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

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska – 10/07/2026)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we could actually start?

MS. PILCHER: Five is quorum. Actually, there's Tim. So, yeah, five is quorum. But I think -- I guess -- this is Nissa Pilcher for the record. What we can do is, we should probably do a round of introductions for anyone new in the room, although everyone was here yesterday. And then online, anybody didn't get a chance yesterday and then do non-agenda items if there is anybody that wants to set up for that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I know we got Diloola. Do you want to introduce yourself? We didn't catch you for the record yesterday. We introduced our guests. Oh, did you? Oh, that's right, you did. I don't see anybody else who wasn't introduced. Is anybody online that's not introduced?

(No response)

So, we have -- Tim is here. So, we should get started. And Tommy is en route somewhere. He always got 10 irons on the fire. Doing a lot of stuff. He's got a lot of family and stuff he deals with. He's very supportive of his family as you can see. So, let's see. Here is Tommy. Good. Good morning, Tommy. Good morning, Tim. So, we were going to do -- no, we gotta do the public comment on non-agenda items first, that's a time certain, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: The time certain was the ACR review. That was with Gale who I do not see in the room. Although it is snowing in Fairbanks and she was a ways out of town.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we could do.....

MS. PILCHER: It also sounds like we are not transmitting online either. So, we may need to troubleshoot that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, okay. Let's stand down for 5 minutes.

(Off record)

(On record)

MS. PILCHER: Can we -- everyone hear us now?

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, we can hear you.

MS. PILCHER: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're back online. And Gale was going to go over these ACRs, but we don't have a heck of a lot of time today because we went pretty long on discussion on fishery. And I knew that was going to happen and I wanted that to happen this -- yesterday. But now we got to do a little catch up. We can't let things slide. So, is any -- we have anybody online that wants to speak about non-agenda items? Anything that's not on the agenda that you would like to speak to regarding other issues? That's basically what that slot is for.

MS. PILCHER: And as a reminder, it is star 6 to mute and unmute. And star 5 also raises your hand, but you can also just speak up and say, "Mr. Chair," to get recognized as well.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nobody's raising their hand. If nobody in the room wants to speak to any issues. Don't see anybody. What should we do here?

MS. PILCHER: We could go to Serena.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, we can go to Serena. That's exactly right. Next on the agenda. I'm sorry about not getting to you Serena. I'm sorry I didn't get to you, but people are impassioned yesterday. And they're still impassioned but we needed to go there. We put Serena up since you weren't here.

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We assumed that. So, we didn't know how long that was going to be. So,

we're going to do Serena, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, then you're next up. Go ahead, Serena.

MS. ALSTROM: Okay, good morning. For the record, my name is Serena Alstrom. My Yup'ik name is Cuucitcuar. And I'm the Executive Director of Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

MR. MCKENNA: Good morning, everyone. For the record, my name is Brian McKenna, fish biologist with Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

MS. ALSTROM: Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Council here. Unfortunately, we did not have the written report in the booklet. So, we'd like to update you on some projects. One project in particular, and some potential projects that we're pursuing. On top of the many projects that we have, we have the harvest survey, the teleconference calls during the season, the pre-season meeting, the biotechnician trainings, culture camps, carcass surveys, and, of course, our advocacy work. I'm nervous. Let's see.

So, I'd like to highlight one project I'll talk about, and I'll hand it off to Brian to talk about a potential project that we're working on. The project that we are currently doing is called the Yukon Chinook Integrated Watershed Framework Project. This project is coordinated for a framework for chinook salmon conservation and restoration in the Yukon River watershed. The watershed framework is funded by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and includes partnerships with Trout Unlimited, Tanana Valley Watershed Association, Indigenous Sentinels Network. And we work closely with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff, and they provide additional advisory and technical support for our project. To accomplish the watershed framework objectives, it is to continue its ongoing fish passage barrier assessment and water quality testing work, and to continue to support and training for local stream monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge, data collection, integrate -- and integration of all data collected into the YRDFA's GIS-based Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan. Though watershed framework intends to further develop the -- we'll call the Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan WEAP from here on out.

Let's see. To further develop the WEAP tool for use in streamlining identification of subsistence monitoring sites and future salmon habitat restoration projects in Yukon River watershed. The Watershed Framework partners are aligning these efforts inter-organizationally to ensure that the diversity of data will continue to directly inform habitat restoration planning. The information obtained from YRDFA's own field efforts, community monitoring, and citizen science applications, such as ISN, will be integrated into the Watershed Ecosystem Action Plan GIS tool and into the Fish and Wildlife Yukon River GIS database with the intention of identifying priority chinook habitat and possibly future restoration sites. The intention is to significantly expand a shared organizational capacity for GIS-based chinook habitat assessment and monitoring. And also, to submit nominations to the AWC that guides strategic conservation. Prior to the 2006 field season, YRDFA and ISN worked together to develop a customized fish passage barrier data collection app, which is currently being modeled and updated before we release it. YRDFA and ISN worked closely together to develop a water quality monitoring field app. With these collaborative development data collection tools in hand, during the 2006 field season, YRDFA staff obtained 48 fish passage barrier surveys and 32 separate water quality samples from across the selected data collection sites in the middle Yukon River watershed. YRDFA also deployed 3 separate water temperature loggers in the study areas.

For the 2026 field season -- sorry, got a cold. For the 2026 field season, the priority communities and regions were Shageluk, Anvik, Grayling, Tanana, Dry Creek, Delta, Salcha, and North Pole. YRDFA and ISN will transfer the collected 2026 data into the WEAP interactive mapping tool and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service GIS database. As the watershed framework project proceeds, TEK data, community-based monitoring data, and further fish passage barrier and water quality data will be transferred to these applications and also shared with Alaska Freshwater Fish Inventory and the AWC. These 2026 data collection activities serve to expand YRDFA’s 2024 and 2025 documentation of fish passage barrier and water quality concerns at St. Mary's, Mountain Village, Wiseman, Coldfoot, Fort Yukon, Nulato, Ruby, Rampart, Manley, and Minto. By extending collaboration between projects to fill data gaps, the Watershed Framework intends to provide an outstanding contribution towards protecting Yukon River chinook salmon, informing habitat

restoration activities, and developing for future projects. Ultimately, the watershed framework intends to inform and inspire among all users, the development of a collaborative regional habitat restoration decision-making tool, which prioritizes actionable restoration projects that target the most critical habitat areas, and which are centered on local knowledge. And eventually, the project outcome for the Watershed Framework will be development of a comprehensive watershed protection plan. Core to this protection plan will be positioning Tribal stewardship as primary and prioritizing community-driven knowledge over externally exposed solutions. YRDFA's effort and collaboration with our partners -- we'll continue our field work in 2026 and 2027, and that's in the summer. And I'll hand it off to Brian.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can we ask questions at this point?

MS. ALSTROM: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Are you going to have additional for this project, Brian? Go ahead. Oh. So, I -- my question is, we just had these huge flood event and you see -- and I see that you got Salcha as one of your stream flows. What happens at these highwaters, the whole bottom on a good salmon stream, like the Chena or the Jim River drainage, the bottom is covered in algae and so forth, and highwaters typically don't bother those. But when you have massive discharge, it erodes the bottom, turns the stones, and destroys a lot of the productivity of the stream. And also, the streams will move. So, now that you've got Salcha, I would encourage you to go soon, when the water clears up, and look at the bottom to see if you've got channel change, see what the bottom structure. That's a big deal because that's where we flip those stones. They're covered in stoneflies and stuff. This is the food for the baby chinook and the other species. So, I'm really happy you're doing this project because this habitat thing is a big deal with these climate change events, with these huge flooding events. We're getting a lot of discharge. I see that you got Wiseman, that's one of the quality -- there's -- Wiseman Creek was discharging a lot of iron oxide. There's a drainage up to the valley about 8 miles, it's just continuously running iron oxide. And it didn't used to run that until 3 years ago. So, they're still getting a lot of heavy metal discharge. There's a stream that's below Wiseman, it has blue water.

I don't know what that is, whether it's aluminum, bauxite, or some other mineral. But there's a lot of things that are going on with this climate change. And I'm happy to see that you've actually plugged in some of the strategic places. Any other questions on that project for [sic] the Council or comments?

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Brian.

MR. MCKENNA: Thank you, Chairman. Yeah, so, we'll move away from the habitat side of some of the work we've been doing and talk about escapement monitoring methodologies. So, one thought process that we've had for a while now, and we're actively exploring it, is an alternative approach to collecting salmon escapement data. So, as you heard yesterday in Justin's report, you know, he mentioned one of the weirs on the Kusko getting ripped out and taken down river. I've seen that a few times in the Yukon as well. So, there's been a mismatch with weir -- weirs and increased flood events and highwaters for some time now. That was one of the first reasons why we started thinking about an alternative method for collecting this type of data. So, what we're hoping to do is utilize drone technology and pair that with local and traditional knowledge to collect some of that long-term -- to collect the long-term data sets, escapement monitoring on some of these rivers. So, in the Yukon, for example, the East Fork Andreafsky River was decommissioned last year by Fish and Wildlife. So, that project is done now. The Gisasa River weir and Henshaw Creek weir, formerly operated by Fish and Wildlife and TCC, are both not operating for several years now. And I don't know of any plans -- I haven't heard of any plans to get those going again.

So, weirs, you know, mismatch with environmental conditions these days, really difficult with logistics and costs. So, these are some of the reasons why we started thinking about new methods. And drones were -- have been explored for some time now and have been proven pretty successful. So, we've been seeking funds, and we have got a little bit of funds already to purchase a drone and to do some training. This summer, we recruited 2 folks from St. Mary's and Pilot Station, and we did a drone training event in Quinhagak with Nalaquq. And I apologize if I did not get that correct on the pronunciation there. But it was a really good training. They have been partnering with

Alaska DOT for a couple years now, and they're really pioneering the use of this unmanned technology to monitor salmon. They've been doing great. It was a really successful training. Both of our recruits from St. Mary's and Pilot Station did amazing. One of them is going to come into Anchorage here in a couple of weeks to get their -- take the FAA 107 exam to become a certified FAA drone pilot.

So, moving into the approach that we're taking, as you know, throughout the Yukon, spawning populations are spread out throughout the drainage. Some might be in close proximity to villages and some are a lot more remote, hard to get to. So a lot of logistical constraints. So, we're going to take a 2-step approach. The first step is to develop a local pilot network. So, we're going to recruit, train, and get certified drone pilots to be able to go out and monitor the salmon populations that we can access logistically without those constraints. A second approach for the more remote spawning locations is using a brand-new technology that exists. It's basically a drone in a box. They call it a dock station. This methodology has already been proven in California through the Department of Transportation there. But you pair a drone dock station with Starlink internet and with solar power for just summer operations. And we're -- we have a grant application out right now. We should find out next month if it gets funded. If it does, we're going to try this next summer. But you could go out, you know, pick a river. We'll probably try it on the road system just to prove it first. So, maybe Chena or Salcha. But ideally we'd like to put those out in a remote location. So, you can put it out there pre-season before the salmon arrive. And then it could be set up to basically fly autonomous missions. So, if this is the river here, just like a counting tower, you just draw a line across the river, probably flash panels. The drone would be pre-programmed. It'd be set away from the river somewhere high and dry. So, when there is highwater events, it's safe. So, whereas a weir might get washed down river and then you're out for the whole year. This thing could just sit idle for a couple of days. When the water recedes, it can go back to work. But it would fly up to the fixed position, collect video files, and we'd probably mimic what the towers do here. So, it wouldn't count 24 hours a day, but maybe like a subset of every hour, 20 or 30 minutes. Pair that with machine learning, and everything could be automated. So, it would fly, it would capture passage past a fixed point in the river,

and then it would process that data and spit it out every morning in an email, and it could go to everybody. There's also a live feed option. So, if you're interested one day, you could just log in and you could view the salmon passage in real time. So, it's just a new approach. We think it could be effective. The startup costs are probably equivalent to like what a weir or tower would be, but then in years 2, 3, 4, operationally, it would be much reduced cost from traditional methods. So, I think I'll stop there. Maybe open it up for questions.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any Council members have questions on that project? I -- but you're relying on luminosity to be able to see the bottom and stuff, which is turbidity would pretty much affect this project. But I do think there's a place for, like there's high-grade spawning habitat, and you could get -- I used to collect genetic samples, so, I know where chinook spawn on the Jim River drainage. If the drone could be pre-programmed to fly a specific high-grade habitat and monitor that on a daily basis, you know, you're going to start to see them there in early July. It could fly, like, from its base, it could fly down and up, the river valley. And it could monitor what's actually, you know, you can see the ridge, you see them there, you see them on station if the water's clear enough. And so, you're, again, have this -- I think it has a huge place in monitoring how many or how many pairs you're actually -- then you can get a multi-year data set, like we got 10 pairs here now. We only had 1 last year. And so, as you can see this number's building.

Another technological thing, I know these people down in Minnesota, they put these side view scanners underneath the ice and they actually watch fish come swim up to their hooks and stuff. Is any consideration given to, like the Henshaw, these small drainages that have a lot of fish going up them. Putting 2-side scanners, you're basically running a video of what's actually passing there. And you could even four, in case you have failures, you get an idea of what's going up the river without anybody really being there. You don't have to put it in a steel box to keep the bear from eating it. But that would be another thing to think about, this technology stuff. Because people are using -- regular citizens are using these side-scanning sonar. They're going to watch the fish swim up to their bait, which they seem to be able to see them kind of far away. On a small drainage, that could work pretty well also.

I'm real big on this technology thing. I think this is going to be a lot cheaper in the long run, and I'm really happy about this drone thing. That works really well. DOT came -- our runway washed away at Wiseman this summer. They completely cut the runway in half. And they brought a drone, a big one, and it flew a bathymetric torpedo up the river. And they drew a bathymetric, basically the bottom contour of the water. This thing pulled this kind of a heavy thing, flew it up and down the river. It was a cool gadget. So, I'm happy to hear about this. Any other questions? Go ahead, Tim. Robert.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Serena and Brian. This is Tim. On the drone technology, is there anything in the near future that could check fish passage in -- on, like, mainstem Yukon where you have a lot of silt and a video monitor wouldn't work?

MR. MCKENNA: Yeah, thanks for the question. I don't see that being a viable tool for the mainstem. I think it would be best used in tributaries with clear water.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Jack. You know, just listening to how technology has really worked into our way of life, compared to our elders' way of life. It was that, we always knew when a lot of fish were coming because the water would raise. Because the fish would displace and make the water rise. So, the higher the water, the more fish there was coming. But this is something that, you know, like now, how do we -- or how are we gonna do this is not new to us, like, I mean, you know, we know it's a different system. But, you know, we'll accept that system too because this is 2026. We have a new generation of people coming up. So, I just want to say, you know, all the years that I've lived and watched my grandfather, when he would talk to elders that, you know, they would estimate how much was coming. And that was pretty accurate. I don't know, nobody ever, there was no fish counters. But there had to be within 100,000. Which is really high to be accurate for them for not having any kind of electronic whatever. Don't you think so? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Serena.

MS. ALSTROM: Thanks, Robert, for that. And that -- with any project that we do, we integrate

traditional knowledge into our projects. And that's like the perfect way to, you know, have Western science and traditional knowledge work together to provide us better information. This spring at St. Mary's, I was told by elders, they were like, oh, get your fish racks ready it's going to be a big run. And sure enough, there was opportunity to get fish. So, there's traditional knowledge out there that we all utilize. And, you know, I'm pushing 50. So, I'm like, I want my kids to, you know, know this traditional knowledge too. And, you know, make sure that they have the opportunities to fish. Because it goes back to -- all the way back to my daughter, when she was 7 and we're sitting at the table and having half-dried (In Native) with seal oil. And she's sitting there and she's like, you know, when I get older and I have kids, and my kids have kids, I want to enjoy this with my kids. And so, it's not -- I think all our traditional knowledge that we have and we utilize is really important because we all grew up on the river. We all have -- all that information is passed down. And that's what I think me being in this position can really provide that kind of guidance and knowledge into projects that we pursue.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Serena. You know, this is really true. And this summer, we had a surplus fishery go up to Anvik River, too. And somebody -- and we have bears in our community, again, so we had grayling and other communities around that have large spawning streams. And somehow, I don't know how, but they ended up back in our village again. Because I think their system of having fish every year and having no fish for like 5-6 years is throwing their system off. Because when they go back, there's no fish. And they just kind of like meander further and further out into the flats. Like I said in the last meeting, that they're hunting more black bear. They're hunting more moose. And they are places where they never ever been before, out in the flats. And this is really hair-raising or, you know, make people look and say, you know, where we used to camp, there used to be no grizzly bear tracks. Now, when we camp out in the flats, there's grizzly bear tracks all over the place. So, these things do change. I mean, the animals change with the system too. It's not only us, but they have to, like, you know, you just can't go send the bears a memo when I tell you the fish are here, you know, that don't work. So, how do we do that? Mother Nature will have to take care of her own self on doing

these things because -- it's just like, I -- this year with the highest bear content I've seen in Anvik, we made everybody buy their own camera so they can look out, watch out in their yard before they go out. And you watch the bears, people who have dogs, they come and they smell around where the dogs urinate and everything, they're hunting dogs. So, this is something, a reality where we have to adjust a different way of living. To be on guard where we're never used to have to be on watch for animals. And wolves are coming right into our town too.

So, how do we do this? How do we go back to how everybody was shared equal with the fish? Do we -- this was -- I testified at the Board of Fish at this. And I spoke for animals. Nobody speaks for them. And I told them, I said, where's the Board of Game? You know, these things that coincide with Department of Fish, Department of Game. Nobody came and said anything out there where we shot over 300 grizzly bears on the Yukon River. I thought the Board of Game and the Wildlife Troopers were going to come flying down and do all these things. But after I testified, I had a call from a guy. He said the troopers were going to go down to talk to you, but somebody higher up in the States stopped them. Because they knew if I -- they talked to me, about why are we shooting all the grizzly bears, it opened a can of worms. Because the fishing process has priority over animals now. How does that be? I mean, you look at all these animals, they have no rights. Nobody speaks for them. I mean, they don't have no jails and courthouses, lawyers. They're just at will. So, when we start talking about traditional knowledge, that fits in there too. Because how we looked at for thousands of years, bears never came to Anvik during the summer and the fall time. And that's the elders, what they said. And I believe that. There has to be a reason. So -- and I did bring a newspaper to show the Board of Fish how there's no fish out in rural Alaska. The eagles are in anchorage in the dumps now. That's our national emblem. It's scavenging. Why? I mean, something that's, you know, next to our American flag. So, you know, I really thought hard about it, too, because it hurts me, too, because -- anyway, that's it. Traditional knowledge is one that.....

(Distortion)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you. Any other questions?

(No response)

Are you finished or complete? Okay. Oh, I did have one question. How do the elders know that you're going to have a big run at the mouth?

MS. ALSTROM: We don't question them because they have to tell us. So, I mean, I was taught, you know, they tell us something and we don't question them. Because they're -- it's their way of teaching us and that we have to be cognizant and observant when they're telling us the information like that. And so, because it's all about the learning process, we have values and we have ways of knowing. And teaching and our elders are there to guide us and provide us information. And, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Cool. Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: Thank you. I would just like to add that some of the elders' knowledge that I know from my parents and other elders, like, if the fish was coming, there would be like signs. There's other animals that give you warning that either it's going to be a high run or a low run. And I noticed -- well, I've lived outside too, out of the State of Alaska, and those elders down there, they do the same thing. Like, if they see some kind of worms or something, I don't know, they're not worms, but something crossing the street, it's a sign of something, weather, the weather, or a sign of something. So, I know that our elders did that too. If you see cotton flying in the air, you know the fish is close by. There was just different signs that work with the fish or whatever. They work together and then the elders, their knowledge, I believe that's how they read stuff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Serena gonna respond. Then Don.

MS. ALSTROM: Thank you, Jenny. I really appreciate that. Some of your traditional knowledge from your area also is the same in my area. We do look at the geese when they do come in, the formations, the abundance we look at, and it's all timing. You look at the buds on the trees, and when they're at a certain point, when they're budding, we know the fish are coming in. And wind, the cloud formations, everything that gives us signs, we look at.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Cool. Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Serena and Brian, for your presentations. You know, I'm just sitting here listening to Robert, to my cousin Jenny there, and it kind of dawns on me that, well I mean, you know, I don't want to get off the subject here, but why isn't there any more studies either by YRDFA or anybody that incorporates some of this traditional knowledge that you just mentioned in response to a question? I don't know what the question was. I missed it. But you know, there's so many things that, you know, I mean, I could say, well, you know, hey, the cotton are flying off the trees and stuff like that. The fish are here, whatever. You know, there's so many things. Does YRDFA or any other agency out there that collects data like that, collects anything from a cultural background, shall I say, or, I mean, traditional knowledge? I mean, wouldn't that be great to do a study on that? I mean, we've been talking about this for years, but how do you incorporate, how do you even utilize it? How do you -- why even mention it if we're not gonna try to pursue some traditional knowledges into management? And that's huge. To incorporate traditional knowledge into fish and game management at any point is huge. I mean, but it'd be nice if it was there. If you have a response, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Serena.

MS. ALSTROM: That's a great and excellent question because it should be. It should be incorporated into management. And before my time, our anthropologist, we had Catherine Moncrieff. Worked for us for 24 years, and this is -- was her goal, to get to document traditional knowledge and incorporate it into management. So, if you go to our website, we do have resources we do have natural indicators like children's book that was created and it's -- she did a lot of interviews in the Lower Yukon River talking about salmon arrival, salmon abundance, and all of that. And as we distributed that book early in the early 2000s, it was said from the upper reaches of the Yukon River that a lot of the indicators were similar and that they also wanted the book. We also work closely with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I don't know if you've heard, I mean, they're all recorded, they're all, you know, summarized, our teleconference calls, but ADF&G Yukon area managers have noted that they've used traditional knowledge. And with those calls have asked

people about, you know, what's going on in the Lower Yukon, you know, when people talk about, oh, you know, south wind is blowing in. Well, that's an actual indicator because, you know, usually the wind, that current pushes the fish into the river. And so, they kind of determine that whether or not it's going to be an early or late run, on time, whatever. But I've heard managers utilizing traditional knowledge when they give their assessment or their management overviews through the teleconference.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Cool. Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah. Thank you, Serena, for that. You know, yesterday I mentioned that, you know, we haven't been fishing because of the moratorium and that the time before that, and I was saying that at some point the government or the departments are going to ask, where do you get your traditional knowledge? Because you guys never fished for so long. But I mentioned that yesterday, but then I was thinking about it last night. It's not only fishing. It's the berries. It's the geese hunting. It's the moose. It's the bears. It's just the way, you know, if you live here and on your computers and everything like that, well, everybody has traditional knowledge, no matter the race. And for me, I was thinking about it, and that -- the traditional knowledge will never go away because we're out there, and times can get tougher. Well, that traditional knowledge is going to get stronger, too, because you're going to need it. You're not going to go on computers and everything, look up, when we're gonna fish, when we're gonna hunt and anything like that, your stomach will tell you or the cold will tell you. So, that traditional knowledge is a strong thing. And I think it's one of the reasons that we're here. We're trying to figure out what's going on with the fish, what's going on with the whole -- our country. But then you go back and you can almost say it's a system that's affecting a lot of us. But then traditional knowledge will never fail.

Traditional knowledge should be in the books. Because, like you said, way before, even back in our ancestors, they didn't have these computers. They didn't have paper and pencil to write on. They had it, you know, what they're going to do next, when they're getting ready. It's just an automatic thing. If you watch the people that live around home, they're going down the boats, 3, 4, of them with chainsaws, well, they're going

to get wood. They're going down there, they're hanging up their fishing nets in the springtime. They're getting ready for fishing, if they can fish. Berries, you see the ladies and all the kids and everybody going down to the boats and the -- when the berry time, they're going over. Nobody told them. They just know the time and they're asking each other about the berries in different situations -- different areas. You know, a computer is not going to tell you none of that. It's just what's in you and what you know and how you live. It's just the way of life. And it's always going to be there. And I very strongly think that, you know, if you're going to put the system into our lives and trying to do it with these computers, it's -- you need to work with the traditional knowledge and put them together. There's 2 sides to this thing. We live the traditional knowledge while you live on the system. So, I thank you for that. And I think it needs to be in there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy. Robert.

MR. WALKER: May I? I just got a quote, you know, Serena, you know, when you listen to the elders talk in their language, they always say that fish is the only animal that don't leave tracks. And how come that we are creatures of habit? Because we are. We're the same thing like the animals, you know, they have the habitat, they have the way of living. So, that's just a quote.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Brian.

MR. MCKENNA: Thank you. Yeah, on the discussion, I thought it'd be good to talk about one other project that we have starting next year. Wasn't prepared to talk about it today, but it's in the lower -- it's in the Yukon Coastal District. It's a joint project with ADF&G Subsistence Division. So, the communities of Chevak and Scammon Bay started this discussion, several years ago, but the Kun and Kashunuk Rivers are currently managed under the Yukon Management plan. But those rivers may or may not have Yukon salmon in them. They might have their own unique salmon population there. So, that's kind of what started that thought. But that project is using the traditional knowledge from those communities to potentially impact how they're able to fish and use the resources in their rivers there. So, it's going to be a 2-year study. It's starting next year. We're gonna -- YRDFA, working with

ADF&G. We're gonna be doing interviews with elders and knowledge holders in those communities. To learn about salmon presence, absence, where at in those rivers they're spawning. And then that knowledge will be used in the following open water season to go out and collect genetic data to figure out if those fish are spawning populations there, if the salmon in those rivers are going out and coming back into the Yukon. So, there's potential there for the local and traditional knowledge in those communities to impact how they're managed and how they're able to fish in those rivers there.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. So, thanks so much for your presentation. Always appreciate YRDFA's work and projects and stewarding the teleconferences and so forth. So, thank you.

MS. ALSTROM: Thank you.

MR. MCKENNA: Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. So, Gale?

MS. PILCHER: Gale's going to be discussing the Board of Fish Agenda Change Requests. You guys do have copies of that in your supplemental materials. I believe it's Tab 3. I also -- because I forgot I put them there, put another copy in your folder, the green folder, that may be slightly better organized. So, hopefully you can find them.

MS. VICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the Council. Again, my name is Gale Vick, and I am the Chair of the Fisheries Subcommittee for the Fairbanks Fish and Game Advisory Committee. And I do want to say, listening to the discussion this morning about traditional knowledge, at the AYK Group, we talk about this quite a bit. The Anadromous Waters Catalog is only about 50 percent documented. And traditional knowledge is extremely important for bringing that up to date. A lot of us talk about what is a term called shifting baselines. And if we don't have enough knowledge going back 50-100 or more years, on where certain species were located. We have a shifting baseline based on very recent data, which is not what we want. We want to get a more historical perspective, so traditional knowledge is extremely important there as well. Thank you.

Okay. If everybody wants to look at their form for the Agenda Change Requests. There are 13 ACRs. They're coming before the Board of Fish Work Session, which is going to be the end of October. Next week, October 13th, is the deadline for commentary -- written commentary to the Board of Fish. But I want to remind everybody that the Board does accept RCs, which are record copies, during the meeting. If you are going to put in commentary, like, I -- I'll be talking to Eastern RAC, which will be meeting after the deadline. So, if agencies or groups or individuals want to put in commentary after the record copy is the vehicle for doing that. And that should be done -- there's a portal for it, and that should be done early in the meeting, so that the Board members have an opportunity to review them.

Okay, let's start with ACR number 1, which is to increase subsistence fishing opportunity for salmon in the Copper River District.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I stop you there?

MS. VICK: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have a sheet that's just giving us ACR 3, ACR 6 and 7, ACR 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13.

MS. PILCHER: I've only included the ones that were relevant, you guys don't have any C&T in the Copper River. So, I didn't include that for your guys discussion.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. PILCHER: I can find them if you need them but for the essence of time.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, you're -- you can continue but I just want to say we don't have the -- that ACR that you're actually referring to.

MS. VICK: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And is that relevant to the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: The reason I mentioned Copper River is because of the closeness of the watersheds. And we, at the Fairbanks AC, we pay very close attention to what happens on the Copper River. And, of course, a lot of people up here are going down to the Copper River to do dip net fishing and that kind of thing because of the salmon issues. But I would like to proceed as you want to see it from this Council.

(Talking)

MR. HONEA: Well, just a question. I mean, you're talking about these 8 ACRs. Are they in our booklet?

MS. PILCHER: Yes, you have a copy both in your supplemental materials, which is that black folder. As well as the green folder as well, cause I forgot.

MR. HONEA: Thank you.

MS. PILCHER: So, just as a reminder, what agenda change requests are. Is -- so, these are potential proposals submitted out of cycle that individuals that submitted them wants the Board of Fish to take up out of cycle. So, the Board of Fish is going to be meeting at their work session to discuss if these proposals meet the criteria. There's 3 criteria.

MS. VICK: Yeah, 3 criteria.

MS. PILCHER: To -- they'll accept an ACR for fishery conservation purpose or reason. And this is on the second page in your guys' packet in the green folder. For a fishery conservation purpose or reason to correct an error in regulation or to correct an effect on a fishery that was unforeseen when the regulation was adopted. So, what the Board of Fish is going to be looking at on these proposals at that work session is do these proposals meet one of those criteria? And they stick very close to those criteria.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: They do. Right.

MS. PILCHER: They don't like to take things up out of cycle. And then once that passes, if

they pass it, they assign it to a specific Board of Fish meeting to review it. One of the reasons that these are in front of you at this meeting is there's a chance that some of these proposals could get assigned to a Board of Fish meeting that's going to be before you guys meet again. So, if you guys want to take action on these agenda change requests to submit comments, the first layer would be if you wanted to submit comments recommending the Board of Fish either adopt an ACR or not, based on those criteria. Which is something the Board's really going to handle -- they take public comment, but they're pretty rigid in what they accept or don't accept. And the next layer is if they do accept it, would you guys want to offer comments on those proposals, since you won't have an opportunity as a RAC to do so before your next meeting?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Excuse me. The reason I'm bringing this up is, I mean, if we deem that important enough to -- please give us the pages, so we can follow along on there. Because I think it's important even for our ACs. It may come before the ACs for action. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa's gonna help you locate your -- the document we're on. Because of the time constraints that I'm under, the Copper River does not really affect the Western Interior region that much. In fact, people that have been shipped sockeye salmon, they don't like sockeye salmon because it's a cleaner fish. So, I think we're gonna skip that aspect. But ACR 3, 6 and 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13, those are the ones that would affect our region. And because of our time constraints currently, I would like to go into those. If you want to go to 3 and move on.

MS. VICK: That would be great. Yeah. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And 3 was submitted by Tim, and that -- which is a very well-written proposal. Thank you. Here's the problem with that one. That is going to be challenged as being out of cycle. And because, Nissa was just talking about the criteria that is going to be accepted, and we do know the Board's going to be very strict about that. I am -- can't say what our AC is going to do on Monday night, but I am going to really push to support this proposal. Because it's keeping in line with all the previous intake proposals that we've had before the Board. And we want to keep that in front

of the Board. To us, it's a huge conservation issue. And if we're going to address it at the Board meeting, it's going to be addressed on the basis of conservation. That is going to be a stretch for them, but we have lots of years of backing this up with lots of data, lots of papers. And Tim, we'd certainly be glad to work with you on supporting this at the work session.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: When would be this hatchery type proposal? When would be the cycle?

MS. VICK: They are going to be debating that. They have another meeting, a special meeting on the 21st. And they had one just a couple of weeks ago. They had special meetings to talk about process. And one of the process is when are we going to allow hatchery proposals to be submitted to the Board? Because we've gone back and forth on this like a yo-yo. And so, the conversation, which was not determination yet, the conversation beginning was that, well maybe we can have proposals that are specific to particular hatcheries at that regional meeting. Otherwise, it would be a statewide proposal, and a statewide meeting would. And they want to do it every 3 years. And so, they haven't made that decision yet. I think if we want to have comments -- I'm certainly going to comment on it at the Board of Fish Work Session, is to say, look, we don't have that many hatchery proposals. Most of them are because the Board is limited to what they can do. And that is on the egg take. Their authority over hatcheries is very limited. But we've been doing this for so many years and haven't gotten any traction. And we've had lots of Board members who have said on record how cranky they are, they just did this just a couple of weeks ago, about getting all these hatchery proposals. And we're saying that's cause you're not doing anything about it. So, we need to do it.

Now, there's another glitch in this. And during the statewide meeting, the -- we were close to getting -- this last time, close to getting some relief on one of the proposals that we had submitted. And that will come up here in the ACRs. And no, I'm sorry, it won't. No, I apologize. But we had gotten close and we were within one vote and the commissioner said to -- on record, that he was going to be working with all the hatcheries and they were going to do a -- sign moratorium on egg takes for pink salmon, just for pinks. And so, we took him at his word and that proposal did not get passed at that meeting. And then, now, I have been

talking with the commissioner in the last few days. He has assured me that that is going to be signed next week. And I've asked them to send me a copy of that. So, I'm not going to take any bets until I actually see that signed.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Gale, can you clarify what you mean by a moratorium? A moratorium or a cap on intake?

MS. VICK: I have a statement from the commissioner.

MR. GERVAIS: You're talking about Doug Vincent-Lang?

MS. VICK: Yeah, right. And, if -- Mr. Chair, this was from the -- this was RC240 from the statewide meeting. "This decision to permit the source and number of eggs taken by hatchery operations is one of my authorities under Alaska statute. I want to assure you I take this responsibility seriously. When I became a commissioner 6 years ago, one of the newest controversies I faced was with the issue of hatchery-wild interaction. To ensure we could sort out the science, I made a policy decision that I would not permit an increased egg take for pink salmon, and I have not permitted an increase in egg takes over the past 6 years". So, I think it's a moratorium on just an increase in egg takes. But he goes on. "This past year, I've spent considerable time reviewing the literature and talking with scientists and stakeholders. What I have found is that the science is unclear. Yes, the Ruggerone paper says one thing, but much of it's based on correlation, not cause and effect. Other papers show the opposite". We disagree with that, obviously. "I also reviewed the level of biomass from Alaska pink salmon hatchery releases. Alaska hatchery releases represent 2.1% of the total adult and immature pink biomass in the North Pacific. Also, I reviewed the preliminary data from the International Year of the Salmon marine cruises that showed little overlap in the distribution of rearing pink and chinook salmon. Given this, I have concluded the science regarding hatchery wild is inconclusive at this point in time. As such, I will not be using my authority to reduce permitted pink salmon egg take levels at this time. This said, I encourage further research on this topic with the hope of getting

more definitive science. We will continue our efforts to finalize the study on genetic impacts of hatchery straying on wild stocks and continue our involvement to address the larger questions regarding hatchery food competition through the North Pacific and Andromeda Fish Commission".

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, what is this current, no additional, but what is the current take of eggs for pink salmon? He's referring to.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: It varies according to the address, but I would have to look that up, and I don't have that right in front of me.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: When they released 1.2, 1.4 billion pink salmon smolts, they must be taking billions and billions of eggs because there's failures and so forth.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: They're huge. You raised a good point yesterday on the releases versus the intake. And the releases are the real issues, what goes back into the ocean. And the Anadromous Fish Commission does really good work on tracking that. Alaska is the biggest releaser of pink salmon in the world. Russia's trying to compete with us, but they're not there yet, although they're trying this year. But -- and Ruggerone -- Dr. Ruggerone, that he was talking about, of course, his papers speak to a lot of the competition at sea for forage food and the overlap. And his conclusion is that the -- there are too many pinks in the ocean and that those pink salmon are competing not only for chinook and even sockeye feed, but there's a lot of overlap in the forage food. And we know, from many reports recently, that forage food is becoming a huge issue because some of that forage food is under commercial activity. So, it's a huge ecosystem crisis. So, that's what I know. And I'll know more from the commissioner next week. But honestly, whatever they do is going to be minimal, so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm supportive of ACR 3, because it's -- it's a putting the -- highlighting the issue. They must -- if you total all the hatcheries to release 1.4 billion smolt, pink smolt, you have to be taking 2 billion pink salmon eggs, 100 million is

like vastly underneath that. And the Department of Fish and Game, their objective is sustain yield management of wild replenishable resources, not hatchery fish. Hatchery fish is not in their purview, and it's impeding -- they're under obligation to maintain healthy populations of wild stocks. What they're not considering is when you release all that hatchery fish in Southcentral, Southeast, and Kodiak, the drift, the current is going east to west, the Japan Current. So, it's pushing all that pink salmon smolt right in the way of all of our AYK stocks that are moving, chinook and chum that are moving into the north Gulf. They've obliterated -- by the time they get -- when that plume of pink salmon smolt gets to -- off the South Alaska Peninsula, they've obliterated the phytoplankton and zooplankton regimes. They're going to continuously do it. That's because they're releasing static amounts of pink salmon every year. If you look at what they really should be doing, they might be able to release nearly as many as they are for the high year, but they should have none. They should be releasing 50 percent, you know, in a 2-year period, not a static amount.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Our opinion is they shouldn't be releasing any at all.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: They really should be releasing any.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Just as a little backup, there are over 25 PNP hatcheries in the State of Alaska; private nonprofit, and they're all in the Gulf of Alaska. And they are supposed to be operating on their own dime, which is not true. We know that too. What we're pushing for both at the AC and the BBAYK is to have a statewide discussion on the impacts of hatcheries. We can never get to enough discovery at the Board meetings. There's just too much limited time. Even -- and then we would have separate board meeting, non-regulatory board meetings, for the hatcheries. It's been mostly a dog and pony show, and I apologize for the term, but at the -- from the Board of Fish. And we cannot get the science there that we need to have. And the science against hatcheries is overwhelming. They're finding this out in the Pacific Northwest. I mean, we have hundreds and hundreds of papers about this, going back years. And

lots recently. So, we just need that statewide discussion.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We do.

MS. VICK: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, should we take these up one at a time, Nissa, do you think? This ACR 3? Support.

MS. PILCHER: What I would suggest doing is, ACR 3 is kind of a different kettle than 6 through 11. So, I would take action on 3. And then ACR 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, those were all proposals that passed at the last Area M meeting that were overturned.

MS. VICK: Not 6, just 7 through 11. 6 is a new one, and I'll explain that in a minute.

MS. PILCHER: Okay. So, those could potentially be taken up as a bundle.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Let's take up ACR 3. Is -- the Chair will entertain a motion to support ACR 3 to be submitted to the Board of -- Alaska Board of Fish for their review.

MS. PELKOLA: So, moved.

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

MR. HONEA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Second by Don. Discussion? We've discussed this issue. Do we have a question?

MS. PELKOLA: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Question's called. Those in favor of support of ACR 3, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, continue, Gale.

MS. VICK: Okay, thank you.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. PILCHER: Quick question, or quick clarification, just to get on the record. My interpretation of that vote was to support ACR 3, submit comments to the work session, as well as the Board of Fish meeting it gets assigned, if the Council is unable to meet prior to when that ACR -- if the ACR is approved, what meeting it gets assigned to.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, that's true. And we have quite a bit of discussion on the record on that issue. Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Gale, is it appropriate to -- for the WIRAC to send in that Ruggerone paper with our comments to the work session?

MS. VICK: Absolutely.

MR. GERVAIS: Let me just verify that I'm talking about the correct thing. The Ruggerone paper is the one that this -- we got presented to in March -- February or March, of 2024 at the All-RAC meeting. To remember that the gentleman was talking about hatch releases and food supply and he gave us like an hour presentation during our meeting, is that correct?

(Talking)

MR. GERVAIS: I would make a motion to include the Ruggerone paper regarding pink salmon in the north Pacific, as part of our submitted comments to Board of Fish Working Group.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Regarding ACR 3.

MR. GERVAIS: Roger.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Do we have a second with that motion?

MS. PELKOLA: Second

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. Question. Those in favor of amending that last ACR 3 include the Ruggerone paper, with our with our comments, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Gale.

MS. VICK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to add on to that, Dr. Ruggerone has a lot of papers. That's a very good one, though. That's probably one of the better ones for the public, but he has a ton of evidence. Thank you.

Okay, going on to RC number 6. This was submitted by ONC, and they do have a proposal at the Area M meeting, that there were a number of time restriction proposals. This was not taking up in favor of another one. But there they put this one back in as a new proposal. There again, they're going to have to -- similar to number 3, they're going to have to really work hard to explain this out of cycle. But they'll have -- if -- I don't know, I haven't talked to them recently and I need to find out what they're thinking. We are going to try and get them to come to our meeting on Monday night when we have a discussion at the AC. So, that's all I know. But I but I do know that my recommendation is going to be to not -- to have no action on this one. And in favor of the reinstatement of -- under ACR 7. Now, under ACR 7 and 11, may I explain with the back.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes, go ahead.

MS. VICK: Yeah, because that's relevant to number 6 as well. These were the 5 proposals that were vacated by the AG's office. And our position is that they’re -- these were done with -- egregiously. We've used that term. And they were without benefit of public input and so, -- and it's really put an onus on the Board of Fish at this moment. It's a -- really a

crisis, actually. We see it that way from the public. And talking with a lot of board members, they're not sure how this is going to proceed. They're still waiting to hear from the Department of Law. And, so, the Fairbanks AC back in July had a special meeting, so that we could put these in as an ACR, as a placeholder. We were hoping there would be -- the Department of Law would have a determination way before this. And we -- these would be irrelevant, that we would just be reinstating them. But I don't think that's going to happen. So, because, as I mentioned yesterday, there were so many chum taken out of Area M this summer, 4 times the Bering Sea, so -- as bycatch. That, again, is in a 3-week period under a sockeye-prosecuted fishery. And it was both seine and drift fleet. And they took over 487,000 out of chum. Because of the genetics, we know some of those go into the AYK. We don't know how many in recent years. We're still working to ferret that out. And we're hoping at this work session, we'll get more information on genetics.

So, these 5 proposals, and especially proposal number 7, relates directly to number 6. And which is why I'm gonna recommend no action on 6 and get a reinstatement. And the other reason is, these were proposals that were vetted by the Board, were discussed at the Board meeting. The proposal number 1, 7, is -- came, I'm sorry, ACR number 7, came from Proposal 127 at the Area M meeting, and then that was turned into RC245. That's what got passed, was RC245, which was an amendment of the Proposal 127. So, all of this has already been done by the Board, so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I concur. I don't think the board wants to deliberate RC6 again. Because they already reviewed RC245, is that...?

(Talking)

Right. Okay, that's my perception. That it would be a setting us up to fail. So, I think that we should endorse ACR 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. And so, we're going to continue with those, but I think that’s staying with 7. Because it's already deliberated proposal and passed proposal by the Board of Fish, is a lot more weight to be reviewed under the Board process. Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Gale, on -- I don't know very much about the history of the,

you know, some of the proposals put up by Fairbanks AC. I mean, and this is -- I -- is this a repeat of something that was shot down? Is the 10 days or anything? A little bit of history on that? I mean, because, I mean, obviously, you know, we're -- you're submitting it again, I'm guessing, because it was anything that was submitted in the Area M was closed, correct? So, is this a repeat of a previous one? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Don, the Board of Fish passed these proposals, right before the season, the State Attorney General's Office violated -- they claimed that there was conflict of interest by certain Board members. So, they pulled these regulations and deemed them as not valid. Because they were -- yeah, there was supposedly a conflict of interest. Subsequently, they found out that there was no conflict of interest. And so, the reality is the Board of -- Attorney General's Office has illegally pulled these regulations. But to get them back before the State Board of Fish again, there had to be these ACRs. And so, we're dealing with the ACRs. Let's go back to where we were, resubmit these proposals. Hopefully, the Board adopts their previous regulations. You gotta [sic] turn your mic on.

MR. HONEA: I guess what I was asking for, it's a repeat. There's no language change. Nothing has changed in dates and days or anything?

MS. VICK: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MS. VICK: Don, that's an interesting question. We -- the Fairbanks AC has submitted many as such proposals, but other organizations have as well. And for the last -- in 2023, at the Area M meeting, and in 2026, there were several time-and-area closure proposals. The -- there was a -- the Board, and I can't speak to all the deliberations on this, but the Board consolidate some of those. And the one that they did pass was this RC245 which was of all the proposals that were presented at this last meeting. But these are variations on a theme. They're not always the same language, to answer your question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But this -- but what we're deliberating here is the things that the Board of Fish has already adopted as regulations. What we want

is them to re-instate those regulations. That's what this whole process is.

MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, as I mentioned earlier, though, this is probably going to come before the ACs, and I just wanted clarification on those. Thank you.

MS. PILCHER: Yes, as long as the ACs do meet, and meet at the appropriate time, it would -- the ACs would have the option for weighing in on this. Ruby AC, they may not get an opportunity to weigh in on submitting comments prior to the ACR deadline, but you may have an opportunity to do so if the Board accepts the ACR and it becomes a proposal.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: These will be -- this RC245 will be sent out to the Advisory Committee, Koyukuk River Advisory, Middle Yukon, Ruby, as a proposal, and it'll be the amended language of RC245. So, that's what all the Advisory Committees would be looking at. That's the request, is to bring that proposal back up so that we can -- the Board of Fish can redo those proposals. We can make additional comments at that time. So, is that clear? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Gale, procedural clarification on -- are the ACRs going to get either accepted or thrown out around October 15th? The deadline's the 13th. Is the Board -- are the --- could the ACRs get thrown out prior to the October 28th meeting or work session?

MS. VICK: No, not at this point.

MR. GERVAIS: So, the 28th-29th work session is where they'll say, yeah, we'll take this or it doesn't qualify.

MS. VICK: Right.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's clarified the issue of where we're at. Continue, Gale.

MS. VICK: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, we're on ACR number 8, which is to amend the post -- this is post June. This is salmon management plan for the South Alaska Peninsula to enforce king

salmon caps, with reductions in commercial fishing time in South Alaska Peninsula. We are going -- I'm gonna recommend supporting this. And we are going to support it. We submitted it already, so we will support it. And it's based on extreme conservation measures. And this is from proposal number 141 at the Area M meeting. In the ACRs, they don't refer to the original proposals. They're being addressed as new action items. So, we're going to say at the meeting, even though we have language in each of these that you'll see that refer to that original proposal, we're going to really push that issue. So, that's ACR 8. Do you want me to go on to 9?

Okay. ACR 9 is to reduce the maximum gillnet depth in the Alaska Peninsula area to 70 meshes, which is concurrent with what is happening in most commercial fisheries. Area M has much deeper nets than they -- seine nets than in other areas. So, the argument -- this is a conservation argument as well. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Nissa notes that that was our original proposal.

MS. VICK: Oh, I forgot about that. Yes. That's right.

MR. GERVAIS: No, it wasn't. We did the seine one. The gillnet depth is different.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh.

MS. VICK: Yeah, I thought this came out of Chignik.

MR. GERVAIS: So, 9 is referring to gillnets. And I'm not -- I'm just trying to recall. It's 100 currently, isn't it? Is that the status quo?

MS. VICK: Yeah, right.

MR. GERVAIS: So, reducing from 100 to 70. And just for reference, Bristol Bay net is 29 meshes.

MS. VICK: Yeah, yeah. Bristol Bay -- it's very shallow in Bristol Bay.

MR. GERVAIS: So.

MS. VICK: Okay. Yeah, I apologize. I did say seine, it was gillnet. The next one, number 10, is

the seine reduction. My eyes aren't -- even with my glasses, my eyes aren't that good sometimes. So -- and that was your original proposal, is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah.

MS. VICK: Yeah. Okay. And we definitely want to support that. We did originally, and we will do that again.

MR. GERVAIS: Question, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Gale, at that February meeting, that ACR 10, with the same specifications, do you recall about the -- how close of a vote that was?

MS. VICK: I got it on my computer. I'd have to look it up. We can ask.

MR. GERVAIS: I can look it up.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa can find it.

MS. VICK: Yeah, it'll be on the summary. If you go to the Board meeting, it's on the summary. So, Nissa knows how to do that really well. And I apologize. A lot of these votes, I think on that -- I can't remember on the seine. I want to say it was a 5-2, but I just -- I don't remember. That makes a difference, too. One of these proposals was 5-2, and that makes a huge difference, and that might have been the one. Because without that one vote, it would still pass. So, the one contested vote. So, I apologize. It's been a while since I -- we talked about this. And I don't want to put any of our members on the spot here. So, on to ACR 11?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes.

MS. VICK: ACR 11 is to prohibit discard of chinook salmon caught in purse seine gear in the Alaska Peninsula and chinook -- Chignik areas. This was a very contested vote. And originally, we thought it was going to pass. There was a lot of politicking going on, as usual. And so, we thought it was going to be -- not, I mean, dismissed. But it was passed to allow -- to prohibit the discard of chinook salmon. And so, we want to support that to be reinstated. So, right now, seiners can discard salmon. Kings, king salmon. And as we talked

about yesterday, we know in a drift net, you're not going to protect a king to go very far because the whole issue is going to destroy the gills. But for -- in a seine net, it's the pressure. You have hundreds and hundreds of pounds of fish coming up, and a fish is already half dead by the time it gets up into -- if not dead. So, for any seiner who's bringing hundreds and hundreds of pounds of fish in a bag to say that they carefully pick up a chinook, that is incidentally on the top of the bag and carry it carefully and put it back into the ocean and watch it swim away, it just defies any kind of logic in my mind.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, what I think I'll do next summer is I'll film several rolls when we bring the fish out of the water on the deck of the boat. And that way, you'll be able to see the condition of the fish and their cognitive ability and their physical ability, and that'll help everybody understand the situation. That no matter -- like, the current regulation that we operate under this summer was -- we're supposed to gently release any chinook that was not more mortally injured. But you don't know that. And depending on the way your boat's set up, you know, some guys can reach the water from their boat, but some of the bigger boats it's like a 6-foot drop from the working deck to the water. So, they would basically have to let the fish drop in the water. So, wouldn't have any kind of mechanism to revive the fish or anything like that.

MS. VICK: Right.

MR. GERVAIS: So, I think we need to -- I want to do that, to get more information out to the concerned parties on the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: That would be.....

MR. GERVAIS: Trying to release live salmon, it's not meaning that they're making it to the spawning grounds or even a hundred yards away from the boat.

MS. VICK: Right. Right. Thank you, Tim. I really do need to talk to you more about that in defense of this. Because the seiners that do -- have

testified on this have said the opposite, and that just defies logic in my view.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Also, when the roll comes over, most of the load is going down the hole, just dumping in. So, how in the world are you supposed to -- "oh, there's a king on top of the pile. It's like, let's throw it overboard." It's like, what?

MS. VICK: Yeah. And that leaves us without numbers. We don't get an accurate count of kings, even though you're supposed to report exact.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It violates -- what I have said to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council members, when they were throwing away king salmon, we -- what Western Interior, back 20 years ago, was beating on them to retain those chinook -- those fish and return them to river origin. So, SeaShare actually gets all this fish now. Oh, we're saving all the fish, but it ends up in Seattle back at the fleet's base. That's not what I said. That's not what this Council said. We said we wanted the fish returned to the river of origin. People want king salmon. They don't want sockeye or some other kind of a thing. They want the fish that were caught in the Bering Sea. That were supposed to come back to the Yukon River. So, this throwing -- I'm opposed to waste, throwing any fish overboard. It should never be -- ever happening. It's illegal to waste the salmon in Alaska. So, that's -- this is endorsing waste.

MS. VICK: Mr. Chair, if I might ask Tim a question. Because this is on the post-June or -- but in the June fishery, kings are -- they are, according to the genetics that we do have from 2014, I believe, they are -- a large portion of those kings are Western kings, are our kings, but they're immature kings. You know, they're like under 10 pounds, under 8 pounds in some respects. Is that your understanding in the June fishery?

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais. Yeah. The majority of king salmon that are caught in seine operations, at least in Chignik area, I've never seen in Area M, but it's right next door. Those are 6-15 pound king salmon. We're not seeing -- it's not like a spawning fish coming back. However, in

that same management area, I'm fishing out in the (distortion). And there's other fishermen that are fishing in Chignik Lagoon, which is right in front of the river. And those guys -- I've never fished inside like that. So, I don't know what -- if those fish are all spawners or if they're just -- we call them traveling fish.

MS. VICK: Yeah, traveling fish, right. Yeah.

MR. GERVAIS: They're just out there living life.

MS. VICK: Right and if I may ask, what kind of price did you get? Did you get a price at all for those kings?

MR. GERVAIS: They -- the ones that are required to be delivered? They pass like 10 cents.

MS. VICK: Yeah.

MR. GERVAIS: Like they -- Silver Bay Seafoods, they're paying money to make a transactional buy, but the money is a nominal fee, like to discourage any kind of -- there's no commercial incentive for the seiners to be delivering a king salmon, because they're getting 10 cents a pound.

MS. VICK: Right.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Where does the product go?

MR. GERVAIS: Whereas -- but I got to say this for relevance, like if you are fishing Southeast Alaska as a trawl fisherman, targeting kings and taking care of them nice, gill and gut them and sell them same day or onboard freezer, they're getting probably anywhere from 25 to 40 dollars a pound.

MS. VICK: Right, exactly.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Where does the bycatch 10-cent-a-pound fish, where's it going? Who's getting the fish?

MR. GERVAIS: I don't know. I can find out.

MS. VICK: If you would -- because we hear from several people down on the grounds, that it goes into big buckets that are chopped up for chum bait.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Really?

MS. VICK: Yeah, and I would like to verify that, but we're -- we would love to have more surveillance on the docks and on the -- in the processing lines. But we understand, there's no value. I mean, I do understand they're paying for it, but as a nominal fee, but those immature kings that should be going up through the Pass and up into the north side, you know, into Western Alaska to grow up. And we're not allowing them to grow up. We're intercepting that.

MR. GERVAIS: And they -- there should be genetic sampling being taken place.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those all should be genetically sampled. And they should actually be returned to the river of origin, just like the SeaShare program should be doing also.

MS. VICK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that’s -- there's a huge loophole to jump through. Okay, we bought all this fish. We ground them all up. There's no accountability for that. You got 25-30 dollar-a-pound fish. You think they're chopping them up for crab bait? I'd bet. Yeah, right. There's a huge accountability problem of how that fish -- what that product -- happens to that product. I didn't realize they had a big issue there. We do need to move on. I'm getting under stress here to keep this all rolling.

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Right. I apologize.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we’re -- so, that was through ACR 11. So, we've done 7 through 11. And.....

MS. VICK: Yeah, those are the 5 that the Fairbanks AC put forward.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we -- we're going to bundle those. We're going to -- those were actually regulations that were discounted by the Attorney General's Office, that hopefully the Board of Fish will reinstate those as proposals for further review and hopefully for adoption. Who's going to make a motion to bundle that and submit those to the Board of Fish as ACR recommendations?

MR. HONEA: I move.

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

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion. We've talked quite a bit about this issue on the record.

UNIDENTIFIED: 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)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And thanks so much, Gale.

MS. VICK: Mr. Chair, if I might.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. VICK: You might want to consider ACR 13.

MR. WALKER: Jack.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes.

MR. WALKER: I have one question just for clarification so or for understanding. ACR 6 and 7 submitted by the Native Council. What Native Council is that?

MS. VICK: That's down in the Kuskokwim area. And that is, and I apologize, I'm gonna say it wrong. It's -- hold on a second, which proposal are you talking about, Chief Walker?

MR. WALKER: You know, it says.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: 6.

MS. VICK: Oh, the Native Village of Eyak, on the Copper River, yeah. Yeah, I'm sorry, that's not the Kusko, that's the Copper River, Native Village of Eyak.

MR. WALKER: Oh, okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MR. GERVAIS: Orutsararmiut, is Copper River? Or is -- I thought that was a Native Council out of Bethel.

MS. VICK: Oh, I'm sorry. No, this is Copper River. This is Eyak. Yeah.

MS. PILCHER: I'm going to horribly mispronounce it. ACR 6 was submitted by O-R-U-T-S-A-R-A.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Oh, I got it wrong on here.

MS. PILCHER: (Indiscernible) Council which is out of Bethel.

MS. VICK: I'm sorry. I'm looking at number one. He said Copper River, so I'm looking at number one.

MR. WALKER: I didn’t say Copper River, I said submitted by Native.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. VICK: Is my hearing. I apologize, Chief Walker. No, wonder we're going in circles. Okay,

so, yeah. Okay, that's -- and that's why I'm saying I'm having a hard time. Serena, can you help me with pronunciation on that one?

MS. ALSTROM: ONC.

MS. VICK: Yeah, we call it ONC. I do not want to embarrass myself to try to pronounce it correctly.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. We're going to go through ACR 13. If you wanna.....

MS. VICK: Yes, ACR 13. That was submitted by the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association. I strongly hope that you can support that. It's to establish a statewide chinook retention and disposition reporting standard for commercial salmon fisheries statewide. And this will really help us get a better idea of numbers for statewide chinook. Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Does that disposition, does that mean genetic testing?

MS. VICK: That would be what happens to them. We want to know what the retention is and what the harvesting -- what happens to them, basically. Where do they go?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Referred to as home pack?

MS. VICK: Home pack is a huge problem. And that -- we need to have that included here. I'm -- I have to go back and look at the actual language. But yeah, we've been trying to get more control over the home pack situation forever. Here's the -- if I might, Mr. Chair, very quickly.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Briefly, yes.

MS. VICK: Home pack is a term that is in used for fish that commercial fishermen are allowed to keep. They can legally keep them and take them home. They have to report them on their fish tickets as personal use. And that's different than the personal use that we have legally in the State of Alaska that's only for Alaskans. There's just two different

interpretations. But personal use on the fish ticket is the home pack. And as we know, a lot of our fleet is outside. So, outside fishermen can take home fish from that home pack, our king salmon that happens on the Copper and the Prince Williams Sound all the time. I fished Prince Williams Sound for 21 years and normally what you want is the sockeye and you want to take it the last set, because you want to take fresh fish right before you go home. But the issue is when the kings start running, we would get some big kings and everybody would bring them home and you'd have big king parties. And a lot of people would take them -- they can take them down. If you're outside fishermen, you can take them and process them and put them in jars or wherever and selling, in Arizona or Hawaii or Florida or wherever, which is what happens. So, there's a lot of legal fuzziness in all of that. But the biggest thing is that commercial fishermen are allowed to take these kings that really should -- if, you know, should be under subsistence. Because some of the fishermen in Prince William Sound can do both. And -- but they should be allowed to spawn rather than go to outside fishermen. That's my point of view. But because of our regulatory system, we can't discriminate under commercial fishing between in-state and out-of-state.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I happen to be in Juneau and I watched sports fishermen coming in with 10 boxes of frozen fish from a sport fishing, their sport fishing trip. And they were heading to San Diego with 10 boxes of fish. I bet they ate every last one of those fish. This has been a major problem in Alaska for decades. This is basically a black market commercial fishery for -- especially in the sport fishers. They do it in the Kenai. They're processing -- a little processing plant in the back of their little Winnebago's. But we need to move along here. So, I'm supportive of ACR 13, retention and disposition standards. Do we have a motion to adopt that? Tim, you got a question?

MR. GERVAIS: I'll make a motion to adopt it, but I would like to amend it. Oh.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's a motion.....

MR. GERVAIS: Is that appropriate on ACR?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I don't know.

MS. PILCHER: The way that you guys are commenting, it can, because these are -- I'm looking at these as 2 different forms, 2 different ways of communicating with the Board of Fish. You guys have specified that you want me to communicate to the Board of Fish. You're in approval of the ACRs passing, but then also, submit additional comments to the individual Board of Fish meetings that these proposals -- if, these ACRs term proposals will get assigned to. And at that time, I could submit comments from the Council that you support this proposal with an amendment.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, make a motion to that effect.

MR. GERVAIS: I just did.

MS. PILCHER: What's the amendment?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: What's the amendment? You've got a motion and you have to make the amended language.

MR. GERVAIS: All right. I would make a motion to adopt ACR to show support or write comments in support of ACR 13 for statewide retention, disposition, and genetic testing standards for commercial salmon fisheries. Meaning, that when -- because it's chinook salmon and because it's a stock of concern or endangered species level of abundance, that the Department of Fish and Game needs to be -- have a statistically relevant sampling program for these fish. So, that stock of origin can be be made and there needs to be a system in place where somebody is evaluating these fish in these areas are catching the stock of origin and so this is a -- this is a growing up habitat area for these chinook salmon.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Excuse me. The motion is to adopt ACR 13 with amended language to include genetic identification of the -- of those specific stocks that are being retained or in their dispositions. That would be basically a synopsis of that.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Did you include the genetic testing part?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That's what I just said.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And that's clear on the record for your use, Nissa? So, do we have a second to that motion, amended language?

MR. HONEA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Don.

MR. GERVAIS: I -- just on the language. Genetic testing and evaluation -- genetic evaluation of -- as part of the standard for commercial salmon fisheries.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, that's on the record.

MS. PILCHER: Second concurs.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Second concurs with that clarification. Question.

UNIDENTIFIED: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Those in favor of ACR 13 with amended language to the Board of Fish, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we have completed that. Do you have anything else, Gale?

MS. VICK: No, thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And -- but I would ask maybe if either one of you can be at the AC meeting on Monday night with that language from this Council. And we can consider that as an amendment to our support as well.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. VICK: That's a good amendment.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I intend to be on that on that call. I -- people show up at my house, I get disruptions. I can't always promise.

MR. GERVAIS: Gale, you're saying Fairbanks AC meeting is this upcoming Monday?

MS. VICK: The Fisheries Subcommittee is Monday night, and we do most of the fisheries stuff in the subcommittee meeting. And then we report to the full meeting which is on Wednesday night, at the J.P. Jones Center, here in Fairbanks. But Monday night is virtual only and I just highly recommend if you can join us, that would be wonderful.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay.

MS. VICK: Yeah, it's 6 o'clock and it's on the -- our website.

(Talking)

MS. VICK: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You can submit that or transmit that contacts to all the Council members. So, yeah, if you've got a chance to get on there, Tim or Don or anybody else.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, I'm planning on calling in on it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I think we've covered that. And so, I intend to be on that on that call. So, we need to take a break since we're at quarter to 11. So, we'll come back at 11. We're trying to be back on the record at 11, because we've got a lot of agenda.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're gonna bring this meeting back to order. So, Tim. Tim Gervais. So, we're gonna -- where are we at here now?

MS. PILCHER: So, we're at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, yeah, that's right. So, we're gonna do U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Yukon River Salmon Management, Keith. Go ahead.

MR. HERRON: Good morning, Council. I look forward to talking with you today. My name is Keith Herron. I'm the Acting Yukon River Salmon Manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Holly Carroll will be back. She's just taking a brief duty, kind of at a higher level for advanced leadership, but she will be back later in January. So, I'll be speaking for Yukon River Salmon Management over these winter meetings. And I'll let Shane introduce himself and then I'll go into my report.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Shane.

MR. RANSBURY: And I'm Shane Ransbury, Fishery Assessment Biologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service here in Fairbanks.

MR. HERRON: I'd like to start off our salmon report by kind of addressing a few things before I get into the management of 2026. Over the last couple of days, we've been hearing the great concerns about impacts management has across the marine and freshwater environments. And I'd just like to acknowledge that we don't take any of our decisions lightly. I think about those type of things that you've been stressing as important as food security, the cultural security, the way of life. Those things are with me every day when I do give management recommendations. And we can only talk about the fisheries usually in the context of in-river. And that's what we have the delegated authority to do from the Federal Subsistence Board. And you're advising us to make those decisions. So, I just want to acknowledge that. But I also wanted to acknowledge all the great things we've heard about the impacts that the marine removals have -- the cumulative impacts that are often not talked about over time. And that those are real stressors impacting our Yukon salmon. So, I'd like to acknowledge that. And then moving on, I'm going to now talk about in-river salmon management, but I do not forget those things that are important.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Those are important. Continue.

MR. HERRON: So, Yukon River salmon in season management this 2026 year. We did see an increase at pilot stations sonar of the chinook salmon. We saw about 104,000. And I'm gonna talk to this report that we prepared for you if you have a copy. I'm gonna not read it. I'm gonna put it down, but I'll talk generally. But if you want the actual numbers, there's a stack over here.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We have it in our packet?

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, continue.

MR. HERRON: I just bring that up because I'm not going to follow this template. I'm going to kind of give my own little summary. But if you're interested in the more in-depth details, they are outlined here. So, at Pilot Station, we counted about 100,000 chinook, which is an increase over the last couple of years where we only counted about half that. And so, that is a good thing. We are starting to see some returners. These returners are mostly coming from like 5, 6, 7 years ago. And some of those years we did start having our full closures on this run. And so, we're kind of starting to see some benefit and returns from our efforts in-river on the conservation front. There is a little bit of a caution that I'd like to advise. We did not count very many king salmon at our assessment across the drainage, including our U.S. stocks and the Canada stocks.

The U.S. aerials were pretty well below average. They're listed in your report for a couple of drainages. They were all pretty well below average. The Canadian components assessed at Eagle sonar, we counted about 35,000 past the border. That is the highest since 2019, so that is a good thing. However, Pilot Station said there was 59% of the passage bound for Canada, so we should have probably seen more around the 60,000 range at Eagle, despite our full closures. That leads into many possibilities. One of them we've talked about before, and I helped do my master's degree on the impacts of Ichthyophonus. We saw about 40% Ichthyophonus at Pilot Station using their qPCR methods. And so, that is a surprise.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: What is that method?

MR. HERRON: It's like looking for the DNA using quantitative polymerase chain reaction.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And where is that sample taken?

MR. HERRON: Pilot Station.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I mean, where does -- how do they obtain it?

MR. HERRON: Of -- from the heart.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, they -- actually those are (indiscernible)?

MR. HERRON: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. HERRON: Those are from the lethal sampled of fish from test fisheries.

MR. GERVAIS: What was the percent?

MR. HERRON: About 40%. And that's similar to those high levels that were reported in 2021 and 2022 back when it surged up again in our system. And so, the -- another thing is -- I'm going to address is potential harvest. I'm not here to blame anyone, but I want to acknowledge that we know harvest is not zero. Our goal as managers has been to reduce that harvest to give the salmon a chance at making it to their spawning grounds. Our king salmon run is in a very fragile state, and that's -- all your comments have been stressing that at every single life stage. And so, what I'm speaking today is in-river, but I want you to keep pushing at all the life stages because of how important and how fragile our Yukon salmon -- king salmon currently are in. So, we won't know official harvest estimates until December. We probably will expect that harvest should arise. We saw an increase in run, harvest probably increased.

I'd like to address one thing in my -- this summer that Robert brought up yesterday about the YRDFA calls and his decision as his tribal chief to

harvest some jack salmon. I'm not here to fight you, Robert. I just want to use this as a relevant example. And I know it's -- you're not the only community. But I'm not coming at you. I'm just trying to use it as an example. If that's okay. I respect you as the Chief and I respect all the advice you give to us managers. I often, through my graduate education, through my undergraduate, I was also put in situations where I was often the only Native student in these spaces at the university trying to tell my part of the story, in these systems that often try make you walk a path that they want you to walk. And so, I know it's not exactly what we are talking about today, where we're talking about salmon management that relates to every aspect of our life, our culture, our well-being. So, I use that as an example to -- I can relate for when we're in these Western systems trying to be Indigenous people and be heard that it's often difficult. And so, when you come to these spaces, I understand all the things that you're trying to -- and I don't take it personally. I know it's not personal. And I just wanted to say, please keep coming and giving your opinions, your voice, cause it does matter. And I think it is moving the needle on how management decisions are made.

But that said, I think if we do start harvesting fish at this time, especially king salmon, that we're on a very slippery slope. If we see a rebound and we just fish them right away, we're just going to be back in square one, where we have no fish. And we need to give these fish a chance to make it to their spawning grounds to increase their productivity. And it's not just the in-river users. I know it's often said that that's inequitable, that the marine environment can take these fish. And I understand all the reasons you've stated about why you've made that decision. I just want to raise caution that I think if we all did that, and we all took what we need, we would have no more king salmon left. And what we've been doing in-river, even without the help of some other protections from other parts of the life cycle, we are starting to see a difference. And it's not gonna take -- it's not gonna happen overnight. We haven't even had closures for one full life cycle. So, we need to see what this has done and helped our fish to make those type of decisions. I understand the frustration. I acknowledge and respect what you all say. But I just wanted to use as a point of caution that it isn't the time to be giving up because there is hope.

And I'm going to tell you why there's a little hope. We saw some hope in the chum. We saw the chum come back. We saw a good run of summer chum. We had about over a million summer chum at Pilot Station Sonar. Those fish, although some of the assessment in your packet, like the Anvik, that goal was not achieved. But we did see returns into the tributaries that should give us healthy returns in the future. Those chum were mainly 4-year-olds. That means they were born in about 2022. We saw a good upturn in whatever their food sources. We've talked about all the issues of the marine food web and the impacts of removals and all that. We're likely seeing one of the highest returns per spawner once this full age class comes back. But we saw a really good return off that year. And so, there is some hope in our efforts in-river of helping bring back these fish.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was 2022, age class, came back strong, 4-year-old? Okay.

MR. HERRON: And so, we did provide some opportunity on summer chum salmon. But because of the low king salmon run, we had to use selective gear. And that's not very efficient gear. We know the downfalls and that's not the gear that people wanna see. People were happy that they had the opportunity to harvest some summer chum salmon. That was about a couple week opportunity in the lower river and about a month in the upper river. And so, people did have some good opportunity on summer chum salmon with selective gear. Going into fall season, because of that component of 4-year-old fish of the chum, we knew there was a chance that the fall chum could be strong. Because the fall chum are predominantly 4-year-olds. And so, again, we saw based on genetics at Pilot Station, we saw 914,000 at Pilot Station. And then, also based on genetics, we knew the American component of the fall chum run was good.

About 54 percent of those fall chum were headed to the Tanana drainage. So, we nearly had half a million chum that are headed to us here on the Tanana. However, the Canadian component remained low at about 15% of overall passage for fall chum was headed to Canada. 3 percent were headed to Porcupine, Canada, and the other 12 were headed to Eagle. So, that makes up the 15%. We thought we would have a chance to achieve the Eagle escapement goal of 70,000. That is not going to happen. We probably will be in the 60,000 range. So, even though we had the closures and we remained -- that's

why we had the closures for so long on fall chum. It's because we were protecting those Canadian stocks that we knew remained poor. Although our Alaska stocks, did improve, it just put us in that unfortunate scenario where we had to keep fishing in the mainstem river closed to protect all those Canada stocks. We thought we had a chance to meet it, and we did not achieve that. But we did provide opportunity in the fall season where we could. We offered fishing in the tributaries like the Innoko, with gillnets. The Koyukuk River is a unique situation where because the chum headed to the Koyukuk are more closely related to summer chum. We -- after the king season, we opened the Koyukuk also to gillnet fishing for those late fall salmon. The Tanana River was open to fall salmon. In the upper river, like the Teedriinjik was open. And so, some of these U.S. bound fall chum stocks we were able to harvest. But we had to really protect those fish headed to Canada and try meet our treaty objectives, that were set forth by other processes that we managers have to manage too.

And so, all that, this was the 7th consecutive year of very strict chum salmon fishing restrictions and 6 consecutive year of complete king salmon closures. So, I'm also not happy with how these runs turned out. But there is some hope in our future if we continue to help these fish, and steward these fish, and let them kind of go for future generations. And if we choose to kind of discard the laws for any moose, caribou, salmon, anything, then us as managers that are helping protect these resources for the future and our future generations use, I believe that the kind of -- it doesn't work that way. Because we need to all work together across agencies, across jurisdictions, to come up with a plan that we all can get behind, that helps uh our resources that we all depend on. And with that, I think that's kind of my management summary.

So, hopefully, if you read it and you, kind of understand kind of the background of the genetics, the mixed stock analysis that we have to use for management decisions. You what -- you would under -- start to understand why we -- why even though we saw big runs at Pilot, why we couldn't just say fishing is wide open. There's things we've learned over the last couple of decades from people on the river, making us kind of have this cautious approach. And that was not all forgotten. And I think it can help look at how we were successful at some escapement, not all of it, and provide some opportunity where we can. But really think

of the best interests of the future of this stock. And that's all I have. So, I can pause there for questions. Shane does have a research update.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I have a couple of questions. You have predominantly -- if the chinook run was comprised of 5, 6, and 7. You were seeing 7-year-old fish in your assessment -- in your retentions, your lethal takes of chinook at Pilot?

MR. HERRON: There was a proportion of 7, yes, but it's very small. Most of them were 5 and 6.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And you're using various suites of drift gillnet down to small mesh. What was the -- a very important question is how many jack kings are in that -- in the passage assessment? Jack kings are actually a 1 to 3 percent minority of that cohort. So, if you get a lot of jacks, you would -- it indicates what you're going to see the next year, or that next 2-year-old cohort, et cetera, et cetera, or actually 3 and on. So, do you have that number, that proportion of jacks to the -- of the run strength, Shane?

MR. RANSBURY: Just give me a few seconds and I'll look it up for you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Sure. Another -- so, the -- there was a high Ichthyophonus, that my daughter fished at Bristol Bay, they caught 4 kings, 2 of them -- 4 kings, 2 of them were so bad she couldn't even eat them. She loves to eat king salmon. So, the Ichthyophonus was also really high, and that would be basically Kvichak, Nushagak stocks, also showed, you know, with a small sample set. I don't know if anybody's doing any work on the Nushagak. That's a major problem. That drainage has a -- used to have a huge chinook run. So, this Ichthyophonus problem. And we were told that we -- that Ichthyophonus is being conveyed to immature chinook through pollock smolt. Is that actually a correct assessment now? We were told previously that Ichthyophonus was conveyed through herring was their main vector is your -- that's your realm, is that is that correct? The pollock are actually a reservoir for the Ichthyophonus?

MR. HERRON: I haven't been keeping up with -- I know they've been doing lots of research on like the different forage fisheries and all the types of assessment looking for that source. Yes, it is correct

that most of those herring in the Bering Sea didn't seem to have it. And it looked more like in those juvenile or different parts of pollock in different life stages. I'm not sure exactly the exact source, but I know it was the young -- one of the young parts of the pollock.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And can that infection rate be correlated to that thermal event in the Bering Sea, that caused a massive suppression of the snow crab and a lot of the pollock went into the deep cold waters? Wouldn't that exacerbate the infection rate in pollock if that was one of the factors? In the marine system, warmer waters are actually a higher infection rate. That's my understanding, is that correct?

MR. HERRON: I know Ichthyophonus does really well in warmer temperatures. So, I can't speak for certain, but your assessment seems like it would hold true.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, now are you tracking the temperatures of the Bering Sea in correlation to, you know, a more beneficial habitat for chinook? Overall colder waters, less infection rate, higher biomass. And so, there's jacks, king salmon, that's the big question. One of the highlights of the questions is how many jacks were in this assessment?

MR. RANSBURY: So, last year -- well this year, the all chinook number from Pilot Station was 104,000. And then roughly 25 percent of those were jacks. So, 26,000 jacks and 140,000 overall.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Really? Oh, wow. That's a huge cohort.

MR. GERVAIS: Define what you're calling a jack.

MR. RANSBURY: I'm not sure. I'd have to go look it up. I think it's 650 millimeters.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. RANSBURY: 650, I think.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There at what 2 and a half, 3-year-old fish. Something like that.

MR. RANSBURY: Jack's here are 4-year-olds.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Isn’t 2 year in-system?

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. RANSBURY: Yeah, but there's a lot of variety. So, we, like, if king salmon do really well when they're little, they will become precocial and be able to, you know, make sperm and stuff really early. And some of them will come back that first year and then that -- then they're really small like a trout. And that works its way up to these larger sizes but the biggest jack run is usually the -- well, the most noticeable to us anyway is the 4-year-olds here and 3-year-olds down South.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, any other questions? Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: When you're at Pilot Station, can you tell as soon as you set the salmon on the working table. Can you tell it has Ichthyophonus?

MR. HERRON: So, those visual signs that people often describe in their harvest are less apparent in the lower river. So, they have to really depend on those lab samples to kind of process them. Those spots aren't as you would say, like in the heart or the flesh or the smell. It is kind of assumed based on all the findings that those fish enter the river with said infection, and they may or may not be able to kind of hold that infection at bay, until they kind of get into this reproductive cycle. And once they start not eating, spending all their energy focused on getting up-river, reproducing, then the infection is able kind of start growing and getting worse. But I'm going to caution like there still needs to be a lot done on the exact source and like that progression of disease, but that's currently what's understood. So, when you move up to river to like Ruby, when you might see more like heart spots or those visual signs that you typically relate to disease, those are less reliable to people in the lower river. If that makes sense.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. May I make a comment about the illegal fishing? So, yeah, there is illegal fishing happening on the main stem of the Yukon River.

And it’s -- it will continue fishing as long as we have this perverse regulatory regime where commercial fishing by the industrial trawl fleet is allowed at times when we can't make spawning escaping goals and subsistence harvesting is illegal, not allowed. It's a very sad state of affairs that the Yukon River or Kuskokwim River subsistence user is deemed a criminal for trying to feed their family, or the elders in their village, or something of that sort. And that fish itself is actually taken and coveted and well dealt with and consumed. It has a good life purpose for taking that fish out of the ecosystem but it has -- there's good utilization of that fish. It's providing high-quality nutrition for people.

And then at the same time, we have 10 months of fishing by the commercial trawl fishery, and that fish is basically destroyed during the catch process. So, incredible injustice, incredible inequity, and the current regime on -- of management regulations. It would be wonderful if we knew what that -- I'm trying to think of what to call this closed take of -- closed period, or closed illegal fishing in-river. But it'd be great to know those numbers but you're not going to get the numbers because the people that are conducting that on whatever scale it is, they're subject to criminal prosecution. It just a -- really needs to be resolved right away. Because having the unjust regulatory scheme, the unjust burden of conservation. It just -- it's destructive to the whole management system that we have. Makes people in the villages and at their fish camps just distrustful of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the managers, the troopers, to any kind of Fish and Game people at all. So, it's really critical that we as a society, we as a fishing community, get the scales evened out and get our priorities straight. And have our regulations straight where spotting escapement comes first, subsistence fishing comes next, and any surplus after that can be taken in a commercial fishery.

MR. HERRON: Well said. I couldn't have said it better myself, so I don't even have a follow-up, but thank you for your words, because I agree.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don. Then Shane.

MR. HONEA: I think we should all be alarmed that, you know, if you've got a million fish coming up past the sonar there, and I'm also alarmed about that Ichthyophonus, whatever thing. That's

alarmingly high. But what gets me is where -- is there going to be any surveys conducted on what happened to these fish? If we got a million fish go by the Pilot Station and 70,000 or whatever or less than that getting into Canada something is wrong. I mean but -- so, anyway, the comment here, I had a question on the Anvik River escape and goal of 350,000 to 750 -- 700,000 chum salmon was not met. I didn't even know that we had an escape -- there was an escapement goal into the Anvik River. Could you explain that? I mean, somebody, I mean, what does that mean? Thank you.

MR. RANSBURY: This is Shane from U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Yeah, we have a escapement goal into the Anvik, and we've had it for some time. I'm not sure when it was created. But I think the overall issue with the Anvik is that production there has, or returns there, have diminished substantially over the last 20 years. Yeah. So, I mean so, this year we had around 260,000 for comparison and this was a pretty good year. So, we had, you know, we made drainage wide comfortably, but then fish didn't turn up to the Anvik in the way that they used to. The Anvik itself used to be something like 40% of the entire summer chum run. Now it's like 25%. And so, we have an escapement goal. It's the escapement goal based off the, you know, the older numbers. It's a really hard escapement goal to meet. And so, sometimes it isn't talked about in the same way, but that's why we're trying to have a better understanding of what exactly happened in the Anvik. Some people think it's, you know, the pink salmon coming up. Some people think it's a habitat disturbance. We're exploring both at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but.

MR. HONEA: So, is there any other rivers that have escapement goals that I don't know about? I mean, I've never heard of the Anvik River having a, you know, I don't know how large it is or whatever, but an escapement goal, that's a huge number. I mean, so, I'm very perplexed about this.

MR. RANSBURY: Yeah, we -- it's hard to speak to all of them. But we also, well, for example, for summer chum, we also had one on the East Fork Andreafsky. But then for years -- for the last few years, really, we continue to have issues with higher and higher water, to where it makes it really hard for us to put that project in. So, we don't have a way to assess it right now. And this kind of gets back to something Olivia was talking about yesterday, which is historically, once

we lose an ability to track escapement goals, sometimes it -- that's the reason they get retired. And -- but then sometimes projects come back and we can at least see what it was historically. And so, there's projects that don't have escapement goals, but we still monitor and we have ways to look at it. But yeah, I mean, without going through the whole list, there's several for summer chums, several for kings, several for fall chums.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, yeah. Tommy, go ahead.

MR. KRISKA: Well, good afternoon. Anyway, you know, you said that, you know, pointing fingers, it's kind of -- I don't even know why that was mentioned because, you know, they're pointing fingers at the people that are trying to feed their families, which are having the toughest time ever. I don't think that we should use that toward our people. And, you know, the -- there seems to me that there's the like the goal, the subsistence and commercial. That's the way it should go. You're going to go for your goal, subsistence, and then commercial. But right now it is commercial, the goal, and subsistence. That's backwards. We can't eat. But the money part, you know, the real people, the real criminal in this whole thing, is the people that are selling the fish, making tons of money. And our people are -- they're dying of sickness. They're starving for this fish. They're never going to fish. You have a trooper on these rivers that they're looking everywhere. They're hiding behind these fricking islands and everything out there with fricking binoculars, looking around, watching for you. Hiding behind islands, but you know, we found them and what they were doing. They had drones up in the air watching our rivers (indiscernible). And that is really sad to be watched like that. I mean, like I said yesterday, I ain't [sic] pointing the fingers at anybody. It's just the system, the way it is. And this is where we're -- You're on that side, I'm on this side. I'm on this side with my people. You're on that side and I don't know what's going on with the system. You all work for the system in some way, in some manner, for money. I'm glad that you have food and everything on your table and can feed your grandkids. But once you look at us and you think about it, it's hard to sit here and to take that kind of abuse. I'm going to call it that because that's what it is.

You know, the money is what's making the difference in -- between friendship and the God-loving

people. They choose money over, you know, lifestyle of people that was already here. You know, for thousands of years, before I said that we didn't need this. We never had to go through what we're going through right now. Don't -- can't even fish, nothing like that. But we had it in our heart. And we're talking about the way, you know, Indigenous involvement. We were involved way lot longer than anyone. We were fed well. The Lord provided and we only took what we needed. And it was good. And it was good for all of the people that lived on the panhandle or wherever they're fishing too. They had more, plenty more to eat, to whatever. But now, they wanted money to live their lives like a millionaire. And, you know, that industry is like 7 billion dollars. It's what it's worth. And that's sad. We can't even make that kind of money if we tried in where we're at.

I don't want -- really want to go there, but, you know, when you make my elder over there, saying we're not pointing fingers, and he's saying that there are people out there fishing. We have control of ourselves. We don't have control of people's stomachs, people who are starving, people who need to fish, people who are trying to -- guys that can't even work or not work and try to feed 6-7 grandchildren. They're out there. You'll see them out there riding in their boats and sometimes they're poaching and it's happening. They're making this -- real criminals out of us. And it's sad because -- I'm going to keep on saying that, even though I have respect for you all and whoever I'm talking to and wherever I go to the best of my -- of me. But this is turning me into a different person later in my supposed to be turning toward like a elder. Get your advice from the elders, but I'm not too proud of handing this kind of advice down to any one of my younger folks.

This is a big problem and we need to do something about it. It's not the people where -- I would say everyone on the Yukon, no matter the race of them, are trying to survive, but they're put into this issue where you're making criminals out of them. I mean, I shouldn't say you, the system. I'm going to use that. Because it's more -- I don't like to point fingers at all, but it's the system and it's us out here. This goes way back, way, way back when, you know, the Natives and the Indians, they owned the prairies. They were rich with buffalo and everything and it's the same system that you used against them and they're not there anymore. And it's the same system, but in a different manner that's working on us. I respect that they want the

minerals, they want our land, but there's ways to get it. There's ways to deal with this kind of stuff if they use their minds. And respectfully, you know, we're people too. But I could go on and on in that one.

I don't know. I wrote some other things down, but that's on other categories in this meeting here. But like I said, they're -- that -- the Canadian, I want to add that one. I was thinking about, you know, we're all into this trying to make or, you know, have the fish come back to Canadians. And I don't know their output of fry or whatever is happening in the springtime or whenever that happens. Or -- but, you know, there's questions in my mind. I don't know the quality of their waters or what's happening up there to put, I mean, 60-70,000 fish go there. There should be a pretty good number of fry coming back. And I don't understand where this is at or whatever. But, you know, it's just a question in my own mind. But anyway. So, I wanna put this back to pointing fingers. Don't use our people and say, I know there's people out there that are fishing that's going against this. Yeah, against the system, maybe. Maybe, you know, just find some other way to say that. Because saying the way it was said, it's not respectful to me or to anyone, any one of us or our people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you, Tommy. The Canadian has their hatchery at Whitehorse. You have the hatchery release of chinook salmon, which is also performing really well. These are hatchery fish released in Canada, and they were still not -- they're part of the enumeration process at Eagle. What is the hatchery release numbers? Do you have that one, roughly?

MR. RANSBURY: This is Shane. I don't have the numbers for this year. Last time I saw numbers, they were in the range of like 150,000. Which I guess just to put that in context is actually pretty small for a hatchery. I mean, just -- I guess for broader context too, so I used to work in the hatchery system. That's how I got started instead of doing commercial fishing or whatever. So, I've worked in the Federal, the State, the PNP hatcheries. I've raised tens of millions of kings. And 150 you can make with like 2 or 3 heat trays would be like the size of this table, and then some ponds. And, and that's a lot less than, you know, I've worked in hatches where we make.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But the performance, what's the return? You're gonna -- they gotta a tag in their nose. What's the return? They're returning basically at the same low levels as the wild stocks, correct?

MR. RANSBURY: I'll have to look it up. It varies. And I'll say that like in general, there's a range from, you know, for every fish that comes back, like half a fish to around 6 fish come back as adults, that's like in the wild. And with hatcheries, sometimes it is a higher range, but the low end is exactly the same. And so, sometimes the hatchery does and sometimes it doesn't. I don't know for sure about that one. But the other thing is that they release their fish upstream of the turbines, and it's unknown how much that affects the fish when they have to go through the dam, which that's unusual for a hatchery as well.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Another question I had on this, we're -- we got to move on. But -- so, we've got a 40% Ichthyophonus rate in the enumeration project at Pilot Station. How many of the 25% jack kings, quote unquote, were infected with Ichthyophonus? Was that at a higher level or less incidence than the older stocks?

MR. HERRON: I don't have that information. The 40% I shared with you is preliminary based on hearing reports just on that value from the lab -- ADF&G lab. So, I'm sure that data is available, but I don't have it currently. And if I could, we do have, I know we are crunched for time. We have several research updates, if the Council wants to hear it, Shane can provide it. But lastly, I would like to say I didn't mean to offend you all. None of the closures are race-based. They're based on protecting the stock for the future. And I hear you on that it seems backwards. We talk about commercial in the marine environment. And yes, I 100% agree that that is not equitable. That's inequitable to me. And I have no say over that. I'm -- I was born with this system. I'm born and raised in Alaska. I'm Alaska Native too. And this is the system that we have. And I'm trying to -- my mission was to help alleviate some of these stress. And that's the reason why I went to school. So, I hear you 100%. And I didn't mean to offend you in the way I did. But I do not think that any of my words were race-based. I don't want to get the last word, and I respect you all, but I just

wanted to clarify I was not trying to make it into race. The closures are not for that purpose in-river, but I acknowledge the inequity.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Sweet. Oh, go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: This is not personal, this is a livelihood more or less, how we live. You know, and you go back from to page with Figure 1 here, and we look at the 7-year return from 2019 to now, it was over 200,000 then and that should be an indicator if I'm not mistaken. But again.....

(Ringing)

MR. WALKER: But when I did talk to some other people, Charlie Wright and I -- and we pointed and we talked to Serena and we found out there was some sort of an ice jam that really plugged up Area M and where they couldn't go out and fish. And in the meantime, all this fish showed up from somewhere. I mean, it's not you wave your wand, and here they are, but there got to be some kind of nature's fluke here to do this. Because all the years you looked, the last 5 years, there were under 20,000 fish that went through the Pilot Station. All of a sudden, we get 104,000 this year. We knew it was coming because the lower Yukon people would call me, their chief would call me, and say, Robert, water came up 2 feet. There's going to be over a million fish coming. We knew that. So, we got on our native pipeline and we talked to everybody. It's nothing to discriminate, but that's just how we do some things. And to do that, you know, like -- and why is the salmon run in trouble? Bycatch, Area M? And the bycatch has taken so many chinook salmon over the years, but over a million so far, if I'm correct.

MR. HERRON: Yeah.

MR. WALKER: You know, and this is designated for AYK, not the Yukon, if I am correct. So, and fish manager Charlie Lang didn't even bother to have a government-to-government consultation with us, the Tribes, TCC, Kawerak, or whatever the tribes are. He just put a 7-year moratorium. So, this is kind of like a slap in our face. I mean, we have to talk this out. We have to figure out some kind of happy medium because we're losing. You can tell right now, we are talking, not using words to hurt but we're using words for food.

That's what it is. So, I've been an advocate for this for all my years. I stole moose from the State to feed the elders. I did that growing up. You know, and they can put me in jail now, I'm 76. It doesn't matter. But yeah, I did. But all this food here, we're not getting it. We're not. And the State should be more -- go back to what Tom Kriska said, money. And that's the bottom line. We don't even have a window. We don't have anything. We have 4-inch mesh nets compared to their seines. So, it is where -- I understand. I read this, I've been on this Board for over 20 some years. I watched it come from when we're progressive to now when we're not progressive, when we're supposed to be taking care of the Tribe. And that's what OSM was created for. The bottom line was to protect it. And we went back over it, we discussed that yesterday, with Jim Simon, also. About how the Federal government and the State government supposed to mandate everything -- not everything, but majority of the food to be used by Indigenous people. And that's not, in the factor right now, because I don't know. Maybe we don't have strong enough leaders. Maybe we don't have enough elected officials. I don't know. But all of these laws that were put into place before me, before us, before you, that the State will override everything that the Tribes try to do. We're not forming a government inside a government. We've been here all the time. So, we already had a government.

So, what we're going to have to do here, we're going to have to sit down very seriously. We have to, you know, like North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, we wanted a Board member on there. They rejected it. So, how do we talk to them? We can't because they are in majority of what happened in the Federal waters. Even though we're Federal-recognized tribes, we don't have much of a say here. This is just information for you to take back. So, you can say something, you know, where do we go from here? The Tribes are -- we're not on a warpath. We're on a path here with white paper, and that's how we're going to fight it. We haven't even gone to court yet. I mean, how do we go to the courts? We have to take Federal money to go against the Federal government? Take federal money to go against the State government? How do we do this? I believe that we have young people coming up now that's going to take over. And this is where something -- they're going to have to look at really harder because it's been 7 years since we had a chance for fish camps, putting up fish. I'd drive from Anvik to Galena, not 1 fish camp. 20 years ago when we drove up, there was over 50 fish camps. Now

there's nothing. It's just like a desert, a green desert.

So, the way of life we have is pretty much my -- I had my granddaughter help me with the fish last summer, she cut her hand twice. She doesn't know how to use a butcher knife. She wasn't raised with one. So, this is something that struck me too, that -- how a few years could affect your way of life. So, you know, I'm not going to call you Mr. Herron, but I think, Keith, that, you know, you're going to have to go back, talk to Holly and talk to them and sit down and say, we're -- we got to find a happy medium. Because our boats are the jon boats with 20 horses on it. You see the picture of the False Pass fishermen, 50-foot boat, 24-foot wide, all-weather boat. Seines. Look at their boat, $500,000, $750,000 dollars. Our boats are only 3-, $400, with the motor. And a 4-inch mesh net. How are we going to do this? Will we ever get the windows back? I don't know. That's something that I always address, and I never wanted to lose the windows. And Holly and I, we go round and round. We're playing phone tag the other day. I know she doesn't really want to talk to me because I'm -- I have too many hard questions. And -- but I respect who she is because I know at time there's.....

But I'm going to leave it at this here, Mr. Chairman, because I think that we have grounds now to where we could come to some kind of conclusion with our way of life versus the dollar. So, I don't know if there's going to be a committee going to get started up on this, if there's going to be anything to be addressed on these issues, or are we just going to talk it out and wait till next year and talk about it again? So, how do we do this? You know, Western Interior RAC is only one RAC among all the other ones. And we're going to have to find out whether -- or what other RACs were -- I know the Kuskokwim RAC want a lot of help too, and we need their help, they need our help. So, anyway, Mr. Chairman, I'll leave it at that and we can move on. Thank you for listening.

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we need to conclude this. Real brief, Shane, go right ahead.

MS. PILCHER: Jim did have the hatchery numbers if you wanted.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, Jim Simon. Oh, that's okay. Jim, you got the hatchery numbers for us from Whitehorse?

MR. SIMON: Thank you. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can hear you fine.

MR. SIMON: Okay, great. Yeah. I don't believe the 2026 numbers and proportion of hatchery returns to the Whitehorse Fishway are out yet, but in 2025, it was 69%. Which is larger than the average, which I cannot seem to locate right now. And this year's return to the Whitefish Dam Fishway as of September 12th was 944 fish, which is a 17% increase over 2025. But still below -- only 89% of the historical average return to the Whitehorse Dam Fishway. And the other quick point because I know you're pressed for time is wanted to clarify that despite the original intentions of ANILCA and, you know, that underpins the Federal Subsistence Management Program, it's my understanding that the Ninth Circuit Court had determined in the past that ANILCA Title VIII is not a Federal Indian Law. Because it was changed, before passage to only rural residents. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, thank you, Jim. And now Shane. And I appreciate those numbers. I -- there's some kind of a correlation between the hatchery fish returns and the conditions in the marine system, et cetera. Go ahead, Shane.

MR. RANSBURY: So, this is my research update, and I'll try to be quick. So, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service took down Teedriinjik Sonar last week, and we're still processing these last several days. But there's a little over 200,000 fish that went through. It's 212,000, and then there's going to be like a projection on the end of that because the last day of counts had over 9,000 fish. So, it'll be comfortably in the 200,000 range, which is near the upper end of the escapement goal of 85,000 to 234,000. Teedriinjik is our only assessment project right now. But you'll remember that in 2025, we completed the first phase of feasibility for the Koyukuk sonar, and we identified an area near the Alaska Fish and Game Check Station that we'd like to investigate further. Now, we partnered with the Village of Koyukuk and TCC for the project in 2026, but we did not get funded, and we have since lost capacity to do the project. However, I'm exploring ways to

decrease the cost of the project to make it easier to operate and get funding. But ultimately right now, that's our main restriction.

Regarding research in the freshwater, we have 2 peer-reviewed journal publications on chum spawning habitat that we hope to have published this winter. The first one is a historical review of summer and fall chum spawning areas, similar to a paper Randy Brown wrote on chinook several years ago. And that should get published by the end of this month. And it came up earlier, there's a question about, like writing down traditional knowledge and things like that. And I will say that for that paper, I went back and I read, you know, roughly 110 years of reports. And some were pretty good about, just interviewing elders and writing it down. And I found that to be super helpful. And so, if anybody's curious in getting involved in that kind of work, there was a paper in Canada by Cox, C-O-X. Cox 1999 or something like that. And, he interviewed a bunch of people around the Whitehorse area, and I think that's kind of like a good template. But then there's also people who have written books about the topic. But I certainly, as a young person myself, I find it super useful when people write down what elders say.

And then -- so, the second chum paper used remote sensing to look at fall chum spawning habitat in Alaska and the Yukon territory. And we hope to have that one out by March. Both papers were written in partnership with the department, well, it's a little bit of a mix, but they're written in partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Vuntut Gwitchin Nation, Yukon First Nation, Salmon Stewardship Alliance, Alaska Fish and Game, and UAF. We also hope to get publications regarding our recent Ichthyophonus work to scientific journals this winter. That's the stuff headed up by Keith. But the review and publication process takes around 6 months after we submit it. We also expanded our monitoring of water temperatures and chinook spawning areas and portions of the main stem identified by the Randy Brown paper I mentioned. By 2027, we'll have doubled the number of water temperature loggers covering chinook spawning in the drainage. And the reason for the lag is that, you know, a lot of loggers we got out before the king run this year, but then some of them we had to get out in fall, so we won't have the information for a little bit. That'll cover the run next year. But we intend to do that into the future, and that's in partnership with a bunch of people.

We also began conducting a comprehensive habitat survey in the Salcha River based on BLM and EPA standards and we hope to finish the Salcha next year. And then steadily rotate through other major spawning rivers for chinook and chum to create baselines of the habitat provided in each. After Salcha, we hope to do Anvik or Toklat. Finally, we are developing research with USGS and Alaska -- or well -- but we were developing the research with USGS Alaska Fish and Game to the effect of pink salmon numbers on chum salmon spawning in the Anvik. And the effect of gillnet mesh size on Yukon chinook and chum body size over a 40-year period. We also have one on the impact of heat stress on chinook spawning success. And we have more research coming down the pipe on Ichthyophonus.

Regarding ocean -- so that was all the freshwater stuff. Then regarding ocean work, we continue our partnership with YDFDA and NMFS on environmental monitoring buoys in and around the Yukon Delta. We added 2 new buoys, 1 near Hooper Bay and 1 near Scammon. This brings us up to 6 buoys, which we use to say the relationship between the wind and waves on adult salmon entrance and juvenile salmon out-migration. And perhaps most importantly, given the price of gas, the public can look at the real-time weather conditions of each buoy when they're deployed in the Backyard Buoys phone app. And we're taking -- we're in the process of taking them down right now for the winter. And that's, that's a big time, traditional knowledge project from that known relationship between fish and (indiscernible) on certain winds.

Currently genetics cannot be used to separate summer chum caught in the ocean into the various rivers. They'll get lumped into a group called Coastal Western Alaska or CWAK chum. So, in partnership with the University of Calgary, Sitka Sound Science Center, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation, Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Nome, we sampled chum salmon from 13 rivers between Kuskokwim and Norton Sound for muscle, liver, ear bones, and genetic tissue in this last year. Our goal is to see if trace element concentrations can be used to separate CWAK fish by their natal rivers, which will pave the way for the first river-specific bycatch estimates from ocean fisheries. The genetic tissue went to a concurrent project hoping to fix CWAK issues through a refined genetics approach. And at least

on the trace element side of things, we hope to have preliminary results by the end of winter. We are also in negotiations with the Aleutians East Borough and Alaska Fish and Game to assist in their 2027 coastal tagging project of chum and chinook. The goal is to tag fish off the Aleutians and track them into their various rivers of western Alaska. Our hope is to significantly increase the number of tags they put out for that project. And in the Yukon area specifically, we hope to uncover the recent timing and area used by various genetic stocks of chinook and chum through the coastal district in Y1. Which will hopefully allow for more subsistence fishing opportunities on the abundant stocks while protecting those that are doing poorly.

And then yesterday, Chief Walker had a question about whether AI is being used for fisheries research. The Secretary of the Interior is very interested in this, encouraging us to use AI more heavily in our work to process data more quickly. And in Fairbanks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is investigating using it to reduce the cost of Koyukuk sonar. Outside of our agency, I'm also aware of entities trying to use AI and cameras to -- and machine learning to essentially act as observers for commercial fleets that do not have them, which is a major issue. And there's also a lot of exploration and new methods for counting fish, so we don't need weirs, like what we heard about earlier from YRDFA and Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal.

And then I guess just finally, I'll say, based on our earlier conversation, you know, I used to work in the hatcheries and in some of the PNP ones, we would seine fish to bring them into the pens. And that was like, you know, with the goal of seining the fish up, we'd pay commercial seiners to do it, you know, regular commercial equipment. And then we'd have them brought into our pens. And the goal is to keep them alive. And we could have significant losses in that. And that was being as absolutely gentle as possible with a huge bag, not crowding or anything. And so, I think it was quite different than what you do if you were actually fishing to harvest in commercial. So, when you're talking about what is the likely survival of fish coming out of a bag in the commercial fleet, the reality is that it can be like staggeringly low. And part of the issue too is like not just pushing the fish together, but when the fish are stressed, they breathe a lot and they can quickly run through their oxygen. And so,

they're like suffocating without even necessarily pressing against each other. And we see this in the hatcheries when you like, if you feed them too much and the oxygen is low, you can kill your entire pond of fish just by feeding them. And that frenzy that ensues suffocates them, so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You could seal this room off and kill us within an hour and a half if everybody breathed up all the oxygen. Basically, it's the same principle.

MR. RANSBURY: Yeah, exactly. You can survive fish coming off the very top of the bag, maybe, but then it takes them a long time to recover, even from suffocation. They might get eaten or whatever. Yeah, anyway, there's an impact from seining fish.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I appreciate your presentations. In the future, I would like to see, especially on the chinook, is a breakout by age class of the returns, you know, like 3, 4-year-old, 5-year-old, what that -- how this -- how those various age classes are performing, you know, jack on up. ADF&G used to do it kind of like that. I used to see that quite a bit. And they did it with fall chum also and summer chum. So, I'd like to see that kind of presented more of, so to see how the performance of various age classes are progressing. Because we should see atrophic increase on the Bering Sea as the waters cooled down. There was ice against the North Peninsula. So, that's advantageous for phytoplankton, zooplankton regimes. So, we should start to see better productions. I would also like to see the -- in your -- a different time, what the apportionment of Ichthyophonus and that younger age class of chinook that were sampled this summer. So, I think one -- go ahead, Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: Oh, I just can't let Keith go without saying something to you. I can see the -- in your eyes, most of you have your -- he has your back -- his back to you. But you -- I just can see the concern on your face. And it just touches my heart that you're in the situation right now. I don't know how long you'll be in that situation. But your intention is to help us, and like you're in a cage or something, and you can't get out. I just feel for you, but I know what you're trying to say. And we on this Council, we're all different people. People, we all -- I mean we're all people, but we all have our own opinions. We have our

own ideas. We speak from our heart. I can see the hurt, the tears. And I feel for you. I know you're trying to help us. And all the -- all of you in here work for us. And I can see when somebody of your colleagues speak, you're nodding your heads in agreement. And it lightens me up and make me know that we're a team. We're not fighting against each other. We're fighting against something that was there -- put there before we even got on this Board. So, just keep up what you're doing and don't give up. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I will reiterate what Jenny said. You've -- you're in -- put in a bad spot. And don't give up. We really, really need you in this spot. We want you in the management positions. So, don't give up. I was at a meeting one time. I had to correct some people on the record about various things that I didn't agree with. At the evening, our Chairman, Ron Sam, was a very wise person. I said, I hope that this person doesn't take offense at what I said. He goes, he's a professional. He was from Huslia. We're professionals. We go to meetings. We say our piece. We don't take this home. So, people have to say things, but don't take it home. It's just what we have to do at meetings. You have to set out your position. But I really encourage you to continue on your course. We have to get these salmon back. And we need people like you and Shane to actually accomplish what the -- you know, we need to keep moving forward. You're doing a lot of important work that we need the science aspects to that. And so I really, really encourage you just -- we got a course. You're going to hear a lot of stuff, but that's part of this. Your skin gets thicker in your position. So, thank you very much. Appreciate all your work you're doing and your presentation. I'm just looking for a little bit of fine-tuning of information on various aspects of this chinook. I'm really concerned about the chinook run. So, thank you very much. And so, we need to do one more thing before our lunch break. And we have our PIN paper here. That's the one with the little green lines that was put on our seats or desks this morning. These were -- and Kristen's going to come up here and go over this paper again. These were the -- some of the additions that we talked about.

MS. MORROW: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, this is Kristen Morrow. So, we are coming back to those information needs that we discussed yesterday. And the paper that you guys should have in front of you, those sections highlighted in green are

the changes we made to that draft list after hearing public comments yesterday. And so, Cory and I worked to try to capture the additional suggested ideas for research topics from public comments. And what we are looking for now is any Council discussion questions, edits to that list, and then an action to approve this list when the Council is ready.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the Council has the green line list here. These were discussions that we talked about. These were incorporated into these priority informational needs. If any Council comments on those additions and is -- can we finalize this paper as-is, or would you like to make additional additions to that? We need to make a motion to adopt our position on these priority information.

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: These are all additions. These are what we said and they and she actually or they incorporated it. These were the additions.

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Kristen doesn't have a tag on her on her computer, so. So, state your name for the record again.

MS. MORROW: My apologies.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And your association.

MS. MORROW: Yeah. My apologies, everyone. Yeah, my apologies. I'm Kristen Morrow. I'm an anthropologist with OSM.

MR. WALKER: Anthropologist?

MS. MORROW: Yes. In terms of these information needs, the anthropologists, the fisheries biologists for the region, meet with volunteers from the Councils. And our role is to really just facilitate the discussion and write down the ideas that are generated by those volunteer council members, and then come back to the Council to facilitate more discussion and to

finalize. So, the ideas that you see written down here are information topics generated by council members that they would like to see available for funding in this upcoming funding cycle. And we're just here to facilitate, take notes, and make sure those ideas are captured as the Council would like to see them.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This goes back to something that we have always thought that was informational for the rest of the people too, who came to speak to us with respect that they would put their name tag out.

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa, it's a little bit low.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. WALKER: .....we don’t know who you are. They could have been an employee for Doyon. We don't know. Thank you. I appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There's the bottom line is -- so this is the paper. This is also on the screen here. So, we need to finalize this. We need a motion to adopt the final priority informational needs.

MR. HONEA: Is this going to all RACs?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This is our comment paper. This is going to go -- go ahead. I don't know who's going to review this.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Chair, members of the Council, Cory Graham, Fish Biologist with OSM. So, after this meeting, this list will go to Eastern Interior RAC, they'll finalize theirs. And then what are Yukon, Delta, and then we'll have the final list that will then go out to everyone when we publish the notice of funding.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So yes, it does go to all 3 regional Councils that have Yukon River within their region, so.

MR. GERVAIS: So, I make a motion to adopt the revised 2028 Yukon Region Draft Priority Information Needs as listed on this sheet in front of us.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Do we have a second to that?

MS. PELKOLA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. Any further discussion on the various line items which we have quite an extensive conversation about this yesterday?

(No response)

Do we have a question?

MR. HONEA: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Question on the motion. Those in favor of adopting the amended language on the revised 2028 Yukon River -- Yukon Region Draft Priority Information Needs signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you very much. Appreciate all your work on that and your facilitation. So, we're coming down -- should we go to lunch, Nissa, or what do you -- which way you think we should go?

MS. PILCHER: There are still several action items to get through, but I also don't want to push through lunch. I know that some Council members need a break, which is totally understandable. So, we just -- if -- not if, but when we do break, we just need to make sure that we come back. So, we can get through those action items because they are still pretty important.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're at 12:25. If you could -- everybody could be back at the table, because we can't be here all night. They're not going to let us stay past 5 o'clock. So, we have to complete our agenda. So, we have to come back on time. So, let's come back at 1:30. So, that's an hour and 5. Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Can we try to get permission to go to 6 or 6:30? I can tell we're not going to.....

MS. PILCHER: We're not going to make it, but we can get through the action items and we can see where it goes. The facility would really like to not have people here too much later than 5, though, because there won't be staff here.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, they shut the bathrooms down and everything else. So, we do need to finish up our important parts of the agenda. The Yukon River was just a -- was going to be a big thing.

MS. PILCHER: Also, highly important. It was a really good discussion to get -- to have.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Exactly. Okay, we'll see you at 1:30.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay, we found Don. He's coming back in, and so, I'm going to call this meeting back to order after lunch. So, we're -- so, the Annual Report is our next topic, f. And so, we're -- been identifying some issues for the Annual Report during this meeting. And Nissa is queuing up here.

MS. PILCHER: Yep, that is me. I just wanted to double check. Can the folks online hear us just fine?

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, we can hear you, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Thank you. All right, so before we get into the actual Annual Report, which is something that you guys do every fall, I did want to provide a little extra context. As the process itself is gently moving in a -- not a different direction, but the process might change a little bit. So, on page -- is it 65 of your meeting book? Oh, my apologies. It's Tab 4 of your supplemental materials, there's a couple

documents found there, and those are also all found online for anyone listening in on that meeting website. It's Tab 4. So, this time around, rather than the Federal Subsistence Board looking at each of the Council's reports separately, OSM took all 10 of the Council's Annual Reports, for lack of a better word, synergized them. And then took -- there was some pretty strong trends and themes across all ten Councils. And then the -- OSM presented this information to the Board in the form of a table. It's that first sheet on Tab 4. It folds out. It is really small. I do apologize, but I couldn't fit a poster-sized piece of paper in those books. The -- will note that the Board also had the complete reports to review as well. So, it's not that they only were presented information on these specific topics. As you can see there was some very strong themes. So, salmon and marine issues was a very strong theme. Monitoring and research gaps, which this Council also spoke to. Enforcement and user conflicts, again, this Council spoke to in their Annual Report. Caribou declines and management environmental and land use issues and program administration and communication topics as well. So, another difference this year was that Council Chairs or the representatives were encouraged to be present at the work session and had an opportunity to discuss their Annual Report topics directly with the Board, which did seem to be very well received by both Council Chairs that were in attendance, as well as the Board members. I would like to take a minute to note that work session was held after the salmon crisis meeting, so it was held at the beginning of August, and as member Gervais noted, that is not a fantastic time for subsistence users to not be in the field and instead be at a meeting in Anchorage. So, I'm going to pause for a second and see if you guys have any questions about that, what was going on.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I do like this format to see how it's all laid out, the commonalities of all the various Councils.

MS. PILCHER: All right. So, that brings me -- so, that was -- that's the overarching topics from all Councils. That brings me to an action item -- a potential action item.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I will note under caribou over here, the Mulchatna Herd concerns. Western Interior also had fairly significant concerns about Mulchatna.

MS. PILCHER: Yes, yes, you have. So, on the next page under that tab is a draft letter. So, throughout the discussion and this collecting of information, it was evident that the inconsistent fisheries and wildlife monitoring are a significant issue. So, the data gaps that the Councils as a whole would like to see addressed. So, for that reason at that meeting, the Chairs discussed a need to elevate the issue -- to elevate this issue to the Secretaries. So, after that previous table, as that page, there is a draft joint Council letter requesting the Board to elevate and ask to the Secretaries, that's the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, for adequate funding and staffing for fisheries and wildlife monitoring in Alaska. So, there's three parts to that letter. Three different asks. Restore the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funding to at least FY2025 levels, adjust the translation with dedicated staff, establish an equivalent wildlife resource monitoring program, and adequately staff Alaska resource management agencies and OSM.

The letter goes into detail on why stable monitoring matters for management and subsistence opportunity and cites research responsibilities in ANILCA Title VIII Section 812. So, under this agenda item, the Council can discuss if the Council wishes to be included in this joint letter. So, please keep in mind, since it's going to all 10 of the Councils, it can't really be modified much other than basic editing. If the Council wishes to add additional topics, they can be added as an addendum. One topic that came up at both Southcentral and Kodiak Aleutians is, they did request an addendum to specify that if a wildlife fund -- wildlife resource monitoring program is established, it is not done at the cost of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. So, basically, they wouldn't be taking money out of one program to fund another. They would be two distinct funding gaps. And there was internal discussion that that is something that could probably just get added to the letter. It wouldn't necessarily need to be an addendum. So, if the Council would like to take action to sign onto the letter -- so far, the previous Councils that have met all have, which is Kodiak/Aleutians, Northwest Arctic, Southcentral, and North Slope. Of course, two of those did want to make sure that that line item was specified, that those are two distinct funding sources. And then, that is all that is noted. It's an action item.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I think this was a worthwhile exercise for the commonalities of the different Councils. And these Annual Report topics have been coming up consistently. And when we discussed the wildlife resource monitoring aspect, it's always been my understanding that it was a separate funding source. That's good that they clarified that, and I'll clarify that on the record right now. That was my impression when we discussed this issue with our Council. Was that your impression also? That instead of taking money away from the Fisheries Monitoring to have a wildlife monitoring programs that it was strictly -- it's a separate pool of money or separate pot -- funding source. Is that your impression also, Council?

(No response)

Unsure? We have discussed this wildlife monitoring. Just like fisheries have priority informational needs, wildlife also has priority informational needs. and it has had that for years. but for fisheries came -- the priority information needs was formulated in 1999 or whenever. We assumed rural priority after Katie John that there were going to be priority informational needs for fisheries. Those were actually -- should have been in place when the program started in 1991, and Councils were established in 1993. So, there should have been wildlife priority informational needs. And that's a fairly important issue. And that was always a long discussion over -- since All-RAC meeting in 2024. And previous to that, it's always been my understanding that we're requesting an additional funding source for those priority information needs for wildlife. So, I'm just clarifying that on the record. Is that okay for the Council? You're good with that.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: .....consideration? So, I'm getting affirmative from our council members, so -- then we need to have a motion to us to us sign onto this letter, which will go before the Federal Subsistence Board, you know, the Chair Anthony Christianson, and to lay out these various issues that are common to all these Regional Councils. So, somebody -- moved by -- to adopt the letter by Don. Do we have a second?

(No audible response)

Seconded by Robert. Further discussion on this letter -- All-Council letter to the Federal Subsistence Board? Further discussion? Oh, one question. Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Yeah. I mean, I don't know if this was ever brought before us. This particular -- why would they -- why would we have to restore -- is there a justification for ending this? I mean, what -- I -- you know, we have -- it's always been in place. Correct? I mean, it isn't an annual thing that we do?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The priority and the -- restore funding for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring -- those priority informational needs, they've been cutting that program back. The amount of money has been being trimmed down more and more and more. It got down to where this year there was only -- what? $6.7 million for all of the regions. And so, this is requesting that they restore the previous funding level to at least the 2025 level. Because they have been chopping off a lot of that budget.

MR. HONEA: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I -- you know, some of them are really critically needed. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Other discussion?

(No response)

Robert had a question. Those in favor of transmitting this letter to the Federal Subsistence Board with the clarification as the wildlife priority needs shall be funded separately to the -- for its own priority informational needs, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

So, the motion carries. Let's see where we're at here. So, let's see. Okay. Go ahead, Brian.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Brian Ubelaker, wildlife biologist, Acting State Liaison, Acting LT Lead. I could go on, but I'll stop there. Sorry, I apologize. So, I am going to go over the new communication policy of the Federal Subsistence Board. So, we're going to -- I'm going to try to watch.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: What's LT?

MR. UBELAKER: Leadership Team. So, you can find this in your supplemental materials packet. I don't have the tab number handy. Oh, actually, I probably do.

MS. PILCHER: It's Tab 4. So, it's that same tab. It's just the next page after the letter.

MR. UBELAKER: Perfect. All right. We ready? Okay. So, why was this policy drafted? This draft policy comes from discussions between Board members and Council representatives during the August work session. During that work session, the Board directed staff to draft a policy that explains how it responds to correspondence and the Council's Annual Reports. The Board also asked for your feedback before it reviews the final draft after its February regulatory meeting. And what is this policy meant to do? It will be a public facing document posted on the OSM website. It's meant to provide general direction while detailed step-by-step guidelines will be handled internally by staff.

And what the Board will, and probably more importantly, will not respond to. One of the primary purposes of this policy is to explain what the Board can respond to directly and what is outside of its authority. So, the Board will respond directly to anything within its relatively narrow authority over the subsistence take and uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands. If an issue is outside of the Board's authority, such as funding or State management, the Board may elevate it to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, and only to those Secretaries. The Board will not forward Council communications directly to the congressional delegation, State authorities or other Federal Department Secretaries, such as the Secretary of Commerce.

Concerns about response timelines. We recognize that timelines for Board responses have been a continual concern of many Councils and want to acknowledge that, but putting a time frame in policy may set the Board up for policy violations if deadlines can't be met. One possible solution could be updates on outstanding correspondence as a standing agenda item at every Council and Board meeting. And now, how will the Annual Report responses change? So, also, according to this draft policy, responses to each Annual Report topic will not be drafted ahead of time. Instead, the Board will have face-to-face discussions with Council Chairs on their Annual Reports during the Board's work session. Then, responses will be written afterward based on those discussions. While this is still a draft policy, we recognize this potential change may affect how the Council writes their FY26 Annual Report and what topics they choose to include. So, that concludes the overview, and I'll open it up for Council discussion, questions, and feedbacks -- feedback.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Council questions on this on this new policy?

(No response)

This would basically -- the Chair or designee would attend the work sessions, which are typically in like July-ish. Something like that. Yeah. Go ahead.

MR. UBELAKER: There has been discussion to move that, as it was brought to the Board's attention and OSM's attention, that that's a high time for tourism. Quite an expensive time of the year balancing that with subsistence practices and whatnot. So, it's in the mind. It's in the works to possibly be changed. So, it wouldn't necessarily be July.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That -- could these discussions with the Board be like under the wildlife cycle in April? Could that and the report topics be discussed at that time? Was that a consideration?

MR. UBELAKER: I don't believe that was brought up or discussed. Nissa.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: I also don't believe that that was brought up or discussed, but it's something that the Council could put in its feedback because your Annual Report would be drafted at that time.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, Council has completed their winter meeting, and they could have like a breakout on Annual Reports, you know, previous to the Board actions on proposals with the Councils. They could do like a -- probably, a two-hour session with Councils on Annual Reports. So, you got the Councils there for the Wildlife Proposals in April, which is after the -- not the fisheries, but the Wildlife Proposals are in April. So, that would make one. And then the work session could work for the fisheries cycle at some point. That would be advantageous for the Council Chairs. Looking at it from -- who's going to have to do that? I would like to have it, you know, coinciding with -- and I'm there with the Federal Board, I might as well be talking about the Annual Report also, at the -- for the wildlife. Me or the -- whoever the Chair or designee is. Not particularly me, but whoever's in that spot. So, that would be a comment I'm making on that.

MR. UBELAKER: I do have that noted.

MS. PILCHER: Count as a cost saving measure, too.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. That's very vastly cost effective to do it that way.

MR. UBELAKER: Another consideration you might want to discuss is how you would like things elevated to the Secretaries, such as via letters or an Annual Reports, if you have any input on that you'd like to share.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We -- you know, we have this legal question that we're going to -- we're discussing about the State retaining lands that they're -- basically don't want, but they're just kind of sitting on it. And so, we have specific things that DOI would have to address. And so, those kinds of issues that are outside the purview of the Federal Subsistence Board that's not actually in the Department of Interior or the Department of Agriculture's realm. The Council should be -- Councils should have the ability to send letters like we're going to do to the Federal Subsistence Board to be forwarded, addressing specific issues. So, the

Federal Board is aware, the agencies are aware of what the Councils want, but we need to get -- be able to get to that -- to the various -- enabling Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Agriculture. The -- there's a question -- have been questions about the Department of Commerce effects on subsistence and it was vastly graphic during this meeting about those effects. And so, we, again, should be able to transmit letters through to the Secretary. The Board would then transmit to the Secretary of Interior, and as a Cabinet member, should be able to confer -- move into a conference with the AGs and Commerce Department Secretaries about the impacts to subsistence. Because it's a Federal statute, it applies to Federal effects on fish and wildlife management for subsistence use. And if commercial harvest is detrimental to subsistence, the Secretary of Commerce should at least bring it into consideration in their mind. I think they were like -- Secretary of Commerce is relying too heavily on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. They got the ball. That's -- now, they have to understand that they're affecting other international agreements with Secretary of State, with Canadian agreements for chinook passage into Canada. This is a bigger thing. So, these Councils should be able to work through the Federal Subsistence Board and move those to other Secretaries, other Cabinet members, is what it actually is. We don't have that ability. We can't talk. We're not political. Under Hatch Act. But the Federal Subsistence Board needs to be able to confer -- convey the grievances of these Councils, which have statutory authorities under 805, to get to those sources that can actually address the problems. So, this is not just commenting on this, clarifying my perception of how the Council should be able to speak to the other -- to the higher up in the -- in - out of our -- beyond the obscuration on top of the blue clouds. So, go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais. Regarding this communication stuff, you just reminded me, it might be annual report topic also, is we need to convey that the Bering Sea and potentially Gulf of Alaska, that's -- that marine environment area, 3-mile to 200-mile area that's under jurisdiction of Secretary of Commerce. They need to understand that that's habitat for our various salmon species. And that's another reason why the solicitor needs to get involved with communication with the Department of Commerce, because they're damaging the habitat area by having the BSAI, and potentially, Gulf of Alaska trawl

fleet dragging large commercial fishing gear through that habitat area.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That would be under Annual Reports. You know, these -- the new -- or a policy where the Federal Subsistence Board is in communication with the -- on the Annual Report topics face-to-face. We can bring that up whether the Board can -- with the solicitor at the table. Those would be a valid discussion points, you know, to try and move this forward to the Secretary of Commerce. But I think that the new process of face-to-face, especially at the Federal Subsistence Board, where we have the solicitors there for legal advice that this is actually going to be advantageous to the Council process.

MR. GERVAIS: Does the solicitor -- are they a resource for us or only for the Federal Subsistence Board?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: They’re -- what was the interpretation of that? They’re basically -- advise the Federal Subsistence Board. They're not actually our attorney. Because that was my understanding. Is -- am I correct?

MS. PILCHER: The note that I have earlier from yesterday when we were discussing this, is that the Federal Subsistence Management Program solicitor only advises the Board and our Program on issues within the Board's authority. So, it doesn't specifically say -- it's not like the Councils can't request action or questions to the solicitor. So, I have a non-answer for you. I'm not sure.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right.

MS. PILCHER: And this is not a topic that you have not already previously asked. So, I am not sure.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. PILCHER: I'm not sure. I'm not sure why we haven't answered it yet.

MR. GERVAIS: We've discussed it before, but I'm not hearing or understanding from OSM of any

kind of workable solution to the problem of the non-cooperation from Department of Commerce.

MS. PILCHER: And -- can I?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: One thing that was kind of briefly glossed over, and when we were discussing that salmon crisis topic yesterday, is that the Board -- so, the Board -- and someone online interrupt me if I am misspeaking, but one of the actions that the -- all of the Chairs did was request that the Board request, and not only a meeting with the Secretaries, an annual meeting with the Secretaries, with the Board, but also to include Council Chairs. And that is to discuss things that are beyond the authority of the Board in this case. What we're discussing here is beyond the authority of the Board to enact, but that could be an avenue where these things, the liaison with the Department of Commerce or the Secretary of Commerce, could be discussed. And that letter has been sent from OSM up the chain. I don't know if we'll get an answer. I don't know if or when we'll get an answer, but the request has been made to at least have those conversations.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, any further discussion on this Federal Subsistence Board, Regional Advisory Council and external communication procedure policy? Is this an action item? And we just -- it's informative for making comments on this policy. I do feel that it's important for the Councils to be able to speak face-to-face with the Board or virtually, if not possible to attend in person, that they -- the person who is going to sit before the Federal Subsistence Board to discuss the Annual Report topics should have the ability to attend virtually. Because we sign up for two meetings per year. Remember that part of our agreement. And so, we -- I'm willing to do too many. But if it gets -- starts cutting into subsistence or -- it's the travel. It's the travel expense, the loss of time and so forth. So, there's -- in the future, we're going to have better and better technologies. That kind of -- sitting right in front of me right here, where we would be able to work to discuss valid discussions with the Board of -- Federal Subsistence Board. And the Chairs can be virtually in the room, also. Cost of this whole process is a major consideration as funding has been trimmed

drastically away from the program. So, that would be another one of my comments. That was years ago. It was probably 15 years ago. I was talking about being online with -- and moving out of the Stone Age. Getting on to Facebook and publishing these communications about these meetings on Facebook and using media -- social media for that. We're still catching up. I'm happy to see that we have these technologies in the room. Starlink and things have helped us out quite a bit. Technological advances, but these -- some of these aspects of these -- of the Annual Report topics and being under discussion, it's -- there's economical ways to do that in conjunction with attendance of the -- at the Federal Subsistence Board process for the wildlife and/or virtual meeting under fisheries. That's in January. I don't like to go anywhere because it's 60 below zero. That's why you rarely will see me at fisheries meeting unless it's absolutely necessary. I burn wood, I can't leave my house, I don't like to leave my wife burning with a wood stove. Something goes wrong; we're off grid. There's a whole bunch of reasons. Andy Bassich -- there's a whole bunch of people that are the same. This is just like -- you just walk away from your house. Just turn off the lights and your thermostat's running. Not where I live, not where a lot of people live in these rural positions. So, January, I would prefer to see a virtual meeting to discuss Annual Report topics, if you're going to do that at a Board meeting. That would be my comments. And so, any other comments from the Council members?

(No response)

Welcome back, Jenny. So, okay. Is that sufficient?

MR. UBELAKER: I believe we've got it. All your thoughts captured.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Mm-hmm. Thank you. And so, we're going to Federal Subsistence Board 2025 Annual Report topic replies. And that's on page 27 of our meeting book.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. PILCHER: That lies. That is on -- it's on page 87.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. PILCHER: 87. So, your Council had several topics, but they had four topics they requested action on by the Federal Subsistence Board this last year. And I'll quickly go over them. Very quickly.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, yes. It's 87 on the main packet book here.

MS. PILCHER: Yep. The one with the black binding, comb binding. Because they both have black bindings, don't they?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah.

MS. PILCHER: So, topic one continued salmon crisis. I'm not going to get too far into that because I'm going to come back to it under the next agenda item. Topic two, the need for enforcement funding and check stations. I would like to draw your attention to the letter that your Council wrote to both. Oh, the northern complex, for lack of a better word, on enforcement concerns as well as the Alaska Wildlife Troopers about check stations. The Wildlife Troopers did send you a letter back, which is included in your Meeting Materials. So, those letters are in the very back of your book, the one written to Fish and Wildlife Service is 193. And then, the letter to Alaska Wildlife Troopers is 199. Their response is 203.

Topic three was to fund a WRMP, which your Council did just sign on to a joint letter to address this concern as well. And then topic four is to finalize the sheep management strategy guidelines. Marcy is here with the Park Service to talk about a similar document, which is down in your reports, but it should be elevated because that is actually an action item. So, that's -- to a lesser degree, will get discussed there. So, those are the four topics your Council did request action on. They were on the meeting book. So, hopefully, you've had a chance to review them. Let me know if you have questions because, after that, we launch into identifying Annual Report topics for next year. And I already do have a couple suggestions for you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the -- item two, this enforcement issue, we have Maria here. Do you want to come up to the mic? We sent -- she's the -- with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge Manager, Northern Interior Refuge Complex position. So, introduce yourself for the record.

MS. FOSADO: Hey, good afternoon, Chairman, members of the Council. For the record, my name is Maria Fosado, and I'm the new Refuge Manager for the Northern Interior Refuge Complex. Prior to this position, I was based out of Cold Bay as Izembek Refuge Manager from 2020 to 2026.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we were in discussion with Cody Smith, who was in and out of the room, but now he's gone. But it was a position and I -- when I went to the Federal Subsistence Board, I informed the Board that we were requesting that there -- get transporters, air taxis, or transporters in general, that they give a GPS coordinate of where they drop off clients, so that they would be -- so, the enforcement would know where they're at -- what position they're at for safety, in case that air transporter comes up MOA, you know, missing and maybe the plane crashed, and they have no idea where this person's at. And the enforcement doesn't have to go looking for needles in haystacks. Our enforcement doesn't have to fly all over the place. We got a -- air taxi dropped off a move hunt -- moose hunter right there in the middle of the Innoko Refuge. And we know where they're at. And we're going to go -- and when our enforcement officer’s there, they can go drop by and have a chat, and have a check, and see if the meat's there, and a bunch of other issues that we're concerned about. Deeply concerned about on the Innoko Refuge. And I use the Innoko because we've been hearing a lot of bad stuff in McGrath about rotten meat coming out of the Innoko. So, this would be a -- facilitate it more. And we're talking about economy here. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife budget would be vastly reduced, because you would have the ability of not having your pilot flying very expensive airplanes all over the place, trying to find hunt -- looking for needles in haystacks, literally. So, I'm still strongly of that opinion that that's -- there's two prongs to that enforcement, efficiency and safety for the clients themselves. And so -- and you had a response for that in the hall for me. And I would like the Council to hear that response.

MS. FOSADO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, for the record, Maria Fosado. We did receive your letter. We have been having internal conversations. Being new to the position, I didn't want to be pre-decisional on anything. My goal was to come here, learn about the issues. I'm happy to have conversations after the meeting to learn more. And we will be working on our response and looking at potential options in the future with our permits.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Again, for the record, the technologies have advanced dramatically. Most people are carrying Starlink minis around in the airplane, let alone -- So, it's not a burden on the permittee -- they transport it themselves. They have the ability to automatically text. I could do it on my phone, and I could text you that I've dropped off -- "Here's my coordinate." Click. I mean, your phone's got a coordinate in it. Click. "I'm right here. I dropped off three clients, and they're here to hunt moose or whatever. And then to float from here to here to this this other lake system." And so, at least the enforcement knows where they're at if they have to go find them for -- and then they got the ability -- and that's not a burden for the public. So, you could put out a -- it has to be published to the public. And again, I was -- I feel that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife should work with the commercial services boards to also join on this regulatory change. This isn't necessary for them also. But we're speaking to Refuge lands and so forth under this Council process. And National Park Service, preserves, BLM lands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife lands, and there would be Forest Service lands, and Forest Service aspects also. But as far as this region, for us, it's a huge, huge area. And it's a deeply concerning that enforcement can hardly find the clients that are dropped off, let alone what they're actually leaving at field. So, if they come into McGrath and they don't have enough meat, "Oh, we know this client was right over here." Well, all we got to do is go find their dead moose, where all those ravens are at, and then you go, you write them a nice, hefty ticket and take those antlers away from them, and word gets out that you do not leave the meat in the field. We have to have enforcement. Because the worst thing that can ever happen to one of these sport hunters is to lose those antlers. They go nuts. They go crazy when you take that antler away from -- I've seen it. I helped U.S. Fish -- or a State Trooper take antlers away from a client who was throwing -- a hunter that was throwing meat all over the place, trying

to leave it in the field. We packed out 250 pounds of meat from this kill site, and we -- he seized those antlers. And the client -- this hunter was going nuts. So, we need enforcement. And so, I think this should be elevated in the US. Fish and Wildlife. Sara Boario should be talking to you about this whole issue. And I should think that you should start working with Alaska State Troopers in the Commercial Services Board also. So, this would be my discussion on that issue. Is there any other comments from the Council? We discussed this last winter. Remember we were talking quite a bit about this. Tommy's got heartburn about this one. Watching people throwing meat overboard. Going out below the Ella's check -- what do they call it now? The State check station on the Koyukuk River. Go ahead, Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah. It was kind of sad to see that whole deal again. I was just on the side of the river. I didn't think they seen me, but one of the boats that was -- what the heck? Landing craft. And they had a lot of meat on board, and they weren't very far from me, probably about half a mile. But you could see the splashes in the water, the white game bags going overboard. And I let them go for a while. And then, once they were -- keep on doing it, I kind of took off toward them. And then they quit and they started floating, and I just went right toward them and pulled the throttle back and sat not too far from them. And then they knew they were up to something wrong when they took off. And they were running one motor. They had two 250s on there, and they were running one motor. And then they fired up the other one, and they took off down the river, probably within 40 to 50 miles an hour. But they had like five moose rack horns on their boat. And I never -- I don't know -- understand -- I mean, a lot of horsepower, but they didn't have that weight anymore. So, it's just sad things to see. And I think that's the third time I witness something like that. And I don't think anything will ever be done about it unless we put cameras in those areas. I don't know. I think the only way to do it is work with the tribe and try to figure it out. I mean, there's only like 15 miles from the Check Station to the river, and that's where it's -- a lot of it is happening. I imagine it happens on the Yukon, too. Some places -- a lot of people talk about it and say, "Yeah, they were up to something, but then they came down loaded." And then, once you start going against the -- I don't know, I think it's like 5 to 8 mile an hour current up to Yukon, and you got 330 miles to the bridge. Need to do something with weight. So, there's a lot of

talk about that. But really, I don't know, we've been talking about this for years and nothing ever been done. I think that it's got to figure out some sort of strategy to kind of try to, you know, catch them or -- on camera or whatever. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Did you get the AK numbers off that boat and notify the troopers?

MR. KRISKA: No, I -- they're -- when I got up to them, they were on the side. And by the time I -- they were -- they started idling away and then they just jumped up and took off.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But the checkpoint should have had all those AK numbers.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah, I wasn't even thinking about going back and ask who went through or anything like that. I don't really get involved because I own my own transporter business too. But, you know, it's just a sad thing to see.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This particular case, the moose were taken on the Koyukuk Refuge. So, this is an example of how the enforcement -- you know, there's a need for enforcement. That's a different issue. This is an individual that's not being under transport. It's not a transported individual, but there's a bunch of this kind of stuff going on. Tommy was talking about this last year. You know, if that AK number had been correlated to what the five moose just went through the checkpoint, and then they knew what that AK number was and who those people are and were -- and then caught them at the Yukon River Bridge. There's troopers that go there. They could have really gave them a big ticket, but they got to -- you got to get the pictures, you got to get -- you know, they check their meat out, but if they don't have the meat up there, then they can be busted big time. They could be in jail about that one. But that's a different issue. But basically, this was an annual topic report need. We sent the letter. You're here with our opportunity to have this chat about, basically, lobbying or advocating for this change in the process of how the permitting system -- and work with the other sister agencies, Park Service and Bureau of Land Management also, who also issue permitting. So, thank you very much. And so, Maria, any other questions? Oh, go right ahead.

MS. FOSADO: I did just want to note, I have had internal conversations with Director Boario. So, she is aware. We are looking to hear all of the concerns. Cody's -- law enforcement officer Smith has been coming in and out of these meetings. He may be online. Oh, okay. But just know that we do understand the concerns. We do hear them. And we will do our best to prioritize the staff and resources that we have to further look into it and see what possible paths forward we do have. I also wanted to note I did -- I was able to travel to McGrath earlier this season, and I did meet with ADF&G. So, I did hear the concerns there. And I guess I'll just ask that if folks are hearing these concerns from clients of our permittees, if they can direct them to our office, it's always best to hear direct from them so that we can make note of that and further strengthen our discussions as we talk with leadership and try and prioritize resources in certain areas.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. Well, we're not -- we're deaf now because we don't have a Council member from McGrath or Aniak. We don't have anybody on the Kuskokwim River. But whenever we've had contact with McGrath, we've heard a lot of complaining about spoiled meat getting left in the field too long, clients not getting picked up on time. A lot of problems with permitted transporters that are working off the Refuge. And they're still not -- they're not doing their -- do disservice to their clients, to their -- to the meat care and to -- and so, there's several reasons for this to move forward. Yeah, I can see that it's going to take quite a bit of time to initiate that. But the issue has to be brought to the forefront, and it can be moved forward. So, appreciate you working on this, and thank you very much for attending our meeting. And look, and you're -- you'll -- you're -- how long have you been in this position about approximately?

MS. FOSADO: Mr. Chair, I started in May of this year. So, I'm very new. I'm very much learning. We are the new Northern Interior Refuge Complex. So, we administer four refuges: Koyukuk, Innoko, Nowitna, and Kanuti. So, I ask for a little bit of grace as I learn a new area, learn the issues. I mean, obviously across the State, we hear a lot of the same concerns. It's -- same concerns, different area. So, I won't be completely starting from scratch, but it will take a little bit of time for me to get to know the staff, get to know the players in the communities, ADF&G, the Tribes, etc. And

so, with time, I hope to improve relationships and hear more about it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you very much for attending our meeting. Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Okay. So, I kind of -- you know, we talked till we're blue in the face last fall, or this past winter. Wrote it all down, wrote the whole thing down and gave it to somebody else. And this is what I'm talking about. About the system. You get somebody new and all you did last -- you know, in our last meeting, seems like it's all out the door, and we're back to, you know, square one. And it kind of frustrates me, sorry to say that. I mean, I don't want to point fingers or say anything like that, but it is the way I feel. That we have to explain and write all this all out again. And then, you know, it's just like I said, biologists change, people change. They do a few years here, a few years there. Then they move and move, and then you're back to square one. It's hard to deal with the system that's in place. I don't know what to do about it. I just kind of -- I thought we went through that last year, but now back to square one, right down to the T. But anyway, no offense, it's just that I wish that all the information that we gave you last year, whoever was before you, would hand it down or give you -- you know, you had had a meeting with them and brought you up to date or brought you up to power, what was happening and what's going on rather than us going through this again, and it could fall out the door, and it's gone. So, anyway, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So -- Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais. Maria, thank you for your -- attending our meeting and giving the presentation. Welcome to Interior Alaska Refuges. We're really special places. Do you know how many enforcement officers you had on -- in your complex this September for moose season?

MS. FOSADO: Thank you, again, for the record, Maria Fosado. So, this past fall, we did have less law enforcement officers in the field for a couple different reasons. Wildfire season down in the Lower 48, some casualties, things out of the control that pulled some of our law enforcement officers down to the Lower 48. So on Innoko, we did not do any patrols. I did get out with Law Enforcement Officer Smith, up to Kanuti

this fall. And I was able to have conversations. This will also get a little bit to the comment from Member Kriska. I have had internal conversations with the law enforcement officers. I also went through the transcripts from the last RAC meeting. So, I did read all of the concerns that were shared and have internal conversations to try and get up to speed. I think where it's going to need time, and where I wouldn't want to presume anything, is you all need to get to know me. And we need to build trust so that we can move forward together. And that will take time. And I would say that no conversations or internal conversations that were had could replace that. It just takes time to build trust and to move forward. But I do hear the concerns of people entering into jobs, and then every so often we leave, we move to another area. There's some fallbacks and drawbacks to that, but I'll also say that as we move around, the experiences that we have, hopefully, make us a better employee and maybe more prepared to have some of these difficult conversations with new communities.

Also, I'm sorry. To answer your question, Innoko did not have any specific law enforcement from -- or law enforcement from Fish and Wildlife Service, but I won't speak on behalf of troopers.

MR. GERVAIS: What about Nowitna and Koyukuk Refuges?

MS. FOSADO: We did have law enforcement earlier -- correct me if I'm wrong. Jeremy, did we have law enforcement officers out at Galena earlier in the year? I'm sorry. I don't recall.

MR. HAVENER: Yeah. For the record, Jeremy Havener, Refuge Subsistence Coordinator and Acting Deputy Manager for the Northern Interior Complex at Galena. No, those are good questions. I think, you know, for the majority of our patrolling, we worked pretty closely with the Galena State Trooper. We -- at the Nowitna (indiscernible), the Nowitna Check Station. And so, you know, myself and staff that I have out there, we don't have law enforcement jurisdiction, but we do have the ability to contact troopers if we are seeing things. So, you know, our presence out there, I think, is helped out in a lot with that kind of thing. You know, people are checking out. It is a voluntary check station, but we still get good compliance for the most

part from people. But as far as in the Galena area up to Koyukuk, I know Trooper Chwialkowski is his name, has been making a presence up there and kind of patrolling that area, so.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. Thank you. Okay. I think that kind of covers that. Oh, Don. Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know, it's really kind of confusing when -- yeah. Tim brings up something interesting. So, you're reporting out on maybe four refuges, correct? So, any specific questions we had, like under Nowitna or the Innoko, we would have to -- you would have to -- bring it to you. Stuff like that. I mean, particularly in, you know, when we're finding out numbers and when we come here and we say, "Hey, we're concerned about a particular area." You know, I'm hoping that -- so, when did it become the North Interior Refuge Complex? It's just a combination of all the refuges there, correct? I mean, and you're a spokesperson for that?

MS. FOSADO: That is correct. Through the Chair. There's been conversations about the potential for complex for quite some time now. I don't know if folks will recall, but at one point there were conversations about complexing Kanuti with Flats, that after -- my understanding is, after some consultations, that idea was vacated and what floated to the table was the potential for the complexing with Koyukuk, Innoko, Nowitna, and Kanuti. And so, the change has been very recent. Tina Moran acted for a short time. She did retire in July, which is a big loss, and Tina and I did overlap, so I've been in the position since May. And the complexing is a very, very new issue. And as we work through the structuring, I would like to clarify that all the refuges still have their own individual comprehensive conservation plans. They're still going to be managed individually for the priorities associated with that refuge, but they will be managed under one umbrella. And so, concerns for those refuges can come directly to me or through, you know, our tenured staff. So, most of the staff is based out of Galena. Having said that, we do have one staff member in McGrath, one staff member in Bettles. And then I, myself, am based out of Fairbanks.

MR. HONEA: Yeah, it's just -- I don't know. It's just, you know, years ago -- maybe it was cost saving. That was what we were -- we weren't -- we were told after the fact that, you know, that they had moved Innoko over to Galena. And, you know, we -- it just kind of makes it so much harder for an individual. If I was living in Nikolai, Alaska, and I saw all these infractions, and I just say, "Well, the heck with it." I mean, you know what I mean? Because we have held meetings in McGrath and, you know, we know what we're talking about. When you see the wasted meat and all those racks that are sitting there about the time we're meeting. And so, it's real. I mean, it just seems like it's just -- I don't know. It -- you know, I'm just really discouraged by taking refuges from those areas and having no representation. You can have a person sit there, but it's not like there's any law enforcement or anything. But thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I think we've covered this issue quite a bit, and I appreciate your attending our meeting, and look forward to working with you, and look forward to an update on this enforcement strategy. Let's call it an enforcement strategy. So, thank you very much, Maria. So, we're going to move down here. Let's see, where are we at now? We're on identify issues for the 2000 [sic] Annual Report for the Federal Subsistence Board. And so, Brian. And that's on page 41.

MS. PILCHER: That's again a lie. 95.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: On 95. Okay, 95. Go ahead, Brian.

MR. UBELAKER: Okay. I don't think I really have a whole lot. Nissa and I have been listening to your discussions so far. We have some ideas. I believe Nissa had a kind of a -- not a pre-populated list, but ideas she'd been running through her head. So, I'll just sit here, listen to what you have to say, and let Nissa handle it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, Nissa's been taking notes on -- you know, we have been highlighting issues during this meeting, which is -- Nissa has been good about basically making notations throughout our discussions. So, you got a short list there, Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: Yeah, it's not a very big list. So, at your -- last year, your Council, when

presented with -- once again, OSM was trying to herd the Councils into structuring the agenda -- Annual Report topics in slightly different manner. One of the things that your Council came up with last year was to have an informational topic, and you coined the phrase a report card. So, basically taking what had been discussed through the meeting with emphasis on the beginning reports to put together a report card of this is what's been going on in the region. Just to keep the Board updated on what was going on, what was concerning, what was good. Those kinds of things. So, I'd like to continue with that topic. It was well received. I mean, it wasn't included in that table that you guys saw, but it is valuable information, and it also creates a historic record if we continue to do it moving forward. So, that's one topic.

Another topic is your very first topic in your -- and it's been in many of your Annual Reports since I started in probably prior is the salmon crisis. And I believe -- I shouldn't say I believe. I wrote it in the Annual Report topic from FY25. And it does cover a lot of different salmon concerns, including the marine salmon conservation issue, as well as the liaison -- the liaising between the different Secretaries. It does say in that agenda topic that, while the Council has written to the Board before and gotten the response, that the Council -- and this was, again, your language that I put in there. The Council said that this topic will be included in Annual Reports going forward. I believe the language was either until this is resolved or until the species don't exist anymore. So, that's another topic that I can take update with any of the new information you guys have put on the record today and include that as well. So, those are two pretty large ones that can for sure be in there. And those are kind of my two big ones as of right now. Because most of the conversation that this Council has had to date in this meeting have been based on salmon and salmon concerns. So, that's most of my notes so far.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, those are two major issues that this Council has been dealing with for this meeting. Is there any other? I don't have anything else myself. Does the Council have anything else to add to this Annual Report?

(No response)

I mean, we have -- as far as -- if we're going to grade our wildlife performance and our sheep, caribou, and including moose have been drastically lower. They're not -- and, you know, people aren't -- they have a harder time with actually achieving their subsistence needs because of the high cost of fuel and the climate conditions of highwater events is moving the moose into more remote areas. Caribou populations are lower. The lower the population, the less they migrate, the later they'll migrate. So, that -- caribou are becoming harder to Anaktuvuk Pass. It's not in my region, but it's actually within this region. It's on the head of the John River. It's in the North Slope Region. But they rely on caribou coming off the North Slope. Those aren't coming down. The critical time is right now. The caribou -- when the caribou started to the first part of October, the bulls go into rut. They're completely unpalatable. So, people aren't achieving -- late migrations. They're not achieving bull harvests. They're shifting to cow harvest, which is a kind of a big deal. It's impacting the reproductive. And so, there's proposals to eliminate cow harvest.

So, we're going to give a report card to the Board. You know, we're supposed to appraise the Board of various performances. Our fish populations are low, and game populations have yet to recover from catastrophic weather events over the last -- since basically 2018 is when we started into significant declines in -- within the Western Interior Region. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd was in decline for the last -- starting 20 years ago with rain on snow events -- climate change, rain on snow events, augmenting the decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and continuing to decline. And now with this cow caribou harvest problem. And it's not going to get any better. So, let's just give the Board a report card we got a D-minus for caribou as F -- well, D-minus on Dall sheep. Basically, are not -- we gotta restructure our population with our sheep closures that this Council was successful in getting. But the part -- the time has been too long, and the older animals of the population are dying off. So, now we're left with younger animals in the population, but still at really low numbers. So, that's an F-minus or D-minus. That's that we've not performed. We would take off some of the older rams this year, because those are going to time out too. But we don't have -- our moose population is still really low. I've not seen significant numbers of recruiting younger bull moose into the population for several years because

we had 2018, '19, '20, catastrophic years, but then we had deep snow. Even in 2024, '25, we had deep snow 52 inches deep. That was restricted to moose camp survival. This is the first year I've seen a yearling bull moose in -- for probably about three years. We've hardly seen recruitments into the population.

So, the performance of our fishery, we've discussed that with ad nauseam. So, it's like we don't have anything to talk about that, but we will. We should tell the Board when we have it, and as our subject matter. But this -- the performance of the big game animals in our region is either stable, low, or declining low. Those are the -- basically, what we got right now. So, that's a -- basically, it's a report card. It's an Annual Report topic. It's the -- it's part of a -- of our Annual Report analysis as to apprise the Board of what the performance of the meeting -- of people meeting their subsistence needs. That's what this Annual Report topic is really all about. Any other comments on the Annual Report?

MR. GERVAIS: No.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I think I've -- we've covered three main topics. Basically, a report card on the performance of subsistence resources and the other two issues, which are related. So, I think we can -- do we have to adopt this? We're -- we adopt that in the spring and the winter meeting?

MS. PILCHER: You can certainly take a motion or take action on it now, but you will for sure, have to take action on it in the spring when you see the final document.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I think we should wait. I think we can wait. We can we can make a motion to move it forward. And then we -- but we can finalize it at the spring meeting. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to move these annual topics forward for our winter meeting discussion. And so, we get it on the record. So, do we have a motion to move the three annual topics -- report topics forward?

MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

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

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion?

(No audible response)

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

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. Thank you, Brian. And yeah. So, okay. Oh, it's a Brian show. Okay. We're moving into special actions. WSA26-01, which is on -- is it a real page? 97? Okay.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again, for the record, Brian Ubelaker. I'm going to kind of bounce around a little bit. I will cover all of the special actions. But I'll give you a brief update on the others and will dip into 26-01. So, first, the updates on actions that have already been taken. These are not action items and are for your information only. WSA26-03 was approved by the Board to close Federal public lands in Unit 26A Southwest to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users for the 2026-2028 regulatory cycle. Then, WSA26-02 was also approved to close Federal public lands in Unit 22 to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users for the same time frame. WSA26-04 was passed during the summer work session, which established winter moose season on National Park Service lands in Unit 24A. And I'll pause there real quick to see if there are any questions about those before we head to action item.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I don't have any questions.

MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Moving on. Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA26-01, is, as I said, an action item. I will try to keep this brief, since this is not the first time you have heard about this action request. So, originally, this Council took no action on WSA26-01. I'll back up. Since you have already heard

this, would you like a brief description of 26-01 or do you want me to just cut to the chase?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You can just cut to the chase.

MR. UBELAKER: We will do that. Thank you. So, originally, your Council took no action on WSA26-01, stating that this request did not adequately protect the interest of subsistence users. Because if it passed as written, there would have been disparities between State and Federal regulations, significantly lowering the Federal harvest as compared to State limits. And because this request did not include all of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's range. Additionally, the Council feels that this harvest of cows should be eliminated when the population is this low. Your Council also voted to submit a special action request to the Board to mirror any emergency order the State might issue to restrict Western Arctic Caribou Herd harvest.

So, the current issues, when the Board originally considered WSA26-01 at their wildlife regulatory meeting, they adopted a modified version which eliminated cow harvest for the '26 to '28 regulatory cycle in Units 22, 23 and 26A Southwest. However, they deferred any decision on the harvest of bulls to the February fish regulatory cycle meeting. This was because they had concerns about making Federal regulations more restrictive than the State. So, in addition to these three Board actions, the State issued an emergency order to close cow harvest for regulatory year '26 in the same units. And the Board of Game will be meeting in Kotzebue January 23rd through the 26th to consider multiple proposals pertaining to the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

So, we are bringing this back to the Councils for reconsideration before the Board takes action on the bull harvest portion of WSA26-01. But since you've made your original recommendations, the cow harvest has been closed in Units 22, 23 and 26A Southwest. Federal public lands in Unit 22 have been closed to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users and Federal public lands in 26A Southwest have been closed to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users. So, since the Board has already made a determination on cow harvest, the remaining portion of WSA26-01 under consideration requests reducing the caribou harvest limits in Units 22, 23 and 26A Southwest

to 4 caribou per year for the 2026-'27 regulatory year. In your recommendation, please specify if you do or do not support this reduction or state any modification you would like to make. For your information, current State regulations are 15 bulls and Unit 23 is only closed to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users from August 1st to October 31st until the Western Arctic Caribou Herd population exceeds 200,000 caribou. Therefore, if you are recommended -- recommending a reduction in bull harvest, then also please be specific if this reduction should be for all users or specific groups.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I submitted a proposal for the Board of Game for Game Management Unit 24D and 24C to eliminate cow harvests within those units for 4 bulls only, so that hopefully, the Board support will -- have the Board review those proposals as that is part of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd range in 24D and 24C Western Arctic is utilized. The northwestern part of the Koyukuk Flats. They also use 26C around Hughes, that area. And they've routinely done that many different times. So, that's common. If they're in the Nulato Hills and in that region, they'll be there. The herd has been in steep decline in harvest of cows. On the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission, we have Tristan Pattee, he's from Ambler. He's very frustrated with the high level of cow harvest by subsistence users, when it's completely unnecessary. When they have bull components. We had an easy winter last year, and I killed a bull caribou on March 6th that had a half inch of fat on the top of the ham, fatter than any cow caribou out there at the same time. So, but people are fixated on killing these cow caribou because they're the fatter animal. We can't -- we have no cows to harvest. So, there's a proposal before the State Board to go to the 4 bulls in Game Management Unit 24D and C. And we'll see what happens with that. That's my proposal that will be reviewed by the Koyukuk River Advisory.

But the Board -- the Department has now closed cow caribou harvest. And there's quite a bit of discussion about 4 caribou here in this proposal, but I'm opposed to 4 caribou. That's for any caribou. That's nor -- neither cow nor bull. So, with only one, maybe a cow. I don't agree with that at this time. I personally don't agree with that. I don't feel that I can support 26 -- WSA26-01 as written because it's still allowing cow harvesting. Tristan -- go ahead.

MR. UBELAKER: Oh, Mr. Chair, sorry, the Board acted on this. They modified it to eliminate cow harvest.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, they did...?

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. UBELAKER: And they're -- yes, sir. So, this is the original.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, I'm reading the original.

MR. UBELAKER: Yep. That's the original one. So, the cow harvest has been eliminated, and now they're just focused on the reduction of bull harvest.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, the bag limit.....

MR. UBELAKER: Yes, sir.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Then I'm in support of, personally -- speaking from my own perspective. If cow harvest is eliminated for 4 bulls, that's exactly the same proposal that I have before the State Board of Game for 24B, D and C. So, I'm supportive of this proposal as Board modified. I'll write that on here. And so, I would support this proposal that currently -- I do feel that the proposal should include Game Management Units 24D and C. Because it's historical, and in the range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, it shows that they utilize that portion of Unit 24D as -- consecutively -- consistently. So, I would support this proposal with modification to include a Game Management Unit 24D and C, as the subunits that include portions of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's range because there -- if they get into the -- into our region, and there should be no cow harvest. We can't support any cow harvest at all. There's no way it can support cow harvest. It's been declining at about 10% -- 5 to 10% annually. It's nosediving from cow harvest. Cow survival -- it shows cow survival as a yearling -- short yearling survival is good, but cow survival keeps going down. That's because people keep shooting cows. You can't shoot cows right now. None. There's none to get. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to adopt WS26-01 as board modified to -- also, with the modification to include Game Management

Units 24D and 24C, which is within the Western Interior Region, but within the historical range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's winter range. Do we have a motion to make to that effect?

MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. Those in -- any discussion on that?

MR. HONEA: I've got a discussion on that.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

MR. HONEA: Yeah, Mr. Chair. Under discussion -- okay, this -- the -- you're reducing it down to 4 caribou. What was the original number? What was the original take?

MR. UBELAKER: Harvest limit used to be 15 bulls.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: For clarification for the Council, at the April meeting, the Board eliminated any cow harvest for this proposal. Now, it's -- this proposal currently is -- it should be amendment language here that it's for bull -- 4 bulls only. There's 4 caribou, but the Board eliminated cow harvest. There's no cow involved at all. As you see here, it would be 4 bulls only. And that's what the proposal -- that's what the northwest -- let's see. No, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd work group submitted that proposal. And so, I think that the Board is going to go for this proposal. So, questions called. Those in favor of the -- of WSA21 -- 26-01 as modified to include the Board's elimination of cow harvest, and to include 24D and 24C in the modification, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

So, okay. Thanks for that clarification, Brian. I wasn't -- I missed that part. I missed that part during my -- when I attended the Federal Subsistence Board. Why did I miss that part?

MS. PILCHER: I don't have a good answer.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead.

MS. PILCHER: My request is -- so, right now on your agenda, you would be discussing your calendar for the next two meetings. And after that, is Board of Game proposals for the Arctic -- Western Arctic meeting. I propose flip flopping those. Because most of those proposals that I wanted to bring to your attention concern Western Arctic, since we're already discussing them.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, that's a good idea.

MS. PILCHER: Okay. Can I take the reins for just a little bit?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go right ahead.

MS. PILCHER: So, in your green folder, there's a document that looks like this. It's Western Arctic Western Region meeting. And what this is, it's a printout of just the regional proposals. Because most of the regional proposals deal specifically with Western Arctic Caribou. I separated them into subjects, so instead of going over each individual proposal, I figured we'd be short on time. It's like I have a crystal ball sometimes. And I separate them into general topics. So, if you just ignore the Proposal 4, 5, and 6 for right now. Proposal 7 through 12 all deal with proposals to reduce caribou harvest and bag limits, which is what the Board of Game calls harvest limits. The next set is proposal to eliminate the cow season completely but not modify the bull harvest. And that bull harvest, of course, was that 15 per year. The next set is to modify or eliminate non-resident hunters in the WACH range in the Western Arctic Region. And let me also specify by saying -- we're talking about the Western Arctic Region. We are not talking about the Interior Board of Game proposals, because you'll have time at your next meeting to talk about those. And hopefully, at that point in time, you'll also already -- you'll all have had AC meetings, since you're all either on an AC or attend them, for the most part. So, you'll have that opportunity through the State to hear from the area biologists in that venue. So, this is just talking about out-of-region proposals.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. HONEA: Clarification please. Okay. So, these are game proposals, correct?

MS. PILCHER: Yes. These are Board of Game proposals. So, these are State proposals. This has nothing to do with the Federal Subsistence Management Program. But since the Council generally talks about Western Arctic Caribou, I just wanted to give you an opportunity to weigh in. You certainly do not have to.

MR. HONEA: Correct me. I was told that we could not take action on game proposals. I thought that that window closed.

MS. PILCHER: So, you can't draft and submit anymore, but you can submit comments to the Board of Game about upcoming -- or Board Official about upcoming regulatory meetings.

MR. HONEA: Well, what I'm asking is, you know, some of these that were taken action on, I was told that it was too late to vote on them. Is that correct?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No. These proposals here are going to be -- where's that meeting, in Kotzebue?

MS. PILCHER: Kotzebue.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the meetings -- there's going to be a meeting in Kotzebue in January, and they're going to take up these proposals here. These -- Unit 22, 23 and 26A are in the Northwest Arctic, and they're affecting these because the Northwest Arctic Caribou Herd lives over there. All the -- a lot of these proposals affect that. Those are taking up this Ambler Road corridor thing. They put that over there in that meeting. Then there'll be the Interior meeting, which will be in -- at 24, 20, 19, 21, 26, 26B, 26C, and 25, 20 -- and 20. What else is in that one? So, those Interior Region three meeting is going to have any proposal that's within our -- within Unit 24 or those units. But we can comment on those. And those -- our meeting is going to be in February of this year. The Board of Game meeting is in March. So, the Interior proposals, we can go over those thoroughly. These

proposals here, this is going to happen in January. This -- we're not going to -- if we're going to comment on any of these, we have to do it now, today. That's when we have to comment on these, so.

MS. PILCHER: My suggestion for sake of time is, you guys did just take action on a Federal special action to enforce no take of cows, harvest limit of four. So, that could address Proposals 7 through 12, Proposal 13 -- as well as Proposal 13, to just expand on your comments towards those proposals. The next topic would be modify or eliminate non-resident hunters in the WACH range in the Western Arctic Region, if you wanted to discuss that, if you think non-residents should be hunting during these times. And then, the last -- on the back of that first page, there are several proposals requesting an intensive management plan for the WACH range be instigated. Without having Fish and Game here, I'm not going to put words in their mouth by any means, but one of these proposals at least is from the Northwest Arctic Council. And like I said, you could choose to take up none. You could choose to take up 1 or 2. You could choose to take up all. It's up to you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Chair would be inclined to group Proposal 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 to align with the language that we just passed with the Federal special action request for 4 bulls only. Any of these proposals that align for 4 bulls only and no cow harvest. And so -- and also, to include Game Management Unit 24D and 24C because that's within the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's range. So, that's -- that was the proposal that -- the recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board. These proposals here -- or would you be inclined to eliminate the 24D and C, and let them deal with that at the Interior meeting?

MS. PILCHER: Yes, because they would not take action on Unit 24 at this meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Okay. Yeah. Strike that. So, we would support any of these proposals, or combinations, or modified proposals that allow a 4 bull limit, no cow harvest. And so, that would be for Proposal 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 for the Northwest Arctic -- Western Arctic/Western Region meeting, which will be in Kotzebue in January. So, that's a -- so, we need to address something else here. We're going to get to that IM stuff at the end of this. So, we're -- we want to address Proposal 7, 8,9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 of

the Board of Game proposals for the Western Arctic/Western Region meeting in Kotzebue as a block. That it's 4 bulls per year within that region, no cow harvest. So, just like we did with the special action request, that would be our comment that they -- that the Board go with the four bulls, not 15 or any other amounts of caribou. And so, that's -- that would be taken up as a block. The Chair will entertain a motion to address those proposals as one block.

MR. HONEA: I move.

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

MR. GERVAIS: Don, your movement includes the additional hunting areas of 24 Delta.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Now, you were in discussion with Robert. We clarified that with Nissa, that they're not going to take up any of the additions in Unit 24 until the Interior Region -- and if they adopt this regulation, they then could adopt the same overlapping in 24D and C.

MR. GERVAIS: They’re different.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And that'll be in the March meeting versus the January meeting at Kotzebue. So, this -- so, sorry about that. So, Don has made a motion to adopt a 4 bull bag limit for caribou in the north -- in the Western Arctic/Western Region. That'd be Unit 23, 22, 26A, and any combination of these proposals that come to that effect. Do we have a second to that?

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Tommy. Further discussion? Questions called. Those in favor of that motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. So, there is a proposal to close a two-mile wide corridor for the Ambler Road. That was in a summer meeting. Some summer meeting that popped up for the Board of Game. But Fairbanks AC was opposed to the -- this proposal at this time. They felt it was premature because there's no road alignment. We don't even know where this road's going to be. I went down there where they're supposed to build the Ambler Road. There's not a stake, there's nothing. There's not -- they have no -- we have no idea where this road is going to be. So, I think this is premature. The -- I -- there's -- I had concerns about trapping because it's for trapping and hunting. And they -- the closure could be for hunting, but trapping wolves and predators is advantageous to the population. So, and it actually -- the road alignments are actually crossing previous trap lines of people in the village that I live in. So, they -- we need to know where this road is going to be. If the -- so, Proposal 4, we should send a comment that the road alignment is integral as to the big game closure use from the road, one mile on each side of the road, and it should not entail trapping. It should be only for large game harvest. So, that would be our discussion point. Is that okay with the Council? Is that clear to the Council?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, that's clear. I just had a question. What did you see this summer at Coldfoot with the surveyors and archaeologists, and what kind of activity?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Basically, they’re way off to the west. You know, they're drilling some river crossings and they're doing some stuff over there out of Bettles. But when I went to where the road was supposed to start, they had these great big signs, you know, that the Ambler -- beginning of the Ambler Road and all this stuff. But there was a lot of hoopla there, but there was nothing going on. There was no stakes. There's no survey. There's nothing. You can't find where they're going to build this road yet. So, unless they -- we'd have to know where this road is to -- where is it going to affect traplines? That's what we need to know. And we want to eliminate the proposal, which part -- I asked Glenn Stout, “Where did this proposal come from?” It came from the Regional Office of the Fish and Game in Juneau. So, we don't even know who submitted this proposal. So, this proposal is like unclear to the public at the Koyukuk River Advisory. We're going to

review this proposal also. But at this time, this -- we should be aware because it's within our region that it would close trapping. The proposal is to close trapping, and I don't feel that that's appropriate myself.

MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair, as an option, can we just not take any action?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we should submit a proposal -- we should submit a comment that we feel that the proposal is premature at this time. Go ahead, Robert.

MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair, I have a question. I mean, we're talking -- all do that -- table Western Interior. Kotzebue closed two-mile corridor, Ambler Road as follows. I would have a question in here that where this corridor would be, with some sort of coordinates to justify this. We're just talking two-mile wide and whatever, but if we're going to have something like this, we should had [sic] a coordination on this.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

MR. WALKER: Like, you will -- there will be a two-mile corridor. We will survey this out. We will put corner posts on this. We will use all of this and everything. So, this is survey. It can make it more -- because how do you know where the boundary line is going to be if you're just going to say two miles? There's no boundary set in it. It just set as a mile, and that's it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, actually the proposal was one mile on each side of the road.

MR. WALKER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Two mile wide.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. WALKER: But where...?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: But it has to be centered on the alignment of where the road is actually going to be. And I'm opposed to the part about eliminating trapping. It's to close big game hunting and trapping. So, I'm opposed to the trapping component of that because it affects existing.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. WALKER: Well, there it is. It would be outlined in black and white.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we should -- they're going to take comments on this. So, our comment could be that the two-mile.....

MR. WALKER: I understand that. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And then, the -- we also are opposed to the trapping aspect of it.

MR. WALKER: It's just like setting a house. I mean, you have to have so many -- if you're going to have a house here set, you know, it's not going to be 200 by 200. It's going to be surveyed 200 by 200. So, you'll know where your boundary lines are.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right.

MR. WALKER: And that's what I'm asking. Is it -- should we put a boundary line on this?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we can't set the boundary line because the State Department of Transportation is going to set those boundaries. They're going to set -- it's called an alignment.

MR. WALKER: I understand that, but if that's Federal land, it's not even.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It’s not Federal anymore. It was all given to the State. It's all State, all the way until you get to Doyon land. Doyon is going to take a payment to go across the Doyon section, goes on State -- basically, State land all the way down. So, there is no more BLM land there.

MR. WALKER: There’s no more BLM land there. Good Lord. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we can't determine at this time. This is a pre -- well state it for the record that it's a premature proposal. It doesn't actually have an alignment. But if -- wherever the alignment is, it should be one mile from each side for big game closure only, not trapping. So, Tim, you have a comment?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Isn't the Haul Road five miles on either side?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, the five -- there's a five-mile closure on the Dalton Highway. Yes.

MR. GERVAIS: So, why wouldn't we want to have five-mile, ten-mile-wide corridor for Ambler Road?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: This isn't even the proposal. And so, the.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. GERVAIS: What do you mean, it's not a proposal?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's a two-mile-wide closure. The proposer -- and I suspect -- I'm not sure. The only one that would submit this proposal would be the regional.....

MR. GERVAIS: ADF&G.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. And they -- that came out of their headquarters. But who came up with this idea would be -- the Ambler Road idea -- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority has a Resource Advisory Council. That's who would have come up with this closure. And Tristan Pattee is on that Council. So, I suspect it's from that Council is where it is. And of course, the Department of Fish and Game is -- came out of the Regional Office. And so, they're submitting it for -- but they put their name on it.

MR. GERVAIS: Right. So, I'm saying -- I am suggesting to the WIRAC, if we're going to make comments on this proposal, which I think is a good idea, saying that shouldn't close trapping, should only be big game. I don't know about small game, grouse and hare -- Arctic hare, but the corridor should be ten miles wide and not two miles wide. I mean, that's been the intent of the WIRAC since we heard about the road. We didn't want it to turn into a hunting road. And so, putting five miles on either side of that would deter a lot of.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa.

MR. GERVAIS: .....use.

MS. PILCHER: I could make the suggestion that, as Jack noted, currently there is no planning there. There's no -- we -- you guys aren't -- the Council currently isn't aware of where the road is going. Once the road is a actual road, you could pursue a larger corridor at that time, but currently there is no road.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, we don't know. Right now, we don't -- it has to do with topography and stuff.

MS. PILCHER: Yeah. And you -- the comments that you've given me so far isn't that you're against the closure. You're against instilling a closure on something that doesn't currently exist.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're opposed to the -- in the trapping aspect. Not in favor of closing it to trapping. Because harvest of furbearers from the road -- well, the road's alignment's going to be on top of existing trappers, there's trails that are already down there. So, there's -- you know, there's historical trails that are already down there. The main aspect that I'm opposed to is the trapping closure. And I'm also opposed to this proposal being vague. It's extremely vague because there is no alignment at this time. So, but it's -- a one-mile on each side. Yeah. This terrain that I'm in right now, if you've got to pack a moose one mile on that stuff, that is bad country down there. So, there's Boone and Crockett record-book tussocks to your knee down in that country. You're not packing a moose very far in that kind of stuff. No kidding. That's in -- my trapline is on the other side of the river from there. It's rough over there. Really rough. Go ahead.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay, well, if you're going to comment on it, and this proposal is in the proposal book and we're concerned with wildlife conservation, I think, part of our comments should be to make it a ten-mile-wide corridor. What -- even though I understand what you're saying, we don't know what the alignment is, but Fish and Game, which has a prominent aspect in the Board of Game deliberations, they're trying to correct the corridor -- I'm saying, make the corridor the appropriate size from the start.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We could suggest the -- a five-mile on each side, it's actually five miles on each side of the alignment, is the proper language of that. That's what's in the reg book. You know, you got to look at the reg book. So, we could just -- could suggest that they modify the proposal to five miles on each side of the alignment, and for the take of big game, but not the portion about trapping. Is that adequate? Is [sic] that accomplish what you're looking for?

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. Well, see, here's the issue. This has reminded me of like Amendment 51 with North Pacific Management Council. They come out with this amendment, and everybody thinks it's all about salmon conservation. But what it was, was legalizing prohibited species bycatch. So, now Fish and Game is coming out and saying, "Oh, we're such good stewards of the land and the resources that we're going to have a one-mile closure on each side of the road." But they're saying right in there that hunters and trappers are not prevented from crossing the corridor of the road, and access across closed area will be provided to areas open to hunting and trapping. So, what I'm seeing -- my point of view on what Fish and Game is trying to do is -- the State is trying to say, "Oh, we're trying to show this is not a hunting road. And so, we have this corridor language." And then, maybe later on, ten years from now, if we try to put in the ten-mile-wide corridor, then Safari Club and a lot of the sport hunting groups, we'll say, "No, there already is a corridor. We don't need to expand it." So, I'm saying they're going to establish the no hunting corridor. Let's get it at ten miles right now before you get some amount of time.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, do you want to make that motion to modify the proposal, Proposal 4 to be five miles on each side of the Ambler Road, as a closure area for big game hunting only, and excluding the part about the trapping?

MR. GERVAIS: So moved.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we have a motion to adopt Proposal 4 with modification for five miles on each side of the road and eliminating the trapping closure. Do I have a second?

MR. WALKER: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded. Further discussion?

(No response)

Do I have a question?

(No audible response)

Questions called. All those in favor of the modified Proposal 4 to the State Board of Game meeting in Kotzebue signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed? Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: I was saying aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. And those opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries. So.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MS. PILCHER: Quick -- just a quick check -- just checking. The -- originally, we were discussing just submitting it as a comment, but the intent of the Council on that vote was to submit it as a -- in support as modified instead of just a general comment?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, that's kind of the direction we went. Because Tim wanted it on the record, you know, at the meeting, the five-mile corridor thing. So, this -- there's this block of proposals. It would be 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, which would eliminate non-resident, which are -- not meaning nonresidents of the area, non-residents of Alaska hunters from hunting caribou in Unit 20. There's various ones of 22, 23, and 26A. They're to basically eliminate non-resident harvest. And there are reasons why that has become prominent because now we have so much cow harvest, we need to shift to bull harvest. Except we're not -- we don't have that many bulls anymore. So, we don't have excess bulls to give away to non-resident harvest. And

the Department of Fish and Game is going to be wanting to maintain non-resident harvest, because I'll say it at every meeting that this issue comes up. We have Pittman-Roberts [sic], which is administrated by the Federal -- correction, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife -- an 11% tax on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and other fire -- other sporting goods specifics that are allocated to the states on a three-to-one ratio. So, if Alaskans do $50 million, as Alaska sells $1 in license, they get $3 in Pittman-Roberts funds, Federal Wildlife Restoration funds. If a caribou tag is $650 and the non-resident license is $180 -- yeah, they get that funding. Plus, they get three times that amount. That makes that close to -- what? 36, 200 or $3500, or whatever it is, comes out to be. I don't have my calculator in my hand, but the reality is that that's where the State's getting money, and they don't want to eliminate non-resident harvest. So, but we don't have resource to give. We have a State subsistence priority, and we have a sustained yield management clause under the State of Alaska. And we have a rural subsistence priority. So, the State Board of Game should realize that we don't -- are not going to have enough bulls for a 12,000-caribou harvest as the annual harvest rate within the Western Arctic Caribou Herd’s range. We don't have that kind of resource to give right now. So, we may have to trim off this non-resident harvest aspect. So, I'm supportive of these proposals to eliminate non-resident harvest because of those aspects that we're concerned about. The bull-cow ratio, especially the large bull component. We just -- any reindeer herd. I got sent down to the ungulate meeting down in Anchorage -- with the reindeer ungulate meeting in Captain Cook in Anchorage in 2023. Reindeer herders in Scandinavia showed data that caribou are not skeletally mature until they're five years old. And Layne Adams and down at Denali National Park had up to 18 years of data showing that five-year-old bull caribou -- large bull caribou dominate the breeding. Why is that? Because large bulls attain the fat reserves to go through the breeding stress. Four-year-old bulls. These are called (In Native) in the Inupiaq language. These submature bulls, skeletally mature bulls, they only have about one third the fat reserves to 25% of the fat reserves. They can't take that kind of breeding stress. So, if you let the nonresidents call off all the large bulls out of the herd, “Oh, they only kill 300.” That might have a significant impact because reindeer herders will tell you that they sequester 15 cows to one large bull. That's what you'd need for breeding. That's in a controlled

situation. So, you need at least ten large bulls per 100 cows to have your proper breeding component. Mulchatna got wiped out because they went to one bull -- large bull per 100 cow. Only one per 100 cows. They had 14 bulls total. It shifted the breeding onto the younger bull component, and the herd plummets to what we got right now, in the nightmare we're in on shooting brown bears to bail ourselves out of the situation. It had nothing to do with range. It has nothing to do with range. It has to do with how restructuring the breeding structure to eliminate the population. We're trying to get this herd to come back. This herd does not need additional large bull component harvest. That's what non-residents are going to harvest. They're going to shoot the biggest bull out there, and that's going to be the breeding bulls.

So, anybody at this table talk about the breeding bulls per moose. I hear it all the time on moose. You have that -- you have the same factor. Why large bull moose are seven years old. Cows want to breed with that because her success of reproduction is really high with a tried-and-true bull. That's what this all revolves around. So, I have to explain it to the -- and I'll do it again because we have new people in the room. I explained to the Boards -- Board of Game or the Federal Subsistence Board. Relying on young bulls as your breeding component is like a two-year-old bull caribou is like a 14-year-old boy chasing 28-year-old women. They're not going on a date. They're not going to get married, and they're not going to have kids. It happens with people and it happens with wildlife. And so, that's what the problem is. You get rejection. Those adult cows reject those adults. I get that same reaction. People laugh about that. But that's -- it's a fact. It's a fact of life. I gotta teach the birds and bees to the -- to these Boards.

MR. GERVAIS: I get rejected at 60.

(Laughter)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. So, anyways, I'm supportive of non-resident elimination at this time with the Western Arctic Caribou. So, we should block these proposals. Proposal 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 as one block to eliminate non-resident harvest within the Western Arctic Caribou range. And do we have a motion to that effect with the justification that’s stated? Drawing that stuff about 14-year-old boys also.

(No audible response)

Got a motion to adopt.

MR. HONEA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Don. Do we have any discussion?

(No response)

Do we have a question on the motion?

(No audible response)

Questions called. All those in favor of the motion as stated signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries.

MR. GERVAIS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead.

MR. GERVAIS: I just had clarification back on Proposal 4 that -- we got -- we voted on that as a total ten-mile-wide corridor. We.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah, we voted that. We were.....

MR. GERVAIS: I want to just clarify we get the right distance.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We modified it to a five-mile from the -- from a.....

MR. GERVAIS: Five miles on each.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Each side of the of the Ambler Road.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay, fine.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, let's see here. What's our -- do we need a bathroom break, Nissa? Can we keep going? How's the room feeling?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Jenny wants a break. So, we got 3:15. We need to be back here at 3:45.

MS. PILCHER: 30 minutes?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, it's 3:30 right now. 3:45 is when we need to be back.

MS. PILCHER: 15-minute break.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 15-minute break.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're going to come back to order again. We got a quarter to 4; 3:45. This was on my seat.

MS. PILCHER: Oh, that's fine. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And so, Tim and Don. I'll come back to order. Yeah, we're kind of -- so, we're back to confirmation of the winter meetings that we were at.

MS. PILCHER: We are on page 171 in your black comb-bound book. Are the calendars currently -- no Councils that have met prior have changed their meeting dates. I would like to bring it to the Council's attention that you did talk pretty extensively yesterday about a -- well, actually no, I'm going to back up. First off, at Eastern Interior's last meeting, they chose to change their meeting dates to overlap your meeting dates to allow a Joint Council meeting for your winter meeting in Fairbanks. So, that's one. So, if you guys did choose to move your meeting dates, you would be moving it away from meeting jointly with the Eastern Interior. Page 171. So, that's one request that I have to maybe consider about not moving our meeting dates.

The next thing that I'd like to bring to your attention is, you spoke quite heavily about having a three-day meeting, especially in light of having one of these days now -- at least one of these days being tied up meeting with Eastern Interior. So, I would recommend that you request to extend it through February 25th. I wouldn't recommend meeting on Monday just because those that fly can't fly in on Sunday.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, I'm really happy to see that EIRAC is combined with us, and that's more likely to be at Pike's. And so, this February 23, 24, and 25 will align with EIRAC's time frame. We'll have a one-day overlap on the first part of the meeting, like we did in December of 2025. And then we can have two days to accomplish our work agenda. So, I think that that will work out real well. Because I was still good times for the Council members. February 23, 24, and 25 of 2027 in Fairbanks at Pike's.

MR. GERVAIS: Yeah, that's a good time for me. But like, check with Pike's because that's pretty close to Iron Dog.

MS. PILCHER: We did already reserve the room. Well, I should -- Brooke McDavid already reserved the space.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. So, we're penciled in. So, is that -- that's good for everybody? Tommy?

MR. KRISKA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, that's good, Don?

MR. HONEA: Great.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Robert?

MR. WALKER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we're good with that. And that's a three-day meeting for us in February in Fairbanks. And so, then we're going to go to the next page, which is fall of 2027. So, EIRAC is down for Holy Cross, and we're going -- are we going to get an approval for that one? We don't know. We tried to go to Aniak this year. The budget -- OSM's budget was not adequate

to -- it's a very expensive trip to go to out of our hub communities, which was McGrath and Galena. So, we got -- didn't we put Holy Cross as our first priority and possibly Galena as a secondary? Did we do that?

MS. PILCHER: That does -- that -- I think so.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seems like it. So, that would be this coming -- excuse me -- this coming fall, would be October 5 and 6 in Holy Cross. There are -- Wright Air goes down there. I forget what day they fly down to McGrath, to that area. We'd have to check on that scheduling for.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. WALKER: You have.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: .....seafarers.

MR. WALKER: You have a -- Wright Air goes to Holy Cross.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And what days do they go down there?

MR. WALKER: They go down on Saturday -- on Monday, and Thursday, and Saturday.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. GERVAIS: From here?

MR. WALKER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, yeah. Well, that might line up. So, if we can get on the Wright plane going out of Fairbanks down there, which will go to McGrath anyways.

MR. WALKER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: More than likely. Then go over to Holy Cross. There for two days, and then we'll come out on the Thursday plane, and come back over here to Fairbanks or wherever. And they jump between Anvik and Holy Cross for you or...?

MR. WALKER: Well, it's really a shame because if it goes backwards, if it goes Shageluk, Grayling, Anvik, Holy Cross, then I don't go home.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh.

MR. WALKER: This is one of the bad things about it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, I see.

MR. WALKER: And I don't want to have to go all the way to Fairbanks and come back.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. So, we're down for Holy Cross. If this -- and I'm concerned now because OSM didn't have the funding for the Aniak meeting. And if we -- that's why I'm trying to stay on the fare flights, which are cheaper than the Essential Air Service, etc., for cheaper airfares. That's -- if we can stay on the fare flights with Wright Air for that, that might stay within our parameters. And we have met in the Holy Cross several years ago, and we had quite a bit of public participation there when we did have a meeting, and it seemed like we had a decent -- at least, an acoustically decent place to meet. That wasn't an echo chamber like Aniak' gym. So, I think we'll stay with that as a fallback. Are we still -- can we put down Galena as a fallback?

MS. PILCHER: I would.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Since we're going to have a spring meeting or winter meeting here in Fairbanks. So, Galena will be the fallback for that. Is that okay with the Council?

MR. WALKER: Yes.

MR. GERVAIS: Roger. Yes.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And Jenny, you'll be in -- if you were to go to Galena, you'll come and see us if we come and visit.

MS. PELKOLA: I probably will. But I'm just thinking. This year in Galena, they're having a jamboree or -- not really jamboree, but something going on.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: In October?

MS. PELKOLA: And next year -- yeah. And next year.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, yeah...?

MS. PELKOLA: .....they're planning to have it like in the beginning of October, so I don't know.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, okay. Okay. We'll keep that under consideration. Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Yeah. And I do ask the -- we don't just show up.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Right. Right. And that's -- those dates are good for you, Tommy?

MR. KRISKA: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: 5th and 6th in Holy Cross. And so, that's it for action -- so, we're going to adopt those. So, we need a motion to adopt these. So, the Chair will entertain a motion to adopt both of these schedules for the February 23, 24, 25 and WIRAC meeting in Fairbanks joint with EIRAC as one meeting confirmation. The second would be October 5 and 6 in Holy Cross. And so, we're trying to stay within the seat fare schedule with Wright Air so that that keeps it down for the OSM. So, those are the two meeting confirmations. Do we have a motion to that effect?

MR. HONEA: So move.

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

MS. PELKOLA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Seconded by Jenny. Further discussion?

MR. HONEA: Question.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Questions called. Those in favor of those meeting dates signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Opposed, same sign.

(No response)

Motion adopted. And so, we're going to go to tribal -- let's see.

MS. PILCHER: I do have something to bring up.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: There is one action item that I incidentally put further down under the reports. The Subsistence Resource Commission Sheep Hunting Plan is an action item. I don't know if you guys would want to take it up now or wait a little bit until Marcy's update under the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I was in -- I'm thinking about that. We actually have -- we may have to adjust it slightly at the SRCs. So, we might table that for this meeting. And so, we're going to have a November meeting. So, we can table that for this meeting. And so, that -- we can take that off the table, that particular item. Let's see. What we're -- Tanana Chiefs. Yeah.

MS. ERICKSON: Good afternoon. For the record, I'm Diloola Erickson. I'm the Tribal Resource Stewardship Department Director at Tanana Chiefs Conference. And I didn't prepare a written report. I just have like some quick updates for you guys. I think the biggest one is the mid-river sonar project that TCC has been working on. I know that's been a big project of interest for a lot of folks. And right now, we're kind of in a waiting period. We expended all of the funding that we had for the phase one of the feasibility project, which was a site selection project. And we selected the Yuki Island site as the most of it -- like, most optimal site to use for a mid-river sonar. And we're waiting to hear back from a couple funding applications to see if we can get some multi-year project funding to actually operate the sonar at that site. We did apply to the FRMP, but we weren't awarded. And then we also submitted an application to Murkowski's Appropriations Committee. And so, we're waiting to hear

back from that. And then we'll likely be submitting applications to the AYKSSI when that opens as well. So, just trying to get funding.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: What -- how much does a sonar cost?

MS. ERICKSON: We submitted a three-year, like, operation budget, and I think it was like a little under 700,000 for those three years.

MR. GERVAIS: Wow.

MS. ERICKSON: Yeah. To the appropriations. Yeah. And then I think we submitted a shorter -- so, we're like -- we're just grabbing for funding wherever we can get it to run it maybe a year, run it for two, optionally, maybe like five because we need a longer-term data set.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. Any other questions on that? Don, go ahead.

MR. HONEA: Good afternoon, Diloola. So, out of -- it seems like it's been time consuming. We've been, you know, talking about this a few years. So, it's been narrowed down. What's the next course of action for that? I believe TCC had, potentially, maybe 3 or 4 sites that they have considered. It -- what exactly went into considering the Yuki Island? Because of water depth, or the width of the river, or whatever? And so, is there anything going to happen this summer? Thank you.

MS. ERICKSON: Nothing happened. Summer 2026 field season, we didn't have any active projects because we didn't have anything funded. So, I'll answer your questions kind of in the order that I heard them best I can. There -- we looked at three sites, one above Tanana near their spirit camp, right below the rapids, one below Tanana near the mouth of the Tozitna River, and then one near Yuki Island, right below Ruby, between Ruby and Galena. I'm not the biologist, and our biologist is no longer on staff, but my understanding from the reports and what we had talked about was they were looking at the river stream. If it was braided, like if there was an island or multi-channels or whatever, they

needed a narrow point in the river, and they were looking at the bottom profile, the -- like, riverbed profile. Because it needed to have a specific, like slope angle, and they needed to be able to run a test fishery. And there needed to be like a site where they could build like a temporary camp and stuff like that. And so, they took all of that into consideration when they looked at all three of those sites. And then the Yuki River -- they all had pretty good, I think, bottom profiles, but they wanted to do it -- they suggested and recommended doing it near the Yuki Island site because when you're up to Tanana, it got too close to like the stock breaking off in the Tanana and the stock going north. And there were just some other things that they were like, this is the more optimal site. And it was a little bit closer -- or no. The Tanana site would have been easier to operate out of, but the Yuki Island had better, I think, bottom profiles and stuff like that. And as far as like next steps, we just have to wait for funding. So, we're waiting for it to get funded, and we're actively pursuing as many opportunities as we can.

MR. HONEA: Just one more question, Mr. Chair. So, what is the purpose of this sonar? Is it just like a sonar down at Pilot Station or -- you know, I mean, like I said, it's been -- boy, we've been talking about that for, I don't know, 4, 5, 10 years or something. And, you know, it's incredibly slow. It seems how -- you know, choosing a site and getting it up and running. But what is it going to tell us? Thank you.

MS. ERICKSON: Again, I'm not the biologist, so -- but I'll answer best I can. My understanding of why we are pursuing a mid-river sonar is because it comes from a Full Board Resolution. So, TCC operates on Full Board Resolutions from all 42 of our member communities. And in 2021, I believe, they passed the mid-river sonar resolution directing TCC to pursue funding and conduct a feasibility study. So, I'm just following my marching orders.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I'm excited about this mid-river sonar. And I'm happy that it's completed at this point to the -- needing the funding source and this is the project. Please fund this. So, it's only one (indiscernible) or something. You know, it's like virtually nothing as far as the Federal government goes. So, hopefully the Federal funding will come through for that. I'd appreciate that.

MS. ERICKSON: I agree, and that's mostly all we have going on for fisheries right now. I'll save all my wildlife stuff for your spring meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. All right. Any other questions or discussion? Thanks so much, Diloola. So, we're going to go to Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MS. PILCHER: They were left on there as a placeholder, in case anyone was in the room or online and wanted to give a presentation, but I -- there was no.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Okay. So, Maria, did you want to give additional? You're on -- here for Northern Interior. We discussed things with you. I think we've covered everything. Do you have any additional thing that you would like to discuss?

(Talking)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Okay. So, we're going to give Jeremy a chance to talk. Thanks so much.

MR. HAVENER: Good afternoon, Council members, Mr. Chair. Thanks for the time to be here. And I know you guys are pushing through the agenda, so I'll be relatively quick. For the record, my name is Jeremy Havener. I'm the Refuge Assistance Coordinator and Acting Deputy Refuge Manager for the Northern Interior Refuge Complex. As normal, we are just finishing up our field season, and so biologists and park rangers should be completing their reports. And we'll try to have a written report for you guys in February. Here, in Fairbanks. I believe I heard that correctly. So, we'll have that ready for you with all the -- you know, the surveys we've completed.

So, this field season, we did have a couple highlights. In May, we were able to work with our regional pilots and get the twinning surveys completed that we typically do around Galena. I don't have the data off the top of my head, but I know talking to Jenny Bryant, our biologist, that things seemed relatively normal or, you know, things were good. So, nothing out of the ordinary there. And we work with migratory birds,

and we completed or helped complete the Midcontinental Greater White-Fronted Goose Banding Project; that's been going on for quite a few years now. And we were able to get our cabin and the field camp ready for them. They come out there with pilots. They -- with a group of -- with migratory birds. Biologists and staff, they go out and band. I think around 1,000 birds is the quota every year. And so, we feel it's, you know, within our realms to try to help out that program because it is really important for that population, knowing distribution, abundance, harvest rates, survival rates. We use that data through citizen science, you know, people reporting those bands to get an actual -- those estimates. And it's really important for that population, which is an important subsistence species around the Innoko area. So, we did help out with that. We did run into some issues this year. We have a field camp that's about 50 miles south of Galena or 300 miles up the Innoko. And we ran into some problems from the Typhoon Halong. That would have been October, I think 12th of last year, with the strong wind event that was seen. And so, we were able to get, I think it was Cody Smith, our law enforcement officer, was able to fly out and kind of assess the damage. And we did see in that part of the refuge some pretty significant damage to the white spruce trees in that area. And I'm sure other people have seen that. And I know we've had some folks go out and try to do assessments on that, but we did get some structure damage on cabins and stuff. But we were able to get that all kind of cleared up to where we could safely use it and complete that banding project this year. So, that did get done.

Aside from that, the Nowitna Check Station just got completed. I actually just returned from there. We got everything torn down. We still haven't finished putting everything away yet and crunching all the numbers and all that good stuff, but just for folks who aren't aware, that's -- it is a combined check station with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. It's been running since 1988 at the mouth of the Nowitna River. We staff it usually 1st of September through September 20 -- well, excuse me, October 1st because there's a subsistence season. And this year, after completion, we did notice some interesting things. We had 76 hunters, off the top of my head, which since that check station started in 1988, that is the lowest number of hunters we have recorded there. With that being said, we do -- you know, it is a voluntary check station and we have been noticing, you know, boats going by without

checking in. So, you know, plus or minus a few folks there. But moose harvest was actually pretty good for that number of hunters. We saw 30 moose harvested preliminary, which I think penciled out to be about a 40% harvest success rate. And, you know, just in my time talking with hunters out there, it seemed like folks were happy with the number of bulls that they were seeing. So, things seem pretty good out there. And under the subsistence hunt, which is FM21-01, we had, I think, eight permits issued. I'm still tracking down harvest reports from that. We -- people still have probably another five days or so to report those. But I think we are at four moose harvested so far this year. So, and I'll have that updated in the report in February. But aside from that, I think that is everything I needed to report on. It looks like there's maybe some questions coming in, so I'm going to stop there. So, we got time to answer those.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Got a question, Tim?

MR. GERVAIS: Jeremy on that -- so, subsistence hunt. Where's the -- in recent years, we've been getting increasing participation from Tanana. Do you know what communities those subsistence hunters came out of?

MR. HAVENER: So, for the eight permits, I'm just going off the top of my head. So, it might be off just a tad. But I want to say it was about even this year. Because we did take -- me and RIT, Marie Cleaver, took a trip to Ruby on, I think, the 24th of September. And so, we were able to meet with folks there and issue out permits to folks in Ruby. But just off the top of my head, I'd say it was split about even this year with those eight permits that we had issued.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Do you know what the status of the three guide use areas on the Nowitna River?

MR. HAVENER: Yeah, I do. So, on the Nowitna Refuge we have three guide use areas. Two of them are towards the mouth or the confluence of the Yukon River and ones on the east side, ones on the west side, essentially. And the third guide use area is above the Little Mud River. So, you gotta go 90 miles up. And then it's at -- I don't know if it's a two-mile-wide corridor going up to the boundary of the refuge. And we do have one permitted guide in that area that's towards

that -- above the Little Mud River.

MR. GERVAIS: And the two ones closest to the Yukon River are vacant?

MR. HAVENER: Those are vacant. Yep. That's correct.

MR. GERVAIS: Okay. Thank you.

MR. HAVENER: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, since your complex, did you do any work in Kanuti? Are you appraised of Kanuti's projects? Like, they normally would go and do a waterfowl study and ban them there. Or used to. So, if we're -- I lived right next to Kanuti, so I'm a little interested. Kanuti used to have a lot of projects when we first started this Council. They had tons of projects. They had a lot of cool things. Beaver caches, all kinds of stuff. I was wondering what Kanuti's -- basically, what are their projects, or do they have many running, or...?

MS. FOSADO: For the record, again, this is Maria Fosado with Northern Interior Refuge Complex. So, we've had a lot of loss of staff. I'm currently the only one based out of Fairbanks. This year, the only work we were able to do was actually contract aviation work for the scaup and scoter survey on Kanuti. As we move through the restructuring and the complexing, we'll evaluate priorities and shift workload to ensure that we're covering all four refuges.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: There used to be quite a bit of goose work down there, so that was -- I happen to go to the Arctic Slope. And I've -- if I had -- if I take waterfowl, I go take them on the North Slope because the (indiscernible) population is really huge up there. I'm going to be there on the 1st of September, and there was multiple family groups migrating from west to east. They go to the Mackenzie; they start to the south. I was counting subadults in that -- and I was looking like about 3 to 5 subadults per adult pair. So, it's -- it looked like they had decent recruitment there. That's right -- they're coming right off the Arctic Ocean plain. They're basically on at that time. They're migrating from over Prudhoe Bay. I was out at the bay all the way to 40 miles south. There had to be thousands per day in family groups,

loose groups migrating, not large groups, but family groups, at low elevation. So, I do want to know what the Interior populations are doing also. It's not part of a Federal subsistence, but it is a subsistence aspect. There's a subsistence use of birds in general. And so, migratory birds are a big part of subsistence use. And you had a question there, Tim?

MR. GERVAIS: Yes. Could you briefly say what happened to the refuge's budget since the start of the Trump Administration? Like, is it going up, or staying the same, or going down?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Your last annual budget.

MS. FOSADO: I'll say this. Our -- with inflation, our budgets have generally shown a downward trend. If you're looking for more specifics on our budgets, I would prefer to just chat off the record.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Any other questions for -- oh, go ahead, Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah. You said you went to Ruby and were handed out permits; Federal permits?

MR. HAVENER: Mr. Kriska, through the Chair. Yeah, that is correct. For that Federal FM21-01 moose hunt, Galena, Ruby, and Tanana residents are qualified for that hunt. So, we did go to Ruby, and then we worked with -- you know, with Tanana through the phone. And, you know, a lot of those hunters from Tanana do come to the Check Station. So, we were able to issue permits there.

MR. KRISKA: That's the Nowitna Check Station?

MR. HAVENER: That's correct. Yep.

MR. KRISKA: I was just thinking more of down river. I guess that's a Glenn Stout thing or somebody. And they -- I'm just thinking you handed these permits for after the 25th to the -- after the 25th of September or...?

MR. HAVENER: So, the permits that we were issuing out in Ruby it's -- again, it's that FM21-01 Nowitna moose hunt, and that hunt’s open from the

26th of September through October 1st. And it goes -- basically, it's Little Mud River on downstream to the confluence of the Yukon. And then, you know, anything along the Yukon. So, there's areas like Twin Sloughs or you have some areas up, you know, towards Tanana is open as well, so.

MR. KRISKA: That permit is just for locals?

MR. HAVENER: Yeah. Yep. It's a Federal permit for Galena, Ruby, and Tanana residents.

MR. KRISKA: Okay, so my other question was for downriver, like from Galena down Koyukuk, Nulato -- what -- who do they go see? Is there a hunting open during that time too, at the same time?

MR. HAVENER: So, just want to make sure. You're referencing Federal hunt, correct?

MR. KRISKA: Right.

MR. HAVENER: Okay. Yeah. So, for that area there is not a specific permitted Federal hunt during the fall. We have had them in the past. I know there's been special action requests made. I think it was the year of the flood of 2013. I know we issued out permits for a hunt that was created -- that was open in kind of the Koyu area. And maybe some of that Lower Koyukuk Refuge as well. I'm not 100% on that. It's been a few years, but typically for that area, no, we've not had a Federal hunt in Koyu.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. KRISKA: Okay. And it -- we would have to request that to be open. Because what happened to the local hunters in Koyukuk, Galena, Nulato, Kaltag area this year? A lot more hunters came from the road system talking about Wasilla, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and went into our hunting grounds. And, you know, once a certain amount of moose are shot in that area, it's shut down. So, the State is not allowed to put in a extension because of the amount of moose that'd been shot. Okay. So, but the problem is that there's a lot of locals that didn't get a moose. And right now, they still don't have meat. And then that's one of the reasons I was asking. Is there a way that we can open it for that area to as well as at Ruby area just because the last few years,

the water was high and a lot of the folks that didn't get a moose, I mean, they have big families too, but they're older and they, you know, that high water, they can't do very much. And we try to help them, but there's so many people. But anyway, is there a way that we could request it to be like on emergency opening or, you know, like if it's needed, could we go to you guys and see if it would be open? I don't know how long -- how much time you would need before the fact that those states come -- I mean, month or whatever, I don't know. I just want to kind of learn about it and have information because a lot of the time when things go wrong, my phone is ringing off the hook and trying to -- I don't have answers for anybody, so.

MR. HAVENER: Yeah, no, we appreciate that information, but I'll.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Brian. Brian. Brian. Brian. We're going to have Brian answer this emergency special action request as what Tommy's kind of alluding to. They had a highwater. They couldn't get enough moose. What's the process with emergency special action requests? Like, an extension of the moose season that still has to have an analysis and all that, like a special action request, public comment period, all -- the whole shebang?

MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, Member Kriska, through the Chair. Emergency special actions do not have to have public hearings. No comment. What was your -- sorry, you caught me napping back there.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, you were discussing important issues back there, but the -- Tommy's asking, they had high water. That a lot of people didn't get moose out of Nulato. They want to hunt on the Innoko or -- correction, the northern Innoko unit in the Koyu Flats. And they need a -- they need, possibly, a special action request for additional hunting opportunity. And so, you would be wanting a bull moose harvest. It's kind of getting late, but if you wanted something like that, you would -- they would -- we could submit a emergency special action request and set a date of like five days -- you would want five days. You gotta do it pretty soon. It's going to freeze up.

MR. KRISKA: No, not to happen right now, but just for the future.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, just reference.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah, reference because the way it is right now, a lot of the -- I mean, we tried to get Glenn to do it, and then they, like I said, the numbers were met by, I would say roadside folks that went up and shot the amount of moose that was -- you know, to come out of there. And once that number is there, you can't go back in there and put an emergency hunt on from the State side. You can't do it. But then, still the problem is, is that a lot of the locals don't have meat at all. And that's a big thing. I mean, you know, we tried to cover one thing. I think we really need to research a lot of this on the State side too, because there were too many hunters going in there and the moose counts are different. I don't know. I think for some reason we're going to have to go back and figure this out because -- and it's only so many hunters in there. It gets slammed. And a lot of the folks, they're not getting meat. But once that number is there, you can't go against it. It's done.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Sir, you're on the middle Yukon Advisory.

MR. KRISKA: We're on middle Yukon. What I'm talking about is Galena, Koyukuk, Nulato, Kaltag. And a lot of those people in there, like I said, their older ones, they got their grandkids trying to help them. And a lot of them never got meat. They don't got the fish, they’re -- right now, they don't have no meat. And it's a bad situation because the -- a lot of them need this stuff, and they can't get it, even right now. So, it's going to be a tough year for them.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Tommy, you don't want to have a WIRAC request -- an emergency special action request for a five-day hunt before freeze up or after freeze up? Right now, this fall of '26? I mean, if it's justified.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. KRISKA: Right now, it's going to -- might cause more harm than good because you're going to have people going out there trying to go hunting. And if they go back in some of these sloughs you know, there's a chance that you're going to get freeze in there. It's going to cause more problems. But what I was wanting to say is -- I mean, we'll take care of them, regardless. It is going to tell you that, but for this year. But for -- to stay out of trouble and everything else next year, we need to put this in place and probably the WIRAC to put this like a five-day emergency hunt to these guys like, put a request out there now and for next year, just for the future. Because it -- this is not the only time it happened. It happened last year with that I don't know or whatever, kind of really goofed up things. And I had questions on that, but I need -- this is more important than trying to figure it out.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We could address that at our spring meeting. We're going to be talking about wildlife stuff anyways.

MR. KRISKA: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, in the winter meeting in February 23, 24, and 25 in Fairbanks, we can talk about that. You know, a regulatory process where the refuge manager can issue permits if that's required, you know, if there's an emergency status or maybe the Board process.....

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. KRISKA: So -- yeah. So, what I would do is -- could we put that on the agenda right now, so we don't forget? I mean, I know -- usually, things seem to slip out of mind here.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa's making note of that. Go ahead, Jeremy.

MR. HAVENER: And one other thing I want to add to the record is just -- in my presentation, I forgot -- I failed to mention, but we are planning right now to get three pilots, and we're going to complete our moose survey. So, we'll have good trend data. You know, as we're moving into this stuff. Because we do have those winter moose hunts, we got to make a decision on in 21B, 24D, and 21D that take place in March and April. So, we'll be doing that. That'll add some information.

Because I -- my understanding is, that population is doing pretty good. And so, there, you know, could potentially be enough moose for those kind of harvest requests. But like I said, with that special action request, I know we did have one; it was 2013. And we did have a permit with that. So, if something similar happened again, we would probably have that permit. And I can't remember the permit number off the top of my head, but again, it'd be our office issuing them out. We, you know, we can make some trips down to Nulato or wherever we need to and, you know, work with the Tribal offices to -- if we need to do it by email or whatever, just to make it so it's available for everybody.

MR. KRISKA: I have a -- you know, that -- right off the start, they have that federal subsistence open on that -- what there's -- 834 or 832? The hunt would be pretty much similar to that. It's already in place. It's got to add or put these different dates into it. It's right off -- before the State hunt. It's in that area.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Brian.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Brian Ubelaker, for the record. So, planning for this for the future, that can definitely be a proposal the Western Interior Council submits during the open call for proposals next year. And that can be something that we can write into it. That the refuge manager would have delegated authority to be a may-be-announce season, set it up however you want to. In the short term, if it's needed, though, you can always submit -- and either the Council or you, Tommy, or Tribal Council, or whoever can submit a special action request, an emergency special action request to OSM, to the Board. And we would analyze that. Not saying that we promise that we get things done in 3 or 4 days, but we've turned some things around quite rapidly. So, it's always a possibility for short-term solution.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tommy.

(Simultaneous speech)

MR. KRISKA: Okay. Okay. So, what was going on this year, we knew that a lot of people weren't getting moose, and we tried to do a -- you know, a request to the State. But some of the guys that supposedly should have did it was some of the chiefs

that we told them. But the thing is, with some people, you know, they already got their moose, so they weren't really worried about it. So, they didn't check into it on time. And we were talking about this like ten days before the moose season ended. Because we knew that was going to happen. I mean, you could see it, you know. So, what's going to happen in the future now? And if we see that again, we're giving you guys a call. That's what will happen. Is that okay?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, we'll talk about it at our spring meeting. We'll get this pretty defined in the winter meeting here in Fairbanks. And so, we'll -- they'll have -- refuge will have time to think about it. We'll look at the regulations; what we have in place. And we can make a proposal for like a -- basically, the hunt that they have on the Innoko, we would have the same type of a hunt for the northern unit -- not the Innoko, the Novi, the northern unit of the Innoko Refuge. We could have a similar hunt with a registration permit. And if people aren't getting the moose, they can just go get the permit and then go hunt that 26 to the 1st of October. And so, that -- but they have to be on the refuge land, though. That's the rub about that. It's kind of checkerboard there. Go ahead, Jeremy.

MR. HAVENER: Yeah. For the record, this is Jeremy Havener, again. And thanks for that note, Jack. That's -- you know, I know we've looked at some Federal hunts in that area before. And you know, I'm not trying to deter in any way, shape, or form, but it is one of those areas. It's -- there's a lot of checkerboard going on the land status. And, you know, just -- I think we could do our due diligence and look -- start looking at some maps. And so, that way, you know, you could see the areas that would be open under Federal jurisdiction. And so, maybe in the spring or the winter meeting, we could have some maps prepared and stuff. We can talk about that area.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. It'd be better to talk about it at the spring meeting. Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jeremy, there has been -- has there, or did Doyon discover uranium at Illinois Creek over there or something? Some of the stories came down from Nulato, Kaltag, that people met with the tribes there and the villages. And if there is, what is the plans? Anything

that you know of? Thank you.

MR. HAVENER: Thanks, Mr. Walker, through the Chair. You know, they did stop by, and they have been having some meetings. Uranium, I'm not aware of that. You know, and I don't want to speak on their behalf, but I do know, you know, I think some of it is silver and then there's maybe some rare earth metals. But they're kind of going through some planning and doing some more surveying, in my understanding, on what's actually out there. So, I know -- I found some information, you know, on their website and that's a -- I think it would be a good place to start on. And then contacting their office to see what they have in store, so.

MR. KRISKA: So, I think -- you know, I would be interested to know too because, you know, that's a very toxic material. You know, they did discover some up in Elim and they opened a mine and they closed it. It was so toxic, they had to close it. So, how is this going to happen here if it is going to be opened? You know, we have a heck of a ecosystem on Innoko, and that's going to be very devastating ever -- if it ever gets loose. So, I believe that, you know, we should talk about getting started, so we could know. So, that people -- I don't think the people in Shageluk even know that, or they don't know how toxic it is. So, thank you, Jeremy. We'll talk about that some other time. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Nissa's got something on that. Go ahead, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: When you did reach out to me, it was too late to get -- to reach out to the company for this meeting, but Jeremy and I did speak. He did give me contact information for that website, so I can attempt to see if I can find somebody from that mining company to come to your fall meeting to give you an update.

MR. KRISKA: I think that'd be interesting to put on their website too, because other people could read that. I'd be interested in reading more on it.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. I think we've covered Koyukuk, Nowitna, Innoko Kanuti. So, we have Nathan Elswick. Are you online here? Nathan, are you there?

MR. ELSWICK: Yes, I'm here, Mr. Chair, and thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yes. Go right ahead, Nathan.

MR. ELSWICK: I just had a couple of comments. I've seen tribal governments on the agenda, and I've been participating online for the listening, for the past couple of days and.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MR. ELSWICK: Yeah. I'm not, I'm sure you guys are all familiar with the Bering Sea Interior Tribal Commission. I am actively participating with that group. And we just got back from a annual all-member meeting in Anchorage last week. And, you know, I did mention some stuff on the D-1 lands and you touched on it, as well, yesterday during your report, Mr. Chair. But I just wanted to, kind of, touch on it just a little more on the importance. I mentioned for some of the tribal people in the audience, the importance of requesting that tribal consultation. And at our meeting, we had one of our advisors who sits on the commission and advises the Executive Council. And he used to work for BLM, his name is Steve Cohen. One of the things he stated was the importance of getting that consultation and it was to -- because if the D-1s public lands get lifted and the more people have consultation that the -- they're going to have to reconcile all that, everything that was stated in the record. So, the more stuff tribes get in the record and we consult and provide that stuff, they're going to have to reconcile and all that information so, that was one of the reasons I wanted to state the importance of tribal councils requesting consultation on the D-1s. I did see yesterday that the state did lift, I forget how much acreage of their overselected lands. Some of those lands being around our area as well got relinquished by the state, which is a good thing. So, that means those lands will be -- continued to be managed by BLM. But if the D-1 lands get lifted, that doesn't mean that anyone can't open up a mining claim so, those are some of the things that I worry about.

Next, I guess during that meeting, even though it was a Federal lands meeting, when we had our round-robin discussion, pretty much, I'd say two thirds of the folks there they touched on the -- what was it?

The king salmon moratorium that's in place. A lot of tribes are not very happy on how that took place because there was no tribal consultation. The State just, kind of, went and put that moratorium in place without any consultation with the tribes. And the next thing was hunting. A lot of tribes are worried about hunting and being overharvested. I think there was some posts out of St. Mary's that one day there was like 400 racks, moose racks, antlers that got taken out of St. Mary's. We're getting more pressure here in our region, as well. I'm seeing quite a bit more moose this year taken out. We have more transporters and guides, seem like, out of this area. We got more people from the Middle Yukon area coming down and hunting around here. So, those are the things that I worry about. And we've just been attacked in so many ways during this administration. Everything from the way the Bering Sea RMP went on the last day of the first Trump administration to the Nick Begich and Dan Sullivan using the Congressional Review Act.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Say, Nathan, we can't talk about politics on this.

MR. ELSWICK: Okay. Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We are under constraints on that one, under the Hatch Act.

MR. ELSWICK: Okay so, I just wanted to state that we're under attack in so many ways. And I just, kind of, also just wanted to comment on -- I wanted to thank this body for all your guys' work. I know there hasn't been a lot of tribal representation at your meetings, from what I heard. I'm trying to get more involved myself so I'm hoping to attend more. And I also see two vacancies on your Board. I'm not too sure how those are handled or.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: We're encouraging nomination. And I suggest that you get your Council to nominate you or yourself can nominate yourself to the Western Interior Council because we're lacking membership. We have a member that's actually, Jenny Pelkola is going to drop off so we need additional membership, if you would have been inclined to, so. Oh, I see. Nissa says that you've got an application.

MS. PILCHER: I'm getting him one.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Oh, you can get an application? Okay, she's going to send you one. So you can put your -- you got his email address? Okay. She's going to send you an application to the Western Interior Council because we're lacking membership. We really need somebody from the Kuskokwim side. But we need anybody. We're looking for membership on this Council. So, you're exactly right. We're lacking membership. And it was -- to work effectively we have to have full body. So, I encourage you to make that, submit your application and to be nominated. And then it'll go through a process and the -- there'll be a review and vetting and a bunch of stuff, and the Federal Subsistence Board will submit it. And then the Secretary of Interior will make the appointments. And if you've applied now your application, your, it would be possibly appointed and, in December of 2027. That's how the process would work. It takes a while to get on there, but once you're there, it's not that hard to stay on there. So, I encourage you to do that or anybody else that you know that would like to be on there, especially if you know of anybody over in Anvik or on the Lower, Middle Kuskokwim area, that's where we really need some representation over there.

I do want to recommend that you -- you're concerned about the D-1 lands. You have to get a mapping of where the State of Alaska has, it's referred to as top-file. And I don't know if they talked about it. Top-file. They the State of Alaska was allowed to file on top of the D-1 lands, and if the Bureau of Land Management Director lifts those lands from, the Secretary of Interior lifts those lands that the state has top-filed on, they immediately attach and you instantly lose subsistence use within one month. That's what happened to me, where I live. So, you need to get that map of where the State top-files are in the Western Interior Bering Sea area, there's a bunch of lands that have molybdenum and other minerals underneath them over there. And so, you may lose subsistence hunting opportunity, and you need to be consulted on those top-filed lands, because that's what the Secretary of Interior is under executive order by the President, to actually lift those orders of interest to the State of Alaska. So, that would be my advice to you, because I just have to have lived through that and lost their subsistence use where I live, on the valley where I live. So, those are the things that I would encourage you to apply, and I would encourage you to look at where the state top-files are in your Western Interior Bering Sea D-1 public orders.

MR. ELSWICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And yeah, like I said, I just wanted to thank all the work you guys put in on all the issues, even though you guys might not have a lot of tribal governments participating in your meetings. You guys' work does not go unnoticed. And I just want to appreciate all of you. So, with that, I'll hand it back to you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Well, thank you very much, Nathan. Thanks for getting on the call. I got Aaron Moses is on the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge over there. Aaron.

MR. MOSES: Mr. Chair, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I can hear you great. Go right ahead.

MR. MOSES: All right, Council members, for the record, my name is Aaron Moses. I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for Yukon Delta Refuge. I'll have a complete report for you guys in the spring meeting. A lot of our biologists are writing their reports right now.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Aaron, come up to your mic a little better. You're, kind of, back off there. So, yeah, go ahead.

MR. MOSES: Yeah. So, in the springtime, I'll have a complete report for all of you guys on all the stuff that we're doing, both fish and wildlife. Just a couple things that I have right now is, this fall, we had our first ever antlerless moose hunt. We had a really big die-off of moose from really deep snow this year so, we were being very cautious and issued 20 random draw tags for residents of the Kuskokwim. So far, two antlerless moose have been harvested, but the season is still open for another week. A couple of things that we're going to do is, because of this high snow we had last year, we are going to count and do moose compositions on the Kuskokwim tributaries, starting about a month before whenever the snow allows for it. You guys already got pretty good reports about the summer fishing from the Fish Commission, and we're pretty pleased with where the season went, other than coho salmon. And so, we're still looking into why the numbers are so low since the parent year was pretty high in turn. So, something happened to them throughout their

life history that they didn't come back to well this year. And yeah, for right now, that's all we got. I'll have a better picture, a complete report for you guys in the spring meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I really appreciate your report, Aaron. I hadn't heard about the deep snow event down there in your, in the Lower Kuskokwim River. And so, I really appreciate that information. That's important for the Mulchatna Herd also. So, it was actually your report that highlighted the decline of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd several years ago. And so, I appreciate YK Delta actually informing us about various aspects of what's actually going on down in your part of the region. Adjacent region, excuse me. So, thank you. And so, let's see, we'll see you in the spring. We'll see you in Fairbanks, or online in Fairbanks. So, thank you very much. So, where are we at here? We got Togiak update, that's in our packet. I reviewed that, we can you can look at that, the Togiak is in your binder. And so, that's, we have that information. So -- and is anybody for Togiak online? I don't think so, but maybe there is.

(No response)

So, we're going to move into Gates of the Arctic National Park. Marcy and Matt.

(Pause)

You need a name tag also, Marcy? Oh, you got one.

MS. OKADA: Made one just for Robert. Thank you, Mr. Chair, Council members. My name is Marcy Okada. I'm a Subsistence Coordinator for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. And I'd like to refer you to Tab 6 in your green supplemental meeting packet. Or maybe it's not the green packet, but it's somewhere in there. The black?

MS. PILCHER: Yeah, the black one.

MS. OKADA: Tab 6.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. OKADA: We just have a quick update. I think you folks already know we have a Subsistence

Resource Commission for Gates of the Arctic. It's similar to how the RACs advise the Federal Board. Our Gates of the Arctic SRC advises National Park Service on subsistence management within the park and preserve. And our SRC took up the same action items that your RAC did at your previous meetings, everything pertaining to federal subsistence. And then also, as Jack had already mentioned, we covered the winter moose hunt in Unit 24A within Gates. Our meeting is coming up during the first week of November, here in Fairbanks, November 4th and 5th. This -- and then I'd like to pass it on to Matt to talk about caribou and moose.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Go ahead, Matt.

MR. CAMERON: Good afternoon, Council members. My name is Matt Cameron, Wildlife Biologist with Gates of the Arctic and Yukon-Charley Rivers. I just want to start off and just say thank you for your time and your engagement and your service on the Council. We're here, we're listening. We take what you say and we send it back up to folks at the Park and it matters. So, thank you. The next page outlines our -- some information on our caribou monitoring with the herd being at 121,000 as of the last count last year. This is a top concern for us, rally appreciate your comments on WSA26-01. We monitor the herd in conjunction with our colleagues at ADF&G, and we had a big effort this spring. We put out 60 new collars on adult females. Went really well working out of Kotzebue. We're doing a lot of active research on the herd, trying to understand this decline and what it means, and we'll present some of that at the SRC meeting next month or later. And then on, kind of, what the -- on that page there, on your handout outlines some of what we saw with the GPS data the last year and a recent report we had. The next page is about moose. We have a new moose project in this area.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I back you up?

MR. CAMERON: Go ahead, Jack.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Are you aware of -- does the Department of Fish and Game going to do a composition survey this -- they didn't get a trend but they did a -- are they doing a comp work this year, are you aware of or are you going to work in conjunction on any kind of comp work?

MR. CAMERON: We are not part of that, historically, and I don't know what their plans are, but I could ask and get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. CAMERON: We started a new project this spring looking at moose baseline ecology at the Gates and Kobuk Valley area. And so, there's information on that page about it. We had a really -- despite the cold, we had a successful spring capture effort. Got -- our goal was 70 adult females with GPS collars on. We got them all out. And now we'll be monitoring their movements, their survival, their calf production. And then the -- we'll be following those calves through aerial radio tracking flights throughout that first year and measuring their recruitment at the end of winter. And so, we'll -- as we learn more, we'll be reporting back.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, when you did your, refresh, my memory. When you did the collaring project, what was the snow depths in that area in the Kobuk boot area and the Lower or Middle, I guess. I mean middle Kobuk River drainage. Below average or average snow depths?

MR. CAMERON: I was part of the western ones, and Kyle and Matt were part of the eastern ones. And it, you know, so, it didn't, it felt about average in Kobuk Valley.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Knee deep-ish?

MR. CAMERON: Mm-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Yeah. Okay.

MR. CAMERON: But we have every -- our climate team puts out weather summaries for those areas. And I can send you that when it comes out for this last spring.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That gives us an idea of the snow depth effect on mortalities. Deeper snow the moose have a harder time. Predation increases on younger components and where we live, and we had 16 inches of snow, our moose strolled around in. The wolves had a hard time killing moose last winter so the predation factor goes down. So, continue.

MR. CAMERON: Thank you for that. That's helpful to hear. At that, I'll pass it back to Marcy for the Dall sheep update.

MS. OKADA: Just a really quick update on the surveys that were conducted on sheep within Gates. Every year surveys are conducted in the northeast portion or Itkillik Preserve, and that was done in July. And then the southeast portion or the North Fork of the Koyukuk River was surveyed as well. But the survey areas around Anaktuvuk Pass were not completed due to bad weather. So, I think we're missing two years now of sheep survey information around Anaktuvuk Pass. But we will share more. The data is being processed and it'll be shared at your SRC meeting next month.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: One question on that. Are you getting harvest information from Anaktuvuk or are you -- I -- from this, from Facebook accounts, they're not having such a successful sheep hunting up times this year.

MS. OKADA: So, the North Slope Regional Advisory Council met last week, and we heard the same thing. Sheep hunters from Anaktuvuk have been going to their usual spots and they have not been seeing sheep. Maybe one has been taken, but it's not a high sheep harvest year this season.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

MS. OKADA: And then, you know, that's the second resource they utilize. So, caribou also have not come through, as of yet.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: That was my impression.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Marcy, I -- all these years, you know, I really don't -- but you bring up something interesting because it's affects Jack’s area, too. Do you find that that the number of sheep and stuff have -- are they beginning to be an area of concern for you guys? I, you know, I'm just relegated to my area and what I know about our numbers and to me, I mean, I feel like our moose is a little bit low, but that's, you know, it's just a -- it's not detrimental or anything. I was just, you know, I was just wondering what your area up there, what those people are, you know, is it an area of concern for us or anybody?

MS. OKADA: So, there's a disclaimer here. I'm not the sheep biologist for Gates of the Arctic. Our sheep biologist is Zach DeLile. And, you know, sheep, we've been talking about sheep at each of your RAC meetings, every year. And that's mainly because in 2013-2014, there was rain on snow events and sheep don't have the ability to chip away at the ice and get at their food. So, that caused a decline. And then also, that freezing rain during lambing season also impacted the sheep population, as well. So, with some heavy deep snow years and some hard winters, sheep do get impacted and their population isn't allowed to grow, so to speak. So, that's why we're monitoring usual spots and Gates of the Arctic.

MR. HONEA: Yeah, but I was just wondering the population now, is it stable or is it going down or.....?

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I live there. And part of this blue area that you see here, I couldn't find one sheep this fall. Ewe, lamb, ram no kind of a sheep. On any, I looked at mountains where there's mineral, where sheep usually go. I couldn't find, I know there are some there. I saw some in the spring, but not very many. And the pilots are saying that the numbers of younger sheep are, have come up, but the overall population has not grown at all because our older sheep have timed out at 13-14. But the main thing was 18-19, 19-20. Those years beat them up. So, I was on top of snow, hauling wood and snow that deep on the 10th of May, on ice, there was inch and three quarters of rain with a six-inch ice crust. Killed sheep like crazy. The next two years in a row, back-to-back dilated. Our moose population went way down because of that. They're having a hard time recovering. You know, they’re -- we had our protection. We had four years, this Council got, was successful in getting a control on the hunting pressure. I saw adult rams within the Utility Corridor this spring. I was like, really super happy to find those sheep. Those were our breeders that we’re protecting. So, we have that -- we've retained the genetics. I was worried about losing the genetics of -- the stronger genetics of the population that go through those kind of deep snow years. But the numbers are really low. And if we get another -- we had an easy winter in '24 or '25-'26. We get an easy winter this year with no snow, light snow, cold winter, dry snow that blows away, the sheep population should start to come up. But, right now, we're

still low and stable, is what I would give the assessment now. So, very low. Stable is what it means. So, that answers kind of that question. Any other questions or comments from the -- about the Gates of the Arctic issues?

(No response)

And so, we'll have a meeting and I will be at the Gates of the Arctic meeting in November. That's when our next Gates of the Arctic meeting will be. Thank you very much, appreciate it. I appreciate all the work you're doing.

MR. CAMERON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, we got Bureau of Land Management, BLM. Erin. And Erin’s been patiently waiting.

MS. JULIANUS: Good afternoon, everybody. Good to see everyone and listen to all of you, as usual. Erin Julianus, Wildlife Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management, Central Yukon Field Office, based here in Fairbanks. So, I think again, for the second time in a row, I made the report, submitted the report in time so, it should be in the book. I think it's page 177. It says according to the agenda. So, I'm not going to cover -- the report is pretty basic. Don't have too many report specific updates. I told myself I wasn't going to belabor the land transfer in my update, but I think I'm probably just going to belabor the land transfer. But I do want to -- there's a couple things I did want to cover with regard to that. So, yeah, our field office is in a considerable time of transition. 1.4 million acres of BLM land in the Utility Corridor was conveyed to the State of Alaska in May. And then, also, this was covered at previous meetings, but the two -- 2024 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan, our management document was one of three plans. We worked on it for over a decade. And it was one of three plans that was rescinded under the Congressional Review Act in December of 2025. So now, we are managing BLM lands in the Western Interior Region under two plans, basically the old Central Yukon RMP, Resource Management Plan from 1986 and the 1991 Utility Corridor RMP. So, both plans, you know, they were outdated which was the reason for the update. And now they're really outdated. You know, we're, you know, essentially operating under a management plan for Utility Corridor that we don't

manage anymore, so. Yeah, so there's been some discussion about, you know, potentially initiating a new planning effort. You know, as we all, kind of, know now, those planning efforts are pretty big. But nothing has really been, you know, no concrete plans have been made at this point. And that would definitely, you know, come from above, Washington level, so. So, yeah, just a little bit about, kind of, the changes that our field office level, our permitting workload is changing quite a bit. I'd say probably 95 -- 90% of our permitting workload has historically been in the Utility Corridor.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Can I stop you there for a second, Erin? You still have the mining claims, which are fairly extensive in the Utility Corridor. And so, you're still, as far as I can tell, at, right now, that's what you're managing, is the federal mining claims, the placer claims, the stibnite claims and stuff. I think in the future, you know, I'm not going to give up on this. Those are still federal claims. You're having to manage them. You're having to permit them. Those are still federal lands. And until the State of Alaska takes those, I'm going to keep pressing that those are still federal lands for subsistence use. So, in our discussion here, I want to reiterate that for the record, on this BLM Utility Corridor, basically you're using the 1991 Utility Corridor plan. And that's the part that you're actually managing.

MS. JULIANUS: Right.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, I want to make that clear to the Council, that I'm still not backing off on that issue. That's -- the ANILCA's clear that if it's federal lands, it has subsistence priority on it. So, I'm going to maintain that. So, you can continue. I just wanted to make sure that that was on the record. Thank you.

MS. JULIANUS: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah, we do still have, you know, we are still managing and permitting the federal claims. And yeah, I should say we, as far as kind of our recreation facilities we are still managing the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center, are still have a, you know, presence there. And then, we maintained or retained the campgrounds. So, most of the waysides, you know, and outhouses and things like that work in.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The admin site, your BLM cabins at Marion Creek?

MS. JULIANUS: Yep. Yeah. We retain that. Yep. So, we do have, yeah, some facilities there still. But yeah, so, gravel pit authorizations. We, you know, all the gravel pits went to the State. Tour operators and hunting guides. You know, some may continue to, you know, they may want to renew their permits, but I think a lot of things are going to close out at the end of this year, so. Because there's just not enough land to operate.

So, for our resource workload you know, my work and the work of, you know, like our hydrologist, our fisheries biologist, archaeologists and ecologists, it hasn't changed in an immediate sense. You know, it could certainly change over time. But we do have a lot of long-term monitoring projects in the Dalton with a lot of scientific value. You know, I always mentioned Donna Defalco's snowshoe hare survey or snowshoe hare monitoring project. That we kind of inherited. It's a nearly 30-year data set. And, you know, we have snow surveys that we've been doing for a long time. And yeah, so, the resource staff are really trying to maintain continuity with all of those projects. And, you know, we're going to continue, you know, in the absence of specific direction to stop which we haven't been -- haven't been given at this point.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Would you have to work with ADF&G small game on this survey thing or they would join you or assist you in that?

MS. JULIANUS: Yeah. We've been talking about that a little bit. I guess internally, you know, there's certainly -- I guess from my perspective, I don't want to drop it until somebody, you know, Fish and Game has the capacity and willingness to take over projects like that, then great. You know, but we're not going to drop it in the interim. But yeah, I think that there's a lot of potential there that maybe, you know, we hadn't thought about before. So, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Good.

MS. JULIANUS: Let's see. Yeah. I had a note here. I think it's been stated by others. But I'm finding that this is true. I think it's going to take some time for the new kind of management picture to

really become clear. And until then, you know, we're just trying to be mindful of this transition and provide kind of local stability where we can, but also anticipate change, you know, where we can and where we need to. So, probably a good example of this is issuing federal permits. You know, as, you know, Jack, yeah, we have three permits or three hunts that we issue permits for in Wiseman every year. And I issued them again this year, even though, you know, as you said, the federal mining claims are still you know, there's still federal land there but there's really not very much federal -- unencumbered federal land. You know, in sheep country in GMU 24A. But, you know, the hunt is still on the books, and we will continue to issue them as long as, you know, there's a desire from the community and, you know, those hunts are in regulation, so.

Yeah, I think that's about it. As I said, I don't think there's anything specific from the report that I want to bring up. We have a lot of, you know, vacancies that kind of all levels in BLM Alaska but I'm pretty grateful that our, you know, at least for my chain of command and kind of the local BLM management, it's been pretty stable in Fairbanks at least, so. And I think we did, officially, steal Brent Vickers. I don't know if he's still on the call, from OSM, but yeah, I really appreciated Brent kind of stepping into his new role as the, I guess, Subsistence Lead for BLM and yeah, he's done a great job helping us out and, you know, also in his, yeah, really important job as kind of the Advisor to the State Director on the Federal Subsistence Board.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: He's now the Interagency Staff Committee member for the Federal Subsistence Board process. Okay. Yeah, Brent did a good job for OSM, probably, but we got good staff off, still, anthropology staff. The Central Yukon District Manager is who now? That's been kind of a moving target.

MS. JULIANUS: Yeah, yeah. So, our -- the Fairbanks District Manager is Bill Hedman. So, he, yeah, he's been a long time kind of Fairbanks BLM-er [sic] and the Central Yukon -- and he's, I guess, technically, in an acting role, but yeah, he's, for the foreseeable future, he'll be in that role. And then Sylvia Ringer is the Central Yukon Field Office Manager and she's also technically in an acting role, but.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And for your information, my Council's information, I work with Robin

Mills, and I forget what her name was, they were, I went and enumerated various historical sites, cabins that were down and things that were on the BLM lands that are now going to be State lands, but they wanted to identify those so that they could, when they convey those to the state, they can be, basically, analyzed. You know, there's quite a bit of historical stuff there. I pointed out old -- where a cabin used to be. Of course, they're real good about finding old cans and bottles. They were boom! They were, went right to them. So, I said, there's a can here, well, they found the whole dump. So, they're good at that stuff. But it's sort of in a transition. There's been quite a bit of state overflight, you know, with helicopters and drones and all kinds of stuff looking at road alignments. But we've had to meet with the Department of Natural Resources on wood cutting abilities and harvest. The largest biomass of subsistence, and I'll say it over and over again, the largest biomass of subsistence in the interior of Alaska is forestry, is wood product biomass. Lots of wood is used for heating fuel, building logs and building materials and so forth. We're working with DNR on that issue, there have been fairly good about trying to work with us. I talked to their forester and stuff. And so, they're trying to work out, they might have to do some work with the legislature on certain statutory things, or at least their interpretation of statutory. They didn't think that the statutes for the Utility Corridor entailed -- it precludes them, Department of Natural Resources from disposal. And they interpreted it as any kind of a surface resource or lands. And I was like, no, it means lands, otherwise, you better call up the Board of Game and tell them that they can't have hunting of any type on this road. If you're talking about wildlife resources and stuff. It also, it did not preclude harvest. In fact, the statutes, if you actually get back to the statutes, it said it was not supposed to affect local residents and subsistence. It actually said that in the in the statute.

So, DNR is a little confused. They boom!, got this thing landed in their lap. They had their Eastern Interior plan, but they had, kind of, knew they were going to get the Dalton Highway Corridor. They have no idea what to do with this thing. They're completely confused by it. So, we're having to work with that whole aspect, trying to bring the ship around. It's been laying on its side in the trough. They're going to bring it around on track again, and try and get this, some of the subsistence aspects back with regulatory

change with the Board of Game and the Department of Natural Resources. But in the interim, I've been trying to work with BLM, also, to try and get them, you know, so we don't lose some of this cultural stuff like our cemetery and stuff like that, local stuff to the community. So, any questions for the BLM on this on this presentation?

(No response)

Seeing none. Thanks so much, Erin. Thank you.

MS. JULIANUS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: You're always welcome to stop by and bring Little Fox.

MS. JULIANUS: Yeah. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Erin's got a little baby. Little fox and Seth. You can bring Seth too. Is at school, so. Office of Subsistence Management. Brian.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Brian Ubelaker, Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be giving you a summary of what has happened with OSM and the Federal Subsistence Program since the winter of 2026 meeting cycle ended. As well as a preview of upcoming events. Starting off with the wildlife regulatory cycle, the Federal Subsistence Board met last April for the Wildlife Regulatory Meeting. The final rule for the 2026-2028 Wildlife Harvest Regulations has still not published in the Federal Register. And until publication, the 2024-26 Federal Subsistence Harvest Regulations remain in effect. However, please be sure to check for temporary regulation changes via special actions before heading into the field.

Moving on to the Secretarial Review. The Secretarial Review of the Federal Subsistence Management program is still ongoing. While there are no major developments to report at this time, Kara Moriarty, the Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior for Alaska Affairs, has noted that all comments that were submitted earlier this year will be reviewed, and that no decisions have been made on whether the review will result in any program changes. As a reminder, any tribe can request a separate consultation on this topic at any time.

The FSB Summer Work Session. The Federal Subsistence Board met, excuse me, met in Anchorage in August for its summer work session. During the session, the Board approved replies to the Council's Annual Reports, which we had discussed a bit earlier today. So, I won't dive into that. The Board also discussed the annual report reply process, received a report out from the Council Chairs on their Alaska Salmon Crisis Workshop, reviewed Council and Board correspondence, and approved wildlife special action requests. During the executive session, the Board developed recommendations to the Secretaries for Council member appointments.

Fisheries regulatory cycle is upcoming. There are 11 fisheries proposals and ten fishery closure reviews to be considered during the 2027 Fisheries Regulatory Cycle. Tribal consultation opportunities on these proposals and closure reviews occurred on August 18th, 2026, but additional tribal consultations will occur after the fall Council meetings on November 10th. And the Board will meet in Anchorage, February 1st through the 5th of 2027 to act on the fisheries regulatory proposals and closure reviews under review this cycle. The Board will also consider three deferred wildlife proposals and two wildlife special actions.

Council appointments and nominations. The Board's recommendations on the Council member appointments are being reviewed by the Office of the Secretary of the Interior and is expected, the next set of appointments will be issued this December. Staffing. There's a gigantic paragraph of that, but for brevity, OSM is still quite understaffed. We lost a lot of people. Most everybody within the office is pulling double duty, either officially or unofficially and most of them are unofficially. We're all working really hard. And that concludes the presentation. Thank you, everybody, for your attention. And I will answer any questions if you have them.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: And I really appreciate you working extra hard. I mean, we rely heavily on our staff and whether the Interior Department knows it or not, the statute says there should be provided a working staff for this Council. And so, you're our staff. We would like DOI to fund you adequately. And so, I don't want to see our staff work to death to where they actually, like, just give up or something. So, please don't give up. We're begging everybody not to

quit. You gotta have thick skin and all that. So, I do would appreciate if Kara Moriarty would actually convey that, you know, this is statutory, this staff, you staff are statutory. This is not an option. This is in the statute. And so, go back to Title VIII of ANILCA, basically, it sets out that there has to be adequately staffed. And it says adequately staffed. And so, I'm saying that on the record because I'm concerned about overwork of our staff in general, whether it's a Federal Refuge staff or OSM staff, it's important for our DOI staff to be funded adequately for this Council, the Councils, all the Councils benefit. So, I appreciate your working double duty, but I do feel that there needs to be -- our liaison should actually speak to that issue, that they need to have adequate staffing. So, I'm just getting that all on the record. Any Council members discussion? Don, go ahead.

MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just another reason why we need a little more time here. But kind of briefly, I, Brian. Did you take the place of Orville? Is Orville still there?

MR. UBELAKER: Yes. Orville is still with us.

MR. HONEA: Okay.

MR. UBELAKER: Sorry. No, I'm filling in for George Pappas, the State Liaison.

MR. HONEA: Okay. Oh, a different section or whatever. Okay. I just, kind of, briefly here, I don't know what the Secretarial Review is. Is that something that you that you guys, in your office, of, go through or...? Let us know.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Remember we had that joint meeting with EIRAC last winter. Weren’t you there? We had -- oh, you weren't there in December. We had a joint meeting with EIRAC on, there was a proposal to review all of the Federal Subsistence Board process, the Council membership, and a whole bunch of aspects. And we had a joint meeting with Eastern Interior on that whole issue. And so, we had Sara Taylor. It was time certain on 1:00 p.m. in the afternoon and we had -- Sara Taylor was there and we had a long discussion on that issue and made various points. The Eastern Interior and Western Interior Council worked with Brooke and Nissa to submit comments on to maintain what we have now, the

makeup of the Board. We had a whole bunch of different reasons. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Let's -- you can make adjustments, but don't destroy the whole process. So, that's the Secretarial Review. There's still -- they told us that they were going to be done with their stuff by June. Well, that never happened. And we're there. And we were told by staff with DOI that they were actually going to give us an update here, at this meeting, but no word. The old saying is no word is good word, so. So, all is well, so far. So, that's what that is. That's a Secretarial Review.

MR. HONEA: Oh, yeah. I think now it comes to mind that we did have that. But I was, kind of, pressing whether, you know, if we submitted our, you know, views and stuff, what is OSM? Do they take that and.....

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It's not, OSM and the Federal Board have no skin in the -- they're all, they're hands off, the Board members don't even want to talk about it. So, they're under review, also. The whole program is under review. So, they're not making comments. We're making comments. They're not, because they're -- so, we made our comments. It's in the DOI's court. And so, it's over in Washington DC. It's in some boiling cauldron of planning processes. And we don't know what's going to float up to the surface on that. So, we're waiting. That's what we're doing. But we do rely heavily on the OSM staff and the makeup of the staff to have cohesion. And so, one question for you, Brian. Are you doing analysis still for wildlife proposals or you're just doing Board of Game and Board of Fish and that's a big thing in itself?

MR. UBELAKER: Oh, no, I authored some closure reviews. I'm going to write some Board of Game proposal comments. And still fulfilling the duties of State Liaison.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. All right. Double duty, triple duty. So, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: What's the status of George Pappas regarding OSM?

MR. UBELAKER: George, I can't think of the proper word. George quit. He moved over to the State. He is now heading their Subsistence Division. Yeah. He's the head of Subsistence Division for the Department of

Fish and Game.

MR. GERVAIS: That's what Caroline used to do?

MS. PILCHER: I've probably screwed up, Caroline is the Statewide Research Manager so, technically, George is her supervisor.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: So, George was a great guy. He's come to our meeting, he's worked for the state, and they would come and give us this standard thing and, basically an auctioneer tone and so. And speed. And then he moved over to OSM. Now he's gone back to the State. And so, George is a great guy. You know, we always got along good with George. So, any other questions or comments on OSM's report? Council members?

(No response)

Seeing none. Thank you very much. And so, where are we at here now?

(Talking)

Update on deferral of 01 – 26-01.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Once again Brian Ubelaker. WP26-01 requested to move authority for managing federal hunts out of delegation of authority letters and into unit-specific regulations for many hunts across Alaska, and to rescind their associated letters. In April of 2026, the Board deferred WP26-01 to their February 2027 regulatory meeting. Since April, OSM has confirmed, in consultation with the solicitor, that the delegated authority is an administrative and not a regulatory function, and that all in-season management actions are subject to special action regulatory requirements regardless of where they appear. Because of this, OSM is no longer proposing to transfer delegated authority into codified regulation, as originally requested by WP26-01. Instead, OSM is proposing a new system to streamline delegated authority actions for wildlife. This new approach will not change the delegations, but will improve consistency of implementation, accountability, public transparency and tracking of actions. The new approach will be fully laid out to the Board at the February Fisheries meeting. But briefly, the new approach is the development of a single comprehensive table that includes all the wildlife

authorities currently delegated in over 60 letters, as well as associated guidance that will apply to all in-season wildlife managers. This will allow updates to guidance to be made in a single document that can be quickly distributed to all managers. Both the table and associated guidance will be published on the program's website providing transparency. OSM also plans to provide annual training to all in-season managers and associated staff.

Initially, OSM considered asking to withdraw WP26-01, but realized a lot of regulatory cleanup was also achieved through it. Because of this, OSM is revising its recommendation to retain all the regulatory cleanup proposed by WP26-01, but not to transfer the delegated authority into codified regulations. All Councils supported the regulatory housekeeping portions of WP26-01 when they took this up -- when they took this proposal up last fall. While delegated authority is an administrative and legal issue that is not subject to Council deference. Therefore, Councils are not being asked to reconsider this deferred proposal. That's the end of it. And I'll be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay. So, that sounds like it's moving forward in a positive direction. It's got the list. And so, I think that that was good. Good for review, good for legal analysis. I think it was a -- I'm happy with the delegated authority process, but the in-season manager's dealing with various issues that -- in real time, close to the cost of the resource instead of, you know, a distant entity and trying to get the Federal Board to act on in the season. That's just not -- they don't do that under the State, they don't, you know, there's specifics to this type of management. So, I'm happy to see the direction that this is going. I'll be, you know, online to listen to that discussion at the February meeting, of the Federal Subsistence Board. So, any questions on that issue?

(No response)

26-01. Thanks, Brian. So, 805(c) Report. Nissa?

MS. PILCHER: Yep. This is just a standard agenda item at this meeting. Your 805(c) Report is on page 1 -- it starts on page 185 of your meeting book. So, as a reminder, section 805(c) of ANILCA

provides that the Board is to consider the recommendations of the Councils concerning the take of fish and wildlife for subsistence uses. The Board generally defers to the Council recommendations, but it may choose not to follow a recommendation if it determines that the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs.

(Pause)

MS. PILCHER: We were just getting an update that some building maintenance. Hold on one sec.

(Pause)

MS. PILCHER: I'll just finish this up real quick. I know people are milling. So, basically there were two proposals that the Council was in support that the Board did not vote along recommendations. WP26-41 and -42 sought to eliminate the take of caribou and moose respectively, from a boat under power in Unit 18. So, this is the YK Delta Region. The Council supported this and the Board approved the withdrawal of the proposal by the proponent, which was the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Board meeting. And I'll turn it back to you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Okay.

(Talking)

MS. PILCHER: Yeah. All right. And then the next agenda item is correspondence update. This is a standard agenda item, as well, on all of your Council meetings. It just is a reminder of a on page 191 is your correspondence policy. And then, after that, I include all of the correspondence that the Council has sent out since your last meeting. And any updates as necessary. So, in this case, I'll skip that first one, but you sent a letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service regarding transporter permits that was touched on earlier. There was another one to DOI regarding additional comments to the Secretarial Review. That was forwarded on, as well. And that dealt with salmon management. There was another letter to the Alaska Wildlife Troopers regarding check stations. That was also mentioned earlier, as well as the trooper response that was received. Also in that meeting book, page 199 and 203 respectively. Also

included in this, under correspondence, in your green packet, I just wanted to inform the Council and of course Chairman Reakoff received it earlier, because the letter was addressed to him that the Notice of Public Meeting for the -- oh, gosh, S.E.I.S. I forget what that acronym stands for, the Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed Donlin Gold Project regarding.....

(Simultaneous speech)

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Special E.I.S.

MS. PILCHER: There we go. Special E.I.S. That is in a meeting handout. It's just a notice of some public meetings that are happening in the Kuskokwim area, I believe specifically around Stony. It's in your region, you don't have any Council members specifically affected by it. And then the last bit on 14.c.ii, I'll circle back to it is, at the last Council meeting, this Council tabled a motion to send a letter to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding chinook salmon recovery in the Yukon drainage. It's come up a couple times at this meeting. It -- as a general term, it's called the salmon -- or the chinook moratorium. It's technically not a moratorium. It's a signed agreement saying that unless escapement X -- is this high, there will be no chinook salmon fishing, similar to a treaty that was already in place. It was just a lower number.

I did include too -- the Council, one member specifically was concerned that laws or policies from the State of Alaska were broken in the passing of this agreement. There were none. It was an agreement made by the State of Alaska and the Oceans and -- Fisheries and Oceans Canada at a panel meeting. Everything was above ground. Granted, I understand that the end result was not something that is favorably looked upon. One option this Council could potentially take is that -- one thing that has been mentioned was there was no tribal consultation in this process. I don't believe at this time, I would advise the Council draft a letter to Fish and Game requesting that they start government-to-government consultations. I don't think that will get you anywhere. But what could be done is a letter could be drafted to the panel requesting some sort of tribal process in their process. Currently they don't have one. Of course, the panel is made up of six members from Alaska and six members from Canada that get together. So, that could be a potential avenue moving forward. But even if that process was in place when this agreement

was reached, it still could have gone through without any tribal consultation process. So, thank you very much to the Council for tabling the motion to allow me to do some back work so, we didn't end up writing a letter to the Fish and Game that might have caused issues.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: It was it was gray. The direction we were going to go. It was good to analyze that. And I do think that the tribal organizations have had requested government-to-government on that whole issue multiple times. We've heard it at this meeting. So, I don't think that we're -- would actually have any effect on that whole process. That's kind of water under the bridge. You know, it's been going, this meeting a 71,000 escapement goal, which was -- that year that they set, that there was a 40,000 passage through Pilot Station. They put 71, 42,000, they put 142,000, they put 71, 71,000 into Canada, 71,000 into Alaska. That's where that number comes from. That's what their objective was to meet the escapement needs of the of the Yukon River drainage, because they over under escaped it so much. It was not -- the previous panel obligation was 42,500 to 55,000. So, they increase the escapement to start to make escapement needs. That has not happened yet. When 24, 5, 35,000 this year. So, we haven't made anywhere in the ballpark of making escapement into Canada. So, we're beating a dead horse on that issue. So, I don't really want to go there. So, I prefer not to -- Council not do that. It can be a discussion point at our next meeting. You know, a -- people want to talk about issue but I don't think that we'll get anywhere with that. I always look at the battles, the looking at a, if you're going to press a point, you got to have some assurance that you're going to have success at least at 50-50. If I'm going to climb a hill and I got the wind on my back, I'm not going to climb the mountain if I got the wind on my back. Sheep are going to run away from me. Why would I do that? So, if I'm in a -- to press an issue with the Board, I got to have some kind of perspective of, actually, you know, statutory ammunition or some way that I'm going to make headway with this. I just don't like to do things for kicks if I don't have to. You learn that with old age. So, not that I'm old or anything. Several years ago, old Jackie (indiscernible) (indiscernible), he was 65 years old. He says, "I'm an elder." And everybody there was older than him. They all like, "Yeah, right. Shut up." So.

MS. PILCHER: That was it,

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: I think we're done. I think we got quorum back. Okay, good. So, we have closing comments. And so, we'll start with Jenny, our esteemed elder.

MS. PELKOLA: Thank you. We always don't have that many staff to thank, but I just want to thank the staff that is here. Thank you for all your hard work and I know, you know, it takes a lot of energy and stuff to go -- keep on going, but just do what you're doing and hang in there. I miss my elder, Pollock. I understand we got a card out to him, and I didn't know he was in Anchorage, but I miss his wise words. I've learned a lot from him. And as I sit here, I may be old, but I'm still learning a lot. And I learned from every meeting, I learned a new thing. And I probably heard it before but as you get older, when you hear things more and more, it, you grasp it. But anyway, I just want to thank the Board and, also for all your hard work. And Nissa, I know you put a lot of hours on this. Thank you very much. And our recorder, Gabe. Thank you. I think I got your name right, Gabe. And thank you for the breakfast this morning. But my term -- I think I got one more. I thought I was going to be done, but I have a couple more meetings to go. And I'll be glad to go, you know, to hear what's going on. Yeah. So, I thought I was done, but -- because I got a plaque, I thought I was -- you were shipping me out but one more time. No, I -- two more meetings, I have to go. Yeah. No, I don't have a term, but I would like to -- I'm always pushing for a woman on here because we have a different view than men. You know, men are, well, you all are doing a good job. You get things done. But there's a compassion women have some -- have compassion. And I think a woman would add that to the Board to help. I like I just couldn't, I just had to say something to Keith today because sitting here, I could just see his face. And I know I've been in situations like that too, where you're trying to help some, you know, work and, but you're under somebody else's thumb and you're trying to do your best at what you're doing. So, I just had to say something to him. But yeah, we're all doing a good job, I think, so far. And I know Jack's been on here since the beginning, and I've learned a lot from you, Jack. You have -- I don't know, you just got it. But anyway, keep it up. I don't know how many more years you got to go on here, but, you know, we don't know, we may be called home tomorrow. We don't know. And, Robert, I've served on the Board many years with you too. And put your phone down because I'm

talking to you, Robert. Thank you for your guidance and your words. And Tim. Tim, also, thank you. You add a lot to the Board. I know you study hard. You got a younger brain and you can do it. Just keep it up.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Jenny.

MS. PELKOLA: And Don, you also have helped me in, you know, many, many meetings. I've learned a lot from you, even though you're way younger than me. So, thank you very much. And to Tommy, my cousin. My cousin -- my nephew. Thank you, Tommy, for your words. And just keep it up. And you're young also so when -- one day you'll be giving your goodbye speech. But I just wanted to say this before, because I don't know what's going to happen from here to the next meeting. So, I just want to thank all of you. And I enjoyed the meeting and work hard. Thank you and God bless you all. When you get older, your breath is, you run out of air.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Jenny. God bless you too. Tommy.

MR. KRISKA: Yeah. Thank all of you guys and everybody that was here. You know, times get pretty difficult when you have to speak in different terms, in different ways and different emotions. It's just that way. But anyway, I thank the Board here for having me on this Board and I don't -- seem like I'd go anywhere, I always like to speak for the people, help the people. I'm always physically helping the people back at home. Every town I go to. Galena. Nulato. Kaltag. Koyukuk, it don't matter. Huslia. You just jump right in and start doing, working right along with them. And that's just the way we are, we're just one big family, and no matter who you are or where you are, in things you get into, you just look at it, is to enjoy what you're doing, regardless if it's -- how it goes and how it turns out but the best thing is do a good job of what you're doing. Yeah, I, kind of, you know, learned a lot about myself this last couple of years. And it, I seem like I'm not going to go anywhere because it's just that a lot of things come to my mind, which goes way back way back to -- I gotta thank my uncle Roger. He's one of the first guys that ever made up my mind to stay away from the drinking just for, I still could see him chopping his wood in front of his house in Bishop Mountain, and he was talking while he was splitting that wood, and I was sitting on his woodpile. I was only like, I don't know, 14 or 15. But I remember his words clearly. And I took

it to heart too. A lot of them in that that camp at that time. So yeah, learning from the elders and, you know, you would think of things that you learned from the elders and then soon I'm growing into being be an elder. And I really realize where they get all that knowledge from. It's just a lifelong thing. They're doing the right thing and with the great knowledge and just trying to do the right thing for everyone. Always a plus one. And I used to be a radical young guy playing baseball, racing, and I still do racing. But just watch what I'm doing the right thing and it shows, you know, the outcome of it. But yeah, it's just great to be here. I don't think I'll be going anywhere soon. And I see a lot of potential behind this Board, and things can be done. We're really working. We're doing a great job.

And I just got to thank all the people that, when I first started, and I think 1987 was a lot of those older guys, like they're not here anymore. There's not one face in that group. There's not one face in this group that was there at the time. But I learned a lot and I kind of want to just put it to good use in a good way and a good manner not to offend anyone. You know, there's, we're in a tough situation with the fishing on the lower part of Alaska and the situation we're in on the Yukon. And I have faith in time that hopefully it will -- the people will get tired of their money and give us our fish back. There's a lot of ways that they're saying that "You got to do this, you got to do this." And we got into a finger pointing thing here, in this room. Which should never happen. And there's, you don't want to blame anybody. It's just, sometimes, some people have greed for money and they're just going to goof it up until they run out of, maybe to come to their senses, I don't know. I don't know what to say about it, but I really thank Jack and all these other guys, Robert, Tim, Don, Jenny, and I tried to get a few younger guys on here, but I don't know what happened to them so, I think they were in the books. I mean, they, we -- they did their applications and stuff and hopefully that something happened. I really like the one guy that was talking today. I mean, get representation from other places. But I could talk all day but anyway, thank you for having me and thank you. And no offense to anyone. It just, we just need to work together and be proud of what we're doing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Tommy. I was -- Tommy's needed to get his application and to get back on the Council. I called up his cell phone. He was

up -- he was out in the Huslia flats, miles, miles and miles away from, I don't even know how he got cell service over there. And I talked him into getting his application, and he went over to the tribal council and faxed it in, or I don't know how he got it in there, but it came in on time. This guy is like, he's wild. He's everywhere. He -- it takes quite a deal to try and get him to get his application in. But now they'll, Nissa will make sure that he's got his application before that happens. So, Tim.

MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tim Gervais. I'd like to thank the community of Fairbanks for hosting us. We got good participation. There's a lot of agency people that are based out of Fairbanks, and it's really good to have them show up and participate, communicate with us, listen to our issues. Like to thank the staff for all their work. I know it's, kind of, odd you're sitting on the side of the microphone, you have to listen to us talking and talking, and you only come up to the microphone for a limited amount of time. So, maybe, you'd like to communicate more or put in. But we appreciate your hard work and dedication and people in the Western Interior Region are well appreciated and benefit from your good work and your dedication to task and I think what a lot of the mission of a lot of people on this Board is, we just want to have good fish and game populations now and for future generations. So, keep up the good work and what you do is important.

Sometimes I like to thank the Council members for coming and contributing their knowledge and experience. There's, like a -- every move in this technology age and less reliance on heavy duty subsistence lifestyle. A lot of the experiences and knowledge base that you have is not being picked up by the younger generation so, I appreciate what you offer here on the Board. And I also appreciate you taking the time to communicate on other types of media and venues. Like, I appreciate seeing some stuff Serena did with a filmmaker talking about Yukon salmon crisis. I appreciated seeing a video about Robert talking about the salmon abundance on the river this summer. All that stuff's going to -- is useful now, but future generations and people 100 or 200 years from now, will look at that stuff and get an idea of what life was like back in the day. I want everybody to understand when we talk about fish and game populations, I refer back to this section in this logbook I have where this guy was traveling on the Yukon in 1869, and he's describing king salmon, and

he's just describing them all as five feet long. So, we have a long way to get to rebuild to that level. So, yeah, my long-term goal will be, if I live to -- a few more decades, is that there at least be salmon levels that there was when I came to Alaska in 1996. So, hopefully, it'd be better. But that is definitely a goal I have. Or just to be able to catch fish and eat it outside my cabin when I'm an older gentleman. So, that will leave something for future generations, would be good stewards if we don't destroy the place during our lifetime.

I was reading a book about Interior Alaska on my boat this summer, and the guy was talking about migrations coming in from across the land bridge, from Siberia, and he kept referring to time frames as generations. He's talking about those earlier travelers, 800 generations ago. So, I like that, the way he looked at it from perspective of you're just handing something down to the next generation. And so, if Indigenous People could maintain their communities and their families for a hundred generations, we need to step up here and do a better job of what's going on. And then, there are some comments about people saying like, the system's against them or it's not working out correctly. And it reminded me of this ad I used to see in a fishing magazine for a company that was selling training for being in the merchant marine industry. And their logo was, “The sea doesn't care about you.” And so, they're saying there is like, it doesn't matter what you do or what you think, the sea is going to do, what it's going to do, and you're either going to go there or come back, you're going to get destroyed by it. And so, I'm telling this Council and the staff members that there's industrial fishing companies and corporate interests, mining interests. They don't care about you. You're just, to them, you're just inconvenient, in the way. And so, it's up to us to put up resistance to maintain these lands, not get them over to develop. Make sure society itself has a mindset that success comes through conservation and habitat and conservation of our wild resources. So, just don't get intimidated by it. Just realize that what we're doing and what we're saying, and the kind of harsh opportunities we're trying to provide for our families and for the future, the next 800 generations is important. And even though it's inconvenient to shut down your camp or to leave your families to come to these meetings, it's important. And it's one of the few avenues that subsistence users have of getting stuff on record.

And potentially, I'm really impressed with the development and the work that is coming from Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission and Yukon Intertribal Fish Commission and YRDFA. There's increasing public awareness on fish issues and salmon issues in particular. And so, that's nice to see. I like the participation from Gale and the collaboration with the Eastern Interior and the Fairbanks AC. I look forward to learning more about those groups and contributing with those groups. I want everybody to realize that there's a lot of proposals trying to restrict fishing in Area M and, as you're discussing these issues and voting on these issues, creating proposals, realize that those people are -- they're basically doing the same thing you're trying to do. They're just -- that's where they live. They survive on fishing, subsistence, and commercial fishing. Really expensive to live in those communities because of high travel costs, long distance from Anchorage. And they do have a story, and you got a -- when you're like, voting on proposals, you have to realize that what benefits you may be a detriment to somebody else and what you're voting for needs to have a reason. And I think going forward, I know I will have more contact with those communities and discuss fish issues with them and try to understand what they're saying and try to express our situation up here. And hopefully we can work together to get something that's workable for both sides of the issue. And then, right now everybody's pretty beat up with high fuel costs and that may -- there may be some benefits to that in the long term. We might learn how to be more efficient or do things differently or do without certain things. And so, just look, be solution oriented and keep your chin up and be thankful that you live, eat and do your daily activities in a really wonderful place and have a safe trip home.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim. Appreciate those word. Robert.

MR. WALKER: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thank our Board members for being -- thank our BLM employee who walked out the door without -- I'm thanking you for being here. And I think you're our third BLM person. I think, since I've been on the Board. So, congratulations and thank you. Thank you, Jeremy. I mean, it's always nice to see you and Brian and the ladies and Ms. Okada, who had her name tag out. I really -- staff made her day, I think. Thank you for that. And our Chairman,

thank you, Nissa, for being so cordial, making sure that everything is done right. I know I carried a little bit hard feelings among the staff today, too, but. And I don't like to lose, but I will lose gracefully. What we need and what we want is two different things. We're not getting the things met that we supposed to have. And that's one thing I would pursuit to make sure that our tribes have to never, never, ever go without something for food like fish. Every Friday in the church doctrine says that we have to have fish on Friday. And the church doctrine also says that we have to have -- give up meat for Lent and Advent. So, there are things in here in the church that documents that. And sometimes I think the government will, kind of, override that. But I believe that the president, Donald Trump, did make a -- pardon the ladies that went against the government, democratic government. And, you know, I, kind of like, thought that was pretty neat because they were all old ladies to be pardoned for something that, you know, that they believed in. So, I don't know if the state government will throw me in jail for some of the things that I said. I wouldn't be surprised, too so. I don't want to be long. And, but I, I think we're productive. I think some of the things that we had done today was very interesting. Some of the things that I have learned, some of the characteristics of how our employees are. Motivated, they are well mannered. They address as the Board should be addressed. And I thought that was very cordial from the staff, you know, and this makes us feel good because sometimes, you know, we get criticized back in our village because they say we don't do enough, but how much can you do? I mean, you know, your department. I mean, you want to do more, but you can't. So, this is something that we have to live with. And again, thank you, staff and Board members. And Don, I will turn it over to you, Don.

MR. HONEA: You're too kind. Yeah, I want to thank the Board for, you know, just characteristics of the Board. Each person brings something different, something, a different view or whatever. You could be sentimental, you could be outspoken. But hey, we do this, like Tom said, for the people. And so, you know, I don't think that we have to be regretful for what we say. Maybe it's, you know, maybe it will help us, but, you know, Robert brought up something, and I still think that we should do it after the fact or something for one of our Board members, for Carl. We should take up something, even if we have to do it when we get home. So, you know, it's I -- you know, he was part of our

Board. We went to Allakaket. We went to a number of places. And, you know, we have this companion type of thing here. But I just want to say that, you know, I was sorry I missed Jeremy or Maria's thing here on the, you know, I was trying to come in here and find out numbers and stuff, but the good thing is, you know, we're we could call each other and we frequently do and talk about the numbers and stuff like that. And I'm thankful for the Refuge for giving us the early season, the late season, the last week there. And even though, you know, it was, it's cold and everything, and I enjoy the camaraderie that we have and the information we can share together. I just wanted to say that I got back on the Council last night. And it's a plus really, because, you know, I could sit in this position of, you know, we would like to say, well, who knows about fish or game or something can go to this one here. And so, please, you know, keep us in mind, keep me in prayer even. I mean, because Tim knows him and I are trying to revive the Ruby AC. You know, the ACs are powerful. They're much more powerful than, you know, tribal councils and stuff like that. So, it's, you know, since Ed was -- we lost him, it fell to me. And so, keep us in mind. Nissa, I appreciate your work with the state before and doing the AC work and helping me with questions like that. So, I mean, because I do not want to see that. You know, I've been to many meetings statewide or whatever. When somebody says, "How come you guys got your own AC." And it's like, what? You're jealous? I mean, because we are fortunate to have that. Somebody in the 40s and 50s said, "Hey, we should have an AC." And so, you lose that status. And that's why I don't like losing that. So, you know, that, it's part of it that, I think that we should continue to, you know, help each other with. And one last thing here, I always mentioned it, let's try to get somebody from the McGrath area. The last person I think was Thomas.

No. Some Thomas guy from Crooked Creek, Red Devil. His last name was Thomas. But yeah, he and he, last time we ever met was in Galena and an older gentleman, but we have to have knowledge from that area. So, I don't know what we should do. Talk to Kevin, talk to people. Other than that, I appreciate each one of you. I appreciate even you guys, that's waiting, that's still here. You know, we don't have a bathroom. We have to go up to 22nd floor. But, you know, we're still here, so. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: The Chair will entertain a motion to send Carl's family a condolence letter. Angela is his wife and the Carl Morgan family. Carl was an integral part of this Council for a long time. And so, I hadn't heard that he has passed on, but he was a great guy, always had a good laugh. And so, we should send him his family condolence letter or card. So, to take a motion to do that.

MR. GERVAIS: I make a motion to send a condolence card to Carl's family.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Thank you. We have a second?

MR. KRISKA: Second.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: Second by Tommy. Those in favor of the motion signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: All right. So, my closing comment. I want to appreciate all the Council members that are here Don, Robert, Tim, Jenny. Tim Gervais and Tommy. And so, you know, Pollock's wife is sick. He couldn't be here. And Darrell had an issue, but did our best getting most Council members so we can get things done and have more input and discussion. Appreciate Erin sticking it out. She's got a baby at home. She needs to go right now. I know how that goes. And Jeremy and Brian, Maria, Chloe, and Marcy. We're sticking it out here. And Gabe, our court recorder, he's come up to speed. He's learning our Council's sort of tempo. So, we had a -- I think we had a good meeting. I had to let people go. We had a 15-minute time constraint, that wasn't going to work out at this meeting. People had to, they had to vent so that -- this shows the frustration, the record shows the frustration that this, the people of rural people are having about the various fish and wildlife issues that we have to meet subsistence needs. And so, I look forward to the next meeting. I'm up for reappointment. I don't know where I'm at, going to be with that. So, if I don't get reappointed, I hope to be. And we don't know, you know, with, you know, the last, you know, there's hard to say with this administration, but we're under DOI appointment, was supposed to go a little faster, but. So, anyways, look forward to the next meeting, one way or another. If so,

I'll be on the call there. Whatever. I'm not done with this Council. So, there's a lot of important business to accomplish, a lot of things that need to happen. So, I'll be doing the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission. The Koyukuk River Advisory, I'll have to set up a meeting with that. So, on various game proposals. So, safe travels. Happy Thanksgiving. We'll see you in February. Call that springtime. So, Chair entertain a motion to adjourn the meeting.

(No audible response)

Motion to adjourn. Robert. Second by Jenny. Those in favor of adjournment signify by saying aye

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRPERSON REAKOFF: No, same sign.

(No response)

Motion carries.

MS. PILCHER: Thank you for everyone that stuck with us who isn't in the room.

UNIDENTIFIED: Happy trails, till we meet again.

(Off record)

END OF PROCEEDINGS

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 167 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II 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