish that go up the Chena, it seems are males, young male. So, they don't breed very well.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We need to conclude this section. Thank you very much. We need the Kusko River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Leon. And I got your last name first. Sorry about that.

MR. LEON: Hey, you're all good. People do it a lot. No worries.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Justin, go ahead.

MR. LEON: Yeah, thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. Appreciate the opportunity to speak in front of you all today. So, for the record, my name is Justin Leon. I'm the Research Director for the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. Thanks to everyone at the Fish Commission, it was a collaborative effort to put this together. Thank you to Nissa for handing it out. So, I know a couple people have referenced it. I'm going to be going through this. If anybody has it, I'll try to redirect. I don't know if it made it in time to be online so, maybe, it's just available for people here in the room. Yeah, go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: If anyone would like a copy, please send me an email. I'll put my email in the chat.

MR. LEON: Thank you. Yeah, so the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, we're a tribal organization composed of 28 authorized tribal commissioners. We're broken down further into a 7-member Executive Council, 5 in-season managers and staff with the goal of protecting and sustaining Kuskokwim salmon fisheries and traditional ways of life, using traditional and indigenous knowledge and the best available Western science. So, kind of with this and the way I'm going to kind of go through things after I go through the leadership and staff portion is, we kind of see ourselves currently as like a three-part, kind of

deal. The first part, excuse me, is in-season management. It is co-management, but the relationship is such between us and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge that internally we just call it management. So, there's the management component. There's the research and monitoring component, which is where I come into play overseeing some of that. And then there's the advocacy for salmon, for fish, which is where I'll end things.

But, again, to get back to it, just on the first page, here, in the middle, how are we led? How are we organized? I kind of went through, like, a, just an overview right now, but you can see here, middle of the page, we've got -- I'm not going to go through everyone by name, but we were broken into seven units across the river. That was decided by the tribes organized based on those that they thought were shared the same, just, I guess, a number of factors. But it wasn't -- the point is, it's decided by the tribes, the organization. With that, we've got a picture from our latest annual meeting, at the bottom there.

And then to break things up further, I mentioned 5 in-season managers. Those I will call out by name because they're the ones who make the really tough decisions. I know, with a number of things that I'm gonna speak about, they've been touched on in different ways by different people throughout the day. And they really are making the sacrifices, making the decisions, having to go to their communities and tell them what they did and why. And, you know, it's a whole big collective for the whole river. It's not just their communities so they put a lot on the line. So, I'm just going to read them off by name. We've got Denny Thomas Jr. He represents the upper river/headwaters, Crooked Creek. We've got Tracy Simeon, Middle River, Chuathbaluk. We've got Mike Williams, Sr. I'm going on to the top of the second page now. Lower River, Akiak. We've got Henry Hunter Sr., representing Bethel area. And then we've got Sam Tinker Sr., from Tundra Coast, Kasigluk. We also have an elder advisor, James Nicori from Kwethluk. And this was the first year where we had a youth advisor, Mary Simeon, out of Bethel. In addition, what I wanted to speak to is, we've got staff -- I'm not going to name each one of us, but we've got positions, executive director, policy and programs director, fisheries biologist, fisheries technician, communications coordinator, and then new, which is why they're bolded, we've got a salmon ecologist and a project assistant.

And just also, again, we don't do this with just staff. Very thankful for contractors who help us with accounting, finance, biometrician work, modeling and the like, salmon science and policy specialists. And then I did want to say, because I thought this was the first year we were able to do this, very fortunate to do it. Wanted to uplift youth from the region, specifically, we had an intern from the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program, ANSEP, Charlie Corthius. She kind of shadowed fisheries management research, actually did a neat workup, a co-management, kind of, policy analysis type deal, which was really cool. And, you know, that's kind of what made us up this last year and kept us going.

So, with that, I'm going to go into the first kind of leg of what I mentioned, of what us, the Fish Commission on the Kuskokwim do. So, that's the in-season management, co-management. 2026 was the 12th consecutive year of federal and tribal management and the 11th consecutive year of co-management between us again with the Fish Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, again, through the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. This is through an M.O.U., a Memorandum of Understanding. And with that, I already spoke to some in-season managers that we have at the Fish Commission. We also have a manager, in-season manager at the Refuge, which is what I'll refer to probably from now on instead of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Yukon Delta. This season started a lot like others that we've had in the past. Restrictions started kind of with things being closed down June 1 unless opened by emergency order. Then there were 10 federally announced six-inch set or set drift gillnet fishing opportunities between June 2nd and June 10th.

That was all at the bottom of page two. And now I'm going to the top of page three. This were in varying length in terms of openers. They were 12 to 24 hours. Then at that point, we had -- I apologize, fishing in the mainstem river on July 13th. And then at that point, Federal waters remain closed until July 31st. And I say that because, and I'll speak to this more in a second, but there's dual management on the Kuskokwim River for those of you who may not be familiar or may not remember where the co-management takes place in the lower half of the river within the confines of the Refuge. And then the upper half of the river is in State management, year round, or I should say during the

season. Now, with that, this was a different season in that you heard where we had our last fishing opportunity in July, management was rescinded. Well, unfortunately, coho salmon did not come in well at all. And so, Federal management, co-management with the tribes resumed. And that was August 12th through the 15th. Unfortunately, we did not have direct target -- targeted openings for coho, but we did offer three openings for whitefish with four-inch or less mesh. And we relinquished again after September 15th.

And I do have a section -- there is a section here on ADF&G management. This is for just completeness, so people can see kind of what went on there. I mean to kind of sum it up in a nutshell. So, when Federal co-management, when management with the tribes is relinquished, then Fish and Game has authority over the entire river. And so, what they were doing when there wasn't co-management, isn't that -- well, I guess to sum it up is 24-7 opening after June 12th. 24-7 open until coho salmon season. And then, they did, kind of, a revolving closure for start of coho, working its way up the river from the mouth up. And ultimately, I think at the end, after we relinquished management, so that would be after the 15th of September again, then they had management the rest of the season. Had some openings, even for, I think, let me check. I apologize. I'm just going to stop it there and talk, like I said, revolving closures for certain parts of the river from the mouth starting that way up.

I do want to add that, in terms of in-season outreach, we do try to get the word out, along with our partners throughout the season. What that amounted to this year, I'm at the top of page five. We've got five different bullets there. Co-hosted 13 fish talk shows on KYUK, the local Bethel-based radio station. Hosted 10 plus weekly river-wide teleconferences in which us, our partners, in-season managers, try to get everybody to attend and field questions, issues, concerns from the public. Issued 15 weekly in-season newsletters. Updated our fishing info webpage. I'll make a plug for that at the end, but it's kuskosalmon.org. We have management actions, harvest estimates, and bycatch and Area M reports, all of which I'll share again just in a moment here. And also issued social media posts, radio announcements, tribal and community emails, and Delta Discovery articles. So, newspaper articles after fishing management actions were announced.

That kind of wraps up things in terms of the fish management portion. I'm going to move on to the research monitoring. And then also, as you can see added on here, included in here, we're trying to grow -- always do knowledge documentation where we can. I do want to state as kind of a theme of the season, it's been spoken to by other people, but it is getting harder and harder to run some of these weird tower, more traditional in terms of Western science, fish counting data. And things like highwater have really created issues, even in the last 5 years, definitely in the last 10. That's the other way around. Last 10, definitely the last 5. And that's not just the Fish Commission, that's agencies, that's other tribes. That's what we've experienced. We're currently still trying to get some projects out of the water. One project that I'm about to speak to operated for all of one day, and it's just been a real challenging season. I know of a situation where there's counting -- there's a weir that ripped completely out of the ground on a quarter mile downriver, and they're still trying to figure out how to go get it back if they can. So, it's just, unfortunately, it's the theme of the season. And it, kind of, goes to why we're looking at, you know, I think it was PINs, people were talking about like other ways to research things and be able to still get fish counts, what we kind of call alternative escapement counting techniques, so.

With that and recognizing that, the first one you'll see, I'm on the middle of page five, is the stationary camera systems. We call it camera-based escapement monitoring. It's essentially taking cameras, setting them up on the side of the river, from a height like you would a more of a traditional counting tower, which counts like two or three stories up in the air, looks down on the river, has a flash panel for contrast, something so that you can see the fish that stick out and count fish that way. Tried to recreate that with a camera system. Now, unfortunately, like I mentioned, we did have highwater this year and a big portion that was we were hoping to build off of this is to have counts compare -- to compare to. So, we did this in places where we had weirs. This would be specifically through a partnership with the Native Village in the Napaimute, a weir on the Aniak, Salmon Antiak. And then Takotna River weir with support from the Takotna Tribal Council. Unfortunately, neither of those weirs operated this year, and one of them, the whole weir blew out. The other one is the one that Takotna that got in, no

problem, ran for a day, and then nothing else, still trying to pull it. This week, even, with some ice coming down. It's not a great situation. But what I'll say is that in terms of the equipment, we've been able to prove feasibility, show that it works. But in terms of getting counts and what are those compared to, unfortunately, it was a rough year for that. But not giving up on it, like with all this research, trying to do priorities, figure out how to game plan. We've got a strategic planning session later this year. And we're still trying to figure out how to pivot with what we've got going on.

But for now, I'll move to the next project. It's been brought up, having power rests with the people, community-based harvest data collection. That's huge. We're all about that at the Fish Commission. And honestly, with the way -- we didn't have any fish counting projects running or running at full capacity, community-based harvest monitoring was really what we had in terms of Western science data. I'm very thankful to have it. You can see here, employed 17 harvest monitors and 8 Lower Kuskokwim villages, and this accounted for almost 700 interviews and accounted for almost or over half of all the data collected in terms of subsistence harvest in-season surveys. Why is it not all of it? Well, this is a collaboration with the local tribe out of Bethel, ONC and then also with the Refuge. So, this program, combined with aerial flights, surveys at fish camps, other communities at the Bethel Boat Harbor, they are all used to make harvest estimates, which I'll get into in a second. But that was definitely the shining light of the season.

Water temperature monitoring project. This is deemed a priority by the tribes. It's something I've spoken about before. And we've continued to grow it over the last three years. We, kind of, based around where we've had our -- what we call our research platforms. So, that's where we've got weirs infrastructure already started, established. So, Takotna, Bethel, Kwethluk, you can see we've expanded to Kasigluk, Kisaralik. And, going on to the next page, Before I do, I'll say that you can see here, we've had trouble retrieving the water temperature data loggers because the last time we went out to go see, the bank was like 2-3 feet underwater, and you couldn't even see where stuff was tied or flagged off to shore. Not sure if it's there yet. I've heard waters come down. People have gone and tried to retrieve since. Sounds like with some success, but not able to get everything. Again,

just the theme of the season.

So, now I'm at the top of page 6. You can see that we want to give a shout out to the Refuge because they helped us when we couldn't get out there again to go pull things. Good relationship with the Refuge, that kind of, plays into a lot of things that we talk about do accomplish, including management. But what I will say is we've also partnered with UAF and they've deployed some main stem loggers that sink with a auto-release, in the lower half of the river, out into the Kuskokwim Bay, looking at water temperatures in the lower half and trying to look to see how we can partner further. Takotna weir, excuse me, I kind of already touched on that. You know, it's counting for a day, no problems getting in. with a lot of these things were lined up great but after the first day, second day wasn't complete counts. Water continued to rise and we're still dealing with it. So, that's where we're at there, unfortunately. But again, through no fault of anyone's. Still need to get everything, hopefully, really hopefully, out of the water this week and reassess where we're at.

And then, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention this huge project that I did not spearhead, others like Therese Vicente, our staff, who does a great job with advocacy in general, which is what I'll speak to in a moment. But then our partners at Ocean Conservancy, the Tamamta Program through the University of Alaska Fairbanks, which I'm a part of for graduate work. Trying to bring together ways of knowing, in an equitable way, blend things. Had worked on the Knowledge of Kuskokwim Salmon and People Project, created a document starting in 2024, to document Kuskokwim residents' knowledge of and observations of changes to salmon ecology, relationships with salmon, and recommendations for improving salmon management. There's a final copy that's available on our website now, published this year. And there's hard copies that went out to all of our tribal commissioners.

And then, Kwethluk River Weir, just as a side note at the bottom, ready, willing and able to work on that project. It's a very important project that provides good data, but water never gave us a chance. So, we went out there even when ice was still out and even considered chipping out ice, but none of it mattered. It just was a -- that one's a tough nut to crack. But next, to kind of, end things up, we've got

advocacy. I already mentioned Therese Vicente. Her email's on here. She leads this front. The other two, I'm in a lot more wholly. I help facilitate in-season management meetings. I lead the research monitoring.

But this, I just, people have already spoken to it. I want to make sure to, at least, touch on it. Everybody knows about the decision from the Attorney General and how that was overturned. Fish Commission has been working with -- AVCP who's been spoken about. Our sisters on the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission, who just went before me, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association and others to condemn these approvals. I'm at the top of page 7 now. Because of the voided approvals, this was already kind of touched on, but none of the stuff that passed through Board of Fish went through in terms of management plans for 2026 and everything basically just operated the same way it had the last several years. You can see harvest at that table through June 30th, through August 31st. You can see bycatch, has already been spoken to. In terms of recent genetic analyses, those percentages were spoken to as well, I don't feel like I need to address that again, but you can see that, what those numbers are towards the middle of the page. And then building further on this, the two bullets speak to bycatch levels of chinook and chum through October 1. And you can see that the majority is from pollock trawlers, which isn't a surprise to anyone here. I think to build on things again towards the bottom of the page, you can see that in June of 2026, Fish Commission staff attended the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council meeting to testify in support of getting trawl nets off the seafloor. Because, regardless of the term, I think everybody here is well aware that they spend most of their time in the bottom. In a previous life, when I worked for the Department of Fish and Game myself, I did a lot of my work out of the Norton Sound, Kotzebue Sound region, and I participated in trawl surveys. And I -- while it's a lot shallower, I remember talking to the skippers myself and the lead scientists at the time, they'd be like, "Man, what we're finding out from having this GoPro mounted to the net is like, we can't see anything. Because as soon as you drop the net, it's just mud everywhere, because it's just dragging the bottom the whole time." So, I remember that was news to me even back then. So, I'm glad that it's, you know, just common knowledge, because that's really what it is. It's what happens.

I think in terms of salmon people website, to finish things off, I think for the most part. Fish Commission has worked with the association of Village Council Presidents and Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission through our partnership as the -- at the -- I apologize, Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Consortium to launch salmonpeople.org. It's a website, central hub for fisheries news, stories, and updates from communities affected by rapid salmon. I'm going to the top of the last page here. Set rapid salmon declines and resources for people to stay informed and to take action to support salmon conservation and restoration policy. I thought it was pretty neat. One of the things that they put out, so it's our -- I'm glad to see that it's in here. The top 10 facts to know about trawling in Alaska, including the size of trawl gear. It's just -- it's one thing to see the nets, hear about the nets, another thing to have that compared to, you know, like the size of a football field. You know, I think, again, please reach out to Therese. Her contact information is here. Full number to the office is here. There's important events coming up. But quite honestly, I think most of these have already been touched on throughout the day. And happy to answer any questions. Again, a plug for kuskosalmon.org. And yeah, if anybody has anything, I'm happy to answer questions.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks so much, Justin.

MR. LEON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Lots of important work being done there. Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, I have had high hopes for this organization when it was forming and it's performing to my expectations and it's going really well. Appreciate your lead on the innovating ideas about research, developing -- adjusting to the changing conditions with climate change and so forth. Any comments from the Council? We have Yukon River Fisheries Drainage -- Yukon drainage -- YRDFA. It's getting a little late. Any questions? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you for your organization's work, Justin and your presentation today. Just, I just gotta ask you some quick questions, just, you know. I would -- I'm requesting, I'm in a proxy for the Council that you got all these people working with your Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. We need to get somebody from the Kuskokwim River on this

Council. It's part of the Western Interior and it's sorely underrepresented, so. They'll have to be as knowledgeable as Kevin, but they need to be from the Kuskokwim River. And yeah, we would -- we definitely would like somebody under 50 years old and female, would help balance this out on our perspective. Traditionally, prior to, like 2005, Kuskokwim normally could have subsistence harvester at 80,000 kings. Is that about normal? You are -- they harvested 4,500 here, but isn't 80,000, not before the salmon crash and that a normal.....?

MR. LEON: Yes, I apologize through the Chair, Tim. I'm smiling and opening this because, in my rush going through this, I meant to completely cover that. And I helped do the estimates and everything. So yes, on page 4 of 8, you can see that there were at least 79,000 salmon that were estimated in-season. That's generally updated post-season, when Fish and Game has been able to conduct post-season subsistence surveys. This year, they're not able to do that, at least as fully as they normally would. But yeah, the breakdown, I apologize, is just under 23,000 chinook. 29,000 chum and a little over 27,000 sockeye. You can see the ANS, the amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence. You can see the ranges there. And I apologize for not going over that as well as the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: I got confused, I was looking at the table on page 7. That's Area M.

MR. LEON: Yes. And I apologize because, like I said, and my, you know, I accidentally skipped that page that went over the assessment by the numbers and I'm happy to, you know, we've got comparisons in-river with sonar, that -- which is the main Western science fish counting project that, kind of, accounts for the river as a whole in-season in terms of, like, you know, escapement monitoring. And we've got comparisons there as well, by species. Which I can go over if you'd like, but yes that's the total harvest. Is around 79,000.

MR. GERVAIS: Just to keep it real basic. So, how many sonars are on the Kusko River?

MR. LEON: So, there's one sonar project currently operating in the mainstem around Bethel, the

hub. But that being said, there are four individual sonar units that are used to cross the entire gap of the mainstem there.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. And how does -- briefly, how does the Inter-Tribal Fish Commission interact with the Kuskokwim Bay commercial fishery? Is that, are they connected? Do they advise?

MR. LEON: That's a great question. So, the Kuskokwim Bay is also under the jurisdiction of Fish and Game. So, Fish and Game does attend some of our meetings. We all take part in what's called the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group. But in terms of roles in the ocean, the bay, in terms of management, the Fish Commission does not take part in that as far as I'm aware. The Feds, the Refuge and the State Manager do consult, in general, once a week, in-season about management decisions. Whether or not those pertain to the bay, I couldn't tell you.

MR. GERVAIS: And my last question is, are you still seeing annual, year over year increase in pink salmon abundance?

MR. LEON: Yeah, through the Chair, Tim. That's a good question. We've been getting a lot of interest in pink salmon lately. I will fully admit that, starting this off-season, this season, with all the interest, we have really been starting to dive into the data. Even today, working with a consultant biometrician, just talking about agreeing on where we should pull from, what's available, what's not, what's considered decent Western science data to look into or not. I don't have a good answer, other than, I mean, the cyclical nature of pinks and, like for instance when I worked out of Norton Sound, Kotzebue Sound, there was a lot more interest in pink salmon, whether it's, you know, on either even year dominant run kind of thing, which, yeah, I think everyone here is aware of. But in general, I'm just starting to find out more and more about it. I don't know that I could speak to that intelligently at the moment. But it's a great question. I will say we're starting to look into it more.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, I need to have yard foot come up. Appreciate your overview. Thank you very much. Serena.

(Talking)

MS. PILCHER: Karen, this is Nissa Pilcher, I'm just checking in with you. I know Gale was going to come back in the morning and go over some things, and she did mention the Zoom meetings that you guys go through. Did you? Did you have more of an update you wanted to cover with the Council?

MS LINNELL: I do but it's really, you know, 8-10 minutes long at best.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can we combine you with Gale in the morning?

MS. LINNELL: I have a meeting that starts at 9:30.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, I guess we could do that now, since.....

MS. LINNELL: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, go ahead.

MS. LINNELL: Okay, thank you. Just a quick overview for those that aren't terribly familiar with Bering Sea Fishermen's Association. We were started in 1979 and, basically, work at State and Federal levels, both within the Board of Fisheries and the NPFMC Fish Federal Subsistence Board and other bodies to support abundant healthy resources and vibrant communities in the Bristol Bay, Arctic, Yukon and Kuskokwim regions. So, we work in the same arenas and I won't touch on the same topics, but I will say -- that have been addressed here today. But I will say, you know, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association was just livid when the Attorney General's Office voided the Board of Fisheries regulations back in the spring and worked very closely with our partner organizations to get a press release out. BSFA was the entity who applied to be an intervener in the case because we did not believe that the State of Alaska would effectively defend the Board of Fisheries in that lawsuit. And in the end, that's -- that was the outcome. They worked with the Area M commercial fishing groups and decided to drop the lawsuit and give those fishermen everything they wanted. So, it was a big disappointment for us and many other organizations. But just to know, just for you guys to

know that I think everyone, you know, did their best. The only other thing that could be done now would be to sue the State of Alaska. And I don't know of any organization who has funds to take on a beast like that. So, it likely won't be done.

There are other areas within the Area M fishery that are, we think, sort of suspect. The ADF&G genetics reports that have come out are either delayed or preliminary, or they're lumping genetic groups together, primarily the non-Alaska groups. And that's really not the best available science. And we think it's a real, sort of, slap in the face to the Washington tribes and fishermen there, because we're not -- Alaska's refusing to recognize British Columbia stocks versus Washington stocks and, since those are ESA, we find it to be, you know, problematic for a lot of reasons. We'll continue working on, you know, Area M issues as we have for 45 years. And you'll see an ACR that's being put forward to the Board of Fisheries Work Session later this month, which is our chinook retention proposal. And there's already been a little bit of opposition to it from Southeast, which makes sense. We did recognize that in the trawl fishery, Southeast, Kodiak and Nushagak, there are current regulations that may be affected. But the point is here that we believe chinook salmon in the crisis that they are in all across the State should not be discarded. And so, I think you're taking that up later in the meeting. And if I can be available or if there's others who can speak to it, that would be great.

We also work in the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council space. Working on trial issues, bycatch, regarding, like, Sullivan's bill, which, for folks that don't know did have a -- well, the early version, which was actually Mary Peltola's bill, did have a provision in there that exempted and protected small boat fishers, and Sullivan's bill took that section out. So, we are having some issues with the way that it was revised for Sullivan to, you know, slip it in here, in this campaign year. We're also working on pelagic trawl gear issues, working with organizations as well as state and federal agencies to keep that gear off the bottom of the ocean and protect the habitat. Through the EPA and the Clean Waters Act, we're commenting and staying on top of the fact that they would like to allow vessels in the Bering Sea to discharge waste without a permit and we think that's a real problem. The USDA Farm Bill is up for consideration

and we'll be commenting and tracking that issue. That includes some provisions for fishermen as well. Through NOAAF, the Restore American Seafood Competitiveness Bill is revising or looking to make some changes to the Fisheries Disaster Program. It's also looking to update Magnus and Stevens Act National Standards, specifically Standard 8 and 9. And so, we're tracking that as well. On the AYK SSI funding program side of things, we do expect to have an RFP released this fall. I do not know -- we have not heard yet back from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund folks about how much money is going to be released. And so, we're not -- kind of holding back and waiting for that information.

And then the last thing I'll say is just that it's really encouraging that we have YRDFA in the room, that we have the fish commissions in the room, that TCC is there and that our other partners, the Inter-Tribal Fish -- the Watershed Council and AVCP and Kawerak and these groups, you know, are all tracking these issues, collectively, shoulder to shoulder and in a way that sort of prevents redundancy through, like, the AYK Tribal Consortium. And I just really applaud each one of our, you know, partners for the amount of time and attention that they pay to every one of these issues. There is no shortage of work to go around. And I think we all absolutely need to be, you know, working closely with one another. I think it serves you all really well when we are partnered up and working together, you know, as a collective to address these issues. I think the more voices in the room, the better. And so, I really think part of my job is to make sure that, you know, that the organizations that are working closer to the region, like TCC and the Yukon Fish Commission, YRDFA, especially, you know, have a greater voice than BSFA does. I think that's important because I always feel like we're just a little bit of step away, but it's only because the capacity of these organizations has grown to be in a place where their voices matter a lot more as time goes on. And so, I just am expressing some gratitude and some awe for the amount of work that, you know, Serena, Jim, Olivia, Deloola, Therese at the Watershed Council, Justin, that all of these folks do on the behalf of the resources from their region.

And then, yes, the last thing is, the Bristol Bay Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim meeting is every Thursday at 9 a.m. We call it BBAYK, and I think Gale either spoke to it earlier today or is going to tomorrow, but there's a really open invitation for folks from the

region, specifically living in the region or working for organizations that serve the region and its people. We don't allow state or federal employees in the room unless they're invited for some specific particular purpose. So, it's just a venue where folks can bring ideas, strategize about the next, you know, big policy or regulatory meeting, and just kind of, support one another through all of this hard work. So, the invitation should have my email address on it, which is just karen@bsfaak.org or my phone number, 907-887-1148. If folks want to join that meeting, I can -- I just need an email and I'll send an invitation every Wednesday. And you're welcome to join us as you can. But I think that's all I've got.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you, Karen. And I've lost some Council members. They've had had prior commitments and so forth. Appreciate all you're doing there with Bering Sea Fishermen's Association and the collaborative work with other organizations. That's super important also. So, I think we need to go to break for the evening. I really would have liked to have been further ahead, but I knew this meeting was going to be really a boiling point for the Yukon River. That's what we're here for. We need to get everybody on the table, everybody to speak and talk. And so, Serena, you're going to be available tomorrow? Okay. So, I want to recess the meeting until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. And so, looking forward to continuing this important work. Thank you. Have a great evening.

(Off record)

# C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 131 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME I recorded on the 6th day of October;

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 23rd day of October 2026.

_____
Rafael Morel
Chief Project Manager