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FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

REGULATORY MEETING

VOLUME III

EGAN CONVENTION CENTER
Anchorage, Alaska
February 2, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Anthony Christianson, Chairman
- Charles Brower, Public Member
- Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
- Jill Klein, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service
- Steve Cohn, Bureau of Land Management
- Glenn Chen, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- David Schmid, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 2/2/2023)

(On record - 9:00 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good morning everybody. Welcome to the third day of the Federal Subsistence Board meeting and welcome again and we look forward to a productive day. I'm Anthony Christianson, the Board Chair. And we'll go ahead and turn it over to Sue for roll call.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning. Roll call to establish a quorum here.

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Glenn Chen.

MR. CHEN: Present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Bureau of Land Management, Steve Cohn.

MR. COHN: Present.

MS. DETWILER: Fish and Wildlife Service, I understand Jill Klein is acting for Fish and Wildlife Service today.

MS. KLEIN: Present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. National Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: She's here, she's coming in now.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Good morning, Sue. Present.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka. I understand she's going to be a little bit late this morning.

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1 MS. PITKA: Here.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie
4 Brower. I understand he is also going to be a little
5 bit late this morning.

6

7 And I see Park Service Member --
8 National Park Service Member Sarah Creachbaum is
9 present, she just walked in.

10

11 And, finally, Anthony Christianson,
12 Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

15

16 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. We have six
17 out of eight Board members, Mr. Chair.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm jealous
20 now, I need to work out.

21

22 (Laughter)

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
25 This morning we're going to start with public
26 testimony. Every morning we provide an opportunity for
27 the public to come speak to non-consensus -- or
28 consensus agenda items as well as items that are not on
29 the agenda. So this is your opportunity for the public
30 to come speak to the Board about non-agenda items and
31 the consensus agenda.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 OPERATOR: Thank you. We will now
36 begin the public comment section. If you would like to
37 make a comment please press star one, unmute your
38 phone, and record your name. Your name is required to
39 make a comment. If you need to withdraw your comment
40 please press star, two. Again, to make a comment
41 please press star, one.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
44 Operator. We'll start with the room here first and
45 then we'll move on and recognize those online,
46 appreciate that.

47

48 Thank you.

49

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1 We'll call on Cathy Needham first.

2

3

4 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Members of the Board. For the record my name is Cathy
6 Needham, I'm representing the Southeast Alaska Regional
7 Advisory Council.

7

8

9 One item that I omitted from our Chairs
10 report that I think is important and wanted to bring
11 back to the Board's attention is that the Southeast
12 Regional Advisory Council spends -- has spent a number
13 of years, six plus years working with the Alaska
14 Department of Fish and Game in the management of Unit 2
15 wolves. And it's something that we -- I'm sure that
16 the Board has heard from our past Chair and I do
17 apologize for our Council for omitting it in my Chair's
18 report.

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 As you may be aware the Regional
Advisory Council hand in hand with the Alaska
Department of Fish and Game worked together to develop
a management strategy that is currently being
implemented on Unit 2 wolves and at our past Council
meeting this last fall, we get briefings from the
Alaska Department of Fish and Game every meeting to let
us know like how that's going, they've been engaged
with us in terms of being able to provide important
opportunities for the take of wolves on Unit 2. And
the Council, as a whole, feel the management strategy
which has now been implemented for the past three years
is working and we still need to continue to allow for
that management strategy to be in place because I think
by and large most of the users, as well as the
management agencies felt the old system of a quota
system was not working.

 Also the Southeast Alaska Regional
Advisory Council spent a lot of time developing
comments to the Board of Game proposals and there were
a number of wolf management proposals that went before
the Board of Game and we opposed most of them because
they would have been in conflict with that management
strategy.

 And so I just felt it was important
that I bring that up because I did omit it from my
report and I appreciate your time this morning.

 Thank you.

0243

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
2 Cathy. Any comments.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
7 your testimony this morning. Next we'll call on
8 Charlie Wright.

9
10 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 I've been part of the Bering Sea InterTribal Commission
12 on working on the BLM land use plan and I just wanted
13 to say a little bit about that today and the impacts
14 it's going to have on the Interior tribes and the
15 people who rely on the resources that might be affected
16 by these plans.

17
18 I strongly -- I'd like to appreciate
19 Mr. Steve Cohn over there for all his hard work he's
20 been doing on that and we really appreciate him.

21
22 We just want a few little talking
23 points here.

24
25 The 37 member Bering Sea InterTribal
26 Commission has strongly encouraged the Bureau to keep
27 (d)(1) withdrawals in place to protect the lands and
28 resources that's continued to sustain our traditional
29 subsistence based ways of life.

30
31 Tribes support BLM's efforts to address
32 deficiencies in past resource management plans like the
33 Bering Sea Western Interior plan that rejected all the
34 tribes nominations for protection of watersheds and
35 other important lands.

36
37 Nearly 75 percent of all Federally-
38 recognized tribes in Alaska are impacted by the BLM
39 land management plan and decisions. The BLM managed
40 lands support critical subsistence resources for
41 thousands of indigenous peoples because almost all of
42 the communities impacted by the (d)(1) protection
43 decision are Alaska Native communities and reside on
44 off the road system and we hope the Federal government
45 will carefully consider our essential connections to
46 this land and the importance of this land to our way of
47 life. Over 80 percent of food consumed in our
48 communities come directly from the surrounding land and
49 waters. Alaska is at the forefront of climate change
50

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1 and significant impacts are already occurring,
2 including permafrost, melt, a typhoon in the Arctic
3 Coastal and riverbank erosion, increase of air and
4 water temperatures and habitat displacement if fish and
5 wildlife.

6
7 In the rapidly changing environment
8 across Alaska with so many future unknowns it is in the
9 public interest to adopt a precautionary approach and
10 prioritize the protections of natural environments that
11 underpin our people's subsistence resources over the
12 industry that would pose harm to current land -- intact
13 lands -- impact the lands and waters.

14
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16
17 That's all I have.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
20 comments from the Board.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Charlie. Next we'll call on Mark Richards.

26
27 MR. RICHARDS: Is this the right time,
28 Mr. Chairman, for consensus items.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

31
32 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Thank you. For
33 the record my name is Mark Richards. I'm the Executive
34 Director of Resident Hunters of Alaska, an organization
35 that's comprised of approximately 3,200 members from
36 across the state from Utqiagvik to Ketchikan, from Holy
37 Cross to Eagle and parts in between.

38
39 I'm here today to respectfully oppose
40 Wildlife Proposals WP22-07,22-08, and 22-10.

41
42 Our organization advocates for
43 sustainable wildlife management policies that will
44 ensure the future hunting opportunities of all
45 Alaskans. When and where there are real wildlife
46 conservation concerns for wildlife population that
47 impact the subsistence needs of Alaskans, we will
48 support and have supported restrictions or closures and
49 that applies to both the State and Federal management
50

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1 systems. These three deferred wildlife proposals
2 before you at this meeting that seek to restrict or
3 limit non-Federally-qualified deer hunters aren't about
4 any issues with the deer populations. Deer populations
5 in these areas are healthy, abundant and stable. Nor
6 is there any real evidence that subsistence needs are
7 not being met by Federally-qualified subsistence
8 hunters.

9

10 What these proposals appear to be about
11 is sidelining competition amongst Alaskans who are not
12 Federally-qualified hunters.

13

14 Now, look, no hunter likes to compete
15 with other hunters but the fact is whether rural or
16 urban, Federally-qualified or not all of us compete
17 with other hunters for available wildlife resources.
18 In these instances that competition does not appear to
19 have increased over the years, nor does it appeared to
20 have led to subsistence needs not being met. As
21 hunters we know we won't always be successful and we
22 also know that sometimes the hunt may take longer in
23 order to fill our freezer. These examples in these
24 proposals are not valid reasons to restrict or limit
25 other user groups. The opportunity to hunt deer in
26 these areas is already there under current regulations.
27 The data compiled by OSM and the Department of Fish and
28 Game shows that the effort levels, success rates and
29 total deer harvest for all hunters in these areas has
30 been stable.

31

32 We understand that this Board would
33 like to support the RACs in proposals that they bring
34 forward but we must base decisions on actual evidence.

35

36 There's another aspect of this proposal
37 I'd like to speak to, the unintended consequences.

38

39 I was a Federally-qualified subsistence
40 hunter for 35 years. I moved to Fairbanks and I'm no
41 longer Federally-qualified. Many others like myself,
42 for whatever reason be it jobs, family, health reasons
43 move from rural areas to more urban areas but they
44 would still like to return home to hunt. Should these
45 proposals pass those Alaskans who are now non-
46 Federally-qualified hunters will be limited or
47 restricted.

48

49 In closing, I hope you all had a chance

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1 to watch the Unit 4 video that the Department of Fish
2 and Game put out. I commend them for that effort and I
3 think it provided a lot of valuable information for
4 everybody. We respectfully ask this Board to vote no
5 on these three wildlife proposals.

6
7 Thank you very much for your time and
8 service.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
11 questions.

12
13 (No comments)

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
16 Mark.

17
18 Karen.

19
20 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 For the record my name is Karen Linnell, Executive
22 Director for Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission
23 which represents eight Federally-recognized tribes and
24 two ANCSA Corporations who are the land owners in our
25 Ahtna Traditional Use Territory.

26
27 In going -- in sitting here and
28 watching the process and things I'm so happy to see
29 that all the Federal Board members are staying
30 throughout the entire process and not proxying
31 alternates in but I also see Staff supporting them with
32 documentation and things like that and I was wondering
33 if there was going to be support like that for the
34 public members as well and, you know, maybe the tribal
35 liaisons, not just Orville, but several because there
36 are 229 tribes, 173 village corporations and 12 ANCSA
37 Corporations to contend with let alone the other Native
38 non-profit organizations and rural resident
39 organizations to represent and provide information to
40 and having that conduit for members of the public so
41 that we can provide additional information on a
42 specific topic might help the public members in their
43 decisionmaking aside from this public comment process
44 and the tribal consultation that happens in August when
45 everybody is out gathering.

46
47 So that's one thing.

48
49 The other thing that I want to bring up
50

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1 is the National Park Service has got a proposed rule
2 coming forward to change things that this Board has set
3 in regulation. I believe it's coming out of the DC
4 office and it's going to change the way that the
5 methods and means, the seasons and bag limits, those
6 kinds of things, circumventing the Federal Subsistence
7 Board's process. So I encourage you as a Board to look
8 into that. They're doing public comments -- or tribal
9 consultations now through March but I think you guys
10 should be aware of it and be prepared for it. Alaska's
11 different, and you've heard that multiple times
12 throughout this process when we're talking about Title
13 VIII and ANILCA and the ability for subsistence take of
14 animals and fish and game. So that process, to me, is
15 something that I feel that the -- it's an agency
16 pushing down their own beliefs and things and it's not
17 biological. They're not looking at what's happening
18 with the resource. You sit here in these meetings, you
19 hear reports on what's going on with the animals on the
20 ground or the fish in the rivers and you make decisions
21 on management that way, this proposed rule would
22 circumvent that and take the biology out of it. And so
23 I just wanted to raise that to your awareness and maybe
24 Mr. Lord can look into it further as he advises the
25 Board, but that's something I think everybody should be
26 aware of. It'll definitely change what's happening on
27 the landscape.

28
29 So I think that's all I have for you
30 this morning, Mr. Chair.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chairman.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
37 the floor Sarah.

38
39 MS. CREACHBAUM: Karen, thank you for
40 your comments and I appreciate your concerns. The
41 proposed hunting rule that's currently under public
42 comment does not affect subsistence regulations per se,
43 right, it doesn't deal specifically with subsistence
44 regulations, it deals with sporthunting in Preserves
45 and only Preserves and doesn't affect our subsistence
46 law. However, there can be unintended consequences of
47 every rulemaking process, and so I wanted to thank you
48 for your comments and also urge everyone to get
49 involved in the process. This is the time for all of
50

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1 you to let us know about the language in the rule and
2 the effects that it's going to have on you as
3 subsistence hunters so thank you.

4

5 MS. LINNELL: You'll have to excuse my
6 little giggle there. That's what they told my dad when
7 the Wrangell-St. Elias was formed is it's not going to
8 change anything.

9

10 MS. CREACHBAUM: Yeah.

11

12 MS. LINNELL: His entire trapline,
13 everywhere that he went hunting, no, can't use it. He
14 used to fly in there, can't fly in there anymore for
15 subsistence. So it does change things. And frankly
16 you're going to end up with a ton of people in here
17 because our relatives -- I live in Glennallen, I'm
18 still rural but I'm no longer eligible for what I was
19 eligible for when I lived in Chistochina which is the
20 Chishana Caribou Herd so, you know, those things happen
21 and there are other rural residents who will be
22 impacted because of this. And you got to look at
23 Alaska, Wrangell-St.Elias is the size of Ohio, roughly,
24 you got Denali, huge Park, on both sides of the Ahtna
25 Traditional Territory, you wouldn't be telling Yosemite
26 what to do from Arches (ph) National Park, one blanket
27 rule for them, it doesn't work that way and that's
28 what's happening in Alaska.

29

30 These things and what's been happening,
31 how this process works, deals with individual Parks and
32 Preserves and BLM lands based on the biology and what's
33 happening there. When you look at here, Glennallen,
34 Glennallen's like in Iowa, Juneau, is in like Georgia,
35 so this is what we're looking at and we're not that
36 little postage stamp on the left-hand corner of the
37 United States map, we're huge. And DC doesn't
38 understand that. And I encourage you to get out there
39 and go do some field visits so that you can see.

40

41 When Wrangell-St.Elias gets 34 cents an
42 acre to manage wildlife and fish, they have one
43 fisheries biologist, one wildlife biologist. They
44 cannot do research, they barely can get out to do
45 aerial counts. Last year my Staff helped with aerial
46 counts. It's not easy to manage that size of a Park
47 with that little Staff and there needs to be something
48 to look at the amount of -- the size of the Park that
49 they're trying to manage, not the number of people that

50

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1 visit the Park. Because you need to manage the
2 resource and that's not happening in a lot of Alaska's
3 Parks because of the way the formula is from DC.

4
5 So I have to say I differ. I beg to
6 differ. And that it is taken the biology and what this
7 Board does by region and managing those resources.

8
9 Thank you, Mr. Chair and Ms.
10 Creachbaum.

11
12 MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you, Karen.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
15 other Board discussion or questions.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
20 Thank you, Karen. Thank you, Sarah, for responding.
21 Anybody in the room like to be recognized.

22
23 Keenan, you have the floor.

24
25 MR. SANDERSON: What a great day it is
26 to be on Dena'ina lands. Mr. Chair. Federal
27 Subsistence Board. My name is Keenan Sanderson for the
28 record. I wear a number of hats nowadays. I'm the
29 Ketchikan Tlingit and Haida Community Council
30 President. I'm the Vice President for the Ketchikan
31 Gateway Borough School District. I'm the Indigenous
32 Food Sovereignty Specialist for the Ketchikan Indian
33 Community. Just to give you a guys a little bit of
34 background about me, I haven't met a lot of you yet but
35 hope to talk to you before the end of this meeting.

36
37 I'm not wearing any of these hats
38 speaking right now. The hat that I actually have on
39 right now is my coaching hat that I do for my high
40 school students down in Ketchikan for the Ocean Science
41 Program that I run. And I wasn't originally going to
42 even bring this up at this meeting because I wasn't
43 sure if it was hugely relevant. But I want to thank
44 Heather Bauscher for bringing all of her students up
45 here to Anchorage because in Ketchikan, specifically,
46 and it might be in a lot of other places, too, I see a
47 very real problem with a lot of our people, and
48 especially Native youth for not being engaged or
49 involved with any regulatory process on any level,
50

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1 whether it's the Federal Subsistence Board, the RAC,
2 Board of Fish, Board of Game, Halibut Commission, North
3 Pacific Fisheries Management Council, there's not very
4 many people our age and, you know, I'm way more closer
5 to their age than I am to a lot of you, but one of the
6 things that I -- outside of fish and wildlife
7 management, the other thing that I am really passionate
8 about is education. And I am fully aware that -- well,
9 maybe not fully aware, but the Federal Subsistence
10 Board isn't necessarily responsible for training and
11 bringing up youth to, you know, eventually replace all
12 of you some day. Who knows, maybe I'll be able to fill
13 your seat their Mr. Chair.

14
15 But I guess I'm kind of more or less
16 doing a shameless plug for my program because there's a
17 lot of agencies out there that either may or may not be
18 involved in this program that I'm in with --
19 specifically with ocean fisheries related but I mainly,
20 you know, want to open the door for any conversation to
21 help engage more youth in this process and other
22 processes.

23
24 There's definitely a lot that I can
25 through with my program, like my students, we write
26 research papers that are very relevant to Alaska and
27 wildlife problems. Like this year the papers that we
28 wrote about are all about mariculture. And my varsity
29 team wrote about writing about different stock
30 enhancement strategies on red king crab in the Bering
31 Sea. Two years ago my students wrote about how it's
32 important to keep the portfolio effect -- it's kind of
33 a little bit of a complex topic but of Bristol Bay
34 sockeye salmon, the reason why -- one of the major
35 reasons why Bristol Bay sockeye salmon are always so
36 good is because of that portfolio effect and not many
37 people know about that.

38
39 But those are the kinds of things that
40 my students are learning and engaging about. And who
41 knows if they're going to be within the management
42 process in the future but as long as more people are
43 aware of what's going on I think we have a better
44 chance of doing what we need to do to make our
45 fisheries and wildlife sustainable.

46
47 I can respond to questions now or you
48 can pull me aside within the rest of the meeting to see
49 how we could potentially get more youth engaged with
50

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1 various things but that's why I'm here this morning --
2 well, for right now, anyways.

3

4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
5 questions. I think I would refer you to Dave since
6 Dave seemed to have a wallet yesterday.

7

8 (Laughter)

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I joke. A
11 program that you could connect with.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, and Jill's
16 asking to be recognized so you sparked conversation.
17 Thank you.

18

19 MS. KLEIN: Thank you for sharing that
20 information about the program you work with this
21 morning. Yeah, I think it would be great if you're not
22 already sharing that information with the Office of
23 Subsistence Management and/or our agencies, or just to
24 let us know how to access those papers. I think that
25 would be great. I'm sure you've seen the analysis that
26 get done and I don't know if OSM Staff are able to tap
27 into the work that your students are doing and I think
28 it would be great to do that, so thank you.

29

30 MR. SANDERSON: Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
33 Thank you, Keenan.

34

35 Anyone else in the room like to be
36 recognized.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And for the
41 record Keenan's father is also from Hydaburg. I'll
42 take claim.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
47 moving on to Operator, is there anyone online at this
48 time who would like to be recognized to provide public
49 testimony on non-agenda items or the consensus agenda,
50

0252

1 this is their opportunity. Thank you.

2

3 OPERATOR: Yes, you have one in cue.
4 Brianna Walker, your line is open.

5

6 MS. WALKER: Thank you. Good morning,
7 Chair and Members of the Federal Subsistence Board and
8 thank you for this opportunity to give public comment.
9 My name is Brianna Walker and I'm the Director of
10 Salmon Beyond Borders and I'm calling in from AukeKwaan
11 and (In Native) the ancestral and present homelands of
12 the Aukekwaan Tlingit peoples in Juneau Alaska.

13

14 Salmon Beyond Borders is a community
15 driven campaign. We work closely with commercial and
16 sportfishermen, community leaders, tourism and
17 recreation business owners and concerned citizens in
18 collaboration with tribes and First Nations united
19 across the Alaska/British Columbia border to defend and
20 sustain our transboundary rivers, jobs, and our salmon
21 way of life.

22

23 As members of this Board know very well
24 the Taku, Stikine and Unuk are world class
25 transboundary salmon rivers that originate in Northwest
26 British Columbia and flow into Southeast Alaska. These
27 wild salmon rivers have been centers of culture and
28 commerce for thousands of years. They are hot spots of
29 biodiversity, climate refugeia and birth all five
30 species of wild Pacific salmon. Historically these
31 three rivers have produced 80 percent of Southeast
32 Alaska's king salmon, however, all three river chinook
33 runs are now listed as stocks of concerns by Alaska
34 Department of Fish and Game.

35

36 At the headwaters of these major river
37 systems the Government of British Columbia has dozens
38 of large scale open pit mines in various stages from
39 abandonment to exploration and development to full
40 operation. BC has staked 20 percent of these
41 watersheds of mineral claims and most of the dozens of
42 operating and proposed mines in this region sit on acid
43 generating deposits including one or more tailings dams
44 and they will require water treatment in perpetuity.
45 British Columbia's archaic mining laws are not strong
46 enough to protect water quality, wild salmon and the
47 communities that rely on them.

48

49 I would like to thank the Southeast

50

0253

1 Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council for its
2 leadership and action in defense of these salmon rivers
3 in the past and also this Board, who I believe has sent
4 letters on this issue in the past. Yet despite these
5 concerns that have come from tribes, communities and
6 law makers down stream BC is still pushing ahead the
7 development of these mines and it's happening without
8 meaningful input of communities and tribes downstream
9 in Alaska.

10

11 As of today six tribes, including the
12 Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes
13 of Alaska and 10 municipalities in Southeast Alaska
14 have passed resolutions calling for a permanent band on
15 toxic mine waste dams or tailings dams and for a
16 temporary pause to new BC mining activities in the
17 mines along the Alaska Transboundary Rivers until the
18 U.S./Canada Boundary Waters Treaty and the United
19 Declaration of Indigenous Peoples are upheld and an
20 international agreement on watershed protection is in
21 place. In addition to this, several dozen community
22 members, business owners and organizations have signed
23 on to a community version of this resolution and
24 hundreds of individual Alaskans have signed a letter to
25 President Biden asking for this same temporary pause on
26 new BC mining activities and a permanent band on
27 tailings dams along the Taku, Stikine and Unuk Rivers.

28

29 On behalf of Salmon Beyond Borders, I
30 ask that you please consider submitting a letter to
31 U.S. Federal agencies including the Department of
32 Interior, Department of Agriculture requesting the
33 request in these recent resolutions passed across
34 communities in Southeast Alaska.

35

36 Thank you so much for the opportunity
37 to comment today and for your leadership on this issue
38 in the past.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
41 taking the time to call in. Any questions from the
42 Board. Comments.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
47 seeing none, thank you, appreciate that. Operator, is
48 there anyone else who would like to be recognized.

49

50

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1 OPERATOR: We have no participants in
2 cue.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, that
5 concludes this morning's public testimony. We will get
6 back.....

7
8 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

9
10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead,
11 Charlie.

12
13 MR. BROWER: I'm online now.

14
15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
16 Glad you could make it partner. We will get back to
17 the fishery proposals. 16. We'll call on Staff to
18 present. I believe it's 15/16 is where we're at.

19
20 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Mr. Chair
21 and Members of the Council. I'm Liz Williams, I'm a
22 Cultural Anthropologist with OSM. And I will be
23 presenting a summary of the analysis FP23-15/16 which
24 starts on Page 547 in the book.

25
26 This proposal was submitted by the
27 Alaska Department of Fish and Game Upper Tanana
28 Fortymile Advisory Committee. It requests that the
29 Federal Subsistence Board recognize customary and
30 traditional use of salmon in the Chitina subdistrict of
31 the upper Copper River district by the permanent rural
32 residents who live named communities -- between named
33 communities along the Alaska Highway from the U.S.
34 Canada Border to Dot Lake. And as soon as we get the
35 map up it'll be easier to see but there is a map on
36 Page 551 and it shows the communities along the portion
37 of the Alaska Highway that we're talking about with
38 this proposal. It is Northway, Tetlin, Tok, Tanacross
39 and Dot Lake all have C&T for salmon in the Chitina
40 Subdistrict. So the people that live in between these
41 communities are requesting customary and traditional
42 use determination.

43
44 There's not specific information on
45 these little chunks in between. They're difficult to
46 separate out from these other communities who all have
47 different subsistence patterns because most of them
48 have post office boxes in Tok and some in Northway
49 depending on where they're from. Another thing to
50

0255

1 consider about this proposal is that as written it
2 contains and includes the people who live and work at
3 the Border Station and if they're Alaska residents,
4 some may or may not be, these are about 30 people who
5 have Tok mailing addresses.

6
7 So because of the sort of in between
8 nature of these comm -- households there's not specific
9 subsistence data for them but the reason the proposal
10 was submitted, the proponent, again the Fortymile AC
11 states that in 2002 FP02-16 was adopted by the Board
12 and neglected to include this area in the list of
13 communities and areas so when those communities were --
14 had their C&T acknowledged, these people were not
15 included. And the community members, I only spoke to
16 two or three, they said that they're not separate from
17 these communities but they are linked to them by
18 geography, kinship, economy and practice the same
19 subsistence way of life. So some of these are Alaska
20 Native people from different parts of the state, some
21 are American Homesteaders.

22
23 So I spoke with two or three and some
24 of them talked about trading and sharing of subsistence
25 resources with family members who maybe used to live in
26 some of the communities. All of them use at least
27 seven to 10 different resources, moose, caribou,
28 berries, all kinds of fish and they share.

29
30 The reason that we are considering this
31 sort of as a general C&T is because they're so close to
32 the named communities that have C&T and it appears that
33 they holistically meet the eight factor criteria.
34 They've chosen to live and subsist outside of community
35 boundaries, they're closer to and more dependent on the
36 land and second, as I said before, they're not separate
37 from the communities and areas that are listed in the
38 current customary and traditional use determination and
39 they're just part of the communities according to the
40 people that I spoke with which, again, was only three.

41
42 If this proposal is adopted, the
43 permanent rural residents that live between these named
44 communities would be added to the customary and
45 traditional use determination and it would allow them
46 to harvest salmon under the Federal subsistence
47 regulations, which are a little bit more less
48 restrictive than State regulations. If the proposal is
49 rejected they could continue to fish in the Glennallen
50

0256

1 Subdistrict where they do have a customary and
2 traditional use determination under Federal subsistence
3 regulations and they could also continue to fish in the
4 Chitina Subdistrict under State personal use and
5 sportfishing regulations.

6
7 So the OSM conclusion is to support
8 this proposal.

9
10 The justification is that, again, I'll
11 repeat myself, they're connected to the communities
12 along the highway by geography, kinship and economy.
13 Their subsistence harvest patterns are not distinct and
14 are very much the same as their relatives and neighbors
15 who live in the communities that are named.

16
17 So that's the end of my summary of the
18 analysis and I can move to written public comments and
19 SRC comments when the Chair and the Board are ready.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any question
22 from the Board for Staff.

23
24 (No comments)

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing none,
27 thank you. Any summary of written public comment.

28
29 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, Mr. Chair. There
30 were three written public comments. Two in opposition
31 and one in support with modification.

32
33 So the two comments in opposition were
34 submitted by the Ahtna Incorporated Customary and
35 Traditional Committee and the Ahtna InterTribal
36 Resource Commission. Both stated that proponents do
37 not display an appropriate long-term use of the Chitina
38 Subdistrict fishery and that they have not provided
39 proper written documentation to prove their historical,
40 cultural and economic ties to upper Copper River
41 fisheries. The concern about including more
42 communities to this customary and traditional use
43 determination while Ahtna communities, who's traditions
44 are the basis for these determinations are already
45 facing increased competition for decreasing populations
46 of salmon.

47
48 A member -- the support with
49 modification public comment was from a member of the
50

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1 Dry Creek community who requested their addition to
2 this customary and traditional use determination for
3 the Chitina Subdistrict of the upper Copper River
4 district by extending the C&T determination along the
5 highway to Dry Creek at the Johnson River.

6
7 And then there is a -- the Wrangell-
8 St.Elias Subsistence Resource Commission also commented
9 on this proposal and they voted unanimously to support
10 this proposal. And their comment is, that the people
11 who live along the Alaska Highway between Dot Lake and
12 the Canadian Border outside of communities are rural
13 residents with a pattern of use similar to that of
14 adjacent communities and those adjacent communities
15 already have a customary and traditional use for the
16 fishery.

17
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
21 this time we'll open up the floor to public testimony.
22 Anybody who would like to be recognized here on the
23 floor or online this is your opportunity.

24
25 Well, I expected you, you're first,
26 Karen.

27
28 (Laughter)

29
30 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
31 did turn in the card yesterday for these proposals.
32 For the record my name is Karen Linnell, I'm the
33 Executive Director for Ahtna InterTribal Resource
34 Commission, again, representative of eight Federally-
35 recognized tribes and two ANCSA Corporations who are
36 the land owners which form our organization.

37
38 What they've just proven is their
39 connection to those communities that have a connection
40 to a fishery. They didn't prove their own connection
41 to that fishery. So where's the .801 [sic] analysis in
42 that. They connected themselves to Northway which has
43 a direct connection to the Copper River. They
44 connected themselves to Dot Lake, which has a direct
45 connection to Batzulnetas and Katie John and Doris
46 Charles. They connected themselves to Tanacross and to
47 Tetlin, which have direct ties to Copper River. They
48 didn't connect themselves to the Copper River.

49
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1 Proximity doesn't make it their C&T.

2

3

4 So I feel that the recommendation and
the analysis that was done is incomplete or inaccurate.

5

6

7 Again, the Copper River cannot feed the
entire state.

8

9

10 We have such an impact from theses
different organizations and different communities
11 coming into our area to get salmon, to get moose, to
12 get caribou but it's -- we can't take care of
13 everybody. It was never intended to be that way. It's
14 the blessing and the curse of being on the highway
15 system is that we get overwhelmed with visitors trying
16 to extract resources from our area.

17

18

19 We do barter and trade with family
members in Tanacross and Northway for -- trade salmon
20 and dry strips for ducks and whitefish. We share those
21 things. And like I said in the tribal consultation
22 those direct family ties relate back to individual
23 communities and those people would come back to those
24 communities for their fish. Dick Ewan would come back
25 to Gulkana. That was our Chief Banili's (ph) brother-
26 in-law and his grandson, Jeffrey Alberts, still comes
27 back to Gulkana to get his fish. He doesn't go down
28 everywhere else, he goes back to where they come from.
29 We have my cousins in Tanacross, the Sanfords, where
30 their grandpa is buried at my fish camp, they come back
31 to my fish camp to get their fish, they don't go down
32 to other areas, they come back to where they come from.
33 And that's the tie. These other communities,
34 especially the Canadian Border Staff, they have no tie
35 to this, they change out just like agency Staff. They
36 come and they go, they have no tie to that river, no
37 long-term use and history of using that salmon.

38

39

40 The analysis that has been provided and
this liberalization of the customary and traditional
41 use patterns is faulty and causing problems.

42

43

44 We continue to do this, you're setting
precedence for other communities that have no direct
45 tie to the resource but they have a tie to a different
46 community that has things. We saw that yesterday with
47 Serendipity where they were tied in with Lower Tonsina
48 -- or Upper Tonsina and so because they were lumped
49 into that census designated place they got C&T, because

50

0259

1 they're part of the Prince William Sound area they get
2 C&T. There was no analysis done on the individual, and
3 I want to say thank you for calling two or three people
4 but did you talk to other people in the other
5 communities to verify those relationships and that use.

6
7 Even if they are members of families
8 from those communities they still have the right to
9 individual C&T that they can file for because they're
10 rural residents and use their tie to that resource to
11 get their individual C&T, not blanket community
12 approval.

13
14 And I -- I can't say it enough and I
15 think you folks heard me yesterday. So, again, those
16 were ties to communities, not to the resource itself
17 and long-term use. The Border community, all the way
18 to Dot Lake, again, not so.

19
20 And Dry Creek chose to get their C&T at
21 Slana where they had never fished, now they know how
22 little we get and now they want to change what they got
23 before. So they can submit the new proposal for
24 themselves.

25
26 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
29 Karen. Any questions from the Board. Comments.

30
31 (No comments)

32
33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your
34 testimony this morning.

35
36 Any other public testifying this
37 morning from the floor.

38
39 (No comments)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator,
42 online, is anybody who would like to be recognized at
43 this time.

44
45 OPERATOR: Yes, you have one person in
46 cue, Mike, your line is open.

47
48 MR. BETHERS: Is that Mike Bethers?

49
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1 OPERATOR: Yes, sir.

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OPERATOR: Yes, sir.

MR. BETHERS: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair for this opportunity. My name is Mike Bethers, a 75 year old life long deer hunter from Auke Bay. I do most of my deer hunting in Tenakee where I have a house. I'd also like to speak for the Jesse Walker and Shawn Bethers families who are unable to participate today. I'd like to comment on Wildlife Proposal WP22-07, 22-08 and 22-10.

None of them.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Can I interrupt you please for a second. I hate to do that. I don't interrupt.

MR. BETHERS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: But this is specific to a C&T proposal at this time. The public testimony we will be receiving at this time would be specific to FP23-15/16. And like I said there's opportunity at the front of the day for this, I believe those are still on the agenda?

MS. DETWILER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And there's an opportunity to afford you testimony at that time. So if you have public testimony specific to the proposal mentioned we'll take it at this time.

MR. BETHERS: Okay, sir. When will we be doing these wildlife proposals?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. And thank you for that question because I forgot to mention this morning because of the hotness of that topic we're going to do a time certain for those proposals at 1:30 today. At 1:30.

MR. BETHERS: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: At 1:30. So everybody knows when it's going to happen, the testifiers, the communities, the public have an opportunity to get theirselves ready for 1:30. So you can come back then, thank you.

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1 MR. BETHERS: Okay, thank you very
2 much, Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anybody else in
5 the cue.

6
7 OPERATOR: No, sir.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 We'll go ahead and call on you Orville. Tribal/Alaska
11 Native Corporation comments.

12
13 MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair, can
14 you hear me?

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
17 floor, Orville.

18
19 MR. LIND: Good morning everyone. Mr.
20 Chair and Board Members. During the consultation held
21 on August 23rd, we did not have any questions or
22 comments on 23-15.

23
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Orville. Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

28
29 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Charlie Wright, Co-Chair, Eastern Interior RAC.

31
32 The EIRAC opposed FP23-15 and 16. The
33 Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
34 Council considered the proposal with modifications to
35 include the community of Dry Creek, which was not part
36 of the original proposal but submitted via public
37 comment. The Council opposed the inclusion of new
38 communities, areas that have not demonstrated the same
39 long-term traditional subsistence harvest patterns as
40 shown by the communities with recognized customary and
41 traditional use determinations.

42
43 The Council discussed the possibility
44 of increased harvest pressure on the resource if the
45 customary and traditional use determinations were
46 expanded. The Council noted that area residents who
47 live in communities or areas without a customary and
48 traditional use determination for salmon in the Chitina
49 Subdistrict have harvest opportunities there under
50

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1 State regulations.

2

3 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4

5 And also I think Sue might be online to
6 say something also on this proposal.

7

8 Thank you, Mr. Chair and Board.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
11 this time, Operator, can you let Sue in.

12

13 OPERATOR: I'm sorry is she on as a
14 participant?

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: She's listed in
17 the speaker room, Sue Entsminger.

18

19 OPERATOR: Okay. All speaker lines are
20 open.

21

22 MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, this is Robbin.
23 And I do see Sue in the speaker's room but she may have
24 her line muted and so Operator can you help us -- well,
25 she may have her line muted and that might be on her
26 end but in the speaker's room, Sue Entsminger, your
27 line looks to be open.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 (Pause)

32

33 MS. ENTSMINGER: Can you hear me now?

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
36 floor, Sue, thank you.

37

38 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, sorry. I tried
39 and tried. Thank you very much. Yeah, I wanted to
40 speak to this as the Chair. I've been the Chair for 16
41 years. And I wanted the Board to know I really try to
42 do a really, really good job.

43

44 And I ended up -- I have a lot on my
45 mind and I had gotten distracted during the discussion.
46 This proposal -- the motion on the floor was one motion
47 to include Dry Creek and as the discussion went I was
48 conflicted our -- or not conflicted out, I was accused
49 of having a conflict of interest and that really did
50

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1 upset me quite a bit at the time and I should have
2 taken a recess and I did not. And so what I should
3 have done with that proposal as the discussion went,
4 pulled out the Border Station and Dry Creek and handled
5 each one separately and then handled the in between --
6 people in between communities. I am aware that there
7 are people, like myself, I am in between Mentasta and
8 Tok, and this is the Wrangell-St.Elias Park and we may
9 -- I thought the precedent was already set, that people
10 in between communities that had ties to those
11 communities are already included but evidently not and
12 that's the way this proposal came up. And I think the
13 Board needs to be cautious and understand that
14 sometimes the discussion gets way off and we're not
15 really discussing what it -- what the intent of the
16 proposal was and I feel like I really did a poor job of
17 that and I wanted the Board to know that.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
20 thank you, Sue. any questions for Sue.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
25 calling in, good to hear you Sue.

26

27 MS. ENTSMINGER: And thank you for
28 allowing it.

29

30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, thank you
31 for calling in Sue. Additional Regional Advisory
32 Council recommendations.

33

34 MS. GILL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
35 the record my name is Justice Gill, I'm the
36 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Coordinator.
37 I'm here today to present the Southcentral Council's
38 decision on the FP23-15 and 23-16.

39

40 The Council opposed FP23-15 and took no
41 action on 23-16 based on the actions for 23-15.

42

43 The Council had concerns over harvest
44 of salmon resources by the members of the communities
45 located outside the traditional harvest region. The
46 Council expressed desire to hear testimony from the
47 proponents of the proposal as well as the members of
48 the community that this customary and traditional use
49 determination request might impact.

50

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1 The Council was also concerned about
2 recent changes in the customary and traditional use
3 determination process that were made -- that we're
4 making the process too inclusive and allowing residents
5 to gain customary and traditional use status without
6 providing formal documentation of their subsistence
7 practices.

8
9 Thank you.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
12 Appreciate that. Any questions.

13
14 (No comments)

15
16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. We
17 got to a point where I got another blue card and I know
18 we're in a stepped process here but I like to remind
19 ourselves that this is a public process and everybody
20 who comes here to engage needs an opportunity. So I'll
21 call on Dan Gorsey at this time.

22
23 MR. GORSEY: Thank you, Chairman.
24 Members of the Board. My name is Dan Gorsey. I'm the
25 Fisheries Biologist for Ahtna InterTribal Resource
26 Commission in Glennallen.

27
28 I just wanted to point out that chinook
29 escapement has not been met five of the last 12 years
30 in the Copper River. It's not a good time to water
31 down this process and liberalize the fishery.

32
33 So that's all I wanted to say.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
36 that. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

37
38 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 Similar to the previous proposal for a C&T
40 determination the Department is neutral as well on this
41 one.

42
43 Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
46 InterAgency Staff Committee.

47
48 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
49 InterAgency Staff Committee provided their standard
50

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1 comment.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board
4 discussion with the RACs, State Liaison.

5

6 Jill you have the floor.

7

8 MS. KLEIN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
9 Chair. I don't know if Sue is still on but she just
10 made a comment saying she urged the Board to be
11 cautious and I just wanted to know if she could clarify
12 that point about what -- yeah.

13

14 MS. ENTSMINGER: I am still on.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Sue,
17 that's a question from Jill to you, you have the floor.

18

19 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. Cautious. What
20 I mean is there actually in -- this is me working in
21 this whole system for a long time, there has been in
22 between communities accepted and I was thinking that
23 that proposal might not have even needed to be in. And
24 I think we should take note that we should look at the
25 fact that these communities do have C&T and there's
26 just a handful of people, people that are tied to
27 Northway, people that are tied to Tok, people that are
28 tied to Dot Lake that are all part of those communities
29 -- they consider themselves part of those communities
30 so when somebody goes in and says, okay, I want my
31 permit and then they can't get it because they say well
32 you're in between a community, I mean I feel like you
33 should be cautious on how you look at that and make
34 sure it's addressed properly and I think the discussion
35 on what happened at our meeting got way off track of
36 what we should have been talking about.

37

38 So I mean that's -- to me this is all
39 precedent setting so it's important to do the right
40 thing.

41

42 MS. KLEIN: Thank you.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue.
45 Any followup questions with the Board here, Council
46 Chairs or the State Liaison.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
2 Board motion.

3
4 MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair, Sarah
5 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
8 floor, Sarah.

9
10 MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair. I move to
11 adopt Proposal FP23-15 and if I get a -- and take no
12 action on FP23-16, and if I get a second I'll explain
13 why I intend to vote in opposition of my motion.

14
15 MR. BROWER: Second.

16
17 MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The
18 National Park Service opposes FP23-15/16 in deference
19 to the Southcentral and East [sic] Interior Subsistence
20 Regional Advisory Council's recommendations.

21
22 The eight factors used to make
23 customary and traditional use determinations do not
24 appear to be met. There's a lack of substantial
25 evidence for long-term pattern of use of the resource
26 and sharing of the resource along with no relative
27 proximity to the resource by rural residents who live
28 between the named communities along the Alaska Highway
29 from the U.S./Canada Border to Dot Lake.

30
31 Long-term consistent pattern of use
32 defined in the criteria is a pattern of use which
33 includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing and
34 hunting from generation to generation. It would
35 potentially be precedent setting for the Board to
36 recognize such a limited pattern of use as customary
37 and traditional.

38
39 I do recognize the Wrangell-St.Elias
40 Subsistence Resource Commission's support for this
41 proposal and I do understand their desire to be as
42 inclusive as possible. However, applying the eight
43 factors so generally as to not define what constitutes
44 long-term would effectively imply that all rural
45 residents would qualify which would negate the intent
46 for which the C&T guidance was adopted by the Board.

47
48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49
50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 other Board discussion. Deliberation.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
7 question.

8
9 MR. CHEN: Question.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue,
12 please.

13
14 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The motion
15 on the floor is to adopt FP23-15 and take no action on
16 FP23-16.

17
18 Sarah Creachbaum, National Park
19 Service.

20
21 MS. CREACHBAUM: Okay, I think I vote
22 in opposition to 23-15 and is it a support the taking
23 of no action?

24
25 MS. DETWILER: So the -- your proposal
26 -- your motion was to adopt 15 and no action on 16, so
27 if you -- so you would vote no if you are in opposition
28 to adopting 15.

29
30 MS. CREACHBAUM: The National Park
31 Service votes no. Thank you.

32
33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Jill Klein,
34 Fish and Wildlife Service.

35
36 MS. KLEIN: The Fish and Wildlife
37 Service also votes no. I do want to appreciate,
38 though, the testimony shared by Sue Entsminger and also
39 Karen Linnell and also recognize though that there may
40 be individuals that do meet the criteria for customary
41 and traditional use determination and would urge them
42 to look into the individual C&T process that the Board
43 does have.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
48 BLM.

49
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1 MR. COHN: BLM opposed FP23-15 and 16.
2 There is a lack of substantial evidence for long-term
3 pattern of use and sharing of subsistence resources by
4 the rural residents who live between communities along
5 the Alaska Highway from the U.S./Canada Border to Dot
6 Lake. BLM believes that such a general application of
7 the eight factors used to make C&T determinations would
8 be inconsistent with the intent of the C&T guidance
9 adopted by the Board.

10

11 BLM appreciates the public testimony
12 given during the Board meeting on this issue and is
13 sensitive to those concerns.

14

15 BLM's opposition is also consistent
16 with the recommendations of the Southcentral and
17 Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
18 Councils.

19

20 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Glenn Chen,
21 BIA.

22

23 MR. CHEN: The BIA votes no on this
24 proposal and we concur and agree with the Southcentral
25 and Eastern Interior RACs as well as the justification
26 provided by the National Park Service.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Dave Schmid,
31 Forest Service.

32

33 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service votes
34 no on the proposal in deference to both the
35 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council and the Eastern
36 Interior Regional Advisory Council and with the
37 justification provided by the Park Service.

38

39 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
40 Member Rhonda Pitka.

41

42 MS. PITKA: I vote to oppose FP23-15
43 based on the justification put forward by the National
44 Park Service and in deference to the Regional Advisory
45 Council recommendation to oppose. And I also endorse
46 their justification.

47

48 Thank you.

49

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1 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public Member
2 Charlie Brower.

3
4 MR. BROWER: I oppose the motion on
5 FP23-15 and 16 as presented by Southcentral Regional
6 Advisory Council and Eastern Interior Council.

7
8 Thank you.

9
10 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Finally,
11 Chair Christianson.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose as
14 stated.

15
16 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The motion
17 fails unanimously.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. As
20 a matter of process, yesterday when they -- we would
21 support the proposal, we would take no action by
22 concurrence that it failed -- we need to invite a
23 proposal [sic] to take no action on 16 -- a motion. So
24 I invite a motion at this time to take no action on 16.

25
26 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

29
30 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Dave Schmid
31 Forest Service. I move to take no action on FP23-16.

32
33 MS. KLEIN: Second. Fish and Wildlife
34 Service.

35
36 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair. I would ask
37 for unanimous consent.

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All in favor of
40 the motion say aye.

41
42 IN UNISON: Aye.

43
44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same
45 sign.

46
47 (No opposing votes)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
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1 unanimously. Thank you, Charlie.

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Call on the Staff to present the next proposal. And, again, they wanted a reminder before you go, the time certain is going to be 1:30 today after lunch for Wildlife proposals in Southeast. Yep.

MR. KOLLER: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Justin Koller, I'm a Fish Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. The analysis for FP23-19 begins on Page 569 of the meeting book.

FP23-19 was submitted by the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission and requests that the Lower Copper River area Federal subsistence rod and reel and dipnet fishery be rescinded. The proponent is concerned about the lack of salmon harvest opportunity in the upper most reaches of the Glennallen Subdistrict and at Batzulnetas during years of low salmon escapement. They believe that Copper River salmon were fully allocated prior to the addition of the lower Copper River Federal fishery and additional harvest from this new fishery will take opportunity away from up river users, cause escapement goals to be unmet and contribute to future fishing restrictions for up river users.

Residents of the Prince William Sound area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Prince William Sound area remainder which includes the area under consideration.

In 2020 Proposal FP21-10 was submitted by two residents of Cordova requesting the Board implement a subsistence salmon fishery in the lower Copper River adjacent to the Copper River Highway. The Southcentral Council provided a recommendation at that time in support of the proposal, while the Eastern Interior Council provided a comment in opposition. The Board deferred action on FP23-10 at its January 2021 meeting requesting the Eastern Interior and the Southcentral Councils meet to further discuss the proposal. The Councils met in March of 2022 which led to discussions the Board found useful for their final determination.

The Board subsequently adopted the lower Copper River salmon fishery at its April 2022

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1 meeting and modified to allow only dipnet and rod and
2 reel, to delay the start of the fishery until June 1st,
3 prohibit dipnetting from a boat and require a 48 hour
4 reporting period.

5

6 69 permits were issued in 2022 for this
7 new Federal subsistence fishery and all permit holders
8 were residents of Cordova. A total of 107 sockeye and
9 three chinook salmon were reported harvested during the
10 fishery.

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This proposal would rescind the recently created lower Copper River area subsistence salmon fishery reducing opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users in the Prince William Sound area, primarily residents of Cordova. Federally-qualified subsistence users in Cordova area historically concentrate their salmon harvest efforts through Federal fisheries in Ibeck Creek, Eyak River and Alaganik Slough or through the State subsistence fishery in the marine waters adjacent to the Copper River. Most of the Federal subsistence harvest efforts focus on the fall chinook -- or excuse me -- fall coho salmon return across the Copper River Delta systems. In contrast most of the State's subsistence harvest efforts are focused on the early summer sockeye salmon returns to the Copper River district. State subsistence regulations only allow for harvest of salmon in the marine waters of the Copper River district which requires access to a suitable gill -- or a suitable boat and a gillnet. This proposal would reduce access and methods for rural residents to participate in the harvest of salmon. The total salmon harvest limit permitted per household would not change so effort just may shift back to those other locations.

The elimination of this fishery is not likely to have a significant biological effect on fish stocks or to significantly increase the subsistence, personal use or sport harvest in the upper Copper River. The projected harvest is the smallest of any user group in the Copper River system, about 2,000 sockeye salmon and 300 chinook salmon annually and actual harvest this season was far below those projections.

Sockeye salmon runs in the upper Copper River have consistently exceeded the minimum bound of the sustainable escapement goal range for wild stocks

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1 in all years. Impacts to chinook salmon by eliminating
2 this fishery would be negligible since the harvest of
3 chinook salmon is limited to no more than five per
4 household.

5

6 The OSM conclusion is to oppose FP23-
7 19.

8

9 Harvest and escapement information
10 indicate that sufficient salmon are present to continue
11 the Federal subsistence fishery in the lower Copper
12 River area without creating a conservation concern or
13 significantly affecting up river fisheries. The
14 fishery provides an opportunity to harvest sockeye and
15 chinook salmon in the lower Copper River for Federally-
16 qualified subsistence users of Cordova, many of whom
17 who do not have access to a saltwater capable boat or
18 drift gillnet gear. Projected harvest is anticipated
19 to be very small in comparison with other user groups
20 and harvest from the 2022 fishery supports this.

21

22 The lower Copper River fishery
23 represents such a low proportion of the run to the
24 Copper River that it is unlikely to be a factor in
25 management decisionmaking. The primary management tool
26 controlling in-river abundance in the Copper River is
27 commercial fishery. In times of conservation concern
28 restrictions to time and area available for commercial
29 harvest is the most effective tool available to
30 increase salmon escapement. Maximum anticipated
31 harvest from the lower Copper River Federal subsistence
32 fishery is unlikely to have a significant impact on the
33 overall in-river of salmon abundance relative to other
34 existing fisheries, particularly because it is
35 occurring down stream of the sonar which is the primary
36 assessment tool for management.

37

38 It is very unlikely that the lower
39 river subsistence harvest will take opportunity away
40 from up river users, cause escapement goals to be unmet
41 or contribute to future restrictions up river.

42

43 Lastly, Title VIII of ANILCA mandates
44 Federally-qualified subsistence users have priority
45 consumptive use of fish and wildlife on Federal land
46 and waters. Only after other users have been excluded
47 can we consider allocating among Federally-qualified
48 subsistence users.

49

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0273

1 That concludes my presentation. Thank
2 you, Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
5 questions from the Board.

6
7 (No comments)

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
10 any written public comment.

11
12 MR. KOLLER: Yes, Mr. Chair, there were
13 five written comments in opposition and two in support
14 of FP23-19.

15
16 Those opposed to rescinding the fishery
17 cited the minimal impact to the fishery, the meaningful
18 opportunity provided for users in Cordova and the need
19 to evaluate the fishery before considering a closure.
20 They also stated that all Federally-qualified
21 subsistence users should have highest priority for the
22 use of Copper River salmon and that other users should
23 be restricted before eliminating opportunity for
24 Federally-qualified subsistence users.

25
26 Those in support of rescinding the
27 fishery expressed continued concern about the impact to
28 up river users and stated that the fishery should not
29 have been approved because of broad opposition.

30
31 The Wrangell-St.Elias National Park
32 Subsistence Resource Commission also submitted a
33 comment. They had a tie vote on FP23-19 and as such
34 the motion to support the proposal failed. Members
35 voting in support of the proposal expressed concern
36 about the potential for high numbers of permits to be
37 issued for the fishery in the future and recent low
38 returns on the Copper River. They also stated that
39 Cordova residents have many other fishing opportunities
40 whereas up river communities only have harvest
41 opportunities in the Copper River. Members who opposed
42 the proposal stated that the harvest has been very low
43 and that the delegated Federal manager has the
44 authority to take action in the event that there is a
45 significant in increase and participation in harvest.
46 Those opposed also noted that some Cordova residents
47 have expressed appreciation for the new fishery and
48 stated that they don't want to take an opportunity away
49 in the absence of conservation concerns.

50

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1 And that's the summary of public
2 comments.

3
4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
7 this time we'll open up the floor to public.

8
9 OPERATOR: As a reminder if you'd like
10 to make a public comment over the phone please press
11 star, one.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
14 Operator. At this time we're recognizing the public
15 here in the building and then we will get to you on the
16 phone line. Thank you.

17
18 Karen, you have the floor.

19
20 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 For the record I'm Karen Linnell, Executive Director
22 for Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission.

23
24 Seven of our eight Federally-recognized
25 tribes are on the Copper River or dependent on the
26 salmon from the Copper River. Cantwell is on the
27 Denali side and therefore they get their salmon from us
28 in trade. They also have a tie to the Copper River as
29 many of them are related through the crossing between
30 the villages and their winter camps and so they come
31 and visit and get some salmon from us in trade.

32
33 One of the things that was brought up
34 in this is that, again, the analysis and the C&T was
35 based on Cordova residents and then given to all of
36 Prince William Sound and, to me, again, that's a
37 dilution of the Title VIII process.

38
39 I'd like to encourage the Federal
40 Subsistence Board to develop the necessary metrics to
41 evaluate whether the continuation of Federal
42 subsistence uses are being provided for.

43
44 When we looked at the amounts necessary
45 for subsistence for the upper Copper River from Gakona
46 to Batzulnetas and I know you guys don't recognize ANS
47 but you do have that subsistence use amounts. The ANS
48 hasn't been met, I think it was two out of 10 years,
49 and that's when they, quote, had record numbers of
50

0275

1 sockeye return. Record numbers. And that's when we
2 finally got our needs met. When we talk to managers
3 they're saying we're not putting in the effort, you
4 don't keep trying to get blood from a stone. If
5 they're not coming you don't continue to fish. And if
6 they're coming so small and very little you stop and
7 let them go by so some get to the spawning grounds. If
8 you get too many you stop so that they get to the
9 spawning grounds. That's the way that I've been
10 taught.

11

12 You know -- and it's a practice that we
13 have. We look long-term, holistic, sustainability.

14

15 The only reason there's salmon this
16 river is because Chief Goodlataw had to write a letter
17 to the Department of Education to tell them that we're
18 starving to death because they had a weir across the
19 entire lower Copper outside of Cordova to feed miners.
20 That's when they had to stop it and that's why we have
21 salmon on the Copper River right now.

22

23 There are other opportunities for them
24 to get salmon. They're looking for our kings. They're
25 looking for the Copper River reds for, which, marketing
26 has made it the most sought after salmon. The
27 individual -- or the C&T process is being diluted and
28 the -- providing for subsistence needs at the expense
29 of other subsistence needs, you're pitting us against
30 each other. And when we talked to some of our friends
31 in Cordova, you know, they said they share, they get
32 what they have and if you look at the State community
33 household surveys they definitely get their salmon.
34 They get a lot of fish. And in this whole process the
35 Cordova residents aren't the only beneficiaries because
36 this provides for all of the Prince William Sound.

37

38 And, again, the C&T process was not
39 followed and the C&T eight -- the criteria were not met
40 by all of the communities of the Prince William Sound.
41 This is one of the main reasons that we ask that you
42 repeal this, that we go through the process properly.

43

44 The other thing that happened
45 throughout this because at the meeting when this first
46 came up as you had asked for Eastern Interior RAC and
47 Southcentral RAC to come to a compromise and they
48 didn't know what a compromise was, consensus maybe, but
49 a compromise they didn't know what to do. We had
50

50

0276

1 several new appointments to the RACs, they only had the
2 analysis from 2020 to look at, they couldn't let us --
3 there was no additional comments or opportunity for the
4 public to participate and talk to the new membership
5 and let them know what's going on. Then the comments
6 that were formed letters written by a former Staff
7 member that were allowed as documentation at that last
8 meeting and it was a Xeroxed form and people just
9 signed it, not their individual tie to the resource and
10 their own comments, thoughts and ideas. As a former
11 Board of Game member, you know, I heard and saw
12 thousands of comments come in in regards to bears and
13 denning of bears and things like that that special
14 interest groups would put in and so they were
15 summarized and put in one category that we could look
16 at it and those that actually had some thought in it,
17 it's almost like a petition when you get people paid to
18 sign a petition -- or to solicit signatures for a
19 petition. It's not that they truly believe in the
20 cause but they're getting paid to collect signatures.

21
22 With this thing, this process, we
23 weren't able to talk to the RACs, there was no public
24 process in that consensus meeting and they weren't
25 quite sure how they wanted to Chair it or what they
26 were supposed to do and the votes were -- ended up
27 being based on previous comments and those hundreds of
28 comments or whatever, I forget how many now, written
29 comments that were submitted after the fact. There was
30 no additional opportunity for me to submit a comment
31 but those comments that were not on the record in 2020
32 were accepted and any other member of the public. So
33 that part of the process was faulty.

34
35 And I do want to say that, you know,
36 bless the OSM Staff the analysis was done for Cordova,
37 not for the entire Prince William Sound. And once,
38 again, they have other opportunities, we only have one,
39 the Copper River. That's it.

40
41 So I just ask you to take this request
42 for reconsideration into and act and make them come
43 back with a proposal that is specific to them, their
44 region, their area and that the C&T analysis be done
45 properly.

46
47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
50

0277

1 Karen. Anybody, questions from the Board for Karen.

2

3

4 (No comments)

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
7 Karen, appreciate that. any other public in the room
8 like to be recognized this is your opportunity.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Seeing none,
13 Operator, online is there somebody who would like to
14 testify to this. This is FP23-19.

15

16 OPERATOR: Again, as a reminder if you
17 would like to make a public comment on the phone please
18 press star, one at this time.

19

20 (Pause)

21

22 OPERATOR: There are no public comments
23 over the phone.

24

25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
26 this time we'll call on the tribal Alaska/Native
27 Corporation comments. Orville.

28

29 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the
31 consultation held on August 23rd there were no
32 questions or comments on Proposal 23-19.

33

34 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
37 this time we'll open it up to the Regional Advisory
38 Councils.

39

40 MS. GILL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
41 the record my name is Justice Gill, I'm the
42 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Coordinator.

43

44 So the Southcentral Council opposed
45 FP23-19. The Council felt that the lower Copper River
46 area fishery needed more time to develop to assess
47 harvest amounts and noted a very small estimated
48 harvest and this fishery is not likely to cause
49 conservation concerns.

50

0278

1 The Council highlighted that the
2 Federal subsistence priority on the Copper River and
3 suggested limiting personal use and commercial
4 fisheries before restricting access to Federally-
5 qualified subsistence users.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
10 questions from the Board.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Additional
15 Regional Advisory Council comments.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Only one,
20 sorry.

21
22 Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

23
24 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 For the record ADF&G supports this proposal. As the
26 State reads it, under ANILCA Congress provided the
27 subsistence uses of fish and game shall receive
28 priority among consumptive users for rural residents
29 only when it is necessary to restrict taking in order
30 to assure continued viability of a fish or wildlife
31 population or the continuation of subsistence uses of
32 that population for subsistence purposes.

33
34 We believe Congress never authorized
35 this Board, only to close or restrict a fishery or
36 wildlife season as set forth in Sections .815 and .816
37 of ANILCA. The Board may reopen a season after a
38 closure is no longer warranted but lacks the statutory
39 authority to open a season otherwise.

40
41 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
44 InterAgency Staff Committee.

45
46 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
47 interAgency Staff Committee provided their standard
48 comment.

49
50

0279

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 This opens up the floor for Board discussion with
3 Council Chair and State Liaison.

4
5 (No comments)

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
8 seeing none, Board motion.

9
10 MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair, Sarah
11 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

12
13 Mr. Chair, I move to adopt Proposal
14 FP23-19 and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend
15 to vote in opposition of my motion.

16
17 MR. BROWER: Second.

18
19 MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The
20 National Park Service opposes FP23-19 in deference to
21 the recommendation of the Southcentral Subsistence
22 Regional Advisory Council.

23
24 The subsistence fishery provides an
25 opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users
26 of Cordova and the Prince William Sound area to harvest
27 sockeye and chinook salmon in the lower Copper River in
28 an area accessible to those who do not have access to a
29 saltwater boat with drift gillnet gear. Harvest and
30 escapement information indicate that sufficient salmon
31 are present to continue the Federal subsistence fishery
32 in the lower Copper River area without creating a
33 conservation concern or significantly affecting up
34 river fisheries. The total 2022 harvest in this newly
35 established fishery was only 110 sockeye salmon and
36 three chinook. Title VIII of ANILCA mandates that the
37 Federally-qualified subsistence users have priority for
38 consumptive uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public
39 lands and waters. If conservation concerns arise other
40 uses must be curtailed before restricting Federally-
41 qualified subsistence users.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
46 Board deliberation. Discussion.

47
48 (No comments)

49
50

0280

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
2 question.

3
4 MR. BROWER: Question.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call,
7 please, Sue.

8
9 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. National Park
10 Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

11
12 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
13 opposes.

14
15 MS. DETWILER: Jill Klein, Fish and
16 Wildlife Service.

17
18 MS. KLEIN: Fish and Wildlife Service
19 opposes in deference to the Southcentral Regional
20 Advisory Council and also the justification put forward
21 by the National Park Service.

22
23 The fishery does provide a subsistence
24 opportunity for people in Cordova and we're confident
25 that the Park manager with delegated authority will
26 address any future conservation concerns as needed.

27
28 Thank you.

29
30 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
31 BLM.

32
33 MR. COHN: BLM opposes FP23-19 in
34 deference to the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence
35 Regional Advisory Council.

36
37 Available data indicate that sufficient
38 salmon are present to continue the Federal subsistence
39 fishery in the lower Copper River area without creating
40 a conservation concern or significantly affecting up
41 river fisheries. The fishery provides an opportunity
42 to harvest sockeye and chinook salmon in the lower
43 Copper River for Federally-qualified subsistence users
44 of Cordova and the Prince William Sound area, many of
45 whom do not have access to a saltwater capable boat and
46 drift gillnet gear.

47
48 Projected harvest is anticipated to be
49 very small in comparison with other user groups and
50

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1 harvest from the 2022 fishery supports this.

2

3

4 Title VIII of ANILCA mandates that the
5 Federally-qualified subsistence users have priority for
6 consumptive uses of fish and wildlife on Federal public
7 lands and waters. In the event of a conservation
8 concern other uses should be curtailed before
9 restricting Federally-qualified subsistence users.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Glenn Chen,
12 BIA.

13

14 MR. CHEN: The BIA will vote no on this
15 proposal. Our decision to oppose it is based on
16 deference to the Southcentral Regional Advisory
17 Council. We also concur with the Council's
18 justification as well as that provided by the Park
19 Service in our opposition as well.

20

21 Thank you.

22

23 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Forest
24 Service, Dave Schmid.

25

26 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service opposes
27 FP23-19 in deference to the Southcentral Regional
28 Advisory Council.

29

30 And I'd also like to express certainly
31 my empathy with folks on the upper Copper River,
32 especially some of the members of the Eastern Interior
33 RAC as well as Ahtna over concerns about declining
34 salmon runs in the Copper. But I guess I'd turn a bit
35 and also share in addition to the justification
36 provided by the Park Service and others is when you
37 step back and look at that fishery, where the harvest
38 is occurring and 96/97 percent of that harvest is by
39 non-Federally-qualified users. I know from 2010 to
40 2019 on average 1.3 million sockeye were harvested in
41 the commercial fishery and something like 400,000 --
42 I'm sorry -- 140,000 in the personal use fishery, this
43 represents the bulk of that area.

44

45 We did modify the proposal when we --
46 the original proposal when it was passed by the Board
47 to really limit that fishery over other concerns in
48 terms of timing of the fishery, the gear, and we do
49 need to give it time to evaluate that harvest and as
50 was stated the in-season manager with the Park Service

0282

1 has the opportunity to help manage that.

2

3 Thank you.

4

5 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
6 Member Rhonda Pitka.

7

8 MS. PITKA: I vote to oppose FP23-19 in
9 deference to the Southcentral Regional Advisory
10 Council. Their justification on Page 600 is adequate
11 to describe the discussion that they had.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
16 Member Charlie Brower.

17

18 MR. BROWER: Oppose as stated.

19

20 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Chair
21 Christianson.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose in
24 deference to the RAC.

25

26 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The motion
27 to adopt FP23-19 fails unanimously.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
30 We'll take a five minute break.

31

32 (Off record)

33

34 (On record)

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
37 welcome back from the break. It looks like we have
38 everybody here. We'll go ahead and get started with
39 the next proposal, we'll call on Staff to present.

40

41 Thank you.

42

43 MR. SANDERS: Hello, Mr. Chair and
44 Members of the Board. For the record my name is Andrew
45 Sanders and I'm a Fisheries Biologist with the U.S.
46 Forest Service. I will be presenting Fisheries
47 Proposal 23-21 which can be found on Page 635 in your
48 meeting materials, Volume 2, Book B.

49

50

1 The proposal requests closing the
2 Federal waters of Kah Sheets Creek and Kah Sheets Lake
3 to sockeye salmon harvest by non-Federally-qualified
4 users. It was submitted by Gina Uppencamp of
5 Petersburg.
6

7 The proponent states that they are
8 proposing the closure of Kah Sheets to non-Federally-
9 qualified users due to a conflict between user groups
10 over the limited time and space available for
11 harvesting sockeye salmon in Kah Sheets Creek.
12

13 Harvest at Kah Sheets primarily takes
14 place in a small pool below a pair of waterfalls.
15 Subsistence users harvest sockeye here by use of
16 dipnet. Dipnetting salmon from the small pool below
17 the falls can only be done safely from a particular
18 rock ledge. This ledge is small and can only
19 accommodate one or two harvesters at a time.
20 Additionally the expansive sand flats at the mouth of
21 Kah Sheets Creek make the area inaccessible to
22 harvesters in small boats except during a few large day
23 time tides during the sockeye run. Although access by
24 skiff is extremely limited, the fact that it can be
25 accessed by skiff and that sockeye there can be
26 harvested by dipnet make Kah Sheets a very attractive
27 place to harvest salmon for residents of Petersburg who
28 do not possess the more complicated equipment and
29 powerful boats necessary to harvest in the much larger
30 Stikine River.
31

32 Looking at the cumulative number of
33 permits issued since Federal management of subsistence
34 began, Kah Sheets shows the third highest effort among
35 Petersburg residents after the Stikine and
36 Skaggs(ph)Creek and the second highest cumulative
37 harvest after the Stikine. Over the last 10 years an
38 average of nine permits per year and 53 fish have been
39 harvested at Kah Sheets.
40

41 Sportfishing at Kah Sheets is primarily
42 unguided. Sportfishers are restricted to using hook
43 and line for sockeye salmon which are notoriously
44 difficult to catch using that kind of gear. Because of
45 the low catch per unit effort with hook and line
46 sportfishers may spend a significantly longer period of
47 time fishing the pool than subsistence users before
48 they catch their limit or quit for the day despite
49 their substantially lower bag limit. While
50

1 sportfishers are occupying the small rock ledge,
2 subsistence users who may be anxiously watching the
3 tide to avoid being trapped must wait or convince the
4 sportfishers to let them use the ledge. Over the past
5 10 years at least one sportfisher contacted for the
6 State's random statewide sport harvest survey reported
7 fishing Kah Sheets each year. Although none reported
8 successfully harvesting sockeye salmon. This indicates
9 that consistent but low levels of sportfishing do take
10 place at Kah Sheets.

11
12 There are two USFS cabins located in
13 the Kah Sheets drainage. One at the lake and one at
14 the mouth. Both cabins are connected by a foot trail
15 along the creek that also has a spur leading to the
16 fishing hole. The cabin at the mouth of the creek is
17 useful for fishers who arrive by skiff and may wish to
18 spend the night waiting for the next favorable tide.
19 The cabin at the lake is best accessed by air.
20 According to USFS data an average of 46 users a year
21 visit the lower cabin and 58 users a year visit the
22 upper cabin. A joint survey performed by USFS and
23 ADF&G suggested that 90 percent of visitors to the Kah
24 Sheets cabins participate in the salmon and trout
25 fisheries.

26
27 There is limited biological data on the
28 strength of the Kah Sheets sockeye run. The most
29 recent complete weir count in Kah Sheets was performed
30 in 1965. Another weir count was performed in 1966 but
31 was ended before the run was over. Harvest reporting
32 data suggests that Federally-qualified users are
33 harvesting fewer fish in recent years and fewer fish
34 reported per permit indicates that they're having a
35 more difficult time harvesting their fish there.
36 However, a declining number of days fished per permit
37 also suggests that subsistence harvesters are spending
38 less time fishing Kah Sheets. Overall it is difficult
39 to determine if there is a biological concern for
40 sockeye salmon at Kah Sheets, however, the proponent
41 states that the run is declining.

42
43 The OSM conclusion is to support the
44 proposal with modification to close the creek only to
45 all fishing except by Federally-qualified users from
46 July 1st to July 31st.

47
48 The original proposal, if adopted,
49 would reduce competition for sockeye salmon in Kah
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1 Sheets, however, it would still allow non-Federally-
2 qualified users to fish for other species such as
3 cutthroat trout at the primary harvest location during
4 the sockeye run, which could potentially still lead to
5 conflict between user groups. Because of the
6 popularity of the cabins at Kah Sheets and the presence
7 of numerous species of sportfishes in the lake and
8 creek an alternative has been proposed; closing only
9 the creek from July 1st to July 31st during the sockeye
10 run except to Federally-qualified users. Restricting
11 the closure to only the creek and only the month of
12 July would continue to allow sport anglers to fish for
13 trout and other anadromous species such as coho and
14 steelhead in the creek while preventing conflict with
15 Federally-qualified Federal Subsistence Board users
16 targeting sockeye and avoiding unnecessary restrictions
17 on the lake where minimal sockeye harvest takes place.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 And I'm pleased to take any questions
22 that the Board may have.

23

24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
25 Andrew. Any questions for Andrew.

26

27 (No comments)

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
30 any summary of written public comment.

31

32 MR. SANDERS: Through the Chair. There
33 are two public comments, both in support of FP23-21.

34

35 Proponents were primarily in favor
36 based upon principals of sustained harvest and ensuring
37 access for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

38

39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
40 this time we'll open the floor to the public.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
45 seeing none here, Operator, is there anybody online who
46 would like to be recognized at this time for FP23-21.

47

48 OPERATOR: We have no participants,
49 thank you.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
2 Tribal Alaska/Native Corporate comments.

3
4 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the
6 consultation sessions we did not have any questions or
7 comments on this proposal.

8
9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
12 Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

13
14 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 Cathy Needham for the Southeast Alaska Regional
16 Advisory Council. The Council supported with OSM
17 modification to close Kah Sheets Creek to non-
18 Federally-qualified subsistence users from August 1st
19 to July -- or, sorry, from July 1st to July 31st while
20 leaving Kah Sheets Lake open to all users.

21
22 Although it is difficult to determine
23 if there is a conservation concern without current
24 stock assessment data this area does attract a fair
25 number of fishermen so it can be assumed that there is
26 a decent run. Since fish are being harvested under a
27 Federal permit the Council feels obligated to provide a
28 meaningful priority for an important resource, the
29 sockeye salmon, to subsistence users to help meet their
30 subsistence harvest needs. This will not unnecessarily
31 restrict non-Federally-qualified users. The
32 modification still meets the general intent of the
33 proponent as it reduces competition and may prevent
34 non-Federally-qualified users flooding into the area
35 where there is already a significant competition for
36 physical space between sportfishermen and subsistence
37 users.

38
39 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
42 questions from the Board for the RAC Chair.

43
44 MR. CHEN: Mr. Chair, BIA.

45
46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
47 floor Glenn.

48
49 MR. CHEN: Thank you. Ms. Needham. I
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1 wanted to confirm that your Council's recommendation
2 mirrors what OSM is also providing to the Board.

3

4 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Mr. Chair.
5 Mr. Chen. Yes, the Council supported the OSM
6 modification.

7

8 MR. CHEN: Thank you very much.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: InterAgency
11 Staff Committee.

12

13 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14 The.....

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry,
17 State of Alaska.

18

19 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the
20 record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes
21 the proposal as written. Current harvest of sockeye
22 within this drainage by non-Federally-qualified users
23 is very low with too few respondents to our statewide
24 harvest survey to even quantify those numbers. Under
25 ANILCA, subsistence uses of fish and wildlife shall be
26 the priority consumptive use on Federal public lands
27 when it is necessary to restrict taking in order to
28 assure the continued viability or for the -- continued
29 viability of that population or continuation of
30 subsistence uses.

31

32 I mean based on the available data that
33 is at hand we believe that there are no conservation
34 concerns on this population at this point in time and
35 given the low amount of fishing effort by NFQUs, none
36 of the stipulations under ANILCA apply and this
37 proposal should not be passed.

38

39 With that said, you know, as reading
40 the original proposal and hearing some of the
41 proponent's comments if it is an issue with non-
42 resident anglers the State provides that option to look
43 at that restriction through its Board of Fish process.

44

45 Thank you, sir.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
48 questions from the Board for the State.

49

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1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: InterAgency --
4 oh, go ahead Rhonda.

5

6 MS. PITKA: I'm sorry, I have a
7 question. So you mentioned at the beginning of your
8 statement that this was based on the original proposal
9 as written, do you have any comment on the OSM
10 modification?

11

12 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
13 Member Pitka. No matter the regard I will say this,
14 the Department opposes the proposal. But given the
15 changes it makes it more palatable for the State.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
20 that question, Rhonda.

21

22 ISC.

23

24 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
25 ISC provided their standard comment.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Board
28 discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Open the floor
33 for a Board motion.

34

35 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
38 floor.

39

40 MR. SCHMID: Dave Schmid with the
41 Forest Service.

42

43 I move to adopt FP23-21 with the OSM
44 modification to close Kah Sheets Creek to non-
45 Federally-qualified users from July 1 through July 31st
46 while leaving Kah Sheets Lake open to all users.
47 Following a second I will explain why I intend to
48 support my motion.

49

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1 MR. BROWER: Second.

2

3 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service
4 supports FP23-21 with the OSM modification in deference
5 to the Southeast Regional Advisory Council and for the
6 well reasoned analysis by OSM Staff.

7

8 Kah Sheets Creek is one of three
9 primary sockeye fishing locations for residents of
10 Petersburg that does not require crossing large bodies
11 of water making it accessible to Federally-qualified
12 subsistence users with small boats. In addition there
13 is only truly one good fishing spot on the Kah Sheets
14 Creek which is located below the waterfall. Increasing
15 competition with non-Federally-qualified users at the
16 falls has led to user conflicts and potentially to
17 decreased harvest success for subsistence users.
18 Eliminating competition at the waterfalls from non-
19 subsistence users coming from local lodges while
20 keeping Kah Sheets Lake open to all users will give a
21 Federal preference to rural residents and reduce user
22 conflicts over sockeye salmon.

23

24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25

26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
27 Board discussion or deliberation.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
32 question.

33

34 MR. BROWER: Question.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue,
37 please.

38

39 MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to
40 adopt FP23-21 as modified by OSM.

41

42 Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

43

44 MR. SCHMID: Forest Service supports
45 with the justification I just provided.

46

47 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Sarah
48 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

49

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1 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
2 supports Proposal FP23-21 with OSM modification for the
3 reasons stated in the Forest Service motion and in
4 deference to the Southeast Regional Advisory Council.

5

6 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Fish and
7 Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

8

9 MS. KLEIN: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
10 Service votes in support of Proposal 23-21 with the OSM
11 modification in deference to the Southeast Regional
12 Advisory Council and also in support of the Forest
13 Service's justification.

14

15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
16 BLM.

17

18 MR. COHN: BLM supports FP23-21 as
19 modified by OSM, in deference to the Southeast Regional
20 Advisory Council and following the justifications as
21 put forth in the Forest Service motion.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. BIA, Glenn
26 Chen.

27

28 MR. CHEN: The BIA supports the motion.
29 Our vote is based on deference to the Southeast
30 Regional Advisory Council. We concur with the
31 justification provided by the Council as well as that
32 given by U.S. Forest Service Member Mr. Schmid.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
37 Member Rhonda Pitka.

38

39 MS. PITKA: I vote to support FP23-21.
40 The Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
41 Council laid out a really good justification for why
42 that should be particularly closed.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
47 Member Charlie Brower.

48

49 MR. BROWER: I support Proposal FP23-21

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1 with modification in deference from Southeast Alaska
2 Subsistence Advisory Council.

3

4 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Chair
5 Christianson.

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I support
8 in deference to the RAC.

9

10 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The motion
11 passes unanimously.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on
14 to FCR23-23.

15

16 MR. SANDERS: Hello, again, Mr. Chair
17 and Members of the Board. Again, for the record my
18 name is Andrew Sanders and I'm a Fisheries Biologist
19 with the U.S. Forest Service. I will be presenting
20 Fisheries Closure Review 23-23 which can be found on
21 Page 658.

22

23 Fisheries Closure Review 23-23 is a
24 routine review of the Federal subsistence salmon
25 closure on the Taku River. This is the first review of
26 the closure since it has been in place. The Taku River
27 has been closed to all subsistence salmon fishing since
28 2008. The Taku is a Transboundary River with
29 headwaters in Canada. There are approximately 30 river
30 miles between the Canadian Border and the mouth of the
31 River in Taku Inlet. The mouth is approximately 18
32 miles east of Juneau. At the time of the initial
33 closure the Subsistence Board stated that it was
34 because no salmon fishery in the Taku was authorized by
35 the Pacific Salmon Treaty, however, the language of the
36 Pacific Salmon Treaty states that the provisions
37 regarding total allowable catch only applied to the
38 District 111 drift gillnet fishery and Canadian in-
39 river fisheries. Currently there is a State personal
40 use sockeye fishery on the Taku. The personal use
41 sockeye fishery is generally open July 1st to July 31st
42 but was pushed to July 14th to August 13th in 2022.

43

44 The annual limit for sockeye on the
45 Taku is 10 for a household of one person and 20 for a
46 household of two or more people and set gillnets are
47 the only allowable gear. Permits are not issued for
48 coho or king salmon in the Taku. The average annual
49 personal use sockeye in the Taku is 1,216 fish and 124
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1 permits.

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Sockeye escapement has consistently remained well above the escapement goal range and the 10 year average sockeye escapement has more than doubled the sockeye management objective of 58,000 fish. However, chinook salmon escapement in the Taku has fallen below the escapement goal range since 2016. The Taku River has been recommended as a chinook salmon stock of concern.

Subsistence harvest in the Taku is expected to be limited due to its distant location from any communities with rural determinations. Hoonah is the closest subsistence community to the river at approximately 50 air miles. It is approximately 96 miles from Hoonah to the mouth of the Taku by boat.

The OSM conclusion is to rescind the closure.

Title VIII of ANILCA mandates that Federal subsistence be given priority over other consumptive uses of fish and wildlife resources. Currently there is an open State personal use fishery on the Taku therefore the current Federal subsistence closure is out of compliance with ANILCA. The language of the Pacific Salmon Treaty does not specifically bar the creation of a Federal subsistence fishery. Although there is a biological concern for chinook salmon in the Taku sockeye escapement has consistently exceeded management objectives over the last decade.

If the closure is rescinded, seasons and harvest limits on the Taku would be set by the general season and harvest limits until the Board is able to set specific seasons and limits. In the absence of specific limits for sockeye they are the same as the limit for the adjacent personal use fishery. On the Taku, again, that is an annual limit of 10 fish for a household of one and 20 fish for a household of two or more. The general limit for coho is 20 fish per day. There is no closed season for salmon in the Southeast region outside the Stikine and there are no limits on chinook. Until such time as the Board were able to set seasons and limits for the Taku in-season management could be used to prevent the harvest of chinook salmon in the Taku under subsistence regulations.

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1 Thank you.

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And I'm happy to take any questions that the Board may have.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions from the Board for Andrew.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or seeing none, any public comment received.

MR. SANDERS: There were no public comments on FCR23-23.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Andrew. We'll move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation comments.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. There were no questions or comments on Proposal FCR23-23.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Regional Advisory Council recommendation.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Cathy Needham for the Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council.

The Council voted to rescind the closure. The Council was informed that this fishery was not mentioned in the Pacific Salmon Treaty but it wasn't necessarily intentionally excluded, it was just never listed, addressed or approved. This is the last hurdle to overcome before the Council could support the creation of a chinook fishery and, although, the Taku River will continue to be closed until escapement goals reached this could lay a foundation to help subsistence users meet their harvest needs in the future.

This would not restrict anyone since no regulation is created with rescinding the closure.

The Council would also like to acknowledge the TransBoundary Technical Committee

1 citation in the analysis that encouraged that
2 subsistence has a place in this Treaty.

3
4 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
7 questions from the Board for the RAC.

8
9 (No comments)

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
12 seeing none we'll move on to the Alaska Department of
13 Fish and Game.

14
15 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
17 supports the continued closure of the Taku River for
18 Federal subsistence salmon harvest to be consistent
19 with the provisions of the 2019 Pacific Salmon Treaty
20 Agreement.

21
22 Annex 4, Chapter 1 of the 2019 Treaty
23 Agreement defines the harvest sharing arrangements
24 between the U.S. and Canada regarding TransBoundary
25 Rivers for salmon that spawn in the Canadian portion of
26 the Alsek, Taku and Stikine Rivers. The 2019 agreement
27 does not include provisions for subsistence harvest of
28 salmon on the U.S. portions of the Taku River. This is
29 unlike the Stikine River which does include specific
30 provisions to address U.S. subsistence harvest on the
31 Stikine River.

32
33 The Taku River chinook salmon have been
34 listed as a stock of concern and the Alaska Board of
35 Fisheries has developed an action plan to reduce
36 harvest of Taku River chinook salmon across Southeast
37 Alaska fisheries. Taku River sockeye and coho salmon
38 are managed in accordance with harvest sharing
39 arrangements specified in the 2019 Pacific Salmon
40 Treaty Agreement based on pre-season projections and
41 in-season run strength.

42
43 With that I will just pose one question
44 as -- I mean we are just reacting to a closure review
45 but does anybody on the Board or did OSM actually reach
46 out to the Pacific Salmon Commission or any of the
47 Treaty Seatholders to see how they would interpret the
48 opening of this fishery.

49
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1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.

4 Anybody have questions.

5

6 MS. PITKA: No, he had a question.

7

8 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Who did?

9

10 MS. PITKA: Ben.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, Ben had a
13 question, yeah sorry.

14

15 (Pause)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'll call
18 on Scott for that question, Ben, sorry.

19

20 MR. AYERS: Mr. Chair, thank you.
21 Through the Chair. No we did not reach out to the
22 Pacific -- to the Board related to whether or not this
23 was part of the Treaty at that point in time although I
24 do believe Staff reviewed the 2019 Treaty to ensure
25 that this wasn't an issue.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

30 Thank you, Scott.

31

32 I also glassed over open the floor for
33 public testimony.

34

35 (Pause)

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator was
38 there anybody online.

39

40 OPERATOR: We have no participants,
41 thank you.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
44 InterAgency Staff Committee.

45

46 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
47 InterAgency Staff Committee provided the same comment
48 as the one provided for FCR23-12 and I read that into
49 the record yesterday. It has been requested that as
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1 some people, in the room today, were not hear yesterday
2 or did not hear these comments yesterday I'll read the
3 comments into the record if you don't mind.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 The InterAgency Staff Committee
8 acknowledges that this closure is out of compliance
9 with Title VIII of ANILCA by being closed to fishing by
10 Federally-qualified subsistence users while allowing
11 for sportfishing under State regulations. The Board
12 would need to take action to bring this situation back
13 into compliance with ANILCA. The Board could modify
14 the closure by closing to all uses. The Board could
15 also rescind the closure and provide a priority
16 consumptive use to federally qualified subsistence
17 users.

18

19 The Council has recommended the closure
20 be rescinded, bringing this fishery back into
21 compliance with ANILCA. In the absence of this closure
22 standard, area Federal subsistence regulations would
23 apply which could present conservation concerns.

24

25 Permanent regulations would be the
26 preferable solution to address possible conservation
27 concerns while still providing a meaningful priority to
28 Federally-qualified subsistence users. Until the Board
29 receives and takes action on regulatory proposals,
30 Federal managers can use their delegated authority if
31 conservation concerns arise.

32

33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34

35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
36 Robbin. Any Board discussion with Council Chairs and
37 State Liaison.

38

39 Jill, you have the floor.

40

41 MS. KLEIN: Thank you. Yeah, I had a
42 question related to the Southeast RAC's -- Regional
43 Advisory Council's comments where they support
44 rescinding the closure, it's on Page 670 and it was
45 mentioned that they understood the last hurdle to
46 overcome before the Council could support creation of a
47 chinook fishery and although the Taku River will
48 continue to be closed until escapement goal is reached,
49 this could lay a foundation to help subsistence users

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1 meet their harvest needs in the future.

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So I'm not sure if this is a question for the Council or for the Forest Service just to try to understand if the fishery will remain closed, is that going to be done by a fishery manager?

MR. SCHMID: Dave Schmid with the Forest Service. Yes, the Federal in-season manager has the authority there in Petersburg to open or close those seasons and would be doing that certainly in consultation with the State and others to ensure conversation measure are in place there for chinook.

MS. KLEIN: Okay, thank you. And just to maybe further clarify though was that agreed to, that it would be closed in advance. It's just the reading of the language in the Southeast RAC's narrative made it seem like that would be the case.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, let me -- I would have to ask Staff there, it was my assumption that it was but maybe I'd ask the RAC Co-Chair here if they had any information regarding that when they put together their justification.

MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Southeast Regional Advisory Council views this as a future opportunity. It is not necessarily something that we had talked about putting into regulation immediately. So I think the point is or the justification is is that there is a personal use fishery on the Taku River, there is no mechanism for creating a subsistence fishery on the Taku River because of the closure that is in place that was carried over. And that includes -- that goes on beyond just the chinook fishery. The justification does focus on a chinook fishery as the Southeast Council has also spent some time putting regulations forward in the Board of Fish to potentially -- to change language that was residual in there that did not have a subsistence fishery for king salmon, or chinook salmon, in Southeast Alaska.

So it is a potential step in the future but right now there is not a regulation that is being proposed in going forward with that, it's just recognizing that a subsistence fishery does not exist when there is a personal use fishery and that we

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1 understand that delegated authority would be able to
2 close any regulation that did put in place for
3 conservation -- under conservation concerns.

4
5 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6
7 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Cathy.

8
9 MS. PITKA: I have something.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Before Rhonda
12 I'll recognize Ben.

13
14 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. Just
15 for clarification purposes. The reason there is a
16 personal use fishery on the Taku is because it falls
17 within the Juneau area non-subsistence area so the
18 State is unable to create a subsistence fishery on that
19 river.

20
21 Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda, you
24 have the floor.

25
26 MS. PITKA: Okay. So I was going to
27 ask -- so was it -- do we know if it was overlooked by
28 the Pacific Salmon Treaty, that the Taku was not
29 mentioned for a subsistence harvest? I'm not as
30 familiar with that TransBoundary River as I am with
31 other ones. So do we have clarification on that.

32
33 MR. MULLIGAN: Through the Chair.
34 Member Pitka, I cannot answer that question for you
35 unfortunately.

36
37 (Teleconference interference -
38 participants not muted)

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry,
41 Operator, online we have somebody that's coming
42 through, can you mute their line please.

43
44 Any other Board questions, comments,
45 clarifications.

46
47
48 (No comments)

49
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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, that's a
2 point that I've been trying to stick with, with some of
3 the urban, you know, centers have set that local area
4 plan in place with the State, right, and they kind of
5 circumference a large area, I mean especially around
6 Juneau and Ketchikan and if we -- how to navigate that
7 was a question in my head that was posed last week to
8 myself how do you do that when we try to regulate
9 subsistence inside of a local area management plan with
10 the State, right, I'll put that out there for somebody
11 to tackle, so thank you for that. Because we have
12 proposals from Ketchikan that would be similar in
13 something so just as far as wrapping our mind around
14 this concept, it's probably something we're going to be
15 looking at in the future.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 Any other Board discussion or
20 deliberation.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
25 seeing none we'll open the floor for a Board motion.

26
27 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

28
29 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
30 floor, Dave.

31
32 MR. SCHMID: Dave Schmid, Forest
33 Service. I move to support rescinding FCR23-23,
34 following a second I will explain why I intend to
35 support my motion.

36
37 MS. CREACHBAUM: NPS seconds.

38
39 MR. SCHMID: Thank you. The Forest
40 Service supports rescinding FCR23-23 in deference to
41 the Southeast Regional Advisory Council and for the
42 reasons outlined by the Regional Advisory Council and
43 OSM.

44
45 The Taku River is open to State
46 personal use salmon fishing but not to Federal
47 subsistence fishing making it out of compliance with
48 the rural priority provision mandated in Title VIII of
49 ANILCA. Rescinding the closure would bring the Taku
50

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1 River into compliance with ANILCA. Currently the
2 harvest indicates there is no conservation concern.
3 The Federal in-season manager has the authority to open
4 and close seasons, et cetera, in case a conservation
5 concern arises until the Board receives and takes
6 actions on regulatory proposals.

7

8 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
11 That opens the floor for Board discussion.
12 Deliberation.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
17 seeing none, call for the question.

18

19 MS. CREACHBAUM: Question.

20

21 MR. BROWER: Question.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue,
24 please.

25

26 MS. DETWILER: The motion is to support
27 FCR23-23 to rescind the closure.

28

29 Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

30

31 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service
32 supports rescinding FCR23-23 with the justification I
33 just provided.

34

35 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Sarah
36 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

37

38 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
39 supports rescinding FCR23-23 for the reasons stated by
40 the Forest Service's motion and in deference to the
41 Southeast Regional Advisory Council recommendation.

42

43 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Jill Klein,
44 Fish and Wildlife Service.

45

46 MS. KLEIN: The Fish and Wildlife
47 Service supports rescinding the closure to bring the
48 Taku River into compliance with ANILCA and to support
49 future subsistence opportunity and we support the

50

0301

1 Forest Service's justification including reference to
2 the ability of the in-season manager to close the
3 fishery as needed for conservation concerns or other
4 concerns as needed.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
9 BLM.

10

11 MR. COHN: BLM supports rescinding the
12 closure in deference to the Southeast Alaska
13 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and following the
14 justification in the Forest Service motion.

15

16 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. BIA, Glenn
17 Chen.

18

19 MR. CHEN: The BIA also votes to
20 rescind this closure that's described in FCR23-23. We
21 give deference to the Southeast Regional Advisory
22 Council's recommendation and concur with the
23 justification that the Council provided as well as the
24 justification provided Forest Service Board Member, Mr.
25 Schmid.

26

27 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
28 Member Rhonda Pitka.

29

30 MS. PITKA: I vote to support
31 rescinding the closure of FCR23-23 based on the
32 Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
33 justification on Page 670. Thank you.

34

35 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
36 Member Charlie Brower.

37

38 MR. BROWER: I move to support to
39 rescind the closure of FCR23-23.

40

41 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Chair
42 Christianson.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support in
45 deference.

46

47 MS. DETWILER: Motion passes
48 unanimously.

49

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll call on
2 the Staff to present FCR23-24.

3
4 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 For the record my name is Jake Musslewhite, I am a
6 Fisheries Biologist for the Forest Service out of
7 Juneau. FCR23-24 is a review of the closure of the
8 waters of Neva Lake, Neva Creek and South Creek to the
9 harvest of sockeye salmon by non-Federally-qualified
10 users. The review begins on Page 674 of the meeting
11 book. This is the first review since the closure was
12 first put in place in 2019, and the closure was
13 originally proposed to protect subsistence uses in the
14 face of declining escapements, the result in reduced
15 harvest limits and perceptions of user conflict.

16
17 The Neva system is located near the
18 community of Excursion Inlet and is within the
19 traditional fishing grounds of the Hoonah Tlingit.
20 Residents of Icy Strait communities, primarily Hoonah,
21 Gustavus and Excursion Inlet are the principal
22 Federally-qualified subsistence users of Neva Lake
23 sockeye salmon, while a portion of the harvest is taken
24 by Federally-qualified residents of the Juneau area.
25 The community of Excursion Inlet is home to a seafood
26 processing plant, a number of seasonal recreational
27 cabins and several fishing lodges, one large
28 specializes in unguided anglers who provides clients
29 with boats, equipment and local knowledge but does not
30 typically provide a fishing guide. The seafood
31 processing plant has not operated for several years and
32 is not anticipated to reopen in the near future.

33
34 There is documented history of user
35 conflicts in the area. A 2006 survey of local
36 knowledge and use of sockeye salmon in the Hoonah area
37 found that some respondents avoided the Neva Creek area
38 due to competition between user groups and that
39 subsistence harvest in the area were subject to more
40 law enforcement monitoring than non-resident clients of
41 the fishing lodges.

42
43 The original proponent of the closure
44 also cited competition between user groups as a major
45 factor in proposing the closure.

46
47 Sockeye salmon returning to Neva Lake
48 are targeted in both subsistence and sportfisheries
49 occurring in the Neva South Creek drainage and in the
50

1 marine waters of Excursion Inlet as well as
2 incidentally in mixed stock commercial fisheries in Icy
3 Strait and Excursion Inlet. Commercial harvest is
4 likely negligible as in most years there are no
5 commercial purse seine openings in the area.
6 Sportharvest of Neva Lake sockeye has been estimated
7 using a sportfish harvest survey on the annual
8 statewide mail survey sent to a portion of both the
9 resident and non-resident fishing license holders. In
10 recent years an average of less than one surveyed
11 angler reported fishing at Neva or South Creeks which
12 does not provide enough data to make a statistically
13 valid estimate of effort of catch but indicates that
14 use is likely fairly low. Log book data from guided
15 freshwater anglers also shows minimal effort and catch
16 by guided anglers, so overall sportharvest of Neva Lake
17 sockeye salmon is probably fairly low.

18
19 Subsistence fishing at the Neva system
20 takes place both in freshwater and in marine waters at
21 the mouth of South Creek. Most subsistence fishing is
22 done under the State permit system, though some harvest
23 occurs using Federal permits.

24
25 The harvest limits have varied
26 considerably over the years in response to escapements.
27 The limit was increased from 10 to 25 in 2002 and
28 increased again to 40 in 2004. As escapements declined
29 the limit was decreased to 30 in 2015 and to its
30 current level of 10 fish in 2016. Subsistence harvest
31 of sockeye at Neva has declined sharply in recent years
32 especially since the harvest limit was reduced to 10
33 fish. From 2004 to 2015 the annual reported harvest
34 was an average of 436 sockeye on 29 permits. From 2016
35 to '21 that has dropped to an average of 85 sockeye on
36 15 permits.

37
38 Then on Table 1 on Page 685 in the book
39 details the reported the subsistence harvest but I need
40 to point out that the data for 2019 and 2020 is in
41 error, it shows zero reported harvest but I discovered
42 that the harvest at Neva for those years was miss-
43 assigned to the Neka River until we caught that so the
44 actual harvest in 2019 was 83 sockeye on 15 permits and
45 2020 was 21 sockeye on six permits and then 35 sockeye
46 on 7 permits in 2021.

47
48 So it's not quite zero but the reported
49 harvest has declined dramatically in recent years.
50

0304

1 So the amount of unreported harvest is
2 unknown as only limited harvest monitoring has occurred
3 in the Neva Creek area.

4
5 The State permit system does not record
6 whether harvest occurred in Federal waters, i.e., the
7 freshwater, or in State managed marine waters where
8 this closure does not apply, however, in many cases we
9 can infer the water type from the gear being used;
10 beach seines and gillnets are typically used in marine
11 waters while dipnets and gaffs are used in freshwater.
12 Based on the inferred gear type about half the harvest
13 occurs in Federal waters subject to the closure. The
14 Department does record the residence community of the
15 harvester though so between 2008 and 2017 about 43
16 percent of the reported sockeye harvest was by non-
17 Federally-qualified users all from the Juneau area and
18 the remaining 57 percent was predominately from
19 residents of Hoonah and Gustavus. Thus, about a
20 quarter of the typical harvest there has been from non-
21 Federally-qualified users fishing in Federal public
22 waters, so the folks affected by this closure.

23
24 The OSM conclusion is to rescind the
25 closure under the Board Closure Policy in Section .815
26 of ANILCA. A closure to non-subsistence uses may only
27 be used to conserve healthy populations of fish and
28 wildlife for the reasons set forth in Section .816 to
29 continue subsistence uses of those populations or
30 pursuant to other applicable law. In the case of Neva
31 Lake sockeye salmon ongoing monitoring is showing the
32 population is at healthy levels after increasing from a
33 low point in 2015.

34
35 While there is a documented history of
36 user conflict and competition in the area, the current
37 level of harvest and use by non-Federally-qualified
38 users is not a substantial barrier to subsistence use.
39 The drop in overall subsistence use is more likely due
40 to the restrictive harvest limit and a perception of
41 low abundance than competition from non-Federally-
42 qualified users of the resource. And this closure may
43 discourage subsistence use by contributing to the
44 perception of a conservation concern while doing
45 relatively little per competition. With that said, the
46 closure is not necessary to continue subsistence uses
47 of Neva Lake sockeye salmon.

48
49 And I'd be happy to take any questions.
50

0305

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions
2 from the Board for Staff.

3
4 MR. CHEN: Mr. Chair, BIA.

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have it.

7
8 MR. CHEN: Thank you, Mr. Musslewhite
9 for that presentation. Could you please repeat those
10 numbers about the harvest, I didn't quite have time to
11 write them down?

12
13 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yeah, through the
14 Chair. So starting in 2019 there was 83 sockeye on 15
15 permits. In 2020 there was 21 sockeye on six permits.
16 And then in 2021 there was 35 sockeye on seven permits.

17
18 MR. CHEN: Thank you for that. I also
19 wanted to ask a question. On Page 687 of the Staff
20 analysis there's some discussion about the situation
21 with Covid possibly reducing the number of people from
22 the seafood processing plant going over there and also
23 Covid possibly reducing the number of sport anglers
24 from the different lodges and so forth. So that
25 probably was correct for those years when Covid was a
26 big consideration in terms of visitation and seafood
27 workers out there? This possibly could change, though,
28 with the cessation of Covid and the increase in
29 visitors and so forth following this, did you consider
30 this in your analysis, please?

31
32 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes, that's correct.
33 I actually run that monitoring project there so I spend
34 a lot of time on the ground at Neva and so when this
35 closure went into place I was curious to see what the
36 effect would be, however, it coincided with Covid, so
37 the place turned into a ghost town for other reasons.
38 the Ocean Beauty Seafood Plant there, which essentially
39 Excursion Inlet is largely that plant, and kind of
40 surrounding area, that closed, they couldn't really run
41 due to Covid concerns and then since that closure Ocean
42 Beauty has sort of pulled resources out and has
43 essentially stopped running that plant and I know it's
44 not expected to run next year and it seems to me to be
45 headed toward a long-term if not permanent mothballing
46 which sort of started with the Covid thing and also
47 the, you know, the lodges had a lot reduced. That has
48 picked back up, you know, I saw this past year there
49 were more boats running around from the lodge and stuff
50

0306

1 so it made it difficult to fully evaluate the effect of
2 the closure just in those first couple of years, if
3 that makes sense.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MR. CHEN: Thank you for that. If I
8 could followup with another question. So it sounds
9 like the Ocean Beauty Plant is probably going to remain
10 closed for some time, you did mention that there's been
11 an uptick in sport fishers using -- coming in that area
12 and fishing, that could possibly resume some of these
13 competition concerns that were a part of the reason for
14 the original closure?

15

16 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yeah, through the
17 Chair. Mr. Chen. Yes, I think that is entirely
18 possibly that, you know, we could see resumption of
19 some of those things. As I said I do spend a lot of
20 time on the ground there so part of this is based just
21 on my personal observations. And, you know, we see --
22 I see, personally, sportfishermen fishing at the mouth
23 of the creek, especially in the State waters, you know,
24 they're not covered by this closure, I very rarely, if
25 ever, see any kind of guided folks up stream in the
26 Federal public waters, just a handful of what appears
27 to be residents and such so most of that like guided,
28 angler and charter boat stuff is out in the marine
29 waters of Excursion Inlet exclusively so and very
30 rarely get sockeye salmon out there, they're mostly
31 targeting coho, halibut, things like that.

32

33 MR. CHEN: Thank you for that
34 additional information, appreciate it.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I have a
37 question for Staff, maybe through the Regional Advisory
38 Council, did they take that into consideration as if it
39 does become open to non-Federally-qualified subsistence
40 users, like Glenn's stating, if it is opened then it
41 becomes an opportunity then they capitalized on it,
42 that just seems my understanding of how the commercial
43 industry works and I would just be concerned that it
44 becomes an option for the lodge, period. That would be
45 a concern of mine.

46

47 I was just wondering if you guys had
48 that topic.

49

50

0307

1 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Chair. I
2 don't think we did discuss that specifically. We
3 discussed the potential, the amount of competition for
4 Federally-qualified subsistence users on a resource
5 that is rebounding and the fact that Federally-
6 qualified subsistence users have low amount of -- a low
7 bag limit of 10 fish and so the data, as we know it,
8 don't capture like why subsistence fishermen, they may
9 not be going there because they go -- it's a ways to go
10 for 10 fish. So, yeah, I can address that more in our
11 Council comments, I think, if you'd like.

12
13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I guess that
14 would lead into the question I had is it is a reduced
15 here and we're opening it up, did we consider
16 increasing that harvest back to the subsistence user
17 prior to opening it back up carte blanche for
18 everybody, you know, it seems like we should -- I mean
19 I won't go nowhere for 10 fish but I'll go for 40 so I
20 can see where the user group itself is just going to
21 make that determination based on we're efficient
22 fishermen.

23
24 Staff.

25
26 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
27 Yes, I -- as I spend a lot of time there and thinking
28 about this system, that 10 fish limit, is in my mind
29 the biggest barrier to subsistence use on that system
30 so I have been working with the local managers at
31 Department of Fish and Game to increase that harvest
32 limit to 20, which I think, hopefully, will -- I think
33 it's in the works, I don't know the status of it now
34 but that may take effect next year, possibly.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
37 That was a good discussion just on Staff presentation.
38 Did you receive any public testimony on this?

39
40 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: No, we did not
41 receive any written public comments.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
44 We'll move on to open the floor to public testimony.

45
46 (No comments)

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anybody online,
49 Operator, that would like to be recognized at this
50

0308

1 time, it's their opportunity for FCR23-24.

2

3 OPERATOR: I show no participants in
4 cue. Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
7 We'll call on the Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation
8 comments.

9

10 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board
11 Members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. We did
12 not receive any comments or questions during
13 consultation session on 23-24.

14

15 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
18 We'll move on to the Regional Advisory Council
19 recommendation.

20

21 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
22 Cathy Needham for the Southeast Alaska Regional
23 Advisory Council.

24

25 The Council voted to retain the status
26 quo of the closure. The Council found that this is --
27 that there is substantial evidence that unguided
28 sportfishing is negatively affecting subsistence users
29 harvest of sockeye salmon. This Council has made
30 significant attempts in the past to address this issue,
31 including, but not limited, to submitting various
32 proposals through the State's Board of Fish proposal
33 process to help gather data and address the impacts of
34 unguided non-resident fishing.

35

36 The Council continues to recognize the
37 challenge of developing information other than
38 traditional ecological knowledge, a perceptiveness that
39 often gets discounted and results in no action being
40 taken and continued impact on subsistence resources.

41

42 Maintaining the status quo of the
43 closure gives time to propose increasing limits for
44 subsistence users to provide a meaningful subsistence
45 priority. It also will help subsistence users meet
46 their need and provide safer conditions to fish.

47

48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49

50

0309

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
2 questions from the Board for the RAC.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
7 seeing none, thank you. We'll move on to Alaska
8 Department of Fish and Game.

9
10 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the
11 record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes
12 the continuation of this closure. Based on ADF&G's
13 analysis of the data available we have no conservation
14 concerns at this time and given the small amount of
15 fishing efforts by non-Federally-qualified users within
16 the area none of these stipulations under -- or given
17 these reasons there are no stipulations under ANILCA
18 that would apply for the continuation of this closure.

19
20 Thank you, sir.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
23 questions.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
28 we'll move on to the InterAgency Staff Committee.

29
30 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
31 InterAgency Staff Committee provided their standard
32 comment. And as it's the first time I might be
33 presenting the standard comment today I'll read it --
34 or, well, the last time actually, I'll read it into the
35 record.

36
37 The InterAgency Staff Committee found
38 the analysis to be a thorough and accurate evaluation
39 of the proposal and that it provides sufficient basis
40 for the Regional Advisory Council recommendation and
41 the Federal Subsistence Board action on this proposal.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
46 That opens up for Board discussion, Council Chair and
47 State Liaison.

48
49 (No comments)

50

0310

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing and
2 seeing none, the floor is open.....

3

4 MR. CHEN: Mr. Chair, BIA.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
7 the floor Glenn.

8

9 MR. CHEN: Thank you. So as Mr.
10 Musslewhite suggested, the current bag limit is rather
11 low and that might be limiting users participation in
12 this fishery, as he also pointed out there's a move
13 afoot to increase that bag limit and as you point out,
14 Mr. Chair, that's one of your considerations for
15 traveling to participate in a fishery like this. So
16 should that increase happen, the current information
17 about existing use might not reflect what might happen
18 should the bag limit go up to 20, right, and so with
19 that increase and possibility of greater participation
20 by users that might kind of counteract the artificially
21 low numbers, use that we've seen so far of the existing
22 data.

23

24 So I wanted to ask the question of Ms.
25 Needham, was any information or consideration discussed
26 at your Council meeting?

27

28 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Chair. Mr.
29 Chen. Yes, there was a bit of discussion at the
30 Council meeting amongst Council members who are
31 familiar with the Neva Lake system and also the Hoonah
32 Indian Association had representatives on our Council
33 and they are -- Hoonah is one of the closest
34 communities to the Neva system and there was not -- at
35 that time there was not a discussion of what Mr.
36 Musslewhite brought before us in terms of an increase
37 to 20 fish but my understanding of our deliberations
38 were that given that the population -- the conservation
39 concern on the population is being lifted, that a
40 meaningful opportunity really needed to be provided for
41 subsistence users and 10 fish was -- to cross Icy
42 Straits 10 fish was kind of a long way to go. And we
43 did also talk a little bit about some of the past
44 harvest limits and so we have seen where subsistence
45 users have been able to harvest up to 40 fish rather
46 than the 10 fish so even though we didn't talk about 20
47 I think there was just a general agreement that the
48 more fish that they would be able to access would make
49 it a more appealing and distance to go for fish

50

0311

1 harvesting out of Neva Lake -- or Neva Creek -- sorry.

2

3 MR. CHEN: Thank you, very much, Ms.
4 Needham.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
7 other questions from the Board for the RAC, State.
8 Jill, you have the floor.

9

10 MS. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
11 just a followup, I guess, on Mr. Chen's question and
12 Jake speaking to potentially increasing the bag limit.
13 It wasn't clear to me, is that something that the State
14 would be doing and which users are we talking about --
15 which fishery and which users, if that could just get
16 clarified on the record that everyone's referring to.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think that
19 was a question for Ben.

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: I am afraid that I would
22 not be able to answer that question. We do not
23 inhibit, you know, area managers from communication and
24 that has not been brought up the chain at this point in
25 time so maybe the Forest Service biologist would know.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben.
28 And we'll go ahead and ask Scott -- no, not Scott,
29 Andrew -- or, no, Jake, you know, you know, one of us.

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes, thanks for that,
34 this is Jack Musslewhite with the Forest Service again.
35 Could you repeat the question.

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Jill.

38

39 MS. KLEIN: Thank you. Sure. You had
40 mentioned that you had been in talks with Fish and Game
41 about potentially increasing the bag limit and that was
42 perhaps in response to Chair Christianson's comments
43 about a higher bag limit would make it a more
44 attractive fishery to perhaps go fish in. So I just
45 wasn't clear if that would be the State raising the bag
46 limit and is that for all users and, yeah, if you could
47 clarify which fishery and which user groups would have
48 access to that higher bag limit.

49

50

0312

1 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Through the Chair.
2 Ms. Klein. Yes, so I was in discussion with the Juneau
3 Area Management Biologist, and they have delegated
4 authority from the Board of Fish to adjust those permit
5 amounts and it's nice because since the Federal system
6 uses those in the same waters, if we can adjust the
7 State permit harvest limits, we automatically adjust
8 the Federal harvest limits simultaneously. So they
9 have delegated authority to do from the Board of Fish.
10 It's an easier process for them, I think, with the 30
11 day public notice and that sort of thing. So I --
12 since I run the monitoring project there and, you know,
13 watch the system closely I work with him, showed him
14 all of our data and, you know, essentially suggested
15 that a 20 fish limit would be more appropriate, he
16 agreed and began the State process, which I am not
17 familiar with. It's been invisible to me since then
18 and this was like maybe a month ago so I don't know
19 where it is in their inner-workings. But as far as I
20 know that ball is rolling. If that helps.

21
22 MS. KLEIN: Okay, thank you. So you're
23 saying then the non-Federally-qualified users in the
24 State fishery would have -- or all users would have
25 access in the State fishery to the 20 bag limit and
26 then you could do a corresponding increase for the
27 Federally-qualified subsistence users if this were
28 open?

29
30 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes. Almost all of
31 the fishing there is done under the State permit
32 system, you know, which applies equally to both, you
33 know, qualified and non-Federally-qualified users,
34 there's maybe one or two folks that fish on Federal
35 permits there so it would apply to essentially all
36 people fishing under a subsistence permit there. But
37 if you do choose to fish under a Federal permit you'd
38 be using the State permit harvest limit in those, you
39 know, adjacent waters. If that makes sense.

40
41 MS. KLEIN: Okay, thank you.

42
43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
44 other questions. Thank you, Jake.

45
46 It sounds like we talked it up and down
47 the floor's open for a motion.

48
49 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

50

0313

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
2 floor.

3
4 MR. SCHMID: Dave Schmid with the
5 Forest Service. I move to support rescinding FCR23-24,
6 following a second I will explain why I intend to
7 support my motion.

8
9 MR. BROWER: Second.

10
11 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Charlie. My
12 justification is as follows. The Forest Service
13 supports rescinding FCR23-24 for the reasons outlined
14 in the OSM analysis.

15
16 Under Section .815(3) of ANILCA, the
17 Board closure policy, a closure to non-subsistence
18 users may only be used to conserve healthy populations
19 of fish and wildlife, to continue subsistence uses of
20 those populations, or for health and safety reasons.

21
22 The OSM analysis indicates that sockeye
23 salmon, the population of sockeye salmon in Neva Lake,
24 Neva Creek and South Creek have rebounded and there is
25 no conservation concern. Subsistence uses are not
26 being compromised because there is very little fishing
27 taking place by either Federally-qualified subsistence
28 users or non-Federally. Thus, a restriction to non-
29 Federally-qualified users on Neva Lake, Neva Creek and
30 South Creek is no longer necessary.

31
32 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
35 other Board discussion or deliberation.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
40 seeing none the floor is -- roll call, Sue, please.

41
42 MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to
43 rescind the closure.

44
45 Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

46
47 MR. SCHMID: Again, Forest Service
48 supports rescinding FCR23-24 for the justification I
49 just provided.

50

0314

1 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Sarah
2 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

3
4 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
5 supports rescinding FCR23-24 for the reasons stated by
6 the Forest Service motion.

7
8 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Fish and
9 Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

10
11 MS. KLEIN: The Fish and Wildlife votes
12 to support rescinding the closure FCR23-24 also for the
13 justification shared by the Forest Service.

14
15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
16 BLM.

17
18 MR. COHN: BLM votes to maintain the
19 closure in deference to the Southeast Regional Advisory
20 Council and in light of Staff presentation regarding
21 ongoing discussions to evaluate bag limit increases for
22 Federally-qualified subsistence users.

23
24 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Glenn Chen,
25 BIA.

26
27 MR. CHEN: The BIA votes to oppose the
28 motion, we'd like to retain the closure following the
29 recommendation of the Southeast Regional Advisory
30 Council. It seems that low participation in recent
31 years might have been a result of the reduced bag
32 limit, the likelihood of a higher bag limit could
33 result in more users participating in this fishery
34 harvesting more sockeyes. Also the situation with
35 Covid reducing the number of outside visitors, that
36 might no longer be a problem and we might see
37 resumption of more outside users and then return to
38 some of the competition issues that we were addressing
39 before with the closure.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
44 Member Rhonda Pitka.

45
46 MS. PITKA: I vote to rescind the
47 closure for FCR23-24 based on the justification given
48 by OSM on Page 687 of the book and also the Forest
49 Service justification. Thank you.

50

0315

1 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
2 Member Charlie Brower.

3
4 MR. BROWER: I move to oppose to
5 rescind -- status quo on FCR23-24 as presented by
6 Southeast Regional Advisory Council.

7
8 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. And Chair
9 Christianson.

10
11 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support the
12 Regional Advisory Council to retain and based on the
13 BIA's justification.

14
15 MS. DETWILER: So the vote is four in
16 favor of rescinding and four opposed so it does not
17 pass.

18
19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
20 guys. I'd just like to say that was one of the first
21 times we all had a different vote so it's good to see
22 we do get up here and mix it up a little bit based on
23 the information provided by the public and our partners
24 there and so I appreciate that everybody has a free
25 mind and represents a position.

26
27 Thank you.

28
29 We'll be back at 1:30, time to be
30 determined on the wildlife proposal everyone's waiting
31 for.

32
33 (Off record)

34
35 (On record)

36
37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back
38 after lunch. We'll go ahead and have Sue do roll call
39 just for the record that we establish a quorum before
40 we can go forward. Thank you.

41
42 MS. DETWILER: Okay, this is Sue
43 Detwiler.

44
45 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Glenn Chen.

46
47 MR. CHEN: Present.

48
49 MS. DETWILER: BLM, Steve Cohn.

50

0316

1 MR. COHN: Present.

2

3 MS. DETWILER: Fish and Wildlife
4 Service, Jill Klein.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 MS. DETWILER: National Park Service,
9 Sarah Creachbaum.

10

11 MS. CREACHBAUM: Good afternoon
12 everybody, I'm present.

13

14 MS. DETWILER: Forest Service, Dave
15 Schmid.

16

17 MR. SCHMID: Good afternoon, Sue.
18 Dave's here.

19

20 MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda
21 Pitka.

22

23 MS. PITKA: Here.

24

25 MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie
26 Brower by teleconference.

27

28 (No comments)

29

30 MS. DETWILER: Chair Anthony
31 Christianson.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Present.

34

35 MS. DETWILER: We have six out of eight
36 so you do have a quorum.

37

38 (Pause)

39

40 MS. DETWILER: So we're missing Jill
41 and Charlie.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, is
44 Charlie online.

45

46 OPERATOR: One moment.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm looking for
49 Charlie Brower in the speaker room.

50

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1 OPERATOR: No, sir, he has not dialed
2 in yet.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. All
5 right, we'll go ahead and get started with this
6 meeting.

7
8 We are on Wildlife -- deferred Unit 4
9 deer proposal WP22-07. Staff, you have the floor.

10

11 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12 For the record my name is Jake Musslewhite, I'm a
13 Fishery Biologist for the Forest Service out of Juneau.
14 Wildlife Proposal 22-07 requests that the Federal
15 public lands of Admiralty Island draining into Chatham
16 Strait between Point Marsden and Point Gardner in Unit
17 4 be closed to deer hunting September 15th to November
18 30th except to Federally-qualified subsistence users.
19 It was submitted by the Southeast Regional Advisory
20 Council. And the Staff analysis of the proposal begins
21 on Page 727 of the meeting book.

22

23 The proponent states that it has become
24 more challenging for subsistence hunters in Angoon to
25 harvest sufficient deer to meet their needs due to
26 increased hunting pressure from non-Federally-qualified
27 users. They state that regulatory change is needed to
28 protect the deer population from further depletion and
29 increase opportunity for Federally-qualified
30 subsistence users.

31

32 This proposal was first considered by
33 the Board at their April 2022 meeting with a Council
34 recommendation of supporting the proposal with a
35 reduced closure area. It was deferred by the Board
36 which asked user groups to work together to come up
37 with better solutions. In response to this request OSM
38 organized an open meeting in August 2022 to gather more
39 information on these proposals and to facilitate
40 discussion amongst user groups. OSM, Forest Service
41 and Fish and Game Staff as well as members of the
42 public participated in the meeting. 11 members of the
43 public provided comments and all commenters either
44 opposed the proposals or did not give an explicit
45 position. A summary of that open meeting is included
46 in the Staff analysis.

47

48 In addition, the OSM analysis of the
49 proposal was revised with additional data from
50

0318

1 biological surveys and harvest reports and these are
2 also detailed in the updated Staff analysis in the
3 Board book.

4
5 The current Federal season for deer in
6 Unit 4 is August 1st to January 31st with a limit of
7 six deer. Antlerless deer may only be taken after
8 September 15th. The State general season runs from
9 August 1st to December 31st and also allows antlerless
10 deer to be taken only after September 15th.

11
12 In 2019 the State bag limit was
13 increased from four to six deer.

14
15 Based on the available data, deer
16 populations in Unit 4 are healthy. To assess the deer
17 population ADF&G uses pellet count transects and aerial
18 surveys. While no pellet counts have been done in the
19 proposal area recently, counts in adjacent areas have
20 shown an increasing trend in population. Data from
21 aerial surveys also indicate an increasing in geo
22 populations with Admiralty Island having the highest
23 aerial survey counts within Unit 4. Reports from local
24 users also indicate that deer populations are among the
25 highest in the state.

26
27 We used the data from ADF&G harvest
28 reports between 2000 and 2021 to assess the patterns of
29 deer harvest within the proposal area. Harvest and
30 effort data were grouped by Wildlife Analysis Areas, or
31 WAAs, which roughly correspond to major watersheds or
32 other distinct geographical areas. A map of the six
33 WAAs used is on Page 744 of the meeting book.

34
35 Overall, the success rate of hunters
36 using the proposal area has been relatively stable.
37 The success rate was measured using the number of days
38 hunted per deer harvested and the number of deer
39 harvested per hunter, and graphs for those measures are
40 on Page 748 of the meeting book.

41
42 The days per deer has been variable but
43 stable with Federally-qualified hunters consistently
44 taking less time to harvest a deer than non-qualified
45 hunters. The number of deer per Federally-qualified
46 hunter declined somewhat over the early 2000s but it's
47 been stable for the last decade and is roughly
48 comparable to the non-Federally-qualified rate.

49
50

1 While the harvest and effort data shown
2 in the analysis represent the entire proposal area, the
3 distribution of Federally-qualified and non-Federally-
4 qualified hunters varies across each WAA. Non-
5 Federally-qualified hunters, mainly from Juneau tend to
6 use areas closer to Juneau while Federally-qualified
7 hunters, mainly from Angoon, use areas closer to
8 Angoon. Recognizing this the Southeast Alaska
9 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council in their fall
10 2021 recommendation to the Board recommended adopting
11 WP22-07 with modification to remove WAAs 4043 and 4044
12 from the proposal area. These areas were identified as
13 the ones used most by Juneau hunters and least by the
14 Angoon residents and were removed to reduce the impact
15 of the closure on non-Federally-qualified users. Under
16 the 2021 proposed modification, the amount of harvest
17 and effort by non-Federally-qualified hunters within
18 the reduced proposal areas decreased by about two-
19 thirds.

20

21 This proposal would impose restrictions
22 on non-Federally-qualified users hunting deer on
23 portions of Admiralty Island. The intent of the
24 proposal is to increase opportunity for Federally-
25 qualified subsistence users by limiting competition
26 from non-Federally-qualified users. However, there's
27 little evidence the proposed regulation would increase
28 the availability of deer for Federally-qualified users.
29 Deer populations within the proposal area appear to be
30 healthy and close to carrying capacity and restricting
31 harvest by non-Federally-qualified users is unlikely to
32 result in a significant increase in the deer
33 population.

34

35 Based on ADF&G harvest data indicating
36 no significant change in the deer harvest and hunting
37 effort by Federally-qualified subsistence users in the
38 proposal area, competition from non-Federally-qualified
39 users does not appear to have reduced subsistence uses
40 of deer in the proposal area. However, the perception
41 that Federally-qualified subsistence users are
42 experiencing more competition may stem from increases
43 in encountering other hunters or other user conflicts
44 that are not captured in the data. Local knowledge
45 attests that only one or two boats in this area can
46 negatively affect the success of subsistence hunts
47 because access in some inlets is very small, therefore,
48 even though ADF&G harvest reports indicate no increase
49 in non-Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting in
50

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1 these areas, just a couple can seriously impact
2 subsistence hunts and the proposed closure could reduce
3 the number of such conflicts.

4

5 The OSM conclusion for WP22-07 is to
6 oppose the proposal. Section .815 of ANILCA provides
7 that the Board may restrict non-subsistence uses on
8 Federal public lands if necessary for the conservation
9 of healthy populations of fish and wildlife or to
10 continued subsistence uses of such populations. Any
11 restriction, whether a complete closure or a harvest
12 limit reduction must meet the criteria laid out in
13 Section .815. Deer populations within the area are
14 healthy and there is no conservation concern for deer
15 on the west coast of Admiralty Island indicating
16 restrictions are not necessary for conservation
17 reasons.

18

19 While the presence of only one other
20 boat or a few hunters can negatively affect the success
21 of a subsistence hunter, the reported harvest data
22 shows success rates of Federally-qualified subsistence
23 users have been stable over the last 20-plus years and
24 are among the most favorable in the state. Therefore,
25 restrictions on non-Federally-qualified users are not
26 necessary for the continuation of subsistence uses and
27 the proposed regulation does not meet the criteria
28 identified in Section .815 of ANILCA for restriction of
29 non-subsistence uses.

30

31 And with that I'll be happy to take any
32 questions.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
35 questions from the Board for Staff on the presentation.

36

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
41 thank you. Any public testimony received.

42

43 MR. MUSSLEWHITE: Yes, Mr. Chair. The
44 first time this came around for the April 2022 meeting,
45 we received public comments that were included in that
46 Board book. At that time we had 57 written public
47 comments opposing the proposal and one neutral.

48

49 Among the concerns commonly brought up

50

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1 in the comments were that the proposal will force non-
2 Federally-qualified hunters into a small area leading
3 to over crowding and unsafe conditions. That the deer
4 population is healthy making a closure unwarranted.
5 That the proposal is not based on sound science or
6 justified by data. That the proposal will further
7 divide user groups. The assertion that Federally-
8 qualified subsistence users have had trouble meeting
9 their needs is not supported by the evidence. And that
10 environmental conditions, such as harsh winters are the
11 primary drivers of deer abundance rather than hunting
12 so the proposal will not increase the availability of
13 deer. That the area covered under the proposal is too
14 large. That the proposal would exclude non-qualified
15 family members if qualified users from hunting
16 together. And that the existing January season for
17 Federally-qualified users provides them with a
18 sufficient priority for deer.

19

20 We also recently received one written
21 comment from Fish and Game -- the upper Lynn Canal Fish
22 and Game Advisory Committee so I'll just read that into
23 the record really quick.

24

25 Dated January 18th, 2023.

26

27 Dear Federal Subsistence Board. I am
28 writing to you as the Chair of the Upper Lynn Canal
29 Fish and Game Advisory Committee regarding proposed
30 changes in Federal subsistence regulations that could
31 restrict deer hunting opportunity for non-rural hunters
32 in GMU 4. The Upper Lynn Canal Fish and Game Advisory
33 Committee met December 7th, 2022 and at that meeting
34 discussed the Federal subsistence proposal for GMU 4
35 and how it would affect hunters in our area. We agreed
36 with the Alaska Fish and Game's analysis of the current
37 situation which points out the area has an abundant
38 deer population, non-Federally-qualified hunter use has
39 not increased. Federally-qualified hunter use has
40 declined. And the situation doesn't meet the
41 stipulations set in ANILCA to allow for limiting user
42 groups of this resource.

43

44 At the end of our discussion we voted
45 to send you the above concerns and urge you not to make
46 the proposed changes.

47

48 Different members of the Board shared
49 specific examples of how they, themselves, or people
50

50

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1 they knew would be negatively impacted by the changes.
2 Some of those are recounted below.

3

4

5 Some hunting groups have been using the
6 area continually for over 30 years with people
7 traveling from around the country to hunt. They bring
8 a big boost to local economies and the loss would be
9 significant at a time when every dollar counts in their
10 day to day survival. Rural residents would lose
11 opportunities to hunt with urban friends and relatives
12 which they have been doing for years.

12

13

14 Thank you for the opportunity to
15 comment on the proposed changes.

15

16

17 Sincerely, Tim McDonough, Chair, Upper
18 Lynn Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

18

19

20

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Robbin.

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MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Per
guidance on our website we've been accepting public
comments on Unit 4 deer since the beginning of this
meeting. As of lunch we've received over 1,178
comments in opposition. Per guidance on the website we
won't be reading those into the records but you have
been forwarded them for your notice.

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for the Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At
this time we'll open the floor to the public. As we do
we have an announcement to make, there are three
proposals here today so what we plan on doing with
WP22-07 is opening the floor for public testimony and
as we work through it, as you've heard 1,100 letters
since lunch today so for the order of time and to make
sure we get through the business of this proposal
today, that we ask that people who testify on this
proposal and the next two, if your proposal and your
testimony is the same, we will transfer your testimony
to the next proposal. If listening to the testimony
and to the dialogue for the first proposal adds new
information to your testimony we will entertain you to

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1 come and speak again at that time.

2

3

4 So I know that's a little bit off but
5 we do see a time constraint starting to develop in our
6 Board meeting and it ending on time and being to get
7 all of the order of business done. So we will take
8 public testimony and then as it goes forward we'd just
9 ask the public to be mindful also in the time. So we
10 know this is a passionate issue but we just
11 respectfully request that you just keep your testimony
12 to a confined limit. I'm not going to put a time on
13 that because we know what a confined limit is.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 We'll open up the floor for public
17 testimony and the first I have on my blue card here is
18 Louis Cusak.

19

20 MR. CUSAK: Good afternoon, Chairman
21 and Members of the Board. My name is Louis Cusak. I'm
22 a resident of Chugiak, Alaska. I'm Executive Director
23 for SCI Alaska Chapter but I will be testifying today
24 on my own personal behalf.

25

26 So I won't add anything to the
27 testimony that's already been provided other than I do
28 support it. I think that scientific biological harvest
29 and hunter reports all, you know, clearly state that
30 there's abundance of deer and this closure should not
31 be supported.

32

33 I, on a personal note, I did a little
34 bit of research and Alaska Department of Fish and Game
35 issues 18,000 low income licenses every year. Many of
36 those people live in Juneau and Ketchikan, those
37 individual by current rule, would not be qualified as
38 local subsistence users and we would literally be
39 cutting neighbor off from neighbor from their
40 opportunity to harvest food to feed their family. And
41 from a personal perspective, I just can't see us doing
42 that. I mean we all choose or choose not to live a
43 subsistence lifestyle and we should not stop people
44 from feeding their families when it isn't warranted.

45

46 And that's all I got to say.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
49 questions from the Board. Comments.

50

0324

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,

4 Thank you.

5

6 MR. CUSAK: I did want to clarify that

7 that is for all '7, 8, 9 and 10.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, very
10 much. Appreciate that.

11

12 We'll call on John Sturgeon.

13

14 MR. STURGEON: Good afternoon, Mr.
15 Chairman and Board Members. First of all thank you
16 very much for serving on these boards, I know it's a
17 huge time commitment. I'm on a few boards myself and
18 really appreciate you sitting in these meetings and
19 listening to the public and what our constituents have
20 to say.

21

22 First of all, again, my name is John
23 Sturgeon, I am the current President of Safari Club of
24 Alaska. We have about 750 members in Alaska. Our
25 motto is first for hunters and we work on conservation
26 issues.

27

28 The Safari Club Alaska officially
29 opposes all the deer closures. We don't think they're
30 merited by the science, the facts. We provided you
31 with some written testimony we had prepared by a
32 biologist and went through our board so I'm not going
33 to repeat any of that. Just to say that it doesn't
34 look like science supports this closure at all. There
35 seems to be plenty of deer for everybody in Southeast
36 Alaska and these closures are really not warranted.

37

38 I guess in closing, I don't want to
39 repeat what everybody has said and what our written
40 testimony is but just once again that the Safari Club
41 Alaska, our 750 members oppose this, all these deer
42 proposals and we would hope that you would vote against
43 all of them.

44

45 Again, thank you very much for your
46 time. We appreciate you serving on these boards.

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
49 questions from the Board.

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1 (No comments)

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CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you taking the time to testify today. Thank you.

Anyone else in the room who would like to be recognized. I only had two blue cards so I thought that I would have had 22.

MR. RICHARDS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, my name is Mark Richards. I'm the Executive Director of Resident Hunters of Alaska and I'm testifying for our organization today. I really wanted to do this when these proposals were before you guys. so I'll just be brief. Please refer to my earlier comments.

Something I forgot to mention is that recently the Board of Game at the Ketchikan meeting limited all non-resident hunters in Unit 4 to two deer. So that is also something that you might take into account.

And just one other thing that I want to mention is that I think that you're going to see more proposals similar to this that are really based on competition with other hunters and I really want to see all of you follow the science and really look into what's actually happening because as I said previously, none of us like to compete with other hunters but we all have to compete with other hunters no matter where we live, whether rural or urban and we can't start restricting other Alaskans who depend on these animals to fill their freezers and feed their families just because there is some competition and some perceived negative effects from that. As I said before, you know, we're not always successful, we know that. Weather plays a factor. Sometimes it takes longer to fill our freezer. So all of these happen regardless of whether there is competition and I really want you guys to stick to Section .815 of ANILCA, follow the science, follow the evidence, and make the right decisions.

And thank you very much for your service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that testimony. Any Board.

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1 (No comments)

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(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate that. Looking around the room, all right, we'll go to the Operator. Operator, I know I have a few in the cue there, one of them is having a hard time raising his hand, I got a text, so if we could recognize those on the phone at this time, Operator, we'll provide an opportunity for them to speak to this proposal, WP22-07.

OPERATOR: Thank you. We will now begin the public comment section. If you would like to make a comment please press star, one and unmute your phone and record your name. Your name is required to make a comment. If you need to withdraw your comment press star, two. Again, to make a comment please press star, one.

Mike.

MR. BETHERS: Mike Bethers.

OPERATOR: Mike, your line is open.

MR. BETHERS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some comments on all three of these proposals. The Pelican proposal and the Angoon proposals are more similar, I have a few extra comments on the Hoonah one, would you like me to make them specific to them.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'd appreciate if you'd take all your comments. We'll make sure they apply to each of those proposals moving forward.

Thank you.

MR. BETHERS: Okay, thanks. I will call later on that Hoonah one but I will continue for Angoon and Pelican at this time.

I'm speaking for myself, also the Jessie Walker, Shawn Bethers families from Juneau, and also for Tom Sharp, a Juneau resident who has a long time family property in Angoon and that's where he does his hunting.

1 We would urge you to reject or withdraw
2 these proposals. None of them meet the criteria that's
3 set up in ANILCA. All three proposals were erroneously
4 based on the idea that Juneau non-qualified hunters
5 were keeping qualified hunters from getting their deer
6 and this could be nothing further from the truth given
7 the information that we have collected over this
8 analysis.

9
10 In regard to Angoon we know that they
11 used to use large seiners and they hunted a very large
12 area from those big seine boats, now they have resorted
13 back to smaller boats closer to town and hunt less more
14 area, we know that many of the old time hunters that
15 used to hunt have now hung their rifle on the wall.
16 Many people have left the villages and the younger
17 generation doesn't seem to be interested as much
18 hunting as they do their iPhones. And as a consequence
19 qualified hunting effort is down about 50 percent.
20 These are the factors why subsistence harvest is down,
21 it's not the non-qualified hunters.

22
23 And also Pelican, the effort is down,
24 it's very remote, it's very hard to get there and get
25 your deer back and there, again, we would ask you not
26 to approve that one. And all three of these proposals,
27 if Federally-qualified hunters is down, fewer hunters
28 still hunting are getting more deer than they did
29 before the big heavy snows and winter die-off of
30 2007/'08. And this wouldn't be happening if the Juneau
31 hunters were causing any level of competition.

32
33 None of these proposals can be based on
34 conservation issues, the deer populations have been
35 high the last several years and with the mild weather
36 that we're seeing this winter we should see really good
37 overwinter survival this year and a big crop for next
38 year -- or for this spring. None of these proposals
39 will put more deer in village freezers or keep the crab
40 thieves out of Mr. Howard's crab pots.

41
42 In fact, adoption of these proposals
43 could easily conflict with ongoing subsistence hunting
44 on State private property. This would be an
45 unanticipated consequence, however, non-qualified
46 hunters that would be displaced from the Federal
47 uplands could only hunt the beaches where it would
48 potentially cause more conflict with the subsistence
49 hunters using that area. I would urge the village
50

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1 hunters to drag your kids and your grandkids out into
2 the woods to teach them how to hunt. I think this is
3 very basic. And if the Federally-qualified hunters
4 cannot get out there themselves, I would urge them to
5 use their designated hunter option to get their deer.
6 The woods are actually full of deer, you just need to
7 get out there and expend the effort to get them. I'm a
8 75 year old guy with somewhat serious old age issues
9 and I can get all the meat my family needs and given
10 that there is no limit, there are no legitimate reason
11 that hunters in the villages cannot get their deer to
12 do the same.

13
14

15 Based that there are no conservation
16 issues at all with deer in Northern Southeast and
17 because of the documented reduction of up to 50 percent
18 in Federally-qualified hunter effort provided a reasons
19 because of the probable additional conflict these
20 proposals would cause if adopted between Federally and
21 non-Federally-qualified hunters on State beaches I
22 would urge you to withdraw or reject these proposals,
23 all three of them.

24
25

26 This concludes my comments on these
27 proposals.

28
29

30 I will call back again later and
31 something on the Hoonah proposal.

32
33

34 Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair.

35
36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No questions.

38
39

40 (No comments)

41
42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, is
44 there somebody else who would like to be recognized.

45
46

47 OPERATOR: The next question is from
48 Nathan, your line is now open.

49
50

51 MR. SOBOLEFF: Good afternoon everyone,
52 my name is Nathan Soboleff (ph), my traditional name is
53 (In Tlingit) and I am a member of the (In Tlingit), the
54 Raven, Dog Salmon Clan, the Central House of Angoon.

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61 My family has been here in Southeast
62 Alaska since time immemorial and the proposal -- the
63 three proposals that are up for debate and discussion

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1 all seem to ignore the fact that Juneau is a hub
2 community where there are many people from all
3 different parts of the state but especially the
4 surrounding communities of Juneau where there are clan
5 members that reside in Juneau but yet provide fish and
6 game back to -- and other resources back to these
7 communities for cultural events. I, myself, this year
8 was fortunate enough to harvest my six deer and I
9 donated four of those back to traditional food programs
10 within these communities.

11

12 These proposals completely ignore this
13 important fact which will end up hurting a lot of these
14 communities more.

15

16 Also I have noticed, by paying
17 attention to social media that at least one of the
18 Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council members went
19 out on December 27th went out and harvested at least
20 four deer.

21

22 So the science and everything behind it
23 doesn't support it but I think more importantly it's
24 really important to recognize the fact that culturally
25 these proposals negate a very important aspect of
26 subsistence lifestyle and the cultural elements of
27 harvesting and sharing and that we are all neighbors
28 and related to one another.

29

30 Thank you, very much.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
33 Nate. Any comments.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
38 seeing none, Operator, is there somebody else in the
39 cue that would like to be recognized.

40

41 OPERATOR: The next comment is from
42 Albert, your line is open.

43

44 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
45 I'm wondering if you can hear me or not.

46

47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We can hear you
48 loud and clear Albert you have the floor.

49

50

0330

1 MR. HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
2 In regards to the comment that I got four deer, those
3 deer were not from Admiralty Island.

4
5 My name's Albert Howard. My roots are
6 here in Angoon, my grandfather had a (In Tlingit) full
7 blooded Tlingit. The language of the (Indiscernible -
8 muffled) states that the Monument was created for the
9 health and well-being of the indigenous people of the
10 island and I consider that myself. I literally seen it
11 today when I was out in Angoon.

12
13 Mr. Chairman, this proposal has merit
14 based on traditional knowledge of me hunting in the
15 area since 1978. (Indiscernible) I have friends that
16 are -- so we have information that you don't see in
17 black and white in front of you. Our community
18 (indiscernible) in Angoon. Angoon is 80 percent
19 unemployment and so when we hear people like the Lynn
20 Canal and the Territorial Sportsmen of Juneau, Resident
21 Hunters, when we hear them testify, they pay gas prices
22 that are four to 5\$ a gallon. I went and bought 10
23 gallons of gas the other day for 7\$ a gallon. So we
24 have to, imagine, Mr. Chairman, the fact that there's
25 80 percent of unemployment and a majority of Angoon
26 hunters have to pick their days and (indiscernible)
27 time and time again is -- I know that we always
28 (indiscernible) because of he price of gas, it's
29 cheaper to run around on a (indiscernible) than a
30 (indiscernible) so we choose to head to those areas
31 where we're protected.

32
33 And when we go into a bay, I'm sure
34 none of you have been in the area, possibly,
35 (indiscernible) you might get one boat in there with
36 three or four little boats that are hunting together,
37 that bay is pretty much done for any resident that's
38 running that way.

39
40 The original proposal (indiscernible)
41 the whole west side of Admiralty and there was concern
42 from a Gustavus member that he didn't want the pressure
43 to (indiscernible), there was more concerns
44 (indiscernible) again. Mr. Chair, keep in mind I've
45 always been considerate of everyone else but everyone I
46 hear testify doesn't see what I see daily. I see it.
47 Empty freezers at the store. Empty refrigerators at
48 the store. So when you rely on the resource that's
49 outside of our front door, we use everything we get.

50

0331

1 We use the deer stomach, the deer (indiscernible) and
2 the heart and liver, everything. We don't waste
3 because everything is important to us because when you
4 don't have (indiscernible) in a store, you go out into
5 the (indiscernible) and get what is provided for.

6
7 For example this year a friend of mine
8 who is pretty successful at hunting went to -- he likes
9 to hunt by water but he went in there and there was a
10 boat in there he didn't recognize and there were three
11 or four other boats with that boat, they were all
12 staying in the bigger boat and he said everywhere he
13 tried to go in there there was somebody already
14 hunting. This is something that you don't see in your
15 data, Mr. Chairman. And I've been trying to explain 30
16 different ways on how hunters, not just from Juneau but
17 from Sitka and everywhere else that just happen to be
18 passing through have an impact on this area.

19
20 If you look at the map, the -- if you
21 look at the map I moved the line all the way down to
22 4032, 4055, 4041 from what it originally was. You
23 heard comments of Mr. Sharp, he's a family friend for
24 generations, his father and my father were good friends
25 and Todd and I were good friends as well, we played
26 basketball together, I know where Todd hunts, this
27 doesn't affect Todd at all. And, Mr. Chairman, you
28 hear that this proposal is going to affect people that
29 used to live here. My son grew up hunting with me and
30 he lives in Juneau and he knows the impact of this and
31 he knows why I'm trying to accomplish this for the
32 people of Angoon. We can't go to Costco if we have a
33 failed hunting trip, we can't go to SeaMart, we have to
34 go home and figure another way to feed our families
35 when we don't have a successful hunt. I understand the
36 guidelines of ANILCA and we've learned to live within
37 those guidelines but when we have added pressure to an
38 existing resource it makes it difficult.

39
40 A lot of the people here in Angoon know
41 that I tried to do what's best for the community even
42 if it affects my family negatively, it's about the
43 entire community, not just myself.

44
45 Juneau residents have the entire east
46 side of Admiralty Island if they want it. It's
47 interesting to hear from a Lynn Canal, I always thought
48 that was Haines and north and Skagway and that area,
49 but I've tried to be a good neighbor and move our
50

0332

1 boundary enough to meet the needs of subsistence
2 hunters.

3
4 They haven't been met this year. It is
5 difficult to watch your community members struggle. I
6 know Mr. Soboleff and I appreciate that he keeps an eye
7 on my FaceBook page but if that's the science that's in
8 reference too we need to do something different.

9
10 I'm open to getting realtime data to
11 the Fish and Game to support (indiscernible) trying to
12 accomplish to better manage the resource. All their
13 numbers were based on Mitchell Bay, Mr. Chairman, you
14 could read the notes where they said they did their
15 (indiscernible) Mitchell Bay, that's a tiny part of
16 Admiralty Island, that doesn't tell the entire story.
17 Residents of Angoon hunted for (indiscernible) we get
18 what we need but we have to live within our means,
19 sometimes it's choosing between buying gas to go
20 hunting or keeping your lights on.

21
22 I know you're on a time constraint, Mr.
23 Chairman. It's frustrating to hear people that have
24 never been to Angoon have an opinion.

25
26 I could talk about this all day because
27 it's important to our people.

28
29 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr.
32 Howard. Any questions from the Board for Mr. Howard.

33
34 MR. CHEN: Mr. Chair, BIA.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene you have
37 the floor -- I mean -- Gene -- yeah, I went way back
38 there, Glenn, holy smokes.....

39
40 (Laughter)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry that was
43 like a two year bubble.

44
45 (Laughter)

46
47 MR. CHEN: Mr. Howard, this is Glenn
48 Chen from the BIA. I want to express our appreciation
49 for the information you provided to the Board today

50

0333

1 especially with regard to the economic hardships being
2 faced by the people in your community. Those are very
3 pointed comments and very heartfelt sympathy to the
4 people there. One of the things that's key to
5 understanding and taking action on these proposals is
6 the issue of competition between Unit 4 residents,
7 particularly from Angoon and people living outside of
8 Unit 4. And you provided some really good observations
9 from one of your hunters about him having to drive
10 around in his small skiff and not being able to find a
11 place to hunt because other boats were already there,
12 already hunting there. Could you elaborate upon how
13 frequent this is observed, how often this happens. Is
14 it throughout the season, is it on occasion, and how
15 many of your hunters are experiencing this same
16 situation?

17
18 MR. HOWARD: If I may respond, Mr.
19 Chair.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
22 floor.

23
24 MR. HOWARD: Thank you. Through the
25 Chair. It's unpredictable because you have so many
26 boats traveling from different areas in Southeast and I
27 get it, you know, everyone wants to get deer but you
28 never know, I mean I could go -- as an example, Mr.
29 Chairman, I'm fortunate, I'll go work anywhere to take
30 care of my family, I'm not proud in that regard, as an
31 example I worked in Hoonah all last summer so I made
32 enough money to hunt on the other side off of Admiralty
33 and leave Admiralty Island to the people that can't
34 afford to make long runs like I do. And they don't
35 have their voice so I'm it. So when I got four deer I
36 wasn't on Admiralty. A lot of my friends hunt south
37 because it gets them out of the weather and the area I
38 proposed to close is just that, it's so far away from
39 Juneau I'm surprised I'm even hearing testimony from
40 Lynn Canal and all the Juneau residents and that's
41 probably where a thousand come from that oppose it,
42 but, Mr. Chairman, I'm trying to think of an area that
43 would help me explain better if you go into an area
44 that's common. Well, even if you go like in the Sitka
45 Harbor area, all the way out to the ferry terminal, in
46 that little area, all it takes is two or three boats to
47 be in there for that area for you not to be successful
48 when you go hunting. So when you go in a bay and it's
49 not successful -- I heard a gentleman refer to my crab
50

0334

1 pots, it's interesting, he must really be reading all
2 the material, so in that regard, Mr. Chairman, what
3 that was referring to was an unintended consequence by
4 the Fish and Game allowing bear hunting in these areas
5 and what happened was a bear hunter pulled the crab pot
6 and his reasoning was he was friends with somebody in
7 town, well, that doesn't allow you to pull -- it wasn't
8 my crab pot, it was a friend of mine and he caught them
9 doing it, but there's all kinds of unintended
10 consequences when you allow a new fishery or someone in
11 the area to hunt in an area where you've always been
12 hunting.

13

14 I hope that answers your question. I'm
15 on the edge of my seat here holding on with all I got,
16 I guess, because I'm concerned for some community
17 members that have families of six or seven kids --
18 well, not six or seven, it seems like it, but there's
19 like four or five children in the house and I wonder
20 how they're making it.

21

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23

24 MR. CHEN: Mr. Howard, Gunalcheesh, for
25 your information. We will definitely continue to
26 pursue this topic of competition throughout this
27 discussion and when the RAC Chair speaks on this
28 proposal as well.

29

30 Thank you.

31

32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
33 other Council [sic] comments or questions.

34

35 (No comments)

36

37 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
38 taking the time to speak for your community Mr. Howard.
39 Operator, is there anybody else in the cue who would
40 like to be recognized at this time.

41

42 OPERATOR: The next time is from
43 Madeline, your line is open.

44

45 MS. DEMOSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
46 Hello. For the record my name is Madeline Demoski and
47 I'm speaking on behalf of Safari Club International.
48 If you'd please reflect my comments on all three
49 proposals.

50

1 I want to thank you for the opportunity
2 to comment in opposition to Wildlife Proposal 22-07
3 closing Admiralty Island, Wildlife Proposal 22-08
4 reducing the bag limit, and Wildlife Proposal 22-10
5 reducing the bag limit.

6
7 Not only do these proposals lack State
8 and Federal support but they run counter to the
9 directives set out in the Alaska National Interests
10 Lands Conservation Act, known as ANILCA and the Federal
11 Subsistence Board's implementing regulations. Each
12 proponent has failed to show how these proposals are
13 necessary to conserve the Sitka black-tailed deer
14 population or for the continuation of subsistence use.

15
16 First. The Federal Subsistence Board
17 should reject these proposals because they request
18 relief outside the subsistence priority established in
19 ANILCA. ANILCA, Section .815(3) allows the Federal
20 Subsistence Board to close or restrict non-subsistence
21 hunting on Federal public lands only when necessary for
22 the conservation of healthy populations of fish and
23 wildlife, or continued subsistence uses of these
24 populations. ANILCA does not authorize closures or
25 restrictions due to perceived competition.

26
27 Second. It is improper to close the
28 area or reduce these bag limits because the proposals
29 do not satisfy the regulatory criteria that allows the
30 Board to do so. The Federal Subsistence Board may only
31 approve a proposal if necessary for the conservation of
32 healthy populations of fish or wildlife, to continue
33 subsistence uses of fish and wildlife or for reasons of
34 public safety or administration. None of these limited
35 justifications exist on the facts as presented. The
36 deer population in these areas are healthy and one of
37 the highest in the state, the closure or reduced bag
38 limit only for non-subsistence hunting would not be
39 necessary to maintain a healthy deer population.
40 Significantly the proponents to not assert that these
41 proposals are necessary for conservation purposes.
42 These proposals are also not necessary for the
43 continuation of subsistence uses. According to data
44 compiled by the State over the last 10 years deer
45 harvested per subsistence user has increased or
46 remained the same while time in the field has
47 decreased. Further, non-subsistence use has decreased
48 over the same period indicating that crowding and
49 competition has actually decreased.

0336

1 Since these proposals do not satisfy
2 ANILCA the Federal Subsistence Board must oppose all
3 three. The Federal Subsistence Board should also not
4 approve these proposals because they do not meet the
5 legal standards set forth in their implementing
6 regulations.

7
8 SCI fully understands and supports the
9 fact that the Federal Subsistence Board must prioritize
10 subsistence use of natural resources if a conservation
11 need exists, however, the status of Sitka black-tailed
12 deer in these areas do not require that non-subsistence
13 hunting be restricted to protect either the resource or
14 a subsistence use.

15
16 Thank you, again, for the opportunity
17 to comment on these important proposals and, again, we
18 urge you to oppose Wildlife Proposal 22-07, Wildlife
19 Proposal 22-08, and Wildlife Proposal 22-10.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
22 taking the time to call in. Any questions from the
23 Board.

24
25 (No comments)

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
28 hearing none, thank you.

29
30 At this time I'm going to pause on the
31 online and call on the floor, I have Jenny Leahy.

32
33 MS. LEAHY: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.
34 Members of the Board. I'm Jen Leahy and I'm here today
35 as the Alaska Program Manager for the Theodore
36 Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

37
38 While I know quite a few of you in the
39 room I'm a relative newcomer here. This is my fourth
40 Federal Subsistence Board meeting, only my fourth
41 because I know many of you have decades of time in on
42 this but it's my first time attending in person and so
43 I'd like to take a quick moment to introduce myself and
44 my organization.

45
46 I've lived in Alaska most of my adult
47 life. I currently split my time between Anchorage,
48 here on Den'ina land the community of Klawock on
49 Tlingit-Anee and my favorite part of my work is getting
50

1 to visit our communities across the state from
2 Ketchikan to Kotzebue to learn about the priorities,
3 concerns and traditions of Alaska hunters, fishers and
4 trappers. I also enjoy volunteering as a hunter ed
5 instructor with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
6 My organization, the TRCP is a non-profit, non-partisan
7 group working to ensure that all Americans have quality
8 places to hunt and fish. Here in Alaska that means
9 that I represent the interests of everyone who hunts,
10 fishes and traps on Alaska's public lands and waters
11 including Federally-qualified subsistence users,
12 resident hunters, non-resident hunters and guides. I
13 spend most of my time working to conserve important
14 fish and wildlife habitat because we really want to
15 work to make Alaska's fish and wildlife's pie bigger
16 for everyone. I know that supporting policies that
17 support healthy populations of fish and wildlife won't
18 eliminate all conflicts between user groups but we hope
19 that it helps reduce them.

20

21 And that brings me to my testimony on
22 the Unit 4 deer proposals before the Board and my
23 comments will be brief and will apply generally to all
24 three proposals as directed by the Chair.

25

26 The TRC opposes WP22-07, 22-08 and 22-
27 10. Our Unit 4 deer population is healthy, abundant,
28 and the highest in the state as noted in previous
29 testimony. There's no conservation concern for the
30 deer population on the ABC Islands and no restrictions
31 on non-local bag limits are needed to allow for the
32 continuation of subsistence uses. Harvest data
33 suggests that declines in harvest by local hunters in
34 Angoon, Hoonah and Pelican are a result of decreasing
35 participation and Federally-qualified deer hunters, not
36 necessarily increased competition from non-Federally-
37 qualified users.

38

39 Section VIII of ANILCA as others have
40 noted provides the Board with -- or directs the Board
41 to not restrict non-subsistence uses on Federal public
42 lands unless it's for the conservation of healthy
43 populations of fish and wildlife or to continue the
44 subsistence uses of such populations. The proposed
45 harvest limit restrictions on non-Federally-qualified
46 users don't meet either criteria. They also wouldn't
47 increase success for local users.

48

49 There may also be unintended

50

0338

1 consequences of these proposals, such as negatively
2 impacting the deer population in areas where they're
3 reaching, or getting close to reaching carrying
4 capacity. Increase in hunting competition on beaches
5 near local communities. Restricting opportunity to
6 non-Federally-qualified users with family ties to those
7 communities in the proposal areas.

8
9 I do want to note that the TRCP
10 appreciates the work of the Southeast RAC and all the
11 stakeholders that came together to refine these
12 proposals at the direction of the Board last year. And
13 from that effort that repeatedly surfaced was the idea
14 of a Unit 4 deer working group. while the formation of
15 a working group would need to happen outside of the
16 proposal process it does seem that having a
17 collaborative structure in place to address the kind of
18 social concerns raised in the proposals, you know,
19 could be helpful and would give us some more specific
20 and creative tool set to work with than the tools that
21 are available to this Board.

22
23 And as Mr. Richards noted in his
24 testimony, the Board of Game offers another opportunity
25 to address potential user conflicts. In the most
26 recent Southeast Region regulatory meeting in Ketchikan
27 a couple of weeks ago, consensus minded guides
28 advocated to restrict non-resident hunters, who are
29 their clients, to two bucks in Unit 4 through an
30 amendment that was passed by the Board and that was,
31 specifically, my understanding is, an effort to help
32 find some consensus and reduce conflict among user
33 groups. And so I think it's generally better for
34 everyone if user conflicts can be resolved before they
35 elevate to the level of the Federal Subsistence Board
36 so that the Board can focus its time on the issues that
37 truly concern the conservation of healthy wildlife and
38 fish populations and the continuation of subsistence
39 uses.

40
41 I appreciate your service. I'm always
42 very humbled by all of the knowledge and experience
43 collectively in this room. I always learn a lot from
44 being a part of these meetings so I really appreciate
45 your time, your service and your consideration.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
50

0339

1 questions.

2

3

(No comments)

4

5

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate your
6 testimony today. Operator, is there anybody online
7 that would like to be recognized at this time.

8

9

OPERATOR: The next comment is from
10 Nicholas, your line is open.

11

12

13

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MR. ORR: Hi, my name is Nicholas Orr,
I'm on the Juneau-Douglas Committee although I'm
testifying not on their behalf today. I'll try and
keep it brief because I know that you guys probably
have a bunch of these.

So briefly to summarize, ANILCA -- the
portion of ANILCA I think is pertinent here,
subsistence uses shall be the priority when it is
necessary to assure the continued viability of fish and
wildlife populations and continuation of subsistence
uses of such populations.

So we know that the deer population is
really high so that doesn't meet that criteria of
ANILCA. And I don't see that the continuation of
subsistence use of deer is under threat because
Federally-qualified users are harvesting deer in a more
efficient manner than non-qualified users and non-
qualified effort is pretty minimal given the distance
and logistical challenges for these areas that we're
talking about.

I would note that in the Southeast RAC
they talked about how the bag limit would reestablish
priority but I can see the priority is already there in
that there's an extended season and the Federally-
designated hunter program.

So I'm just going to testify on 7, 8
and 10 right now.

I would say that in Pelican the
original comments were split. If you looked at all the
comments from Pelican, half of the people that were
commenting were against it, and I think that the Board
should take that under consideration that a significant
portion of the community was opposed to this.

0340

1 As far as Hoonah goes, I testified at
2 one of the RAC meetings and it was suggested that -- it
3 was either me or Ryan Beason who is a Territorial
4 Sportsman, that, potentially non-Federally-qualified
5 users could have a limit of three bucks in Hoonah
6 instead of a reduction in bag limit, which is
7 essentially offering up a 15 to 20 percent reduction in
8 the overall take, which was just ignored. But I feel
9 like that would be a reasonable solution for that one.

10

11 And then on the Angoon proposal, I just
12 don't think it meets any of the criteria of ANILCA.

13

14 So on that, thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
17 questions from the Board.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
22 thank you for taking your time to call in today to
23 testify.

24

25 Operator, is there anybody else who
26 would like to be recognized.

27

28 OPERATOR: The next question is from
29 Ian, your line is open.

30

31 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you. Can you hear
32 me?

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
35 the floor.

36

37 MR. JOHNSON: All right, thank you. My
38 name is Ian Johnson, I live in Hoonah and I am
39 commenting as a member of that community. My comments
40 are most linked to Proposal 8, however, has themes that
41 apply to both 7, 8 and 9.

42

43 So when this proposal was introduced,
44 the intent and thought that a bag limit restriction
45 would reduce competition. That was the intent of that
46 proposal, in my opinion. Again, it was a proposal
47 aimed at addressing the local concern of competition
48 that inhibits opportunities for subsistence. I believe
49 the issue of competition is directly linked to the
50

0341

1 continuation of subsistence resources and I believe is
2 subject to establishing a subsistence priority under
3 ANILCA.

4
5 As a community directly attached to
6 Juneau through the ferry we experience high competition
7 on the road system especially during the rut and the
8 core of the hunting season and being only 40 miles by
9 boat our coastlines are heavily pressured by non-
10 Federally-qualified users during the rut. Space is
11 more limited than it looks on a map and there's plenty
12 of testimony to reflect on the effect of one boat in
13 the bay and the ability of others to use that bay.
14 There is a need to ensure that subsistence needs are
15 being met and I do believe that subsistence opportunity
16 is being degraded by competition from non-Federally-
17 qualified users. You know, as a testament to the
18 amount of competition I'll take note of the 1,107
19 comments in opposition, each of those is a letter from
20 a hunter who's outside of Hoonah who would like to
21 harvest deer in the north end of Chichagof or the west
22 side of Admiralty.

23
24 So with that being said I will admit
25 that I'm mixed, if the intent of the proposal, though,
26 will reach the outcome that we seek and that outcome is
27 creating a subsistence priority by reducing the
28 extensive competition on subsistence users.

29
30 The proposal has merit but I think that
31 reducing the bag limit would likely result in users
32 looking elsewhere to hunt and that would meet our goal
33 of reducing competition to increase our opportunity for
34 subsistence users.

35
36 I do think that the data set supporting
37 the analysis are incomplete particularly around the
38 effect of harvest -- or the reporting of harvest and
39 effort. The biological data is scarce, with flights
40 not happening in Hoonah for several years. The alpine
41 flights, I think the last time was 2019. And, however,
42 for both sides community, agency, more data would
43 create a better decision that was more durable down the
44 road.

45
46 I acknowledge that there are notable
47 drawbacks to this proposal. I've discussed this
48 proposal with people in my community I've seen division
49 in opinion regarding the proposal regulations. Some
50

0342

1 see no need for it, they think that getting away from
2 competition is a matter of walking, while others are
3 concerned that a Hoonah family living in an urban areas
4 that may not be able to hunt as many deer when they
5 return to their families. I've also heard the opposite
6 of that, of members who have families who still accept
7 these proposed changes because of the benefits to
8 Hoonah and the need to take care of our community.

9
10 You know, last, this proposal has been
11 mired in a notion of a conservation concern rather than
12 addressing competition. I do not think there's a long
13 term conservation concern for Sitka black-tailed deer
14 in the Chichagof area but I do think that there are
15 repressed in the last three years due to moderate
16 winters. I'll note that it doesn't matter to Hoonah if
17 deer populations are healthy in Unit 4, an area
18 compromised of three of the biggest islands in
19 Southeast Alaska, which is the scale of the analysis,
20 it only matters to us if they're healthy in the areas
21 we hunt and the current analysis doesn't do a good job
22 of teasing out a local scale because of lack of data.

23
24 I'll leave it to the Board to decide if
25 this proposal meets what I believe was the core of the
26 need, reducing competition but will reiterate that I
27 believe there is local need to reduce competition to
28 ensure a priority for subsistence and if this proposal
29 doesn't do it then we need to go back to the drawing
30 board to craft something that works.

31
32 Thank you.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ian.
35 Any questions from the Board.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing or
40 seeing none, thank you for taking the time to call in
41 today.

42
43 Operator, is there anybody else in the
44 cue who would like to be recognized at this time.

45
46 OPERATOR: I'm showing no further
47 participants in the cue.

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

50

0343

1 That concludes the public testimony. We'll go ahead
2 and move on to Tribal/Alaska Native Corporation
3 comments.

4

5 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board
6 Members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During
7 the August 19th consultations held for the region of
8 Southeast, there were no comments or questions on those
9 proposals.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
14 Regional Advisory Council recommendation.

15

16 MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
17 Cathy Needham for the Southeast Alaska Regional
18 Advisory Council.

19

20 I will point out to the Board that the
21 proposal came before the Southeast Regional Advisory
22 Council for our deliberation in the fall of 2021. At
23 that time the proposal was a closure on Admiralty
24 Island centered around the community of Angoon. The
25 Council did provide a recommendation on that proposal
26 at that time, which included reducing the area of that
27 closure area, so it was a modification that we
28 recommended in order to reduce the area that was in the
29 original proposal to lessen the impact to non-
30 Federally-qualified users.

31

32 The proposed closure at that time, our
33 justification was that the proposed closure may not be
34 necessary for conservation purposes but it was
35 necessary to ensure continued subsistence uses by
36 residents of Angoon whose harvest levels have fallen in
37 recent years.

38

39 Then the proposal came before the Board
40 and the Board deferred the proposal until our -- to
41 receive additional information before our fall meeting
42 in 2022, in October. And the Council's recommendation
43 was to support the proposal with further modification
44 to remove Wildlife Analysis Areas 4043, 4044 and 4054
45 from the proposal area and to reduce the harvest limit
46 for non-Federally-qualified users to two bucks within
47 the remaining areas, which are Wildlife Analysis Areas
48 4042, 4055 and 4041, and these areas can be shown on a
49 map on Page 757 in your meeting book, to make it a

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1 little clearer.

2

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4 And I will point out that this included
5 the reduction in the harvest limit rather than a
6 closure. So the Council discussed not having a closure
7 to non-Federally-qualified users but to reduce the bag
8 limit for non-Federally-qualified users in those
9 Wildlife -- the reduced area, in those Wildlife
10 Analysis Areas.

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The Council further limited the area --
sorry, this is going to be a little bit of a repeat
because I was trying to explain using the map. The
Council further limited the area addressed in this
proposal from its fall 2021 recommendation and
recommended the bag limit reduction rather than the
full closure, which will have a lesser impact on non-
Federally-qualified users.

The Council supports Angoon in its
efforts to protect their way of life but recognizes
that there's a higher threshold to achieve when
justifying a closure versus reducing harvest limits.

Angoon residents rely on deer more than
many other Southeast communities due to reduced ferry
schedules and high gas prices resulting in greater need
to supplement available food. The further modified
proposal would have little effect on non-Federally-
qualified users because few take more than two deer.
The buck restriction will create a meaningful priority
for Federally-qualified users during the rut when deer
are healthy -- at their most healthy. The Council
considered this recommendation to be a reasonable
compromise which the Board asked for in its deferral.

The Council looks forward to monitoring
this issue and hearing information and data from a
current Unit 4 deer strategy project by the Hoonah
Indian Association in the hopes to resolve some of the
various issues associated with this matter in the
future.

I also wanted to add that the Council's
work during the Board of Game process, they supported
the Board of Game proposal for a reduction of bag limit
in Unit 4 and the Board of Game did deliberate that
proposal, they modified that proposal and made it a
deer harvest reduction to two bucks for non-residents,

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1 which the Council, you know, in effect, supported
2 because this addresses the competition issues that we
3 are hearing out of the community.

4
5 The Board can consider a closure or a
6 restriction to recognize rural residents that are not
7 having their needs met. And we have seen this in the
8 testimony that we have gotten during our Council
9 meetings over the past two years and that has come in
10 the form of oral testimony and traditional knowledge
11 from local Angoon residents.

12
13 The Council did also discuss that the
14 analysis was limiting in capturing the competition, the
15 competition piece of it, in order to quantify it due to
16 the data not being able to capture the effort of rural
17 versus non-rural users within the units.

18
19 And with that I conclude the Council's
20 comments.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
23 questions from the Board.

24
25 MR. CHEN: Mr. Chair, BIA.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
28 floor.

29
30 MR. CHEN: Ms. Needham. Gunalcheesh,
31 Howaa for the Council's extensive and dedicated work on
32 these deer proposals. You guys have spent a lot of
33 time and put a lot of time and effort and thought into
34 these proposals.

35
36 I wanted to start off by asking a
37 clarification on your latest proposal and modification.
38 You referenced a map on Page 757 and it shows -- areas
39 hatched with red and unhatched areas, could you clarify
40 what would take place in the hatched versus unhatched
41 areas in your modification?

42
43 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Chair.
44 Member Chen. The reduced areas effectively asked for a
45 bag limit reduction to non-Federally-qualified users
46 with a limit of two bucks in Units 4042, 4055 and 4041
47 which are the red hatched areas on the map.

48
49 MR. CHEN: Thank you, Ms. Needham. And
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1 that bag limit reduction would not apply to the other
2 three areas, 4044, 4054, and 4043?

3

4 MS. NEEDHAM: Correct. Through the
5 Chair. Member Chen. That is correct. The remaining
6 Wildlife Units from the original proposal would
7 maintain the current regulation bag limit of six deer.

8

9 MR. CHEN: Thank you for that
10 clarification. Mr. Chair, if I may continue.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

13

14 MR. CHEN: As I mentioned earlier, the
15 topic of competition between the area residents and
16 non-Federally-qualified users seems to be at the heart
17 of this particular matter and we've heard from Mr.
18 Howard, Mr. Johnson how those folks feel that the
19 competition is affecting their ability to get the deer
20 they need for subsistence and you reiterated some of
21 these points in your review of the Council's actions.
22 So in that regard, the competition issue by itself
23 would not be something that the Board could use to
24 institute a closure, or partial closure, however, that
25 competition does affect subsistence uses, that's where
26 the avenue exists to do restrictions, and if I
27 understand you correctly, your Council correctly, Ms.
28 Needham, your Council agrees that that's the situation
29 here where the competition is, indeed, affecting
30 people's abilities in those units to get the deer they
31 need for subsistence?

32

33 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Chair.
34 Member Chen. The Council did have discussion regarding
35 the data analysis. Unfortunately the analysis does
36 give us some information about whether or not there is
37 competition between Federally-qualified and non-
38 Federally-qualified users within the units,
39 unfortunately the level of the detail of the data that
40 is actually collected does not tease out the
41 competition centered around a small community. So it
42 does not actually capture the effort by Angoon
43 residents within those Wildlife Analysis residents or
44 by non-Federally-qualified users in those particular
45 units where Angoon residents tend to, and prefer to
46 hunt.

47

48 Therefore, because the data analysis
49 did not capture that, the Council relied more on the

50

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1 traditional knowledge and testimony from Angoon users
2 regarding the impacts to them, the competition and
3 whether or not they're meeting their needs. And
4 Angoon, in the testimony that we did receive, or the
5 information that we did receive and that local
6 knowledge aspect of things really was clearer to us
7 that there is -- that they are not meeting their
8 subsistence needs for deer near their community in
9 those Wildlife Analysis Areas.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 MR. CHEN: Thank you, Ms. Needham. If
14 I can followup, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

17

18 MR. CHEN: There's also been some
19 discussion about how the number of hunters
20 participating from the village of Angoon has decreased
21 quite a bit, was this discussed at your Council meeting
22 and was there some discussion about why this might have
23 happened and what might have been the consequence of
24 this?

25

26 MS. NEEDHAM: Through the Chair.
27 Member Chen. We did discuss the data as it was
28 presented and that less -- that the decline had gone
29 down, however, we also discussed that in the context
30 that sometimes reporting is not always, I don't want to
31 say inaccurate, but that people may not be reporting
32 their harvest in that aspect and so that was considered
33 in part of the discussion. We did not necessarily
34 agree that -- we didn't necessarily agree with the
35 analysis that just less people are hunting around
36 Angoon. And we did have some testimony from local
37 Angoon resident that that does occur, some of that
38 harvest reporting is not always captured in the data.

39

40 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

41

42 MR. CHEN: Gunalcheesh, Ms. Needham.

43

44 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any further
45 questions for the RAC.

46

47 (No comments)

48

49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I have one

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1 comment but I'll hold it until we deliberate on the
2 discussion. We'll move on to the State of Alaska.

3

4

5 MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
6 For the record the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
7 continues to oppose FP22-07 even as amended. There has
8 been no new evidence presented since the Board last had
9 this proposal in front of them that shows hunting by
10 non-Federally-qualified users has negatively impacted
11 Federally-qualified users overall ability to harvest
12 deer within GMU 4.

13

14 ADF&G could find no support for the
15 contention that competition from NF -- or non-
16 Federally-qualified users has increased or that non-
17 Federally-qualified users are hindering harvest by
18 Federally-qualified users, in fact, over the past two
19 decades, rather than increasing, the number of non-
20 Federally-qualified users in days of hunting effort by
21 those same users has declined dramatically. Further,
22 days of hunting effort by Federally-qualified users
23 required to harvest of deer remains very low and the
24 number of deer harvested per Federally-qualified users
25 has been increasing. The analysis conducted by the
26 Department indicates a decline in the number of deer
27 harvested by Federally-qualified users on western
28 Admiralty Island. However, that decline can be
29 attributed to a decline in the number of Federally-
30 qualified users and days of effort by those hunters.
31 Over the last 20 years the number of Federally-
32 qualified users and days of hunting effort by those
33 hunters has declined by half. Deer remain abundant and
34 competition from non-Federally-qualified users is
35 stable or declining. So we conclude that the decline
36 in Federal subsistence harvest of deer results from a
37 decline in participation and effort by those Federally-
38 qualified users not by depleted deer populations or
39 increasing competition from non-Federally-qualified
40 users.

41

42 Adopting this proposal would deprive
43 non-Federally-qualified users of sustainable deer
44 hunting opportunity contrary to terms laid out in Title
45 VIII of ANILCA.

46

47 You know with that is our formal
48 comment but just a few notes to make.

49

50 You know the discussion so far has been

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1 talked about Federally-qualified users and non-
2 Federally-qualified users but please keep in mind that
3 Federally-qualified users for harvest within Unit 4 is
4 for residents of Game Units 1 through 5 so by
5 restricting non-Federally-qualified users you may not
6 actually be helping as much as you would think because
7 you have other Federally-qualified users coming into
8 the area to hunt.

9
10 Also in regards to a reduction in bag
11 limit, you know, a little while back this Board
12 restricted non-Federally-qualified users bag limit in
13 Unit 2 for deer. You know looking at the data for
14 hunter effort in that area, even with that restriction,
15 Federally-qualified users are actually having a harder
16 time per day -- have a more difficult time hunting deer
17 even in the absence of non-Federally-qualified users.
18 You want from taking 3.1 days per year to four now in
19 order to get a deer.

20
21 You know there's also been a question
22 of data and I have our regional supervisor, Tom
23 Schumacher here, and with your latitude I'll give him
24 an opportunity to weigh in as well knowing that he
25 oversees these hunts on a more consistent basis than I.
26 But, you know, the trends are still there. You may
27 argue that the numbers may not be totally there but the
28 accuracy is in the trends so when you see a stable
29 trend line it means that that hunting effort and
30 participation is trending either increasing or stable,
31 now we can argue the exact numbers but the trend is
32 still accurate.

33
34 And with that, thank you, Mr. Chair,
35 and I'll let Mr. Schumacher give any testimony he wants
36 to give.

37
38 MR. SCHUMACHER: Thank you to the Board
39 for this opportunity. For the record this is Tom
40 Schumacher, Regional Supervisor in Southeast Alaska for
41 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of
42 Wildlife Conservation.

43
44 I'd like to build on just a few of the
45 points that my colleague, Mr. Mulligan, made.

46
47 Hunting effort is something that we
48 don't estimate. Hunting effort, or actually numbers of
49 hunters, people participating in hunts is something
50

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1 that is not estimated. That's a number that is a hard
2 number. So that's how we know fewer people are
3 participating in these hunts. Residents of Angoon,
4 just like anybody else who wants to hunt in Southeast
5 Alaska are required to have a hunting license and deer
6 harvest tickets. That's State and Federal law. We
7 issue the deer harvest tickets so we know how many
8 people intend to hunt deer, right, if you want to hunt
9 deer you have to have a harvest ticket, we give them
10 out so we know how many got deer harvest tickets.
11 Trends in deer harvest tickets indicate how many people
12 want to hunt deer. That trend in Angoon is going down,
13 pretty steeply. So, you know, there's no question
14 fewer people in the area are hunting.

15
16 Other things we estimate because that's
17 the best we can do.

18
19 We send out hunt reports. The
20 Southeast RAC sponsored a Unit 2 Deer Summit in 2004 to
21 2006, one of the outcomes of that process was they
22 wanted better harvest reporting. The Department of
23 Fish and Game spent several years coming up with better
24 harvest reporting. We used to send surveys out to
25 about 30 percent of community members who got harvest
26 tickets for deer and we got about 15 percent, so about
27 15 percent of all hunters reported and now deer harvest
28 reporting is mandatory but there's no penalty for not
29 reporting. So reporting improved. In rural
30 communities it's not what it is in other communities
31 and because of that we send out reminder postcards, we
32 send out emails, we do radio public service
33 announcements trying to get people to report and if we
34 don't get about 60 percent of people from any community
35 reporting we call them up and ask. So harvest data,
36 you know, is pretty good but it's only as good as what
37 people voluntarily share with us. So if people from
38 these communities, you know, the harvest summaries that
39 we provide, the hunter effort data that we provide is
40 what people from these communities reported to us.
41 We're just summarizing it and presenting it. And, you
42 know, those data indicate that competition is
43 declining. Fewer people are hunting, both Federally-
44 qualified and non-Federally-qualified.

45
46 Regarding this proposal, that has to do
47 with the Angoon area I'd like to point out that Juneau
48 is a long way from Angoon. If you're going to go
49 hunting there in November it's a long way. However,
50

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1 Petersburg, Federally-qualified community, Sitka,
2 another Federally-qualified community, those areas are
3 closer, a lot of big fishing boats in both communities,
4 so if you're seeing competition in the Angoon area in
5 all likelihood it's from those communities, we don't
6 know though.

7

8 So with that, if Board members have any
9 questions our contention here would be happy to answer
10 them.

11

12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
13 questions from the Board.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you
18 taking the time to do that today.

19

20 InterAgency Staff Committee.

21

22 MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The
23 InterAgency Staff Committee acknowledges the extensive
24 discussion by the Council members about the closure
25 policy application to this situation. This was one of
26 four proposals for Unit 4, which overall has a healthy
27 population of deer, but is experiencing sub areas where
28 subsistence users are not able to harvest enough deer
29 for their needs.

30

31 The Council submitted this proposal
32 because of concerns brought to them by the affected
33 Federally-qualified subsistence users in Angoon about
34 not meeting subsistence needs for deer. The proposal
35 review process allowed them to review the available
36 data and hear testimony from all affected users of the
37 resources. During the meeting they acknowledged that
38 the data in the State reporting system used to measure
39 effort does not reflect success in subsistence hunting
40 because subsistence hunting of deer is opportunistic
41 and users generally only report when they are
42 successful. They crafted a modification in area and
43 season that limits the impacts to the non-Federally-
44 qualified users and addresses the needs of subsistence
45 users.

46

47 Following deferral of this proposal the
48 ISC recognizes the additional effort that the Southeast
49 Council's put into addressing concerns from subsistence
50

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1 users and attempting to find a meaningful priority when
2 they took up this proposal for a second time.

3

4

5 The Board may want to consider if
6 restrictions to harvest limits and/or closures to non-
7 Federally-qualified users are necessary for the
8 conservation of healthy populations of deer or to allow
9 for the continuation of subsistence uses of deer
10 perception .815(3) of ANILCA. Deer populations in the
11 area covered by this proposal are the highest in the
12 state and harvest success by Federally-qualified
13 subsistence users has been stable over the last decade
14 indicating that they are able to harvest sufficient
15 deer to provide for their uses of the resource.

15

16

17

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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And this actual -- this comment applies
to all three and I will refer to it and not read it
into the record when we take up the next two proposals.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
we'll move to Board discussion with Council Chairs and
State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I answered one
of my own questions I had about the hunt and it's a
liberal hunt there, they can shoot whatever they want
so I was going to offer POW style but they do have
extra time and can shoot what they need. But the
perceived competition, being from Prince of Wales
Island, is a reality and I'm glad Glenn put that on the
record here. Being from Prince of Wales Island and a
Unit 2 resident and a rural resident, the competition
is a reality and I'm glad he mentioned it. Because it
has gone down although there are multiple reasons why,
as predator problems being one of them, you know, we
have a resource there that competes with that resource
for us, both black bear and wolf are highly predatory
animals and they're having their way with anything on
the general beaches or easy routes to get to so we also
have that competition as well as the sporthunters. So
there's multiple factors sometimes in areas that can
lead to that competition other than just person against
person. And, you know, in Hydaburg, I, myself, don't

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1 have a problem meeting my need, I'm still young and fit
2 but as people age up there it does become a problem and
3 I feel for the village of Angoon with the hardship you
4 see them, you know, where they're at. They are a
5 little bit isolated but, again, I feel for the
6 community and the loss of hunters. Like I stated
7 before, you know, just a loss of people in your
8 community that were super subsisters or providers,
9 that's another aspect of this that really tugs at the
10 heart of somebody like myself who's a provider.

11

12 But competition is real. And when you
13 leave a community like Hydaburg and you drive 32 miles
14 and there's 28 cars, it's hard to find a road to walk
15 on and it's hard to find a place to be successful, you
16 know, for us we're at the end of the road and we use
17 boats and that, in itself there's competition. You'd
18 think being all the way down there on Doll Island but
19 we get Wrangell, we get Petersburg, we get Ketchikan,
20 we get all of those big boats that have those
21 abilities, the commercial boys that need to go hunt and
22 do it and it creates an opportunity for them too and we
23 try not to be so bad but it puts a taste in your mouth
24 when you see a legal boat going by with 28 deer hanging
25 from there. It just puts a taste in your mouth when
26 that's your traditional homelands.

27

28 And so I feel for the rural residents
29 who can feel that, you know, but, again, you know, the
30 resources are there for us all to find a balance and I
31 just hope we can find that here today.

32

33 The floor is open without any other
34 Board questions or discussion for a motion.

35

36 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

37

38 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
39 floor.

40

41 MR. SCHMID: Dave Schmid with the
42 Forest Service. I move to adopt Proposal WP22-07 as
43 modified by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional
44 Advisory Council. Following a second I will explain
45 why I attend to oppose my motion.

46

47 MR. BROWER: Second.

48

49 MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Charlie.

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1 First, and foremost I want to acknowledge all the
2 effort that the Southeast RAC has put in trying to
3 address these concerns of Federally-qualified users in
4 the Southeast region and to try and come up with a
5 meaningful priority.

6
7 Those of us that live in Southeast
8 Alaska have seen a decline in available food and no one
9 has felt this impact more than the people in our
10 smaller more isolated communities like Angoon.

11
12 I did attend the October Southeast
13 Regional Advisory Council meeting, I sat in on the
14 other public meetings and listened to a lot of
15 testimony and can really appreciate how the geographic
16 isolation, unemployment, high gas prices, empty store
17 shelves, lack of ferry service have had an effect on
18 food security and I see it from Kake to Angoon to
19 Pelican, to many of these small communities. However
20 -- it's however, this Board's authority is limited.
21 There are only certain actions that we can take for
22 specific reasons.

23
24 As the Staff analysis has pointed out,
25 Section .815(3) of ANILCA states that the Board may
26 only restrict non-subsistence uses on Federal public
27 lands if it is necessary for the conservation of
28 healthy populations of fish and wildlife, to continue
29 subsistence uses of such populations or for health and
30 human safety reasons.

31
32 The existing deer population and
33 harvest survey data show the deer population in Unit 4
34 has remained stable, it's actually the highest in the
35 state and there are no conservation concerns.
36 Subsistence users have been able to continue to harvest
37 deer at approximately the same level over the last 20
38 years of data that's been shared with us. The amount
39 of time it takes for a Federally-qualified users to
40 harvest deer has not changed significantly.

41
42 In summary, the proposed regulation
43 change does not meet the criteria for a closure or
44 restriction to non-subsistence uses.

45
46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

47
48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I got a
49 question. Just for clarification, Cathy, the dates,
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1 you said you need to clarify?

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MS. NEEDHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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The original proposal was for a closure during specific dates. When the Regional Advisory Council modified the proposal to a bag limit reduction, the dates were left in residually so if the motion is to support the proposal as modified by the Southeast Alaska Council, those dates are still there but are not meaningful for a bag limit reduction they were a meaningful for the closure.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Point of clarification for the maker of the motion.

MR, SCHMID: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I didn't quite understand.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, what she's basically saying is that the original dates they put on there were for the reduced bag limit, but it's not reflected -- like, yeah, let her explain that, go ahead, Cathy.

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair. Member Schmid. The original proposal was for a closure for specific dates within the harvest season. When the Regional Advisory Council modified the proposal, we made it a bag limit reduction and the dates -- we didn't specify to take the dates out but the dates aren't important on the bag limit reduction, it would apply to the whole season. So it would be a bag limit reduction for the whole season rather than what we said earlier, which was a closure for September 15th through November 30th.

So when you made your motion you chose to support the proposal as modified by the Southeast Council but those dates are in there but they're not relevant to the bag limit reduction.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And you are speaking to the stuff in yellow, right, the bottom date there, the 15th through November 30th?

MS. NEEDHAM: Mr. Chair, that is correct.

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

2

3 MR. SCHMID: One moment, Mr. Chair.

4

5 (Pause)

6

7 MR. SCHMID: All right. I'll try and
8 keep this simple Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

11

12 MR. SCHMID: Just to clarify my motion,
13 it does not include the dates that are on here because
14 they are no longer relevant. Sorry.

15

16 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is that okay
17 with the concurrence from the second, we will remove
18 those dates and strike them from the proposal as
19 written.

20

21 MR. BROWER: Yes.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Okay,
24 thank you for that clarification, Ms. Needham.

25

26 Any further Board discussion.
27 Deliberation.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for roll
32 call, Sue, please.

33

34 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Dave Schmid,
35 Forest Service.

36

37 MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service will
38 oppose the motion with the justification I just
39 provided.

40

41 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Sarah
42 Creachbaum, National Park Service.

43

44 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
45 opposes WP22-07 for the reasons stated in the Forest
46 Service motion.

47

48 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Fish and
49 Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

50

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1 MS. KLEIN: Fish and Wildlife Service
2 opposes WP22-07 based on the justification presented by
3 the Forest Service.

4
5 I also want to recognize and
6 acknowledge the efforts of the Southeast RAC and all of
7 those that attended their meetings and worked together
8 on further efforts to come to these modifications and
9 gather local and traditional knowledge in your
10 decisionmaking process. It is concerning to hear that
11 there are local residents who are not meeting their
12 subsistence needs so it would be nice to see additional
13 efforts such as that Unit 4 deer working group or any
14 other collaborative efforts that might be going on to
15 help continue the discussion and, yeah, that is all.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Steve Cohn,
20 BLM.

21
22 MR. COHN: BLM opposes WP22-07 for the
23 reasons articulated by the Forest Service.

24
25 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. BIA, Glenn
26 Chen.

27
28 MR. CHEN: The BIA votes to support the
29 motion and the Southeast Regional Advisory Council's
30 recommendation on their modified proposal.

31
32 It seems that this issue of competition
33 that's been highlighted throughout these discussions
34 does have some bearing on our decision, specifically
35 the fact that the competition has been outlined and
36 discussed by the rural residents, by the Councils, by
37 some of the people who testified today is affecting
38 subsistence uses and we feel that this would be a valid
39 reason to adopt some restrictions on non-subsistence
40 users.

41
42 The approach that the Southeast Council
43 took to reduce bag limits in part of the units, leave
44 the bag limits in place for other parts of the units
45 seem to be a reasonable approach to try to address this
46 competition issue and have it to be more targeted
47 towards benefitting the residents of Angoon rather than
48 just a blanket closure across the entire unit.

49
50

0358

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

4 Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

5

6 MS. PITKA: Hi, I vote to oppose WP22-

7 07 and the justification is on Page 752 of the book.

8 And part of that justification is that the deer

9 population is healthy in that area.

10

11 But what I think needs further study

12 and further data is the testimony that we've heard from

13 people that live in the area, that there's increased

14 competition, so I think that it would be part of this

15 working group idea that Jill brought up, to further I

16 guess explore those types of ideas about that kind of

17 competition in the area. Because throughout the state

18 user group competition is more and more common as we go

19 on. So I think having some actual data around that

20 versus, you know, people who are saying things like you

21 should just hunt longer or something like that, that's

22 a little bit not productive, so I think having this

23 working group would prevent some of this in the future.

24

25 Thank you.

26

27 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public

28 Member Charlie Brower.

29

30 MR. BROWER: I oppose as stated in

31 above by Public Member Rhonda.

32

33 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Chair

34 Anthony Christianson.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: This is a hard

37 one. I oppose based on the conservation that they

38 talked about, that there's a population that can

39 sustain the hunt.

40

41 MS. DETWILER: So the motion fails,

42 seven to one.

43

44 MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the

47 floor.

48

49 MR. SCHMID: Thank you. This is Dave

50

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1 Schmid with the Forest Service. I don't know if Ian is
2 still on, Ian Johnson is still on the phone, if he is
3 maybe he could speak a little bit about we -- we, the
4 Forest Service Department of AG funded through our
5 SASS, our Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy,
6 several projects. One of those is with Hoonah Indian
7 Association to do just what we're talking about here I
8 think which is to gather a lot more survey data from
9 the rural users out there as well to help facilitate a
10 working group moving forward in a more collaborative
11 effort here -- a collaborative effort to try and help
12 us resolve some of these issues.

13

14 I don't know if -- there may not be a
15 lot of time here today but if there was Ian could speak
16 to that as well, or actually Cathy could.

17

18 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have a --
19 yes, Ben, go ahead.

20

21 MR. MULLIGAN: Mr. Chair, if you give
22 us the latitude, I'll let Mr. Schumacher answer if you
23 don't mind because they have actually reached out to
24 the Department and he may be able to provide some
25 information as well.

26

27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
28 yeah.

29

30 MR. MULLIGAN: Sorry, Cathy, I didn't
31 mean to steal your thunder.

32

33 MR. SCHUMACHER: Yeah, I'll just
34 provide what I know about that effort. Mr. Johnson's
35 been very proactive reaching out to the Department and
36 other users. They're going to try to look at deer
37 abundance estimates or trend anyway, using a trail
38 camera method which is something the Department is
39 currently working on developing so we're -- our area
40 biologist in Sitka, Steve Bathune, is working with Mr.
41 Johnson and others in the Hoonah Indian Association to
42 ensure our methods are similar, and we collect similar
43 data so that would give us comparative data to look at
44 deer specifically in the Hoonah area.

45

46 The Department of Fish and Game,
47 Subsistence section is also working to help develop the
48 subsistence area surveys for Hoonah and Gustavus so it
49 would gather information that's consistent with the

50

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1 Department's other subsistence information.

2

3

4 So we're very happy to work with the
5 Hoonah Indian Asso -- Indian Association and Mr.
6 Johnson to do that and I guess our management going
7 forward will incorporate what the findings of that
8 work.

8

9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
10 Thank you for that.

11

12

13 All right, we have a weird timeline
14 right now, we have a time certain of 3:30 for the North
15 Pacific Salmon Council to be here, and we need a break,
16 so we'll take a break.

16

17

(Off record)

18

19

(On record)

20

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
23 It's 3:30. We would like to reconvene the meeting now
24 and we'll go ahead and welcome up the North Pacific
25 Salmon presentation.

25

26

27 DR. HAAPALA: Thank you. Good
28 afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. My
29 name is Kate Haapala and I work on staff for the North
30 Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Here with me
31 today is Dr. Stram and we will both be giving the
32 presentation today. I would just note that Mr. David
33 Witherell, who is the executive director for Council
34 staff is also here as well as Ms. Sarah Marrinan, who
35 is a fishery analyst and economist on staff.

35

36

37 Today's presentation is going to be
38 providing the Board with an overview of the North
39 Pacific Fishery Management Council as well as its
40 salmon bycatch management programs in the North Pacific
41 groundfish fisheries. I'm going to be starting the
42 presentation today with an overview of the Council and
43 its jurisdiction as well as its decision-making
44 process.

44

45

46 So the primary place to start for that
47 conversation is with the guiding law for U.S. marine
48 fisheries and that is the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
49 Conservation and Management Act, which was adopted in
50 1976. The Magnuson-Stevens Act established the three

50

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1 to two hundred nautical mile exclusive economic zone as
2 well as national standards and other requirements for
3 conservation and management of resources.

4

5 Then I would just note that the
6 Magnuson-Stevens Act also created a system of eight
7 regional councils composed of fishermen and government
8 representatives to develop fishery regulations that are
9 specific to their area. On the right-hand side of the
10 slide here are different colors depicting those
11 different regions and the associated councils.

12

13 This slide here displays the 10
14 national standards as they currently are under the
15 Magnuson-Stevens Act. Every time that any of the
16 regional fishery management councils are taking action
17 to make management recommendations their role is to
18 balance these national standards.

19

20 So the North Pacific Fishery Management
21 Council is one of those eight regional management
22 councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Act and
23 together the Council and the National Marine Fishery
24 Service or NMFS manage U.S. fisheries in Federal
25 waters. Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act or the MSA the
26 Council is authorized to prepare and submit
27 recommendations for management measures to the U.S.
28 Secretary of Commerce. It's NMFS responsibility to
29 approve, implement and enforce those management
30 measures.

31

32 Then I would just note that management
33 is coordinated and in some cases jointly managed with
34 the State of Alaska. An example of this would be the
35 Bering Sea Aleutian Island crab fisheries.

36

37 This slide displays the Council's
38 memberships. So the North Pacific Fishery Management
39 Council has 15 members, 11 of which have voting rights.
40 Of those voting seats six are from the State of Alaska,
41 three are from Washington, one from Oregon and that
42 final seat is held by the NMFS region, Alaska region,
43 and the Regional Director. The four non-voting members
44 are representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
45 Service, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Pacific States
46 Marine Fisheries Commission as well as the U.S. State
47 Department.

48

49 The Council hosts five meetings each

50

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1 year and they typically run between 8 and 10 days in
2 length. Three of those meetings are held in Anchorage.
3 One of the meetings is held in a rural fishing
4 community. Typically those are in Sitka, Kodiak,
5 Juneau and sometimes in Nome. Then that final meeting
6 rotates between Seattle, Washington and Portland,
7 Oregon. All of the Council's meetings as well as its
8 advisory body meetings are open to the public.

9

10 So the public can provide their
11 testimony in written or oral form. So in advance of
12 the meeting members of the public can submit their
13 comments and letters or online for every agenda item
14 that the Council will be reviewing at that meeting.
15 Then members of the public are also able to provide
16 oral comments on every agenda item both in person or
17 over the phone at every meeting.

18

19 The agenda and schedules are typically
20 posted several weeks in advance and for those members
21 of the public who are interested in following along but
22 are unable to attend we now broadcast Council meetings
23 live in real time on YouTube for a low bandwidth option
24 to participate.

25

26 This slide here depicts the Council's
27 decision-making process. So typically ideas for new
28 management measures come from the public during
29 testimony. These comments raise issues or needs that
30 are currently facing fisheries and communities. If the
31 Council wishes to initiate action on a particular
32 issue, they'll typically do so by tasking its staff
33 with a discussion paper that can then flush out
34 different measures or alternatives for how an action
35 could work.

36

37 From there the Council would initiate
38 an analysis of impacts based on the alternatives it
39 has created to address a problem or a purpose and needs
40 statement. The analysis of impacts goes through an
41 iterative process with multiple reviews by the Council,
42 the public and its advisory bodies. At final action
43 the Council will select a preferred alternative to
44 recommend to the Secretary of Commerce.

45

46 The final three stages here on the
47 slide depict NMFS's role in the decision-making process
48 and that's management measures that are recommended by
49 the Council become Federal regulations when they're
50

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1 implemented by the Secretary. The implemented
2 regulations are reviewed and they can be modified or
3 updated through a public process over time.

4

5 When reviewing potential management
6 measures and rule changes, the Council will draw on the
7 expertise of various advisory bodies and these advisory
8 bodies provide comments both written and oral on
9 relevant issues that are being considered by the
10 Council at the time. So the Council has an advisory
11 panel or what we call an AP that meets at the start of
12 every Council meeting. The advisory panel has 22
13 members at the moment that represent different fishery
14 stakeholder groups that have an interest in the
15 fisheries managed under the Council's jurisdiction.

16

17 I would just note the Council is
18 currently soliciting for a designated Alaska Native
19 tribal seat on its advisory panel, but that nomination
20 period closes tomorrow. The Council will be reviewing
21 those nominations that are submitted at its upcoming
22 February meeting in Seattle and the chairman will make
23 an announcement on a decision at the close of that
24 meeting.

25

26 The advisory panel's purpose is to
27 provide the Council with insight and perspectives of
28 those impacted user groups. And then the Council also
29 has a Science and Statistical Committee that meets at
30 the start of every council meeting. This is typically
31 a body that is around 18 members in size and it
32 includes Federal employees, State employees, academics
33 and independent experts.

34

35 The SSC's role is to provide the
36 Council with recommendations on the scientific rigor of
37 the assessments, analyses and reports that come before
38 the Council and whether or not they're sufficient to
39 inform decision-making. I would also note the SSC
40 plays an important role in making recommendations for
41 the fishery catch limits every year.

42

43 The Council also has several plan teams
44 that compile and prepare annual stock assessment and
45 fishery evaluation reports that provide the Council
46 with the most up-to-date scientific information on
47 stock assessments as well as the socioeconomic
48 conditions of fisheries in the harvesting of processing
49 sectors.

50

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1 Then the Council has several issue-specific committees
2 that provide advice on specific actions before the
3 Council.

4
5 There are four primary regions that
6 fall within the Council's jurisdiction and those are
7 the Arctic Ocean, the Bering Sea, the Aleutian Islands
8 and the Gulf of Alaska, but I would just note that
9 there's currently no commercial fishing in Federal
10 waters in the Arctic.

11
12 The Magnuson-Stevens Act gives the
13 Council the authority to take a wide range of
14 management actions and this includes setting harvest
15 quotas, prohibited species catch limits as well as
16 gear, season or area restrictions. The Council has the
17 authority to design ecosystem and habitat protections
18 as well as community protection measures and creating
19 different monitoring or observer programs. Of course
20 the Council can take other conservation and management
21 actions as necessary.

22
23 The Magnuson-Stevens Act requires that
24 a fishery management plan or an FMP be developed for
25 each fishery stock or complex in Federal waters that's
26 commercially utilized. The FMPs contain conservation
27 and management measures that are necessary to prevent
28 over-fishing and promote the long-term health and
29 sustainability of fisheries for the net benefit of the
30 nation.

31
32 The Council currently has six different
33 FMPs and you can find those on the Council's library
34 tab on its website. Each Fishery Management Plan
35 contains different measures that must be consistent and
36 in accordance with those 10 national standards
37 previously discussed.

38
39 In terms of the fisheries and the gear
40 types that are managed by the Council, it's really
41 quite diverse. So the 2022 fishing seasons in the
42 Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska saw 992 unique catcher
43 vessels or CVs make over 10,000 landings to 63
44 different processors. There are also 58 unique catcher
45 processors or CPs that had over 9,000 days at sea.

46
47 So catcher vessels are those vessels
48 that go out to the fishing grounds and harvest their
49 fish and then take them back to processors in
50

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1 communities at plants shoreside, but they may also
2 deliver to vessels that can process at sea. Catcher
3 processors are different because they go to the fishing
4 grounds and they are capable of harvesting fish at sea
5 and then they generally have a factory below deck that
6 allows them to process at sea as well.

7

8 And then at the bottom of the slide
9 here it just depicts for you the different gear types
10 and some of the fisheries that they target.

11

12 Then the next couple of slides are
13 going to provide a very high level overview of some of
14 the dynamics for the Bering Sea pollock fishery before
15 I turn it over to Dr. Stram. That's because the
16 majority of the Council salmon bycatch management
17 programs for the North Pacific for salmon are focused
18 on this particular fishery in the Bering Sea.

19

20 So there are four different Bering Sea
21 pollock sectors. First here on the slide is the
22 Community Development Quota Program or that CDQ
23 Program. The CDQ Program was implemented in 1992 and
24 it provides an allocation of several different species
25 and resources to six different community development
26 quota groups or CDQ corporations. Those groups
27 represent 65 different communities across coastal
28 western Alaska.

29

30 Then there's also an inshore catcher
31 vessel or the CV sector and that sector has recently
32 seen 85 vessels participating. Again those are vessels
33 that harvest pollock at sea and then deliver to
34 eligible processing plants in Alaska communities.

35

36 The primary communities that receive
37 deliveries of pollock from those catcher vessels are
38 Dutch Harbor, King Cove, Sand Point and Akutan. Then
39 the catcher processor sector has recently had 14
40 vessels that are participating. Again those are
41 vessels that are capable of catching and processing
42 pollock at sea.

43

44 Finally is the mother ship sector.
45 There's three mother ships that are eligible to accept
46 pollock for processing at sea and there's recently been
47 14 catcher vessels participating by delivering to those
48 mother ships.

49

50

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1 The Bering Sea pollock fishery is
2 managed by regulations that set seasonal limits of
3 catches for pollock and each year the Council and NMFS
4 go through an annual harvest specification process that
5 determines the total allowable catch for all fisheries.

6
7

8 Once that total allowable catch is set,
9 10 percent is allocated to the CDQ program and then
10 NMFS will typically set aside an amount that's reserved
11 for pollock bycatch and other fisheries. That averages
12 out to being about 4 percent. It's also called an
13 incidental catch allowance. Then from there 50 percent
14 of that is allocated to the inshore catcher vessel
15 sector, 40 percent to the catcher processor section and
16 10 percent to the mother ship sector.

17
18

19 Then I would just note that the table
20 on the right-hand side of this slide depicts the 2022
21 allocations of that total allowable catch limit in
22 metric tons among those sectors as well as the actual
23 catch amount in metric tons.

24
25

26 There are two distinct fishing seasons
27 for the Bering Sea pollock fishery. The first is that
28 A season or the winter season that has a regulatory
29 opening on January 20th and a regulatory closure on
30 June 10th. NMFS will allocate 45 percent of the total
31 allowable catch to this season to be harvested. At
32 this time the pollock fleets are typically targeting
33 roe-bearing females. While the regulatory closure is
34 June 10th, they're typically done fishing by mid-April.

35
36

37 Then the B season or the summer fishery
38 has a regulatory opening date of June 10th and a
39 closure date of November 1st. During this season the
40 fleet is eligible to harvest 55 percent of that total
41 allowable catch. During this season that pollock fleet
42 is targeting pollock for filet and surimi markets.
43 They are typically done fishing by early to mid October
44 despite having a regulatory closure date of November
45 1st.

46
47

48 I'm just going to turn it over now to
49 Dr. Stram.

50
51

52 DR. STRAM: Thank you. Good afternoon,
53 members of the Board. My name is Diana Stram, Council

54

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1 staff. I'm going to walk through an overview -- I've
2 got an overview of the salmon bycatch measures and
3 impact analyses that we have for the Bering Sea pollock
4 fishery catch of chum and chinook and also an update on
5 where the Council is going right now.

6
7 So I'll go through an overview of the
8 annual trends that we see in the salmon bycatch in the
9 Bering Sea pollock fishery, the historical measures
10 that we've used over time to manage bycatch in the
11 Bering Sea, a genetic overview of the stock of origin
12 that we have for chinook and chum bycatch and then an
13 adult equivalency, what that means, and an impact
14 analysis of chinook salmon in the pollock fishery.
15 Then finally again the Council request in 2022 and our
16 plans moving forward in 2023.

17
18 So just to start in terms of what is
19 bycatch. Bycatch is something that's defined under the
20 Magnuson-Stevens Act and it is fish that are harvested
21 in the fishery but are not sold or kept for personal
22 use. This includes economic discards and regulatory
23 discards. So it's basically discarded fish of which
24 there are two categories.

25
26 Economic discards are fish that can be
27 legally retained but are of insufficient value to
28 retain and then are discarded, such as sculpins,
29 grenadiers. Regulatory discards are fish that are
30 harvested but required by regulation to be discarded.
31 They are also required by regulation that they cannot
32 be retained -- they must be retained but not sold.

33
34 Of that a particular category is called
35 prohibited species catch and this is an addition to the
36 regulations on them being retained but not sold. They
37 must be caught and then returned to the sea with a
38 minimum of injury. Our prohibited species catch, so we
39 call it PSC, and when we say salmon bycatch we also
40 refer to it as salmon PSC. Those categories are
41 Pacific halibut, Pacific herring, Pacific salmon, all
42 species, steelhead, king crab, bairdi crab, opilio
43 crab.

44
45 So when we focus on chinook and chum
46 bycatch, technically the Bering Sea pollock fishery
47 encounters both chinook and chum bycatch. They take
48 chinook bycatch in both A and B seasons, as Dr. Haapala
49 described the pollock fishery seasons. Chum salmon is
50

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1 only caught in the B season. That's the only time they
2 encounter them.

3

4

5 Technically the regulations say that
6 it's non-chinook and that means that that category of
7 non-chinook includes all the other species of salmon
8 including sockeye, coho, pink and chums. What this
9 table is showing you in recent years and overall time
10 when we look at it that the majority of the fish in the
11 total non-chinook category is always over 99 percent
12 chum. So they are enumerated, each fish that is caught
13 on board. So we do see on an annual basis what the
14 species composition is, but we refer to it as chum
15 bycatch because they really do not encounter sockeye,
16 coho or pink salmon.

16

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This just gives you the trend, in red
is chinook and blue is chum, from 1991 through 2022.
For numbers on the left-hand axis is the number of chum
salmon. On the right-hand axis is the number of
chinook salmon. Those are again different magnitudes,
which is important to note.

I'm just going to walk through some
characteristics of when they're encountered and then
I'll walk through a history using this historical of
the different bycatch management measures. This shows
you in terms of the number of salmon. This is over
2011 -- on average 2011 through 2021 and it gives you
-- what the line basically gives you the median value
of the numbers of chinook that are encountered, an
aggregate over that timeframe, average for that
timeframe. Then the bars and the dots. The bars are
giving you an estimate of the uncertainty.

So we can give a general trend of how
much is caught in each season, but there is uncertainty
around it because it does vary by year. The dots then
are outliers. So what you see, as Dr. Haapala
indicated, the A season and the B season. So we don't
catch -- the pollock fishery does not catch chum in the
A season, but you do see that they catch chum in the B
season. What you're looking at here in terms of
statistical weeks.

So this spike that you see, and we'll
see it in different figures, that usually occurs in
mid-August. So it starts to creep up in the beginning
of July and then peaks around August and then dips

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1 down. Chinook on the other hand the pollock fleet
2 encounters in both A season and B season. So this
3 spike here is the A season, which again as Dr. Haapala
4 indicated, goes from January 20th through -- they're
5 usually done fishing by the middle of April. So that's
6 what you see reflected in here.

7

8 Then they begin to run into chinook
9 often in the B season and it's usually we find that the
10 peaks in the B season we've seen over time tend to peak
11 around September, October. So that's important to
12 remember because some of the measures that we put into
13 place most recently we're targeting at the fishing
14 fleet fishing in September and October so that we could
15 avoid those peaks that we've seen over time in that
16 timeframe.

17

18 I'm going to walk through a general
19 overview of the different ways that the North Pacific
20 Council has managed salmon bycatch and how we've
21 shifted over time based on different trends that we see
22 in the bycatch.

23

24 So throughout the '90s -- we've always
25 been managing salmon bycatch just different ways.
26 Throughout the '90s what you see here that arrow is
27 indicating a timeframe from the mid-'90s through early
28 2000's. What we have are very large-scale time and
29 area closures in the Bering Sea for chinook and for
30 chum.

31

32 When those areas were triggered, they
33 had a PSC limit, so that's a cap limit on the number of
34 salmon. When those PSC limits were reached, those
35 areas closed for a certain period of time and the
36 pollock fleet was pushed out of those areas. That was
37 how we managed for a number of years.

38

39 What happened then is that from 2002 to
40 2004 -- the closure areas are called Salmon Saving
41 Areas. What happened is we began to see that as
42 bycatch was creeping up we found that when those
43 closures were being closed the fleet was running into
44 more salmon outside of the closures than what was
45 indicated inside of the closures so the Council began
46 to seek other management measures.

47

48 The first thing the Council did was
49 develop something called an Amendment 84, which was a
50

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1 way of immediately exempting the fleet from those
2 closures provided they participated in what we still
3 use -- they still use is a rolling hotspot program,
4 which is a short, three to seven day. They identify
5 hotspots.

6
7 This is something the industry does
8 amongst themselves because they have both observer data
9 and industry sharing agreements. They identify
10 hotspots and then different portions of the fleet are
11 moved out from three to seven days. So the Council
12 mandated that the entire fleet had to participate in
13 that program in order to be exempt from those area
14 closures. Then what happened in 2005 is we had a big
15 spike in the bycatch that was observed in chum salmon
16 of over 700,000. So the Council began to develop chum
17 bycatch mitigation measures.

18
19 After that then as the Council was
20 developing chum bycatch measures, 2007 happened. As
21 most know, that was when we had the highest observed
22 bycatch of chinook salmon. Over 120,000 chinook
23 salmon. That caused an immediate shift in the
24 prioritization of management measures. As you're
25 likely aware, it's a long process for the Council to
26 develop and analyze and implement by the National
27 Marine Fishery Service an amendment analysis. So the
28 Council shifted gears and began focusing on chinook.

29
30 Over that time then we had the
31 development of what's now called Amendment 91 to the
32 Bering Sea Aleutian Islands Groundfish FMP. We're
33 developing Amendment 91 while undergoing extensive
34 outreach to Western Alaska communities.

35
36 We've participated since about 2009 in
37 your Regional Advisory Council meetings in different
38 communities for Eastern Interior, Western Interior,
39 Bristol Bay, the Y-K RAC, the Seward Peninsula.
40 They've requested presentations. We've made a huge
41 effort after Amendment 91 was implemented in 2009 to
42 bring Council members out to those Regional Subsistence
43 Advisory Councils to provide information on the program
44 that was in place.

45
46 After that time then the Council
47 revisited the idea of looking at chum bycatch measures
48 because at that time then we were still under the
49 exemption to the large-scale area closures with the
50

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1 requirement for the fleet to participate in those
2 rolling hotspot closures for chum.

3

4

5 The Council developed an extensive chum
6 bycatch management measures looking at area closures
7 and caps. That was tabled by the Council in 2012, one
8 year after the implementation of Amendment 91 because
9 of indications that most of the measures the Council
10 was looking at in a rough manner looked as though
11 anything that would push the fishery into fishing their
12 catch in September and October would exacerbate the
13 catch of chinook and that was the priority, trying to
14 avoid that.

15

16 I would note that in 2011 with the
17 implementation of Amendment 91 there are additional
18 provisions that went into place in addition to the cap
19 levels that I'll go over. In order to manage and
20 maintain those cap levels and the management of it, we
21 then instituted a systematic sampling for genetics for
22 salmon. Prior to that the information that we had was
23 opportunistically collected. Now it's a systematic
24 sampling requirement. Every 10 chinook that are
25 brought on board are sampled for genetics. Every 30th
26 chum that is brought on board is sampled for genetics.

27

28 Additionally there's a census
29 requirement for salmon accounting so that there are
30 requirements that every single salmon that is brought
31 on board any pollock vessel is counted. So it's
32 enumerated. There's electronic monitoring provisions
33 in place so that every salmon can -- there's
34 enforcement over when a salmon is brought onboard that
35 there is no point of entry that's not monitored. All
36 of them are counted on catcher processors. They're
37 counted by the observers onboard by onboard census. For
38 the shoreside catcher vessels there's an observer
39 that's enumerating the salmon as they come into the
40 processing plant.

41

42 At that time then while we had
43 implemented Amendment 91, there was a spike in bycatch
44 immediately thereafter, well below the cap levels, but
45 we began to look at whether or not the caps that we had
46 put into place were providing strong enough vessel
47 level incentives. So the Council then began the
48 development of and the implementation of Amendment 91,
49 which was developed both in response to extremely low
50 western Alaska chinook and the need for these stronger

50

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1 vessel level incentives in the incentive program
2 agreement structure, which I'll go over in just a
3 minute.

4
5 They also included in that Amendment
6 110 that chum measures rather than just the exemption
7 to the closures and the rolling hotspot that the
8 incentive plans that are run by the pollock industry
9 include measures to avoid chum salmon with a focus on
10 western Alaska chum salmon.

11
12 So this picture shows you what the
13 current measures that are in place, the combination of
14 Amendment 91 and Amendment 110. There's two cap
15 structures under Amendment 91. There's an overall PSC
16 limit of 60,000 that is allocated by season and by
17 sector. There's a performance standard of 47,591
18 that's also allocated by season and by sector. The
19 idea is that if any of the fleet reaches their
20 proportion of the performance standard in a rolling
21 more than two out of seven years, they would be left
22 with that lower cap number. Moving forward they would
23 no longer be able to fish above that level.

24
25 With Amendment 110 then we put into
26 place a lower cap level in years that were determined
27 to be years of low chinook abundance. We did that
28 working with the State of Alaska to develop what's
29 called a three-river system index. That is the Yukon,
30 the Kuskokwim and the Unalakleet. We did a lot of
31 analyses to indicate that those three rivers sum
32 together -- their post-season run estimate sum together
33 were a fairly good statistical indication of when runs
34 across western Alaska for chinook were low.

35
36 There is a threshold level of 250,000
37 fish and when that run estimate is provided of the
38 three river index to the Council at their October
39 Council meeting if that run estimate is below 250,000,
40 then the cap levels drop to a different level of an
41 overall level of 45,000, again allocated -- sorry. An
42 overall level of 45,000 allocated by season and sector
43 and then a lower performance standard of 30,318
44 allocated by season and sector. So the same relative
45 program in place, but with a drop down in cap levels.
46 In the last several years, with the exception of one,
47 we have been in a low chinook abundance state as we are
48 again here in 2013.

49
50

1 One of the requirements then for
2 participation in these programs is that each of the
3 pollock sectors develops an incentive plan agreement
4 and there are regulations in place for what must be
5 included in those Incentive Plan Agreements. Under
6 those Incentive Plan Agreements to meet those
7 regulatory requirements, these IPAs as they're called,
8 provide incentives for the captains to avoid chinook
9 and chum under any condition of pollock and chinook
10 salmon abundance.

11
12 There's rewards for avoiding chinook
13 salmon and penalties for a failure to avoid chinook
14 salmon at the vessel level. There are also provisions
15 that are mandated for hotspot closures again similar to
16 what was done previously. There are Salmon Escape
17 Panels, which I'll go over in the next slide. Then
18 there is a provision -- an ability to donate by-caught
19 salmon to food banks. That's the only way it can be
20 not -- that is one provision under the prohibited
21 species catch, that they can donate to a food bank.

22
23 This map just at the lower right then
24 just shows you kind of what on a schematic of what some
25 of those rolling hotspot closures look like. This is
26 one snapshot over time. They move again every three to
27 seven days.

28
29 One mandate under Amendment 110 then
30 put in place in 2015 is that all vessels must use
31 salmon excluders under their IPA provisions. Salmon
32 excluders then is something that the pollock industry
33 has been developing for over 20 years, different
34 designs.

35
36 Basically what that is is if you look
37 to the left, this is a schematic of a cod end of a
38 pollock vessel and as the fish enter in the broader end
39 and they are drawn back into the cod end of the net,
40 the pollock -- salmon are better swimmers than pollock,
41 so what's been developed is that when there's this hole
42 in the net with a flap on it, it creates a lee in the
43 current and the salmon are able to adjust their
44 swimming to the lee in the current and use that lower
45 velocity water to escape the pollock net.

46
47 So they've tested multiple different
48 iterations of this. The most recent chinook tests
49 indicate a range of up to 39 percent of chinook
50

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1 escapement with about 1 percent of pollock loss.
2 That's been as low as 9 percent in the recent trials.
3 It's really important to recognize though that that's
4 very variable by vessel and it also varies by
5 horsepower.

6
7 Some of the things that they discovered
8 in their last report is one of the vessels was
9 experimenting with slowing down as they're hauling back
10 and when they slowed down for the last five minutes
11 they found that they had better escapement from these
12 nets.

13
14 The schematic then to the lower right
15 is just the most recent development of the different
16 designs that they've tried. They've looked at holes on
17 the top and the bottom with a net above it so that the
18 salmon can swim out. They've tried different
19 configurations by vessel capacity.

20
21 Dr. Haapala already went over the
22 information on the pollock fishery, so I won't go over
23 this. This on the left shows you by year and then the
24 catch in the A season and the B season east and west of
25 170 west. Then on the right you just see the bars
26 indicate higher CPUE of pollock to indicate where the
27 fleet is fishing.

28
29 This is where the fleet is fishing in
30 the A season. They're fishing closer to Unimak Pass.
31 That's a lot of the CVs that are fishing in that area.
32 Due to ice cover they're restricted -- they're fishing
33 along the shelf break, but restricted to just south of
34 the Pribilofs. That just shows you for 2019, 2020 and
35 2021.

36
37 Then for comparison you can see in the
38 B season the fishery on the shoreside catcher vessels
39 are concentrated closer to Unimak while the catcher
40 processors move up towards the Russian boarder. This
41 basically abuts the 200 nautical mile easy and they
42 fish along that shelf-break edge all the way up there.
43 It's very far offshore.

44
45 Just to go briefly over then the
46 genetic summary in terms of what we found. Again since
47 2011, since the implementation, we have had systematic
48 genetic sampling, so we have very good estimates of the
49 genetic composition of the salmon that are caught in
50

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1 bycatch.

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To the left here again gives you the bycatch trend in the black line. The pie chart that you see here shows you in proportion to western Alaska in blue. The genetic breakouts -- we are limited by the geneticist's ability to breakout by river system and this is true for both chum and chinook. So what they can breakout for western Alaska again our focus is on determining the proportion caught from western Alaska.

They can break out what's called the Coastal Western Alaska Grouping for chinook and then they can break out the Upper Yukon separately. So Coastal Western Alaska is basically all of the river systems from Norton Sound all the way down through the Nushagak and Bristol Bay. Likewise for chum they are also only able to break out the Western Alaska component and the Upper Yukon. So the Upper Yukon representing the fall chum run.

What you see for the chinook then over 54 percent of the -- and this is fairly consistent by year -- of the fish that are caught in the bycatch originate from rivers in Western Alaska. That's in contrast to chum where in recent years it's about 9 percent and these are the 2021 stock composition estimates. But it's by far the majority are of Asian origin in the bycatch.

So this is something that is a conundrum a bit for management measures trying to isolate measures that would benefit Western Alaska chum salmon, whereas for chinook we know that the majority of them are comprised of Western Alaska fish.

This is another snapshot over time then to show some of the variability. What you see to the far left then that's the Coastal Western Alaskan Grouping on the bottom. It's broken out by numbers. These are the straight numbers in the bycatch. This doesn't account for adult equivalency.

So this is just telling you of all the fish that were caught that number of them would have gone back to Western Alaska in some year, but that is the component that was genetically isolated to Western Alaska as well as the Middle and Upper Yukon. This

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1 just gives you by year. So you can see that there is
2 variability. The top shows you proportions. The
3 bottom shows you numbers. There is intra-annual
4 variability in how they're -- what proportion they're
5 catching from Western Alaska.

6
7 Just to isolate in coastal west Alaska
8 then so you can see the numbers a little bit better and
9 you can see that in the most recent -- which we have
10 here for 2020 -- bycatch year it was around 16,000
11 chinook out of the bycatch that was from coastal west
12 Alaska.

13
14 Then similarly for chum -- you can't
15 see this graph quite as well, but the ones that you
16 want to look at are the yellow line, which is for
17 Western Alaska and then the blue, which is Upper and
18 Middle Yukon. Again the top shows you the relative
19 proportions. The lower shows you that in numbers as
20 well. So basically out of those fish that were caught
21 in -- this goes through 2021 where we had over 532,000
22 chum overall that were caught as bycatch. Of them less
23 than 20,000 -- I'm sorry. Of them about 35,000 here
24 are from Western Alaska.

25
26 So again, even with the large bycatch
27 in recent years, they have been below or near the
28 average from those 11 years -- those 10 years that we
29 have. They vary across space and time. So this is
30 just an aggregate, but the way the geneticists have
31 been breaking it out to help us target management
32 measures they're looking at different areas in the
33 Bering Sea.

34
35 They can break out the stock
36 composition estimates by area. They can break it out
37 by snapshots in time. So we've been looking at early,
38 middle and late season stock composition estimates by
39 different areas in the Bering Sea to see if we can
40 isolate space and time where Western Alaska chum salmon
41 are more likely to be congregated.

42
43 The next thing I'm going to go over is
44 adult equivalency and impact rate that we updated this
45 past June in 2022 for Bering Sea chinook. So what goes
46 into an adult equivalency. So the point of an adult
47 equivalency is to look at what's important. Not just
48 the bycatch numbers that would have originated to the
49 Western Alaska rivers, but which fish would have come
50

0377

1 back in an individual year had they not been caught as
2 bycatch.

3
4 So the information that we need to
5 estimate that we need obviously the number of salmon
6 bycatch and we got that from the Observer Program. We
7 do have 100 percent observer coverage in the pollock
8 fishery, so we have really excellent observer data.
9 Again all the salmon are censused.

10
11 We also have information -- we need
12 information on the age of the fish in the bycatch,
13 which we get from the observer data on length and
14 application of an age/length key. We have the region
15 of origin from the genetics. Then we have to estimate
16 the maturity by year.

17
18 So basically we have a range of ages in
19 the bycatch. Anywhere from three to seven years
20 generally. They tend to be closer to three to four
21 years, three to five, but we know what proportion of
22 the fish that are caught in any one year are of which
23 age range. Then we apply a maturity rate. We have to
24 do it in aggregate because we're talking about all the
25 rivers across Western Alaska.

26
27 I believe it's weighted heavily towards
28 the maturation rates in the Kuskokwim, but we included
29 several different rivers in the information on maturity
30 in order to estimate that. So that we look at how many
31 of those fish in any one year would have returned based
32 on their age and the maturity estimates.

33
34 The next thing that we're able to do
35 for chinook that we cannot do for chum is look at an
36 impact rate. So the impact rate then being the adult
37 equivalent divided by the total run estimates for all
38 of Western Alaska. So we can't isolate by individual
39 river, but we get an aggregate estimate of the total
40 runs across Western Alaska from the Alaska Department
41 of Fish and Game. We can do the Upper Yukon
42 separately, but we have to do the rest in the Western
43 Alaska as an aggregate grouping.

44
45 So this just shows you run sizes. So
46 the red then is the combined Western Alaska stocks and
47 then the blue is the Upper Yukon and you can see, of
48 course, the decline in recent years in the combined
49 Western Alaska stocks as well as in the Upper Yukon.
50

0378

1 Again our impact estimates then. What
2 percentage impact we are having. The AQ divided by
3 that run size gives you over time an estimate. To read
4 this what you're looking at is -- the bar across is the
5 median estimate. The distance around that estimate and
6 the shape shows you the relative uncertainty in that
7 estimate.

8
9 So we can see is that on average the
10 impact rate to Coastal West Alaska stocks has been a
11 little bit less than 2 percent. In recent years that
12 has gone up in 2020 and 2021. That's largely driven by
13 declines in the Nushagak.

14
15 So again the impact rates then for
16 Coastal West Alaska average about 1.9 since 2011, which
17 is when we implemented Amendment 91. It's about .6
18 percent for the Upper Yukon. That rate increased in
19 2020 to 3.4 percent and dropped in 2021 to 2.6 percent
20 and those relative numbers for the Upper Yukon are .9
21 and 1.1 percent. Again that increase is due to lower
22 returns overall and the biggest decrease in Western
23 Alaska was from the Nushagak River.

24
25 Assessing impacts for chum bycatch then
26 similarly becomes a little bit more difficult for us.
27 We can do an AEQ for chum. We have in the past, but we
28 have less data availability, so there's certain
29 assumptions that we need to make to do that. In
30 particular we also have estimates of natural -- we make
31 assumptions about natural mortality, both for chinook
32 and for chum, but we also have more course estimates of
33 maturity across Western Alaska rivers for chum.

34
35 We cannot do an impact rate for the
36 Coastal West Alaska Grouping for chum. There's only
37 run reconstructions available for the Yukon summer and
38 fall chum and for the Kwiniuk River chum salmon. That
39 means that we're excluding extremely large populations
40 of chum. The Kuskokwim, throughout Bristol Bay,
41 Kotzebue, Norton Sound. That means that that kind of a
42 run reconstruction is just not -- it's not a good
43 approximation of the total Western Alaska chum salmon.

44
45 We can do an impact rate for Yukon fall
46 because we do have a run reconstruction for that stock,
47 but we're not clear that that would reflect trends
48 across all Western Alaska chum stocks.

49
50

1 Finally, just to go over the actions of
2 the Council has taken in 2022. In 2022 the Council --
3 in June of 2022 the Council created the Salmon Bycatch
4 Committee. As Dr. Haapala went through, the Council
5 has a number of committees in addition to its standing
6 committees. So the Council created a Salmon Bycatch
7 Committee, took nominations over the summer and
8 appointed the members of the Salmon Bycatch Committee
9 in November.

10

11

12 That Committee is specifically tasked
13 with reviewing the State of Alaska Bycatch Task Force
14 recommendations, including the Western Alaska Salmon
15 Subcommittee recommendations. The Committee was also
16 tasked to review a staff discussion paper that was put
17 forward to the Council in December and reviewed by the
18 Committee at their first meeting in November. Then the
19 Committee is also tasked to review current information,
20 including local, traditional and subsistence knowledge
21 and the necessary research to determine what's driving
22 Western Alaska salmon declines.

22

23

24 The Committee again met in November
25 initially and then in December the Council tasked the
26 Committee to provide recommendations to the Council on
27 a range of management measures, both regulatory as well
28 as measures that would be taken up within the IPA
29 structure that should include a PSC limit for chum
30 salmon bycatch. So the report of that committee will
31 come back to the Council in April of 2023 at our
32 upcoming April meeting.

32

33

34 So what's next. The Salmon Bycatch
35 Committee just met on January 25th to begin to review
36 different analyses and to look at how to make
37 recommendations on recommended measures to the Council.
38 The Committee will next meet March 20 and 21st here in
39 Anchorage. They will finalize their recommendations to
40 the Council on a purpose and need, which is something
41 that's included as a statement for the analysis that
42 the Council creates as they initiate the analysis.

42

43

44 Then they're also tasked to provide
45 recommendations to the Council on conceptual
46 alternatives. So different PSC caps or hard caps for
47 the pollock fishery as well as changes to the IPA. The
48 Council will take this up in April of 2023. They'll
49 review the Salmon Bycatch Committee recommendations and
50 then they may adopt a purpose and need and alternatives

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1 to initiate an analysis.

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As Dr. Haapala said, we do have a designated tribal seat for the AP and those nominations close tomorrow. So Dr. Haapala went through this in terms of what the Council process is and again we have a primarily Council process where it moves through our process and then it becomes primarily a NMFS process in terms of proposal review and analysis.

So where we are with chum right now is we're in this review and analysis stage. So the Council, in order to move forward, needs to adopt a purpose and need and they need to adopt alternatives for analysis. Then staff will go and analyze those alternatives and come back to the Council with an initial review draft of an analysis. The Council at that time might refine the alternatives or they might move it forward as a public review draft and select a preferred alternative at the time that they have a public review draft for final action.

So at a minimum getting an analysis through the Council once the alternatives and the purpose and need have been determined takes a minimum of two meetings that are not subsequent. There's timing in between them. It can take longer than that. It has for certain analyses. It certainly did for -- the development of Amendment 91 took place over several years as well as the development of Amendment 110.

With that, Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, we're happy to take questions and we have just a slide for additional resources for your information.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that thorough presentation. Any questions from the Board.

MS. PITKA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Rhonda, you have the floor.

MS. PITKA: So you outlined what made the impact rate, but you didn't tell us what those impact rates were or the adult equivalent rate.

DR. STRAM: I'm sorry. Thank you.

0381

1 Through the Chair. The impact rates -- the most recent
2 ones for -- I have a slide for chinook. We can only do
3 it for chinook. So the most recent ones for chinook
4 then were 3.4 in 2020 and 2.6. Again, keeping in mind
5 that's to the entire aggregate Western Alaska chinook
6 salmon stocks. So all chinook salmon stocks with the
7 exception of the Upper Yukon all the way from Norton
8 Sound through Bristol Bay.

9
10 MS. PITKA: So that's not like specific
11 to the Yukon or specific to the Kuskokwim or specific
12 to -- it's 3 percent of the bycatch total, right?

13
14 DR. STRAM: Through the Chair. That's
15 correct. That's not specific to any one river system
16 with the exception of the Upper Yukon. So you're
17 basically looking at what the impact rate was to -- if
18 you take the Upper Yukon, because that's the only one
19 we can isolate as an individual river system, that
20 would indicate to you that in 2021 the impact rate of
21 bycatch was 1 percent of the Yukon run. So 1 percent
22 that did not come back.

23
24 MS. PITKA: So 1 percent is what
25 number?

26
27 DR. STRAM: I can find that for you,
28 but I don't have the number in front of me.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
31 other Board comments or questions.

32
33 Jill, you have the floor.

34
35 MS. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
36 just want to say thank you to -- is it Dr. Haapala and
37 Dr. Stram for joining us today. David Witherell as
38 well. It's my understanding there may be some North
39 Pacific Fishery Management Council members listening in
40 online, so we appreciate that as well. We appreciate
41 this presentation. As people can see, there's a lot of
42 components to the Council process and to this issue of
43 salmon bycatch.

44
45 As most of us I think are familiar, the
46 issue of salmon bycatch is very important to rural
47 residents that the Federal Subsistence Board works to
48 provide the rural subsistence priority for. As some of
49 you may know, the Board receives annual reports from
50

1 the 10 Regional Advisory Councils and numerous Councils
2 have raised this issue of salmon bycatch in their
3 reports in recent years as we've seen the bycatch
4 numbers increasing at certain periods in time and we've
5 seen Western Alaska salmon runs declining.

6
7 While this issue is outside the
8 jurisdiction of the Board's authority, we have been
9 forwarding the concerns of the Regional Advisory
10 Councils as requested to the Secretaries of Interior
11 and Agriculture. Most recently, just this past summer,
12 we forwarded a letter asking the Secretaries and/or
13 their staff to liaise with their peers at Department of
14 Commerce.

15
16 As some of you may know as well, the
17 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a non-voting seat on
18 the Council and we've been participating in the recent
19 Council meetings and we provide a report and usually in
20 that report we'll give information on the salmon
21 fisheries that we have delegated authority for as well
22 as other topics that are important, such as seabirds
23 and invasive species.

24
25 So we just want to acknowledge the
26 multitude of efforts that you shared with us,
27 especially the formation of the Salmon Bycatch
28 Committee to work on chum salmon bycatch with the
29 Council. Also this creation of the tribal seat on the
30 Advisory Panel. The efforts of Dr. Stram to attend the
31 multitude of Council meetings and to give the
32 presentations on salmon bycatch to you and also for
33 joining us today.

34
35 I just wanted to note that the Service
36 did raise at the most recent Council meeting in
37 December that we thought this issue was big enough that
38 we wanted to suggest the Bycatch Committee be a
39 standing committee and not to have it sunset. This is
40 just to enable ongoing communication about this topic
41 among all stakeholders. So we hope as the important
42 work on the chum issue progresses that the ongoing work
43 of the Committee will be talked about as well.

44
45 So again, just while we do have
46 different jurisdictions and responsibilities, the
47 people and the resources that we work to conserve and
48 provide opportunity for harvest for are all
49 interconnected and we just want to share that we think
50

0383

1 it's essential for us to continue our open lines of
2 communication.

3

4 Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, this is
7 kind of a question here for you. I thank you guys for
8 your presentation. Appreciate it. It does come up a
9 lot, bycatch, in our meetings, so we appreciate you
10 here and I'm thankful the Fish and Wildlife Service
11 brought you here.

12

13 We do have a question from the
14 audience. I want to check your comfort level on that.
15 Okay, Chloe. Come on up here and go ahead and speak.
16 Just please state your name for the record. You've got
17 a nice long last name.

18

19 MS. BOURDUKOFISKY: Hello. My name is
20 Chloe Bourdukofsky or my Unangax name is Kava. It
21 wasn't more of a question, but it was more of a
22 statement on part of the Unangax people. Recently we
23 -- during AFN there was a resolution 22-02 put on
24 against us for Area M, but it hasn't been brought up
25 yet today. So I don't know when to mention it. I
26 don't know if you guys read Resolution 22-02 yet that
27 talked about the bycatch in Area M.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 DR. STRAM: I don't have the resolution
32 in front of me. Obviously the Area M fishery is under
33 the jurisdiction of the Board of Fisheries. We do take
34 that into consideration when we have an analysis in
35 terms of the background information and the genetic
36 stock composition from the Area M fishery, but that's
37 outside of the jurisdiction of the North Pacific
38 Fishery Management Council.

39

40 MS. BOURDUKOFISKY: Okay. I guess
41 that's all.

42

43 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I'd
44 also encourage you to speak in the morning on
45 non-consensus agenda items. It's an opportunity for us
46 to get your testimony on the record and we do try to
47 find answers to the things that you have concerning
48 you.

49

50

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1 Thank you.

2

3 Any other questions from the Board.

4

5 (No comments)

6

7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, I'd like
8 to thank you guys for your presentation. Karen.

9

10 MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 This is Karen Linnell with the Ahtna Intertribal
12 Resource Commission. I appreciate the report and the
13 comments from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding
14 jurisdiction. I do want to say that while the
15 commercial fishery is under the Department of Commerce
16 and NOAA, the responsibility for sustainability is with
17 the Department of Interior and the U.S. Fish and
18 Wildlife Service. So there is a disconnect in this
19 process. It falls with the Secretary.

20

21 The continued take and the bycatch that
22 happens and the -- what do they call the other besides
23 bycatch? Words are -- huh? Interception fisheries
24 have a direct impact on that sustainability and
25 therefore falls within your jurisdiction when we come
26 and talk to these things. There's got to be a place
27 for that ownership and that responsibility to be taken
28 by the Secretary of Interior.

29

30 How this is handled through the
31 Department of Commerce and things like that it's -- you
32 can't keep taking and taking and taking and not getting
33 anything into the river system or there won't be
34 anything for anybody else. You're still not meeting
35 treaty obligations into the Yukon and that is based on
36 what's happening in the open water with the bycatch and
37 the intercept fisheries.

38

39 So to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
40 Service it is your responsibility and it is in your
41 jurisdiction because it's your responsibility to make
42 sure that there's a sustainable fishery. Getting
43 things to the spawning grounds, providing for
44 subsistence needs. That's on this Board's
45 responsibility, but it's also on your responsibility.
46 I just wanted to make that point clear and have that on
47 the record.

48

49 Thank you so much for your report. I

50

0385

1 like having these slide shows so we can see the
2 numbers. I'm sure you guys do too because reading that
3 stack you might talk to the OSM Staff about presenting
4 like that, a report at the beginning, and then being
5 able to see something like this. It was really nice.
6 I don't know whatever happened to the Paper Reduction
7 Act. It just totally left OSM.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 Thank you so much.

12

13 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
14 some humor at the end there. I don't mean to pick on
15 anybody here, but we're one step ahead of the BIA.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie.

20

21 MR. WRIGHT: My name is Charlie Wright.
22 I grew up on the Yukon between Tanana and Rampart. It
23 seems that we've reached the point where every fish
24 matters to achieve escapement and treaty obligations.
25 It seems adult equivalency and impact metrics are
26 designed to minimize the impacts of prohibited species
27 catch on your conservation of salmon on the Yukon
28 River.

29

30 I just wanted to state that. We are
31 really needing to meet escapement, so we really need
32 something to happen. As you guys know, our people
33 haven't been able to eat salmon since '19. We can't do
34 nothing to enhance them salmon without escapement being
35 met. We can't eat without escapement being met. I
36 just thought I would state that so we could hear it on
37 the record.

38

39 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

40

41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
42 Chris, were you wanting to speak now or did you want to
43 wait? Yeah, you can come up. We're on free flow here.

44

45 MR. PRICE: Thank you for your
46 presentation today. I really appreciate it. Just a
47 basic understanding of the fisheries I'm trying to
48 figure is why are the Bristol Bay sockeye salmon
49 numbers doing so well and we see these reductions in

50

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1 the Yukon and the Kuskokwim and it doesn't really --
2 I'm trying to understand why that's going on in the
3 ecosystem. If you could at all talk about that. We
4 never hear about sockeye salmon in the bycatch as well.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 DR. STRAM: Thank you for the question.
9 Going back to one of the slides we showed initially.
10 Again, while the non-chinook category includes the
11 other species of salmon, the pollock fishery, the
12 groundfish fisheries in the Bering Sea do not intercept
13 sockeye salmon. So they don't catch them in any
14 numbers in any year. We do look at those numbers every
15 year by species composition and it is always over 99.9
16 percent chum. So we tend to focus our management
17 considerations on chum with a focus on Western Alaska
18 chum in order to avoid them because the high seas
19 groundfish fisheries impact to sockeye is not present
20 in our fisheries.

21

22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
23 We'll take one more. Kenneth Nukwak. Holy smokes, you
24 hung up on her for this?

25

26 (Laughter)

27

28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We are a
29 priority. Thank you.

30

31 MR. NUKWAK: Through the Chair, thank
32 you. I'm beating around the bush right now. I'm
33 learning as I attend these meetings. This is my second
34 time attending a meeting with FSB. Thank you.

35

36 I had a question on the bycatch. Is it
37 only on the salmon, the bycatch? After you answer that
38 I'll elaborate.

39

40 DR. STRAM: Thank you for the question.
41 If you're asking about the pollock fishery bycatch, for
42 salmon species again it's on chinook and chum. If
43 you're asking about their bycatch of other species,
44 there are other species that the fishery encounters.
45 They do encounter some crab. They also encounter
46 squid. They can encounter herring. In recent years
47 squid and herring have been bycatch issues that the
48 pollock fishery has been navigating in terms of running
49 into herring and squid. Other species that they catch

50

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1 incidentally are largely species that they are allowed
2 to legally retain and land. Hopefully that answers
3 your question.

4

5 MR. NUKWAK: Okay. Thank you. Being a
6 subsistence user I hunt inland also spring time and in
7 fall time out in the Bering Sea. So I'm a seasonal
8 hunter. The walrus in the State Sanctuary Walrus
9 Island also called Round Island they're disappearing.
10 They do eat a lot of clams. The cobbler clams. Going
11 around the cape when I harvest spawn on kelp and
12 cobbler clams, I have to go 180 miles around the cape
13 to get to those. Anyway, is there a number on the
14 clams that are being caught, what the walrus eat?
15 After you answer that I'll have another question.

16

17 DR. STRAM: Thank you for the question.
18 I can try to answer it. I believe it's very minimal,
19 but again we don't manage clams. That would be
20 something that would be managed by the State of Alaska.

21

22 MR. NUKWAK: Okay. But it is still in
23 the Bering Sea waters though. I don't know why it's
24 not part of North Pacific. Having said that, who takes
25 care of the boundaries, surveying the boundaries and
26 making sure the trawlers are not going beyond the
27 three-mile mark? Having said that, one of the
28 subsistence users from my home town sometimes we camp
29 out when we have to put something on the table. There
30 was a trawler within the mile, closer or a mile or so
31 from the beach. Who watches -- and this was early in
32 the morning while everybody is asleep. Who does the
33 watching if I can put it that way?

34

35 DR. STRAM: Thank you for the question.
36 In terms of violations or monitoring, so there's
37 different ways that vessels are monitored. There's a
38 NOAA Office of Law Enforcement. There's also
39 enforcement and monitoring by the Coast Guard across
40 the whole North Pacific. Most, if not all, of at least
41 the pollock vessels themselves have VMS, so vessel
42 monitoring systems, on board. Those tracks are
43 available for the law enforcement to evaluate to what
44 extent they have entered any area that is off limit or
45 closed to them.

46

47 There are some trawl vessels that if
48 it's a parallel fishery, say for cod, they can trawl
49 inside State waters when it's a parallel fishery that's
50

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1 open or if they're operating under their State license,
2 not their Federal license. So it's very issue
3 specific, but there's large enforcement effort and we
4 at the North Pacific Council on an annual basis receive
5 reports from the Coast Guard on all violations that the
6 Coast Guard has brought forward and those are all made
7 public to the Council and gone through I believe it's
8 at our December meeting that we get an extensive report
9 from the Coast Guard on their actions for law
10 enforcement in the North Pacific.

11

12 MR. NUKWAK: Thank you. I'm learning
13 as I go. When we go around the Cape springtime there's
14 a chance, more than a chance we see trawlers out there.
15 At one time I saw seven to ten trawlers. I would
16 assume, since they're so big, they were within the
17 three-mile range.

18

19 Anyway, as I go along I'm learning
20 everything and love to read. Thanks for giving me this
21 opportunity.

22

23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
24 coming. I appreciate you can get some questions
25 answered here today. We'll take one more and then we
26 need to move on. I don't mean to discount anyone, but
27 I've got one more blue card here. We'll call up Karen
28 Pletnikoff.

29

30 MS. PLETNIKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 Thank you, Board, for this opportunity to ask a
32 question and to make a comment. Chloe Bourdukofsky
33 said Resolution 22-02 was problematic for us as Unangan
34 people and our 100-year-old commercial fisheries, which
35 were initially multi-species fisheries. It's only been
36 through the change in management that they've become
37 intercept fisheries, that they've been labeled as
38 something other than what they initially were.
39 Fishermen going out and getting what the sea provides.

40

41 All that being said, the local resident
42 fishermen's ability to avoid certain runs, certain
43 species, certain fish of different maturity classes has
44 been hugely important to the locals success of
45 improving their own catches but also to protecting
46 everybody else's fisheries.

47

48 But what's important to you as the
49 Subsistence Board is that these commercial fishery

50

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1 opportunities are the subsistence access for so many of
2 our folks. It's so difficult to afford to leave the
3 dock when you've got the vessel sizes that it takes to
4 ply the waters of the North Pacific and the Bering Sea.
5 So these aren't single species harvest, these aren't
6 single types of catch. They're commercial and
7 subsistence frequently.

8

9 I wanted to point out that AFN
10 Resolution 22-03 was directed to the North Pacific
11 Fishery Management Council on reducing chinook and chum
12 bycatch through the Amendment 110 process. I think
13 that might have been what the previous person was
14 speaking to and would be appropriate for you to maybe
15 talk about that a little.

16

17 DR. STRAM: Thank you. I don't
18 actually have the resolution in front of me, so I'm not
19 familiar with it specifically.

20

21 MS. PLETNIKOFF: Could you speak to how
22 the Amendment 110 process is moving forward through the
23 Council and what we can expect with the new chinook and
24 chum data on how that might be applied.

25

26 DR. STRAM: Thank you. Just to be
27 clear, Amendment 110 is part of the program that's
28 currently in place. What we're looking at we don't
29 have an amendment number for it yet because an analysis
30 has not yet been initiated. What's been initiated is
31 the committee process to provide a recommendation to
32 the Council in April on a purpose and need for an
33 analysis and conceptual alternatives.

34

35 So without being able to predict what
36 will come out of the Council meeting in April, the
37 committee will be recommending some management
38 approaches. Those management approaches are likely to
39 include some form of ascientifically-based chum cap.
40 If I didn't mention previously, there is no cap on chum
41 currently. No PSE limit on chum currently. There are
42 PSE limits on chinook and again those vary based on
43 above and below the three river index indication.

44

45 So for several years we've been under
46 low cap systems, so there are lower caps in place in
47 the pollock industry in years in which there's low
48 chinook abundance. So that happens through regulation
49 whenever that indication is below 250,000. So the 2023
50

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1 pollock fishery is operating under a low chinook cap.

2

3

4 The Council currently has indicated
5 that their current focus is on developing management
6 measures for chum. We've heard at the committee so far
7 and in public testimony that folks are interested as
8 well in re-looking at different measures for chinook.

8

9

10 The Council has not yet indicated that
11 they're looking at chinook as well, but they are
12 indicating that currently they're looking at providing
13 some range of management measures that could be
14 analyzed that would provide both cap limits on chum
15 salmon bycatch in the pollock fishery as well as
16 possible revisions to the IPA structure.

16

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So when we put into place Amendment 110
we put into place a lower cap system. Then also
through regulations guiding what the Incentive Plan
Agreements by the pollock fishery what they must
include, the Council also put into place through the
IPA mandatory salmon excluders on all pollock vessels.
They put into place restrictions and penalties on
vessels that are fishing into September and October
when known chinook bycatch rates are higher. There is
additional stringent measures on individual vessel
accountability.

So the Council at that time, in order
to refine their current chinook program that was put
into place in 2011 under Amendment 91 through the
amendment process of Amendment 110 put into place
different cap levels as well as different requirements
under the IPA to improve the individual vessel
performance for bycatch reduction of chinook.

So the Council is looking at some form
of process that is still under development to look at
additional measures for chum, both looking at cap
levels as well as additional provisions that could be
folded into these incentive plan agreements. So that
process will begin through the Committee. The
Committee again has met twice. The meeting that we
just had January 25th was a beginning step of providing
recommendations.

The Committee is collecting
information. The Committee will continue to receive
information from staff that they've requested to come

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1 back to them on March 20th and 21st. Over those two
2 days the Committee -- it's a public meeting that will
3 take place here in Anchorage. We're still determining
4 the location. At that meeting then the Committee will
5 begin to develop their recommendations that they'll
6 provide to the Council in April on, again, conceptual
7 alternatives as well as a purpose and need.

8

9 MS. PLETNIKOFF: Thank you so much.
10 That was really super helpful and informative. Mr.
11 Chair, may I just have one closing thought. Currently
12 the numbers of fish that are missing, the millions of
13 fish that are missing don't appear to be found within
14 the bycatch or the intercept.

15

16 The adaptation and resilience measures
17 that we need to start looking at as managers, as
18 harvesters, as commercial users to address the level of
19 environmental change that accounts for these millions
20 of missing fish should be more the forefront of these
21 discussions rather than treating it like a simple
22 allocation issue that would solve our problems. Coming
23 after each other, in-fighting, is not going to bring
24 back the fish that are missing.

25

26 Until we start addressing the
27 mitigation and the resilience actions that we can take
28 as managers, as users, we're not going to get to the
29 place where we'll be able to be on our landscapes for
30 another 10,000 years.

31

32 Thanks.

33

34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I'd
35 also like to thank the presenters for taking the time
36 to answer questions. Sorry if we put you on the spot,
37 but I appreciate it and you did a good job educating
38 people and filling them in on things and providing an
39 outlet for your meetings so they can come and continue
40 to engage with you. So truly appreciate that.

41

42 Thank you.

43

44 MS. STRAM: Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'll call on
47 the Hunter Education Program presentation.

48

49 MS. MCDAVID: Good afternoon, Mr.

50

1 Chairman and members of the Board. For the record my
2 name is Brooke McDavid and I'm the Council Coordinator
3 for the Eastern Interior and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta
4 Regional Advisory Councils.

5
6 Recently the Eastern Interior Council
7 sent a letter to the Board requesting the Board to
8 reaffirm its support for the Hunter Ethics Education
9 and Outreach Initiative in the Eastern Interior Region.
10 A copy of this letter and a few additional supplemental
11 materials were just passed out to you for reference.
12 Those materials and a copy of this presentation are
13 also available on the Federal Subsistence Management
14 Program website for anyone listening in under the Board
15 meeting materials.

16
17 So this presentation is meant to
18 provide you with background information on the Hunter
19 Ethics Initiative since there's several new members of
20 the Board that have been appointed since the last time
21 the Board was updated on this topic. This is an action
22 item.

23
24 Hunter ethics education outreach has
25 been a major priority for the Eastern Interior Council
26 for over a decade. The Council first raised concerns
27 about user conflicts and the need for hunter ethics
28 outreach beginning in 2009. The main concerns raised
29 by the Council over time have been the following:

30
31 Cultural misunderstandings between
32 rural subsistence hunters and urban/sport hunters.
33 Poor meat handling and meat left in the field.
34 Increasing competition and safety concerns in crowded
35 road hunting zones. Trespassing on private property.

36
37 Over the years the Council has
38 continually requested support from the Federal
39 Subsistence Management Program and the Board to develop
40 targeted outreach products and educational programs to
41 help address their concerns. In 2017 the Council voted
42 to have hunter ethics education outreach as an agenda
43 item at every Council meeting.

44
45 At its summer 2016 work session the
46 Board gave its full support for the Hunter Ethics
47 Initiative to move forward and tasked OSM with
48 developing an action plan for next steps. Katya
49 Wessels, who was then the Council Coordinator for the
50

1 Eastern Interior Council, developed an action plan
2 which the Board approved during its summer 2017 work
3 session. Subsequently two planning workshops were held
4 in Fairbanks. The first during fall 2017 and the
5 second in fall of 2018.

6
7 The workshops garnered interest from a
8 diverse group of stakeholders who worked together to
9 refine the goals of the initiative and to develop pilot
10 projects. At the second workshop it was decided that
11 the best way to move forward was to form smaller
12 working groups specific to the pilot projects. I'll
13 provide a brief overview of those pilot projects in
14 later slides.

15
16 It's kind of hard to see on here, but
17 there were a wide range of participants at the planning
18 workshops. That includes representatives from Federal
19 agencies, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, sport
20 hunting groups, tribal councils and regional Alaska
21 Native organizations.

22
23 It was very important to the Eastern
24 Interior Council that this initiative be inclusive and
25 welcoming of all user groups and strive to bring people
26 together over shared values and to foster better
27 understanding for differing values. All participants
28 were very pleased with the outcomes of the workshop and
29 excited to work together to move this initiative
30 forward.

31
32 The overarching goals of the initiative
33 that the Council and workshop participants came up with
34 are summarized here. The main goals were to reduce
35 user conflicts by promoting understanding and tolerance
36 for different cultural hunting values, encouraging
37 respect for the resource, land, and fellow users in the
38 field, and also reducing meat spoilage and waste.

39
40 I do just want to note that it was
41 never the intention of the Council or any of the
42 participants that this initiative be a substitute for
43 the State of Alaska Hunter Education Program.

44
45 Two of the pilot projects developed
46 during the planning workshops ultimately gained
47 traction. The first one I'll go over is the local
48 community hunter liaisons pilot project. The goal of
49 this project is to facilitate direct communication
50

1 between non-local hunters and local community liaisons
2 stationed in the field during hunting season.

3
4 In 2018 Yukon Flats National Wildlife
5 Refuge stepped up to the plate and paved the way for
6 such positions to be filled through their annual
7 funding agreement with the Council of Athabaskan Tribal
8 Governments or CATG. CATG hired the first local hunter
9 liaison to work at the Fort Yukon airport in fall 2018
10 where the greeter greeted hunters passing through via
11 air taxi service.

12
13 In 2019 an additional position was
14 added in the community of Circle to greet hunters who
15 drove the Steese highway to launch their boats on the
16 Yukon River. These two positions have continued to be
17 filled annually up through the fall of 2022. Community
18 hunter liaisons have not only been responsible for
19 greeting and providing information to non-local
20 hunters, but they have also helped collect visitor use
21 and harvest data. The liaisons have produced annual
22 reports detailing their engagements, observations and
23 the data they collected.

24
25 The liaison at the Fort Yukon airport
26 found that many hunters coming through were actually
27 heading north into the Arctic Refuge. The Circle
28 liaison found that about half of the hunters were going
29 upriver into Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.
30 So this resulted in both Arctic Refuge and
31 Yukon-Charley contributing funds to help Yukon Flats
32 continue to be able to support these seasonal liaison
33 positions through their agreement with CATG.

34
35 Although Yukon Flats and Arctic Refuge
36 and Yukon-Charley National Preserve have been able to
37 allocate some funding for these positions in recent
38 years future funding for these positions is not
39 certain. The Eastern Interior Council feels strongly
40 that these positions are beneficial and cost effective
41 and would like to see the current hunter liaison
42 positions continue to be funded.

43
44 Further, the Council would like to see
45 new positions created in other parts of the region,
46 particularly along the Taylor and Steese Highways where
47 hunter use is highly concentrated in the fall time.
48 Expanding these positions into other areas of the
49 Eastern Interior would likely require additional
50

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1 agencies to get involved in supporting these new
2 positions.

3
4 The second pilot project developed
5 during the workshops was the Hunt Like an Alaska pilot
6 project. The goal of this project is to directly
7 engage with military personnel new to Alaska at Fort
8 Wainwright Army Base and Eielson Air Force Base, both
9 located near Fairbanks and the Eastern Interior Region.

10
11 However outreach materials developed
12 for this project could also be used for a more general
13 audience and on other military bases throughout the
14 state. The rationale behind focusing outreach on the
15 military bases is because of the high turnover among
16 military personnel stationed in Alaska.

17
18 Understandably many new residents to
19 Alaska want to get out and have a unique Alaskan
20 hunting experience while here. This project would help
21 provide those individuals with information on how to
22 have that experience in a fun, safe and ethical way.

23
24 Through this project one to two-hour
25 outreach events would be held on the local military
26 bases that would include storytelling and instructional
27 information shared by rural Alaskans and Alaska
28 veterans. It would be an opportunity to distribute
29 outreach materials focused on hunting ethics and proper
30 handling of meat.

31
32 In 2019 a working group that included
33 representatives from Eielson and Ft. Wainwright bases
34 met to begin to identify outreach opportunities and
35 needed products. Unfortunately, OSM staffing shortages
36 and then the COVID-19 pandemic delayed further progress
37 on this project.

38
39 The Eastern Interior Council would
40 really like to see this project regain steam by
41 reconvening a working group and refining the outreach
42 strategies needed. They would also like to see print
43 and video outreach products finalized and put to use at
44 outreach events.

45
46 At the fall 2022 meeting, which was the
47 first in-person meeting after the COVID-19 pandemic,
48 the Eastern Interior Council voted to send a letter to
49 the Board asking the Board to do the following: One,
50

1 reaffirm support for the initiative to move forward
2 and, two, discuss possible funding options for the
3 community hunter liaison positions and the Hunt Like an
4 Alaskan pilot projects.

5
6 Enclosed in the letter to the Board was
7 an estimate of funding needed for the continuation of
8 the two previously mentioned pilot projects. That
9 estimate has since been updated and is included in the
10 copy that was passed out to the Board. This estimate
11 is simply intended to give the Board an idea of the
12 costs associated with these projects, including which
13 ones would be one-time costs versus ongoing costs.

14
15 Mr. Chair, that concludes my overview
16 of the Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach Initiative
17 and the Eastern Interior's request to the Board. I did
18 want to note that we do have some folks on the line
19 that have been involved with this initiative over time
20 and would be able to help answer questions and they
21 might also like to provide some comments to the Board.

22
23 Thank you.

24
25 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
26 that presentation. Any questions from the Board here.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there
31 anything anybody online has that we'll add to this?

32
33 (No comments)

34
35 MS. LINNELL: Hi, this is Karen
36 Linnell. I actually participated in the working group
37 when they were creating the materials and having their
38 first discussions with multiple user groups, guides,
39 subsistence folks, Eastern Interior RAC and it's just
40 good to hear how far it went and I just wanted to
41 publicly thank them for their work. Thank you, Katya,
42 and just the way it all turned out. Hopefully they'll
43 get it going again.

44
45 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
48 that positive statement.

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1 MS. PITKA: Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

4

5 MS. PITKA: I asked Dorothea Adams, the
6 acting executive director for CATG to call in, but I'm
7 not sure if she was able to or not. She's doing a
8 number of things right now. But I did want to say as
9 chairwoman of the Council of Athabaskan Tribal
10 Governments that this particular project was pretty
11 near and dear to the heart of the Eastern Interior
12 Regional Advisory Council and also the Council of
13 Athabaskan Tribal Governments.

14

15 They hold some self-governance
16 agreements and annual funding agreements with the Fish
17 and Wildlife Service and the BLM. So having that
18 particular liaison program was important because we'd
19 heard -- because there's such low moose density in the
20 Yukon Flats that one of the issues we're running into
21 was we would see a lot of waste like out in the woods.
22 Like people would go out into the woods and there would
23 be like a moose with like the hindquarters gone or the
24 back done. It was really getting out of hand. Having
25 some of these local solutions were pretty effective.

26

27 One of the people that was involved
28 with that was Amanda Pope. She's from the village of
29 Circle. She would go out to the boat landing like
30 every single day and basically just talk to people.
31 Not in like a confrontational law enforcement kind of
32 way, but letting them know like where they could and
33 couldn't go. Like what lands are Native allotments and
34 things like that on the ground that I feel like were
35 pretty effective. I'm not sure if she was able to get
36 on though.

37

38 So thank you for that program.

39

40 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead,

43 Katya.

44

45 MS. WESSELS: Mr. Chair, Members of the
46 Board. For the record my name is Katya Wessels and I'm
47 Council Coordination Division Supervisor with OSM. I
48 just wanted to add a couple things to what Brooke said.

49

50

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1 You know, through this meeting we heard
2 a lot about people talking regarding user conflict
3 issues and different user groups vying for the same
4 resource. I think that the Eastern Interior Council
5 they kind of hit the nail on the head with their
6 initiative because they want to involve different user
7 groups in this initiative. They want to educate in a
8 non-confrontational way and provide information. Many,
9 many entities and even people from other regions are
10 interested in this initiative.

11
12 The last workshop that we had there
13 were more than 40 participants and some of them
14 actually came from other regions than the Eastern
15 Interior. So I really hope that the Board will support
16 the continuation of this initiative because it's
17 important not just for the Eastern Interior Region,
18 it's important for all subsistence regions in Alaska.
19 I think some good things will come out of it. It's not
20 like some standard thing that OSM or Federal
21 Subsistence Management Program is doing, but that's for
22 the benefit of all user groups.

23
24 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
27 Katya. I believe I may have heard the operator click
28 there. Operator, was there somebody online?

29
30 OPERATOR: Yes. You can go ahead and
31 speak.

32
33 MS. POPE: Okay. Hello, Mr. Chair.
34 Those on the Board and to those attending the meeting.
35 My name is Amanda Pope and I currently live in Circle.
36 I thank you for the time to speak today. The Hunter
37 Liaisons are hired by the Council of Athabaskan Tribal
38 Government's natural resource department who work for a
39 short time during the hunting season.

40
41 Their job is to interview local
42 hunters, those who come into their community to get a
43 basic idea of how much people are going through, what
44 general area they're hunting, what animals they are
45 searching for and trying to catch those who come out of
46 the field to see if they are successful.

47
48 A lot of hunters donate meat to the
49 communities, so the hunter liaison in my opinion should
50

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1 be there to collect and pass out to those in need. The
2 hunter liaisons are hired to try and collect basic
3 information from hunters and try to ease always rising
4 concern of competing for the same animals.

5

6 During the years of 2019, 2020 and 2021
7 I worked during the months of August and September as a
8 hunter liaison. I interviewed roughly 300 people
9 including about 10 to 12 hunters from Circle each year.
10 Each of those years half of the people go into the
11 Yukon National Wildlife Refuge and about half goes into
12 the Yukon-Charley National Preserve. There would
13 always be a handful of people who hunt in and around
14 Circle, including Units 25D and 20B along the Steese
15 Highway.

16

17 There is a concern some of the locals
18 and from the communities in neighboring areas. I've
19 spoken to a lot of people who I encounter who are
20 hunting and a lot who are not hunting. They always
21 have a concern that they're hunting for the same
22 animals, which I think that concern will always be
23 there.

24

25 I believe continuing this program will
26 continue to help ease that concern and to continue
27 education to those who hunt both local and non-local.
28 I took it upon myself to pass both Federal and State
29 regulation booklets out each year. Each year I worked
30 as a hunter liaison. I explain the differences between
31 the Federal and State regulation booklets and pass
32 local maps out so people will be aware of the local
33 private lands in my area, which it helped alleviate
34 trespassing.

35

36 I also advocated for the State of
37 Alaska to put Game Management Unit signs along the
38 Steese Highway. I shared my experiences as a local
39 subsistence hunter, fisher and trapper and passed tips
40 to those who asked about how and why my culture is a
41 part of the way I process and harvest game animals.

42

43 I now own my own business and currently
44 I got hired as a consultant for the Alaska Conservation
45 Foundation. A small part of my job is to help train
46 those who are hired by CATG's National Resource
47 Department as a hunter liaison. I look forward to
48 starting that with them this fall.

49

50

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1 I have many goals such as possibly
2 making a pamphlet that aligns with the State's harvest
3 requirements and has a cultural significance of
4 harvesting all edible parts. If the people who don't
5 want to utilize the other parts that are not required
6 to be taken from the field, they can easily donate it
7 to the nearest community or person. I think the
8 pamphlet will help educate both locals and non-locals
9 that aren't aware of the importance to share those
10 cultural aspects when out on the land.

11

12 I thank you for the time to speak today
13 and would welcome any feedback or questions.

14

15 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
16 taking the time to call in. Any questions from the
17 Board.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
22 calling and good luck with your program there.
23 Operator, at this time we'd like to recognize Sue, if
24 you could let her into this meeting.

25

26 Thank you.

27

28 OPERATOR: Sue, your line is open.

29

30 MS. ENTSMINGER: I believe I was just
31 going to listen only.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We can hear you
34 now. You have the floor.

35

36 MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, sorry for the
37 confusion. It was Eastern Interior member Andy Bassich
38 who was trying to comment.

39

40 Thank you.

41

42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So it's Andy on
43 the phone?

44

45 MR. BASSICH: Yes. Can you hear me,
46 please?

47

48 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I can hear you
49 now.

50

0401

1 MR. BASSICH: Thank you very much. For
2 the record my name is Andy Bassich. I'm a member of
3 the Eastern Interior RAC for over 20 years. I've been
4 pretty intimately involved in the hunter ethics
5 devolvment through our RAC. I just had a couple of
6 points I wanted to bring up.

7
8 I want to thank Brooke for her
9 excellent presentation to you. I think it covered it
10 very accurately. I also wanted to do a shout out to
11 Katya and also Vince Mathews, who was our Regional
12 Coordinator for a while, and I really wanted to make
13 the Board aware that they have kept this program alive
14 through the Covid process that we've all gone through.
15 So I really want to recognize and appreciate them for
16 those efforts.

17
18 I think the most important thing about
19 this program is that it's meant to be a non-allocative
20 program. It's meant to bring user groups together to
21 work on solutions to have equitable enjoyment in
22 sharing of the resources. That's the goal of it. So
23 that's a really important thing. Of course, for those
24 of us who live out in the remote areas conservation and
25 wasteful practices are probably the biggest concerns.
26 So we're hoping to address that.

27
28 I think one of the things that wasn't
29 talked about that's becoming a growing concern for
30 probably most of Alaskans, whether it's on their radar
31 or not, is that climate change is changing a lot of
32 what's happening ecologically in the state of Alaska.
33 There's been a lot of biological and social studies
34 throughout the country and throughout the world on the
35 future migration of people moving north. That's going
36 to have a dramatic impact on Alaska and in particular
37 Federally qualified users within Alaska as populations
38 increase and as more businesses take place, as farming
39 takes place.

40
41 So I think this approach, the Ethics
42 Program, to begin some of this dialogue and start
43 working on some of the solutions now is going to be
44 really important in the future of the State of Alaska
45 and rural users.

46
47 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We lost him.
48 Operator, did we lose him? Operator, are you still on?

49
50

0402

1 MR. BASSICH:a proactive. And
2 also recognizing that all the Federal programs are
3 excellent programs, but they do take time. So I think
4 the quicker we can get moving on this the more
5 important the work will be into the future.

6
7 I think the other thing that wasn't
8 brought up or maybe it was touched on a little bit is
9 that the idea and the intent behind this program was to
10 initiate the program in the Eastern Interior Region,
11 begin to work on the refinement of it, what doesn't
12 work, what's needed, where can we go with it. Once
13 that is working well to be able to offer that to your
14 Board to expand into other parts of the state and
15 hopefully partner with other State and Federal agencies
16 within the state to initiate that and help with some of
17 the cost-sharing involved in that.

18
19 Those are the points I just wanted to
20 bring up and I thank you very much for the time to make
21 those comments.

22
23 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
24 Andy. Any questions from the Board for Andy.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
29 seeing none. Thank you for taking the time to call in
30 today, Andy.

31
32 MS. WESSELS: We need the motion.

33
34 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, I know that
35 part, I think.

36
37 (Laughter)

38
39 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I didn't know
40 if we had about 20 more hunters going to come in and
41 give us a demonstration on skinning a caribou. Come on
42 now.

43
44 MS. WESSELS: We'll arrange it for the
45 next Board meeting.

46
47 (Laughter)

48
49 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And then eat
50

0403

1 some steak after. You know, we keep talking about we
2 need to see it, right. One of the driving things here
3 is the Board wanting to get out into these areas and
4 look at some of the things they're seeing. You know,
5 the areas of high problems, but also areas of interest
6 like this where we can educate the general public and
7 we hear that transient community members are the ones
8 we need to. So I'm glad you guys are focusing on that.
9 Appreciate it.

10

11 All right, Board. Any Board questions,
12 any additional feedback. We're looking for support at
13 least from the Board to continue the initiative. So I
14 open the floor for a motion at this time.

15

16 MS. KLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
17 looking at the Eastern Interior -- this is Jill Klein
18 with Fish and Wildlife Service for the record. Looking
19 at the Eastern Interior Council's letter to the Board
20 they're asking for the Board's support to continue the
21 initiative and also inquire if any of the Federal
22 agencies represented on the Board would be able to
23 provide modest funding to resume the work associated
24 with the hunt, like an Alaskan pilot project.

25

26 As you heard from Ms. Pitka before the
27 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and through the Yukon
28 Flats National Wildlife Refuge and also the Arctic
29 National Wildlife Refuge, also in partnership with the
30 National Park Service have helped to fund the Hunter
31 Liaisons and as you heard from Amanda about that work
32 it sounds like it's been going really well.

33

34 I would make a motion that the Federal
35 Subsistence Board could write a letter of support for
36 the Hunter Ethics Program and education and outreach
37 initiative. If there's a second, I can explain my
38 motion.

39

40 MR. BROWER: Second.

41

42 MS. KLEIN: Thank you. So thinking
43 that we can write a letter of support. It's my
44 understanding that the Board couldn't necessarily
45 direct the Federal agencies to fund and staff this
46 project. I think it would be up to OSM to share with
47 us how they can continue to support the project
48 internally be it from their staff time. But I would
49 think a letter from the Board that outlined the
50

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1 successes that the project has had such as in securing
2 external funding, the support its received from the
3 local communities and the work to date that they've
4 done informing hunters.

5

6 So that could include the history of
7 the project and what additional funding is needed and
8 the anticipated outcomes. It would be great to share
9 this letter with all the relevant stakeholders involved
10 in the projects and encourage our partners -- you know,
11 so including our Federal agencies but also our partners
12 to consider joining in support of this work in the
13 Eastern Interior Region and then also broader around
14 the state of Alaska as we've heard and eventually in
15 all the Regional Advisory Council regions.

16

17 Thank you.

18

19 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
20 Jill. So we have a motion here, seconded. Any other
21 Board discussion, deliberation, questions.

22

23 Sarah, you have the floor.

24

25 MS. CREACHBAUM: Jill, could you please
26 define what you mean by modest funding.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 MS. KLEIN: Thank you, Ms. Creachbaum.
31 Did I say that in reference to our funding? I hope not
32 to yours. That was actually in the Eastern Interior
33 RAC's letter, I think, to the Board. So I think the
34 attached budgets would describe the modest funding.
35 I'm not sure if we had -- we did have our Yukon Flats
36 Refuge manager. He had called in earlier. I'm not
37 sure if he's still on, but they could also speak to the
38 funds that they've provided.

39

40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board
41 questions, comments, deliberation on the motion to
42 provide a letter of support.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
47 question.

48

49 MR. CHEN: Question.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
2 has been called. Roll call, please.

3

4 MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
5 Starting with Fish and Wildlife Service, Jill Klein.

6

7 MS. KLEIN: Support.

8

9 MS. DETWILER: Sarah Creachbaum,
10 National Park Service.

11

12 MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service
13 enthusiastically supports.

14

15 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Greg Risdahl
16 is sitting in for Forest Service Board Member Dave
17 Schmid.

18

19 MR. RISDAHL: The Forest Service
20 supports writing a letter in support of the Hunter
21 Ethics Program and I'll leave it at that.

22

23 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Borough of
24 Land Management, Steve Cohn.

25

26 MR. COHN: BLM supports.

27

28 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Glenn Chen,
29 BIA.

30

31 MR. CHEN: The BIA also
32 enthusiastically supports this.

33

34 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public
35 Member Rhonda Pitka.

36

37 MS. PITKA: I think I have to recuse
38 myself. I'm chairwoman of the Council of Athabaskan
39 Tribal Governments and that's who would be running that
40 particular program.

41

42 MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you.
43 Public Member Charlie Brower.

44

45 MR. BROWER: Support.

46

47 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Chair
48 Christianson.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support
2 wholeheartedly.

3
4 MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The vote is
5 seven in favor.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So now we've
8 just got to describe out the plan to get you guys
9 money. I think this is a great program. I see a lot
10 of other opportunities too, so I hope we reach out even
11 further because that's some of the things we're working
12 on in Southeast just to train not just ethically how to
13 hunt, but new hunters.

14
15 If you heard that across the region,
16 we're lacking an endangered specie called people like
17 us who live off the land and can do it productively.
18 We have societal issues that are ripping our
19 communities apart and I hope that this can help it.
20 I'd also ask us to reach out to our tribal partners.

21
22 So in the morning we'll get to the deer
23 proposals after we get past public testimony in the
24 morning and we pass our consensus agenda, which would
25 be around 10:00 o'clock. Time to be determined not,
26 but those are the two orders of business in the morning
27 and we'll get back to the deer proposals first thing in
28 the morning. We apologize for any inconvenience it
29 caused, but time to be determined and things to engage
30 with the public take time. So we thank you for a good
31 day and we'll recess until 5:00 in the morning -- I
32 mean 9:00 in the morning.

33
34 (Laughter)

35
36 (Off record)

37
38 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

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