MEMBERS PRESENT:

Anthony Christianson, Chairman
Charles Brower, Public Member
Rhonda Pitka, Public Member
Sara Boario, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service
Tom Heinlein, Bureau of Land Management
Gene Peltola, Bureau of Indian Affairs
David Schmid, U.S. Forest Service

Ken Lord, Solicitor's Office

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PROCEDINGS

(Teleconference - 4/13/2022)

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

OPERATOR: This is the operator. It is now the top of the hour. We have 29 participants in the main conference with a few more speakers coming in. Are we ready to begin or do we want to wait?

MS. DETWILER: Operator, this is Sue Detwiler. I'll be helping the Chair of the Board. I would say maybe wait another minute or so. It looks like we still have several of the Board members who aren't online. I would say a minute, but probably not much more than that.

OPERATOR: Okay. I'll go ahead and give the voice over to the main conference. We'll begin shortly.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

OPERATOR: This is the operator. Right now we do have 43 speakers in the speakers conference.

MS. DETWILER: Operator, this is Sue Detwiler. I think we can go ahead and open a line to everyone.

OPERATOR: All right. We're ready to begin. Please stand by. Good afternoon and thank you for standing by. I'd like to inform all participants that your lines have been placed on a listen only mode for the question and answer session of today's call. Today's call is also being recorded. If anyone has any objections, you may disconnect at this time.

I would now like to turn the call over to Ms. Sue Detwiler. Thank you, you may begin.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Operator.

Thank you everybody for joining us today. My name is Sue Detwiler. I'm the Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management within Fish and Wildlife Service. I wanted to confirm -- Court Reporter Tina, have you started recording this meeting.
REPORTER: I am recording, Sue. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you. Having confirmed that I will start going through our roll call to see who we have on. Starting with the Board members do we have National Park Service?

MS. CREACHBAUM: Good morning, Sue. This is Sarah. Good morning, everyone.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Sarah Creachbaum. BLM, Thomas Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: Good morning.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Good morning. Sara Boario is here.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Sara. Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Good morning, Sue. Dave is on.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Dave. BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Gene is always on. Thank you, Sue.

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

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: (In Inupiaq).

MS. DETWILER: Morning, Charlie. Chairman Anthony Christianson.

(No response)
MS. DETWILER: The Chair may still be trying to get on. Moving forward to legal counsel from Department of Interior, Regional Solicitor's Office. Do we have Ken Lord?

MR. LORD: Yes, ma'am. I'm here. Good morning.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Ken. USDA Office of General Counsel, Jim Ustasiewski.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Liaisons to the Board, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Ben Mulligan and/or Mark Burch.

MR. MULLIGAN: Good morning, Sue. This is Ben.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Ben.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm on as well, Sue. Sorry to interrupt. This is Anthony Christianson.

MS. DETWILER: Oh, okay. Thank you, Tony. Just going through the liaisons to the Board. Regional Advisory Council Chairs. I'll start with Region 1, Southeast, Don Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Region 2, Southcentral. I understand Greg Encelewski is not available, but Gloria Stickwan, the Vice Chair, are you on?

MS. STICKWAN: I am. Good morning.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Gloria. Kodiak Aleutians, Della Trumble.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Bristol Bay, Nanci Morris Lyon.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Good morning.
Present and accounted for.


MS. PATTON: Good morning, Sue. This is Eva. There's still no connectivity in Alakanuk right now. We'll keep you posted when we're able to connect with our Y-K Delta RAC Chair.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Eva. Western Interior, Jack Reakoff.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff here. Good morning.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning. Seward Peninsula, Louis Green.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: He wasn't able to join yesterday. Nissa Pilcher may be able to speak on his behalf when she comes on. Northwest Arctic, Thomas Baker.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Eastern Interior, Sue Entsminger.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Good morning. Yes, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Sue. North Slope, Gordon Brower.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, the only member that has not signed on yet is Rhonda Pitka. Rhonda, are you on?

MS. PITKA: Yes, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Mr. Chair, it looks like we have all eight Board members on the
line. So I'll turn it over to you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
Thank you, Sue. Thank you everybody this morning and
welcome to day two of the meeting, the Federal
Subsistence Board meeting. I'd just welcome everybody
again and I look forward to another productive day of
going through the agenda here.

As every morning, we'll provide an
opportunity this morning to the public to go ahead and
speak on non-agenda items. Again, this is an
opportunity to speak on non-agenda items, something
that might be of importance for the Board to hear.
Operator, with that, I'll open it up this morning for
the public. After we go through that, I'll go ahead
and see if any other Board has anything to share and
then we'll move on with the order of business. Thank
you.

So, public. Any public wants to, you
have the floor.

OPERATOR: Thank you. To ask a
question, please press star, one. Please ensure that
your phone is unmuted and record your name clearly when
prompted.

Heather, your line is open.

MS. BAUSCHER: Good morning, everyone.
Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Members of the Board.
My name is Heather Bauscher. I'm here in Sitka,
Alaska. I'm representing the Sitka Conservation
Society and the University of Alaska Southeast.

I wanted to let everybody know about
that we've continued doing the dual enrollment class
around the Federal Subsistence Board process and I have
four students from various schools in Sitka here
participating. Two are from Mt. Edgecombe, one is a
Sitka High student and one is a homeschooled student.

In other years when we were able to
attend in person we usually would introduce ourselves
at the beginning of the meeting and I just wanted to
know if this is an appropriate time to let the kids say
hello.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back, Heather. This is Anthony Christianson, Board Chair. We welcome anybody working in the field of recruitment and educating on our Board process. So, yes, this would be an appropriate time. Welcome and thank you for your good work. You have the floor.

MS. BAUSCHER: Thank you, Mr. Christianson. I also want to say thanks to the Forest Service and Mr. Schmid for the help supporting this class. Thanks to Terry Suminski over the years for his support. And a big thank you to Rob Cross for helping doing the agency presentations with the students this year. We've also had presentations from Don Hernandez, Cathy Needham and a local Advisory Committee to the State, Member Tad Fujioka.

Now I'm going to turn this over to each student and let them introduce themselves. Do you want to go first, Clare? Okay.

MS. JUNGER: Uvlaalluaaq. Good morning. (In Inupiaq). My name is Clare Jungers. I am a senior at Mt. Edgecombe High School and I'm from Shishmaref, Alaska. I decided to take this class because I thought this was a great opportunity to learn more about the process of going through a proposal. I personally hunt myself and maybe one day I'll write a proposal.

Quyana. Thank you, Mr. Chair and the Board.

MS. ZULLICK: Hi. My name is (indiscernible) Zulick (ph). I'm a senior at Sitka High. I took this class to learn more about the subsistence process and I'm very excited. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

MR. WILKINSON: Hello. My name is Arta (ph) Wilkinson. I'm a sophomore homeschooled student residing in Sitka, Alaska. I would like to take this class because I want to learn more about the process of policy-making and I am very glad for this opportunity. Thank you.

MR. CLEVELAND: Good morning. My name is Nathan Cleveland. I'm a senior at Mt. Edgecombe and I'm from Quinhagak, Alaska.
MS. BAUSCHER: Okay. That's all. Just
four students that we have participating. They
prepared subsistence reflections and introducing
themselves. If there's any questions for them, let us
know.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Heather. I appreciate you guys and your continued
education and outreach. I look forward to some
proposal then. I hear a policy writer there too.
Always looking for people to fill jobs at OSM. Good
luck to you young emerging leaders and keep it up,
Heather. Thank you very much.

Any questions from the Board for the
students?

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor, Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Tony. Thank
you so much, Heather and the students. I sure wish we
could meet together here in person and hopefully at our
next meeting we'll be able to do that, but I just want
to extend my gratitude as well for this program. It's
a powerful program. We learn as much from the students
I think as they learn from the Board.

Thank you so much for continuing. I
know our agency will continue to support you as well.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
Thank you. Any other Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
students. Thank you, Heather. Operator, is there
anybody else online who would like to speak to a
non-agenda item?

OPERATOR: Yes. Next question comes
from Bill. Your line is open.

BILL: Oh, is that me? Hello?
OPERATOR: Your line is open.

BILL: I'm not sure if I'm speaking (indiscernible). I guess I at least have a question. I'm not, you know, familiar with the Federal Subsistence Board. So I'm -- anyway, I've been told about some proposals, but it's like grizzly bear harvest in Gates of the Arctic National Park and I guess I just want to confirm the proposals are 22-26 and 22-56.

I guess my understanding is that I shouldn't comment on those, but my question is -- and I believe this is so, but if it can be confirmed that those two proposals were moved to the non-consensual agenda. If that can be confirmed. And then also are you taking any public comments on those at the meeting or not?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. This is the Board Chair. Thank you for those questions. As far as the two proposals I'd have to ask staff. If they're on the non-consensual agenda item, we will provide public testimony.

Lisa, do you want to answer that.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Lisa Grediagin and, yes, both WP22-46 and 56 were removed by the Park Service Board Member yesterday. So now both of those proposals are on the non-consensus agenda. The time for public testimony on those proposals will be when the Board takes them up. It is hard to say exactly when that will be, but they are towards the end of the proposals.

So if you're able to call back in and provide testimony when the Board individually considers those proposals, that would be great. We do have updates on our website and Facebook page on where the Board is at in the meeting that you're able to just quickly check those to see what proposal they're on if you're not able to stay on the phone the whole time.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa.
BILL: I appreciate the answers. Am I correct in that the meeting goes through the 15th?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we're scheduled up through the 15th. Probably these proposals more towards the end we'll be looking at probably tomorrow afternoon-ish.

BILL: Okay, great. Thank you. I don't know that I'll be able to closely monitor what's happening, but I appreciate the work that you're doing and I appreciate the answers to my questions.

I also appreciate from a personal perspective that those two proposals were moved to the non-consent agenda. I think they do merit discussion. Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have a nice day. Thank you for calling in.


CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, is there another public that would like to speak on non-consent this morning?

OPERATOR: Yes. Our next question comes from Mark. Your line is open.

MR. RICHARDS: Yeah, thank you. Can you hear me, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Mark, you have the floor.

MR. RICHARDS: Thank you. For the record my name is Mark Richards. I'm the executive director of Resident Hunters of Alaska. I'm representing over 3,000 members from across the state today.

I wanted to comment on some Federal Subsistence Board issues in general and the recent passage of Wildlife Special Action Request 21-01A, the closure of caribou hunting in Unit 23 and 26A. We're looking forward to, you know, you guys getting back to in-person meetings, but with the Special Action Request it looks like you're not required to hold public
meetings. It's very frustrating that the Board 
insulates itself from the public and you don't really 
get to hear the public. You just see the summaries 
from the Office of Subsistence Management.

Typically these special action requests 
are controversial and as this latest one, WSA21-01, 
proved, you know, there's hundreds of people that want 
to comment. We'd really like to see some changes in 
the future where you could actually allow the public to 
comment in front of the Board so you actually hear the 
public.

Another issue we had -- and I believe 
after the updated population estimate of the Western 
Arctic Caribou Herd was released -- we were the only 
organization to change our opposition to the proposal. 
We have always supported the Western Arctic Caribou 
Herd Working Group management plan. With the caribou 
under 200,000 animals, it puts them into preservative 
management under that plan, which does call for 
restrictions.

But what we have said in our letter, 
which also we were not allowed to send to you, was that 
there should be a shared sacrifice among all users when 
the population is in decline and in preservative 
management. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management 
Plan did call for the restriction on the taking of cows 
and calves. Yet the Northwest Arctic RAC that 
supported the closure voted to continue the taking of 
cows. Nothing happened at your recent meeting when you 
voted to accept the closure about that.

So we're frustrated. I mean we do 
support subsistence and we do believe, you know, with 
the herd as it is now, that there does need to be some 
restrictions. But especially there needs to be 
restrictions on local Federally-qualified users on the 
taking of cows.

So I know you're not going to revisit 
this right now and we're not going to turn in another 
Special Action Request about that, but it just does 
seem wrong that you restrict other users and at the 
same time with the herd in such decline there was 
nothing about restrictions on the taking of cows and 
calves by locals.
In closing, Mr. Christianson and members of the Board and all the RAC Chairs, I just wanted to say thank you for your service. I know it's very time consuming and we really appreciate your service and respect what you do. Again, we do respect subsistence and we do represent all Alaskans.

So with that I just wanted to say thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mark, for calling in and you bring up some good points there. Some of the harder things we struggle with is trying to find a balance between the public, you know, process and the rural users, priority preference that the Board has to take up as we look at conservation measures as they come on us with these resources and they get in a certain status.

So I just appreciate all the support you guys have given the Western Arctic Herd there too. We lean a lot towards the information they provide to the Board and just look forward to trying to make the process here as user friendly as we can. We know sometimes it doesn't always work out the way that we want it. You know, with the various conditions in this working world we just do the best we can.

So I appreciate you, Mark, in your work that you continue to do out there and we'll try to continue to work towards a best system for all users. So thank you for calling in today, Mark.

MR. RICHARDS: Thanks, Tony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Next, Operator. Was there another one on the board?

OPERATOR: As a reminder, to ask a question please press star, one, but at this time there are no further questions over the phone.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate that. That concludes the non-consensus public process in the morning. At this time I'll just go ahead and open up the floor before we move on to the agenda. If there's any Board members that would like to share any information for the day, this is your time. Staff as well.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: It sounds like nobody drank coffee this morning, so we'll go ahead and move on. I believe we are starting on -- I will ask Sue to take over the agenda for a moment because I'm not -- I know we left off on consensus, so I think we're starting with the non-consensus agenda items.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, correct. We're at agenda item 7 in the main agenda and as Lisa mentioned earlier the consensus and non-consensus agendas have been updated to reflect the Board's actions yesterday and those revised agendas are on our website and also on our Facebook page. Yesterday we just started the non-consensus agenda. We finished with Wildlife Proposal WP22-01. So this morning the first one we'll start out with is WP22-02 and that will be led by Pippa Kenner.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. Pippa, you have the floor.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: I think she may be muted unless she dropped off.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll give Pippa a minute here to get ready and then we'll get started. We'll just wait on Pippa.

MS. DETWILER: Pippa should be online here shortly. She ran into a technical difficulty.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: This is the Operator. It looks like Pippa has joined back in. She's coming into the call now. Pippa, your line is open.

MS. KENNER: Hello. Can people hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I got you loud and clear, Pippa. You have the floor.
MS. KENNER: Well, that was unfortunate. I apologize. I'm not quite sure what happened, but I'm here now. Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Federal Subsistence Board and Regional Advisory Council Chairs. The analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-02 begins on Page 519 of Volume 2A of the Board meeting materials.

My name is Pippa Kenner and I'm an anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. Proposal WP22-02 was submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management in a request to remove language from designated hunting regulations that prohibit the use of a designated hunter by a member of the community operating under a community harvest system.

So yesterday afternoon we were talking about community harvest systems and now we're going to talk about the designated hunter system.

Current designated hunter regulations begin on Page 521 of your meeting materials. It begins by saying if you are a Federally-qualified subsistence user, you may designate another Federally-qualified subsistence user to take deer, moose, and caribou on your behalf unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system.

What we propose is to remove from the language that says you may designate -- ah, okay. Sorry about that. What we are proposing is to remove from the language that says you may designate another Federally-qualified subsistence user unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system.

This is because if a person does not register to participate in the community harvest system, that person retains or still has an individual harvest limit, one moose for example, and should be able to designate that harvest limit to someone else to harvest for them under designated harvester regulations.

Now I want to add that recommending that the Board adopt the proposal as modified by the Eastern Interior Alaska Council was considered and rejected because the Council's recommended modification
is already in regulation and, therefore, it's not necessary to incorporate here.

The OSM conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-02. Thank you for your time and this is the end of my presentation. I'm available to try answering your questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Hearing none. We'll go ahead and move on to the summary of written comments.

MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. No public written comments were submitted during the public comment period. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: At this time, Operator, we'll open up the floor for designated public testimony for this proposal.

OPERATOR: As a reminder to ask a question or comment, please press star, one.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Hearing no public testimony on this one, we'll go ahead and call on the Regional Advisory Council recommendations and.....

MS. GREDIAGIN: Hey, Tony, this is Lisa. There is someone in the cue for public testimony. It's just taking them a moment to get their information to the Operator.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa, for that.

OPERATOR: I do have a question over the phone. It comes from Karen. Your line is open.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you. This is Karen Linnell, Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission. Again
we want to thank OSM for their work on this proposal to rectify a situation that was discovered during the creation of the Ahtna Community Harvest System. While we attended several regions meetings to discuss this and clarify information on it, this proposal will do what we've told folks all along throughout the development of our Community Harvest System and which we talked with Staff about and the InterAgency Staff Committee about over the last couple years.

So we do appreciate this. This will straighten it out to where we have some hunters that will participate in the Community Harvest System they will still be able to be a designated hunter if they register at the Federal agency for Federally-qualified users that are not qualified for the Community Harvest System and we appreciate that.

I just want to say again thank you to the OSM Staff for this and thank you, Board, for your time.

OPERATOR: No further questions on the phone at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen. Thank you for calling in. Appreciate it. No other comments. We'll go ahead and move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendations and I'll call on Sue. You can call on them. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a statewide proposal, so potentially all 10 Regional Councils may have comments, so I'll just start with Region 1, Southeast, Don Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you. Southeast took no action on this proposal. We don't have any Community Harvest Systems in place.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Southcentral, Gloria Stickwan.

MS. STICKWAN: The Council supports this proposal that will allow members of a community with a Community Harvest System to designate another person to harvest on their behalf to meet either individual harvest limit or count towards the community harvest limit.
This provides more opportunity for hunting and increases the chances that subsistence users can get meat in their freezer. The ability to meet subsistence needs benefits the subsistence users.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Gloria. Region 3, Kodiak Aleutians, Della Trumble.

MS. TRUMBLE: Good morning. Thank you. Our Council supports the regulatory changes as it provides more equitable harvest options and opportunities. This is one that we do make good use of and appreciate that we have it.

Thank you.


MS. MORRIS LYON: Yes, good morning. Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council also supported this with Eastern Interior's modification with the understanding that the modification is already in place. I'm sure we would have no hard feelings on the Board's part. They just wanted the clarification in there. They felt like the regulation would protect the rights and opportunities of the individual who cares to hunt separately and knowing that those are protected.

We would be pleased with that. The pending regulations would be simpler, provides clarity and protect the hunting opportunity of individual Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. YKDelta, Eva Patton.

MS. PATTON: Yes, good afternoon. Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory. The YKDelta RAC voted to support WP22-02. The Council supports the Ahtna people and their community harvest system. And while there isn't a harvest system currently in place in the YKDelta region this proposal would be of
benefit if one were adopted there.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Western Interior, Jack Reakoff.

MR. REAKOFF: Western Interior Regional Advisory Council supported the proposal basically in support of our Ahtna neighbors but in the future this would be a fair and equitable way to administer the community hunts.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Seward Peninsula, Nissa Pilcher, Louis Green, did anybody sign on this morning.

MS. PILCHER: Yes, this is Nissa Pilcher. Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record my name is Nissa Pilcher, the Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Council. I don't believe that Louis Green was able to call in yet today. So for the Seward Peninsula Council, voted unanimously to defer. The Council was presented with the proposal and discussed it but deferred the decision to the home region as there are no community harvest systems in the Seward Peninsula region.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Northwest Arctic, Brooke.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you. Brooke McDavid, Northwest Arctic Council Coordinator standing in for Chairman Baker. The Northwest Arctic Council supported WP22-02. The proposal clarifies how these systems work and concurs with the recommendations of other Councils.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Eastern Interior, Sue Entsminger, have you joined.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes, I have.
MS. DETWILER: Okay.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I had to find my mute button. Okay. The Eastern Interior supports WP22-02 with the modification to clarify participants in a community harvest system cannot designate another Federally-qualified subsistence user to take wildlife on their behalf. The modification was recommended by a representative of AITRC, Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission and also by the Wrangell-St. Elias Resource Commission. This modification will allow people outside of a community harvest system to have a designated hunter to meet their subsistence needs. This will be beneficial to those users.

And then the -- the language is different, though, what Pippa said and what we were talking about doing I feel is a little bit different so I'm confused to what Pippa said. Because if you look at the modified regulation it should read, in all of the things -- in Pages 34 -- 534 and 535, if you are a Federally-qualified subsistence user you may designate another Federally-qualified subsistence user to take species on your behalf unless you are a participant in a community harvest system, so I'm a little bit confused because I thought we were taking that out. I don't -- I might need some help from Staff.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair, this is Lisa. I can address Sue's question unless Pippa would like to address it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay, yeah, Pippa said she could fill in if I miss something here. But I think what Pippa was trying to say is that WP22-02 is a statewide regulation that would affect community harvest systems across the entire state -- or I mean designated harvest permit systems across the entire state including, you know, the general regulations in Section 25E of the Federal regulations. And, for example, what happened with the AITRC administered community harvest system is that there's a framework associated with that harvest system, so within that framework and the unit-specific regulations we kind of
make that clarification that the Eastern Interior Council has in their modification. So it just seemed a little simpler to OSM, since it again affects the designated harvest permits across the entire state to just take out completely the language of, unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system and then make that distinction that the Eastern Interior made in their modification about participants in a community harvest system versus non-community harvest systems and more on a case by case basis, through either the framework or unit-specific regulations about that community harvest system.

So hopefully that makes sense and, Pippa, please fill in if I missed something.

Thank you.

MS. KENNER: Mr. Chair, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Pippa, you have the floor.

MS. KENNER: Yes, I'd like to add, Lisa -- I agree with Lisa, Lisa is correct.

The way the regulations read is that members of a community -- members of -- participants in a community harvest system can harvest only as part of the community harvest system. It has to do with accumulating harvest limits. One cannot accumulate an individual harvest with a community harvest limit. Also there are several reasons why a Federally-qualified subsistence users may not be able to designate a hunter. One is they may not have the required permit, so there's a lot of reasons why a person might not be able to designate someone. This is only one of the reasons and, therefore, it could create confusion and conflict in the regulations.

Thank you.

MS. ENTSMINGER: And I think it has created confusion.

MS. KENNER: This is Pippa again and maybe I'll just add one more clarification, that at the time the Eastern Interior Council deliberated and was
responding to a representative of AITRC, we did not at
-- you know, we did not object or say this is in
in conversation with the Solicitor's office, it was
determined it would be better to not add the language
because it already exists in regulation.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

And, Sue, I think we were still going around the table.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. Oh, yes, two
Sue's. Yes, we were just getting to North Slope,
Gordon Brower.

MS. PATTON: Yes, good afternoon, this
is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for North Slope.
I'll be presenting for our Chair Gordon Brower. He
wasn't able to connect at the moment.

And the North Slope Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council supports WP22-02. The
community of Anaktuvuk Pass within the North Slope
region does have a community harvest system for sheep
and this proposal is beneficial to meeting subsistence
needs because that need, sometimes, is not met by
elders and those who are disabled and this would allow
for designated hunters to assist even if there is a
community harvest system in place.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Sue, do you have who is next.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, excuse me, Mr.
Chair, that would be tribal and Alaska Native
Corporation comments. Orville.

MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
Federal Subsistence Board members. This is Orville
Lind, Native Liaison for Office of Subsistence
Management. And during consultation sessions there
were no comments or recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. Then next we'll call on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. For the record this is Ben Mulligan from Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The Department supported the action being taken in this proposal. We viewed it as a clarification in the fairness issue as it pertained to the designated hunter rule.

And then just given that it's up, I will just one last time stress that when you guys look at these community harvest systems, that the same diligence and regularity of making sure that harvest data is reported maintains that same level so when necessary to make in-season management decisions that information is there.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Mulligan. We'll move on to InterAgency Staff Committee comments, ISC Chair.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine, Policy Coordinator and ISC Chair. For Wildlife Proposal 22-02 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comments. That was the comment that I read to you last evening.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

That now will open up the floor for Board discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing no questions from the Board we'll open up the floor for Board action.

MR. HEINLEIN: Mr. Chair, Tom Heinlein, Bureau of Land Management.
Mr. Chair, I move to adopt Proposal WP22-02 and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

Second, Public Member Brower.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you. Adoption of this proposal will allow those living in communities with a community harvest system to designate someone to harvest on their behalf in order to meet their individual harvest limit or to count toward the community harvest limit, depending on whether or not they choose to participate in the community harvest system. It will also help to provide more harvest options and opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users. Adoption of this proposal is also consistent with the recommendations of seven the 10 Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Any questions, comments, discussion.

Just a reminder to ask a question please press star, one.

(No comments)

All right, hearing none, we'll call for the question.

Question.

Question's been called. I guess we'll go ahead, all in favor of this one signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. And, thank you, for that. That was a quick one to get us started for the day. We'll go ahead and move on to the next proposal. Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, that would be WP22-03 and Tom Plank will be kicking that one off.

MR. PLANK: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Tom Plank and I am a wildlife biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management and I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-03 submitted by ADF&G which begins on Page 542 of your meeting books.

The proponent states current Federal sealing regulations no longer align with new State sealing regulations designed to gather more precise information from harvested wolves for use in ADF&G's annual population estimates. It was not understood in 2019 to what extent the change in the sealing requirements from within 14 days of harvest to within 30 days after the season closed would have on data used for population estimates. The purpose of this proposal is to correct that error.

Of note, Unit 2 wolves are part of the Alexander Archipelago sub-species which occupy Southeastern Alaska and coastal British Columbia. In 1993, 2011 [sic], and 2020 the Alexander Archipelago wolf was petitioned to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the listing not to be warranted on both 1993 and the 2016 [sic] petitions as a range wide population appeared stable. On July 27th, 2021, Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 90 day finding that the petition to list the Alexander Archipelago wolves presented substantial information indicating that the petition action may be warranted. Therefore, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will initiate a status review to determine whether the petition action is warranted.

In 1997 the Board of Game and Federal Subsistence Board adopted harvest guideline levels to manage the Unit 2 wolf population, which established annual harvest quotas based on wolf population estimates. Seasons would close early if quotas were expected to be met. Between 2013 and 2018 seasons closed early with reported harvest well exceeding
quotas in some years. In 2018 ADF&G submitted Proposal 43 to the Board of Game to change the harvest management strategy from using the harvest management guidelines to meet population objectives. The Board of Game adopted the proposal in January 2019, establishing the Unit 2 population objective range as 150 to 200 wolves. The Board of Game also extended the season, the State's trapping season aligning Federal and State seasons. In 2020 the Board approved a proposal extending the sealing permit from within 14 days of harvest to within 30 days of the end of the season. This proposal also removed the harvest quota and increased harvest limits to no limit with wolf hunting in Unit 2. In March 2021 the Board of Game adopted Proposal 194, as amended, requiring all wolves taken in Unit 2 to be sequentially marked, numbered by the hunter or trapper and required hunters and trappers to call to ADF&G within seven days of take to report the date and location of take for each wolf and that all hides must be sealed within 15 days of take.

Before 2013 Unit 2 wolf abundance was uncertain but since 2013 a method using DNA from fur samples has been used to generate population estimates. Between 2013 and 2020 wolf population estimates have ranged from a low of 89 wolves in 2014 to a high of 386 wolves in the fall of 2020. Human harvest accounts for the vast majority of wolf mortality in Unit 2, however, wolves are very resilient to high harvest levels due to their high reproductive potential and ability to disperse long distance. Past research indicates that greater than 38 percent total annual mortality is likely unsustainable. In Unit 2 wolf abundance is closely linked with deer abundance, their primary prey, deer are primarily limited to habitat which is being negatively affected by logging of old growth forest in Unit 2. Logging operations also construct roads providing easy hunter and trapper access in previously remote areas. The new harvest management strategy consists of four zones as you could see on Figure 2 of Page 557. Different zones correspond to different population levels. Zone 3 is a desirable zone, where the wolf populations within the objective range of 150 to 200 wolves and season of up to two months would be announced. The fall 2020 wolf population estimated at 386 wolves placing it in Zone 4, however, for the 2021 season, citing recent uncertainty about early population estimates and their influence on population objectives, a conservation approach was taken and State
and Federal trapping seasons was open from November 15th to December 15th and the hunting season also closed on December 15th.

Harvest primarily occurs on non-Federal lands under a combination hunting trapping license and typically little harvest occurs before mid-November, when only the Federal hunting season is open. From 1997 to 2018 when the harvest guideline level was initiated, annual reported harvest has ranged from seven to 76 wolves averaging 50 wolves and the annual harvest quota has been exceeded five times. High unreported harvest rates of 38 to 47 percent have likely resulted in the unsustainable harvest in some years. Between 1997 and 2018 total trapper numbers in Unit 2 averaged 14.5 trappers per year. With Unit 2 residents primarily from Klawock and Craig harvesting 89 percent of the wolves on average. Over this time catch per trapper averages 3.4 wolves, however, usually just two to three skilled trappers harvest more of the wolves. In 2019, the first year under the new harvest management strategy without quotas 165 wolves were reported harvested, which was the highest number of recorded in Unit 2. This is possibly a result from a doubling of the normal trapping efforts. But in 2021 reported harvest was 64.

Adopting 22-03 would align Federal and State regulations by requiring Federally-qualified subsistence users to sequentially mark, number hides, call within 7 days of take to report the date and location of take for each wolf and seal all hides within 15 days of take. Effective wolf management in Unit 2 depends upon coordination between State and Federal regulations, managers and users. The requirement to sequentially marking and numbering hides along with a 7 day can in requirement will aid in minimizing lost or incorrect data. Having the hides sequentially numbered or marked will allow data acquired during the 7 day call in to be correctly correlated and each individually harvested wolves hair sampled taken during the sealing process. The sealing requirement is shorter than the current regulation but is one day longer than the sealing requirement prior to the regulation change in 2020. Sequentially numbering and marking hides and reporting in 7 days will also help increase the accuracy of hunters and trapper reports, records, when the hides are sealed especially if there is a delay due to weather or access to a
sealer. While these important sealing requirements will be more burdensome to hunters and trappers is essential to allow the management agencies to acquire the most precise data possible to aid in estimating the wolf populations with more precision and defensibility in Unit 2. However, reporting harvest at 7 days and again at 15 days after harvest could result in regulatory fatigue for subsistence users and confusion relating to the reporting requirements.

In response to the 2020 petition, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 90 day finding that the petition to list the Alexander Archipelago wolf presented substantial information indicating that a petition action may be warranted. One reason a species can be listed under the ESA is inadequate or of existing regulatory mechanisms.

The OSM's conclusion is to support WP22-03 with modification to remove the 7 day reporting requirement.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I'd be happy to field any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on to summary of written public comments.

MR. PLANK: Again, for the record this is Tom Plank with OSM. And there were no written public comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. We'll go ahead, Operator, open up the floor to any public online that may want to comment on this.

OPERATOR: And as a reminder, to ask a question please press star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: There's no questions over the phone at this time.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll go ahead and move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendations. I'll have Sue call on them.

(Pause)

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, this is Don Hernandez with the Southeast Council, are you ready for my comment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Don, you have the floor.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, okay. The Southeast Council did support this proposal with the modification to remove the 7 day reporting requirement. The Council was concerned that numerous changes in regulations applied to hunters and trappers may result in regulatory fatigue and confusion. Double reporting of data is an unnecessary burden on the subsistence users and may produce inaccurate information. The Council recommends removing the 7 day phone reporting requirement recognizing that hunters and trappers will still be required to provide date and location of wolves within 15 days to help address the need for collecting this information. This reporting helps successfully manage wolf populations within Unit 2 to prevent the need to list the Alexander Archipelago wolf as an endangered species.

So thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don. Any questions for Don.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Moving on, tribal Alaska Native Corp comments. Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, OSM. There were no recommendations or no comments during the consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments. State Liaison.
MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For the record ADF&G supports the proposal as submitted to align Federal regulations with the changes the Board of Game made to the State sealing requirements for wolves harvested in GMU2. More precise information on when and where each wolf is harvested should contribute toward a more accurate and precise Unit 2 wolf population estimate. More accurate population estimates will enable State and Federal managers to be better regulate the wolf population through harvest to meet the fall population objective of 150 to 200 wolves. Maintaining the population within that range is intended to balance the need for a sustainable wolf population with the effect of wolf predation on deer. This regulatory change would reduce regulatory confusion, ease enforcement burden and promote sound management practices within the Game Management Unit.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Go on to the InterAgency Staff Committee, ISC Chair.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-03 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go on to Board discussion with Chairs, State Liaison, any questions, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, that opens up the floor for Federal Board action on this proposal.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, this is Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you. I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-03 as submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Following a second
I will explain why I intend to support my motion with the Southeast RAC's modification and OSM's conclusion to remove the 7 day reporting period.

MR. BROWER: Second by Public Member Brower.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Charlie. The Forest Service agrees that harvest reporting is important for monitoring wolves in Unit 2. However, reporting harvest at seven days and then again at 15 days after harvest is unnecessary and redundant, it could also result in confusion and regulatory fatigue by subsistence users. Reporting harvest within 15 days of take, including the date and location of take is sufficient to provide the data needed to allow management agencies to estimate the wolf population effectively in Unit 2 without the added burden for subsistence users having to report their harvest twice.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. Any questions, comments or discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question from the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA. Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. All in favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously to support the proposal. Thank you. We'll go ahead and call on the Staff for the next proposal, Sue, thank you.

(Pause)

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, I think Sue may have gotten dropped.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you. Lisa, are you still on.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Hi, Mr. Chair, yep. I'm here.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Lisa, I'll just call on you to call the next wildlife proposal and the Staff up, please. Thank you.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay. Yeah, the next proposal is WP22-04 and that would be Rob Cross.

MR. CROSS: Hello, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. Can you hear me okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Loud and clear, you have the floor, Rob. Thank you.

MR. CROSS: All right, thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Robert Cross and I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for the Tongass National Forest.

Wildlife Proposal W22-04 submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council can be found on Page 572 of your meeting book. The proposal requests the establishment of a year-round Federal elk hunt in Units 1, 2, 3 and 4, except on Etolin, Zarembo, Bushy, Shrubby and Kashevarof Island in Unit 3 with a harvest limit of one elk by Federal registration permit. The proponent requests that a Federal general season be established to aid in the control of non-Native elk and to provide a meaningful subsistence hunting opportunity. The proponent cites the previous State general elk season that encompassed the proposed area and was closed in November of 2018.

Elk were transplanted to Etolin Island in 1987 and became established on both Etolin and
Zarembo Islands. An Elk hunting season began in 1997 and remained open on Etolin Island through draw and registration hunts. Elk hunting on Zarembo Island was closed after the 2005 draw hunt remained closed due to conservation concerns. In 2001 ADF&G attempted to limit the dispersal of elk outside of the Zarembo and Etolin Island's population by instituting a general elk season for Units 1, 2 and the remainder of Unit 3. Six elk were harvested in the general season from 2004 to 2005 and they were all cows taken from the neighboring Bushy and Shrubby Islands. In 2012 Bushy and Shrubby -- sorry, Bushy, Shrubby and Kashevarof Islands were added to the restricted area due to concerns of false reporting and illegal harvesting of Zarembo Island elk. In 2018 the State issued an emergency order to discontinue the general elk hunt due to concerns that one or more of the elk harvested during the general season had been harvested illegally from Zarembo or Etolin Islands. The State was not able to verify harvest locations of elk taken during the general season and believe that hunters may have been killing elk in the closed or managed areas and then submitting false reports or not reporting.

The proposed regulation would allow Federally-qualified subsistence users of Units 1 through 5 to harvest one elk by Federal registration permit from Units 1, 2, 4 and the remainder of Unit 3. The proposed harvest would provide additional subsistence opportunity for residents of Units 1 through 5, however, 35 years after being planted sightings of elk on islands other than Etolin and Zarembo have been rare and anecdotal suggesting that the harvest opportunity would be very limited. The State management goal for elk in Unit 3 includes limiting the dispersal of elk to islands other than Etolin and Zarembo.

The OSM conclusion is to support WP22-04. Again there are no conservation concerns for elk outside of the Unit 3 elk management area. The Federal general elk season may provide limited subsistence opportunity to residents of the area while helping to manage the spread of elk.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. And I'm happy to address any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom
[sic]. Any questions for Tom [sic]  

(No comments)  

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Move on to summary of written public comments.  

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Rob Cross again, for the record. And there were no written public comments submitted during the comment window.  

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. At this time we'll open up the floor to any public online who wants to be recognized.  

OPERATOR: If you would like to make a public comment over the phone please press, star, one. Again, that is star, followed by one, make sure your phone is unmuted and record your name properly. Thank you.  

(Pause)  

OPERATOR: No comments coming in at this time.  

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. No comments, Operator, is that what you said?  

OPERATOR: Yes, sir, there is no comments at this time.  

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Regional Advisory Council recommendation.  

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don Hernandez, for the record, from Southeast Advisory Council. The Council supported this proposal.  

The Council submitted this proposal to create a subsistence harvest opportunity while avoiding restrictions to non-Federally-qualified harvesters or harvest closures. The Council recognized local knowledge of elk existing outside of the elk management area and believes that a Federal season would control the spread of elk. The proposed Federal elk season is in line with the established fish and wildlife principles and would stop elk from spreading to
neighboring islands and potentially out competing deer. There are no conservation concerns and this opportunity would be beneficial to subsistence users.

Thank you, very much.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don.

Tribal Alaska Native Corp comments. Native liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the consultation session there were no comments or recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments. State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes the proposal.

It's been over 30 years since elk were introduced and there's still no verified accounts of elk become established outside of Etolin and Zarembo Islands. Consequently this hunt is unnecessary for confining the elk to those islands and provides no real opportunity for subsistence harvest but as -- you know, we've had concerns in the past and will if this proposal passes, would, again, invite unlawful harvest from those two island populations.

As you heard earlier the State general season hunt for elk was eliminated because of concern that elk were being unlawfully harvested from Etolin and Zarembo Islands and reported as harvested during the general season hunt outside the GMU 3 elk drawing hunt area. Unlawful take of elk from these islands remains a concern for us. And we had an example, even just last winter when a joint enforcement action -- or patrol found the remains of a cow elk on Beach Road in northern Zarembo Island and so that's -- I mean this seems like this is a very real concern for us, but if passed, this would -- we feel this would enable some illegal take to resurface and it would be important for the U.S. Forest Service to make sure that they're enforcing those regulations and making sure that that does not happen.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. ISC Staff Committee recommendations.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-04 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll move on with Board discussion with Council Chair, State Liaison, any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll open up the floor for Federal Board action.

MS. PITKA: No, wait, this is Rhonda, I do have a question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Rhonda, you have the floor.

MS. PITKA: So in the book it's a little bit confusing because it shows 22-04/22-05 but this is specifically on 22-04, right?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lisa.

MS. GREDIAGIN: This is Lisa Grediagin for the record. And, yeah, Rhonda, the analysis for 22-04 and -5 are combined because they both concern elk in Unit 3, but 22-05 is on the consensus agenda, whereas 22-04 is on the non-consensus agenda since the State and the Regional Advisory Council's recommendations were different. So, yes, this is only on 22-04.

MS. PITKA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa. Any other Board discussion or questions.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt Proposal -- Wildlife Proposal 22-04 submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. And following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA with a second.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Gene. I support my motion with the reasons given by the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. Specifically, the Council has traditional ecological knowledge establishing that elk occur outside the State elk management area. These elk could provide additional harvest opportunity when incidentally encountered by Federally-qualified subsistence users. The proposed season could also help reduce the spread of non-Native elk outside the elk management area and, thereby, reduce competition with Native deer and also commit -- in response to ADF&G's comments, that the Forest Service will continue to commit to enforcing any illegally harvest on those islands.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. Any questions or comments, discussion from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. All in favor of this proposal signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.
(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello -- motion carries unanimously. Sorry, I had my phone on mute there. How about we take a 10 minute break and come back at 10:30. 10:30. I need to take a 10 minute break so we'll reconvene -- please don't hang up -- reconvene at 10:30.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, Sue, we'll go ahead and come back from the meeting and we'll just make sure that Sue is back on and make sure we have a quorum and we'll get back to business this morning and we'll start off with the lead off for the next proposal.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

OPERATOR: Do you want me to open the lines -- oh, sorry, go ahead.

MS. DETWILER: Yeah, is -- is -- Operator, is everybody online now to listen into this, both the speakers and the listeners rooms open.

OPERATOR: I'm going to open it right now for you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

OPERATOR: On a count down from five. Five, four, three, two, one.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Are -- is everybody online now, Operator, everybody can hear?

OPERATOR: Yes, ma'am.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. And, Tina, is -- are you recording now.

REPORTER: Yes, I am, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. I'll just quickly go through and make sure we have a quorum
Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: I'm here, thank you, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: Good morning. Tom's here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: I'm back.

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

MR. SCHMID: Dave's back, thanks.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: Present.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I am here.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: And Chair Anthony Christianson.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Tony, did we lose you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm here,
thank you, Sue. I was just literally chapping my lips.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry about that. I'm ready.

MS. DETWILER: So we have everybody on, Charlie -- waiting for Charlie.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll just give Charlie another minute and then we'll go ahead and move on to the next proposal.

Thank you, Sue.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I'm sure Charlie will come on pretty quick there, Sue, we better go ahead and just get started. We'll go ahead and call on the next lead author for the next proposal in line.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, that would be Jake Musslewhite for WP22-07.

MR. CROSS: Mr. Chair, this is Robert Cross with the Forest Service. Jake Musslewhite is off the call right now so I will be presenting WP22-07 if that's okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. Again, for the record my name is Robert Cross and I'm the Subsistence Coordinator for the Tongass National Forest.

Wildlife Proposal 22-07 request that the Federal public lands of Admiralty Island draining into Chatham Strait between Point Marsden and Point Gardner in Unit 4 be closed to deer hunting September 15 to November 30 except to Federally-qualified subsistence users. It was submitted by the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. The Staff analysis of the proposal begins on Page 595 of the meeting book.
The proponent states that it has become more challenging for subsistence harvesters in Angoon to harvest sufficient deer to meet their subsistence needs due to increased hunting pressure from non-Federally-qualified users. They state that regulatory change is needed to protect the deer population from further depletion and increase opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users. The portion of Unit 4 covered by the proposal consists of the majority of the west coast of Admiralty Island. The area is primarily Federal public lands within the Admiralty Island National Monument and the Kootznoowoo Wilderness, with the exception of land surrounding Angoon and a strip along the shoreline of Mitchell Bay.

Rural residents of Units 1 through 5 have a customary and traditional use determination for deer in Unit 4.

The current Federal season for deer in Unit 4 is August 1 to January 31 with a limit of six deer. Antlerless deer may be taken after September 15. The State general season runs from August 1 to December 1 and also allows antlerless deer to be taken only after September 15. In 2019 the State bag limit was increased from four to six deer.

Based on the available data, deer populations in Unit 4 appear to be healthy. To assess the deer population ADF&G uses pellet count transects and aerial surveys. While no pellet counts have been done in the proposed area recently, pellet counts conducted in 2019 in Pivats Bay on the eastern side of Admiralty Island increased by 106 percent from the previous survey in 1998. Data from aerial surveys also indicate an increasing trend in deer populations with Admiralty Island having the highest aerial survey counts within Unit 4. The amount of deer hunting effort within the proposal area was measured using both the number of hunters and the number of hunter days. Graphs of the hunting effort data are on Page 604 of your meeting materials. The amount of effort has been relatively stable from 2000 to 2019. The majority of effort is by non-Federally-qualified users, most of which reside in Juneau. Most of the Federally-qualified hunters using the area reside in Angoon. The success rate and harvest was measured using the number of days hunted per deer harvested and the number of deer harvested per hunter. Graphs for those
measures are on Page 605 of your materials. The days per deer have been variable but stable with Federally-qualified hunters consistently taking less time to harvest a deer. The number of deer per Federally-qualified hunter declined somewhat over the early 2000s but has been stable for the last decade and is roughly comparable to the non-Federally-qualified rate. Overall, the number of deer harvested within the proposal area has been fairly stable over recent years as shown in Figure 10 on Page 606 of your materials. There appears to be a decline in the total harvest by Federally-qualified users since the early 2000s but that's largely the result of Angoon users shifting effort out of the proposal area into other areas as shown in Figure 11.

This proposal would restrict non-Federally-qualified users hunting deer on portions of Admiralty Island during the months of peak effort and harvest. Currently non-Federally-qualified users represent roughly 50 to 70 percent of the hunting effort and harvest in the proposal area, which is comprised almost entirely of Federal public land. The proposed September 15 to November 30 of non-Federally-qualified users would likely eliminate over half of the hunter effort and harvest of deer in the proposed area. Non-Federally-qualified users would likely shift their efforts to other areas of Unit 4 leading to increased competition with hunters in these other areas. It could also lead to increased effort in the proposal area during the month of December after the closed period has ended.

Deer populations within the proposal area appear to be healthy and close to carrying capacity, therefore, eliminating -- the elimination of a substantial portion of the harvest is unlikely to result in a significant increase in the deer population and may even increase the risk of population -- of the population exceeding its carrying capacity. Thus, the proposal does not appear to significantly improve the ability of Federally-qualified subsistence users to meet their needs for deer. The proposal may also have the unintended consequence of preventing non-Federally-qualified subsistence users with local ties to the area from participating in subsistence activities. Many people from Angoon and other rural areas move to Juneau to seek employment but return to these communities to participate in subsistence harvesting with family and
friends. Under the proposed regulations these users would be prevented from hunting deer in the area during the closed season.

The OSM conclusion for WP22-07 is to oppose the proposal. Section .8 of ANILCA provides that the Board may restrict non-subsistence uses on Federal public lands if necessary for the conservation of healthy fish and wildlife, or to continue subsistence uses of such populations. Based on available data, hunting effort and harvest success rates of subsistence users have been stable and favorable for the last 20 plus years, suggesting that the closure is not necessary to continue the subsistence uses of deer — of the deer population. Deer populations within the area are healthy and there is no conservation concern for deer on the west coast of Admiralty Island indicating a closure is not necessary for conservation reasons. Thus, the proposed regulation does not meet the criteria identified in Section .815 of ANILCA for the closure or restriction of non-subsistence uses.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can field any questions at this time.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Tony, did we drop you or are you on mute.

MR. LIND: I think he's dropped.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm right here. Sorry, it was taking me a second, my fingers are sweaty, I couldn't get my phone to work. So, yeah, thank you, we'll move on to the next, which is summary of written public comment. Thank you.

MR. CROSS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robert Cross again. There were 57 written public comments opposing the proposal and one neutral comment. The one neutral comment from the Sportsmens Alliance asked the Board to only approve the proposal if it was supported by scientific evidence.

And then among the concerns commonly brought up in the 57 comments opposing the proposal were:
The proposal will force non-Federally-qualified hunters into a smaller area leading to over-crowding and unsafe conditions;

The deer population is unhealthy making a closure on -- the deer population is healthy making a closure unwarranted;

The proposal is not based on sound science or justified by data;

The proposal will further divide user groups;

The assertion that Federally-qualified subsistence users have had trouble meeting their needs is not supported by evidence;

Environmental conditions such as harsh winters are the primary drivers of deer abundance rather than hunting so the proposal will not increase the availability of deer;

The area covered under the proposal is too large;

The proposal would exclude non -- non-qualified family members from qualified -- of qualified users from hunting together;

The existing January season for Federally-qualified users provides them with sufficient priority for deer.

And that's all, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on to -- we'll open the floor to public testimony so, Operator, anybody online who would like to speak to this make the line available.

OPERATOR: If you would like to make a public comment over the phone, again that's star, followed by one. Please make sure your phone is
unmuted and record your name when prompted. Please allow a moment for me to get the names, thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: First public comment comes from Mike, your line is open, sir.

MR. BETHERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm Mike Bthers from Auke Bay. Proposal 22-07 presently involves a huge area of southwest Admiralty Island. It's located at least 50 miles from Juneau. It's huge. Many thousands of acres with a large robust deer population and almost -- very few non-qualified hunters using is. I know of only a couple of Juneau families that hunt in Angoon and some of that is with local residents. The non-qualified hunters hunting Federal lands in this area are not impacting Angoon subsistence deer hunting and I don't think they ever will because the area is just too remote.

And, further, qualified-users need to understand that, if passed, this proposal would displace non-qualified hunters from hunting in the Federal uplands. These hunters displaced from those Federal uplands could then only hunt locally on State managed beaches in the subject area where they would be allowed a limit of six deer of any sex or size. This proposal could actually cause more hunting pressure and possible conflict on the local beaches than the qualified hunters are having at the present time. Wildlife Proposal 22-07 will not solve any perceived problem and it may actually increase possible hunter conflict on the beaches. I think the qualified-users, understanding this impact, would not support it, and I, too, would urge you not to support this proposal.

Thank you, very much, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate you taking the time to call in today. Operator, are there any other public online.

OPERATOR: Yes, sir. The next one comes from Kevin, your line is open.

MR. MEYER: Thank you. For the record my name is Kevin Meyer and I'm here representing the ADF&G Juneau/Douglas Advisory Committee. I want to
thank the Staff and members of the Board for the
opportunity to briefly comment on Proposal 22-07. And
I'd like to ask that these comments be considered when
you deliberate on Proposal WP22-08 and 22-10 as well as
all three impact deer hunting in Southeast Alaska.

We're hoping today that you help
maintain consistent and equitable access to deer
hunting opportunity for all residents of our sparsely
populated region by opposing these three proposals. A
full version of our written comments can be found in
the meeting materials on Pages 658 to 659.

For background, our 15 member citizen
volunteer represents diverse user groups and
perspectives. We have designated seats for commercial,
sport and charter fishing, hunting and hunting guiding,
trapping as well as non-consumptive users. We strive
to represent the interests of our diverse constituents
holding a half dozen meetings each year to both discuss
fish and game issues as well as to create a public
forum for consideration of proposed regulations that
impact our region. Most importantly like the Federal
Subsistence Board we believe we need to support rules
and regulations that create equitable and sustainable
fishing and hunting opportunity well into the future.

And in this instance, we seen that
there are legitimate concerns raised by those who
participated in the RAC Process that led to these
proposals and, indeed, the lack of ferry service and
broader impacts from the Pandemic have created real
impacts on food security in rural communities. We are
not convinced, however, that these proposals best
address the issues raised in the comments. Instead of
addressing these very real food security hardships we
worry the proposals could, instead, amplify tensions
between Federally-qualified and non-Federally-qualified
hunters and straining family ties between communities
in Southeast Alaska. In each of these proposals we
also concur with the position of the Department of Fish
and Game as well as the Forest Service that the
proposals with respect to non-Federally-qualified users
are not warranted for conservation concerns. As the
meeting materials note as well, the Unit 4 deer
populations appear to be doing quite well and are near
carrying capacity.

So we look forward to continuing to
listen and to better understand -- understanding the
corns raised by Federally-qualified hunters and we
stand ready to create a forum to discuss ways to
address these issues. We did meet with the RAC briefly
this fall but before adopting drastic measures like
these we would prefer to work with the RAC or the
Federal Board to propose and champion changes through
the Alaska Board of Game process that could alleviate
some of the problems.

So to conclude, we hope that you vote
to maintain consistent access to deer hunting
opportunity for all residents of the region by opposing
Proposals 22-07, 22-08 and 22-10.

I'm available to answer questions and I
look forward to your deliberations.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Appreciate you taking the time to call in and present
your comments today. Any questions.

OPERATOR: Question over the phone from
Ryan. Your line is open.

MR. BEASON: Thank you for the
opportunity to speak. My name is Ryan Beason and I'm
representing the Territorial Sportsmen out of Juneau
Alaska. We are an outdoor conservation group that
represents over a thousand members in Juneau and
surrounding communities.

Like the similar individual who spoke
we oppose 22-07, 22-08 and 22-10 based on the merits
that were previously given. I'll try to keep this
brief as I know some of this may be repetitive.

But there is no proven conservation
issue based on the data from the Alaska Department of
Fish and Game, Office of Subsistence Management and the
numerous comments opposing this, I think these are
drastic measures that should not happen at this time.
I think there needs to be further work on this with,
you know, the user groups that are currently being
affected, come -- and if needed come to a compromise on
this. Again, if there's no deemed conservation issue,
there's -- you know, under Section .815 of ANILCA it is
not allowed to close these areas.
Again, as Mike Bethers previously mentioned, this could create the opposite and have more conflicts on, you know, as users are still able to hunt the beach and have larger conflicts with beach hunters, as I know a lot of the aging populations in these small communities rely on the beach hunting and if the non-Federally-qualified users are limited to the beach it can only increase that and potentially backfire on what their ultimate goal is here.

I think all of us here listening in would agree that if there is a conservation issue proven through scientific data, we all agree that there should be some sort of conservation measures but that has not been proven here. I feel these proposals are being fast-tracked with very little public input. Again, like I know up north where there have been numerous meetings on issues of closing lands, I think if they're going to close these to non-Federally-qualified users there needs to be a lot more user group input, a lot of work on both sides to really value and see if there is a deemed conservation issue.

With that, I'll just leave it that we are continuing to oppose 22-07, 22-08 and 22-10 and if there's any questions I'll be happy to answer those. I'll thank everybody for your time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate you taking the time to call in today. Operator, is there any other public testimony.

OPERATOR: No questions or comments over the phone at this time. As a reminder, please press star, one.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, next, we'll call on the Regional Advisory Council recommendation. Chair.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Don Hernandez for the Southeast Regional Advisory Council. Our Council spent a lot of time deliberating on this proposal and the other two dealing with Unit 4. I would say that we considered most of the factors that the public testimony, those 57 letters brought out. The Council ultimately supported the proposal with some
We removed some of the areas that were less used less by local Angoon hunters from the closed area. So this proposal restricts the deer hunting season for non-Federally-qualified users. The harvest data have shown a decline in deer harvest by subsistence users and the local Council member testified that Angoon residents are having a hard time getting deer. Decrease in competition from other non-Federally-qualified users will be beneficial to subsistence users. The proposed closure is not necessary for conservation purposes but it will be necessary to ensure continued subsistence uses by residents of Angoon whose harvest levels have fallen in recent years.

The Council removed sections from the original proposed closure area that have the highest rates of use by non-Federally-qualified users. The intent of the modification was to reduce the impact of the closures on those users. The Council acknowledged that wildlife analysis areas could not be used in Federal regulation, the OSM Staff developed a modified regulatory language to reflect the Council’s intent. And that language -- instead of using wildlife analysis areas, the wording that the Staff was able to come up with to reflect those areas was Federal public lands of Admiralty Island draining into Chatham Strait between Fishery Point and Point Gardner in Unit 4, except lands draining into Fair Lake, Hasselborg Lake, and Hasselborg Creek are closed to deer hunting from September 15th to November 30th except by Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

And we did end up having a split vote on this but it did pass by a vote of 8 in favor and 2 opposed.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the Board Chair.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, hearing none, thank you, Don. We'll move on to tribal, Alaska
Native Corporation comments. Native Liaison.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Board Members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison. We did not have any recommendations or comments. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. We'll move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments. State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes this proposal as originally submitted as well as with the changes suggested by the Southeast RAC during their October 2021 meeting.

There is no evidence that hunting by non-Federally-qualified users has negatively impacted Federally-qualified users overall ability to harvest deer. Adopting this proposal would deprive non-Federally-qualified users of sustainable [sic] deer hunting opportunity contrary to the terms laid out in Title VIII of ANILCA. This proposal would also unnecessarily restrict Alaskans, who many are former residents of the area. who have had to move away for a variety of reasons. They would then be put into a situation where they would be restricted in their ability to come back to their home communities to practice their traditional and cultural way of life with family and friends. Approximately 90 percent of land within GMU 4 is Federally-managed and current Federal regulations provide greater opportunity to Federally-qualified deer hunters compared to non-Federally-qualified users. Federally-qualified users are eligible to hunt an entire month longer than non-Federally-qualified users with a season extending through the month of January as well as the liberal designated hunter program, giving people the ability to have someone hunt for them.

As directed by Congress in Section .802 of ANILCA, subsistence uses of wildlife shall be the priority consumptive use on Federal public lands when it is necessary to restrict taking in order to assure the continued viability of fish or wildlife population or the continuation of subsistence uses of such
population. Section .815 of ANILCA provides that a
restriction on taking wildlife for non-Federally-
hunters is only authorized if necessary for the
conservation of healthy populations of fish and
wildlife for the reasons in Section .816 to continue
subsistence uses of such populations, or pursuant to
other applicable law.

When being discussed at the Southeast RAC we heard statements of folks wanting to hunt in
peace, or if going to their favorite spot, seeing
another boat there, it doesn't matter whether or not
they're successful hunters or not, it's just the fact
that they're there alter the way you hunt. Based on
the ADF&G's analysis of the available data none of
these conditions apply from ANILCA. There is no
conservation concern for the deer population and the
continued subsistence uses of deer are not being
impacted by non-Federally-qualified users.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And
I did get a mention that there is one more public
comment, so thank you for that State, and we will go
ahead and back up there, and there was also a Board
member who would like to be recognized. So first we'll
call upon the Board member and then we'll recognize the
public.

Gene, you have the floor.

MR. CHEN: Hello, Tony, this is Glenn Chen from the BIA. Gene wanted me to speak on his
behalf briefly -- oh, he's right here actually -- so
Mr. Chair, Mr. Peltola was wanting to ask Mr.
Hernandez, the Chair of the Southeast Council to
provide some additional information as to why the folks
from Angoon were not being able to get the deer that
they need.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Glenn.
So, Don, if you're available it sounds like BIA would
like to know, you know, the specified reasons that
Angoon was struggling with their deer and to meet their
needs. If Don could elaborate on that question. Thank
you, Don.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
Chair. Yeah, I can elaborate on that a little more. I think the main issue here with the folks in Angoon is this factor of competition. And, you know, they like to point out that they, for the most part, hunt fairly close to home, they don't have a lot of means to go further away from home, they don't feel that they should need to go further away from home to do their harvesting. And their factors that they consider is, you know, what the State mentioned, essentially, competition, and they see it as a significant factor if, you know, they go to a spot where they have gone, you know, for generations and they expect a successful hunt and if there is competition it does affect their ability to harvest. They may not want to hunt there at all, there's lots of reasons for that. There may be some issues of some potential, you know, local depletions if a particular area gets impacted too much, even though the overall unit has no conservation concerns, there is some potential for specific areas that are popular for hunting to be somewhat depleted by intensive use, you know, areas that have good anchorages in particular get harder.

So the main issue here with the folks in Angoon is competition. And, you know, as has been pointed out, there are two provisions, you know, for a closure. One is a conservation concern and the other is the continuation of subsistence users -- uses. And how you want to interpret that provision, of course, leaves a lot of leeway as to what is required to continue a subsistence use. Does that mean the ability to go out and harvest in the most efficient way close to home, is that important for continuing subsistence uses. The folks in Angoon would say it is. And the Council, after a lot of discussion, agreed with them on that.

So I think that's the best explanation I can give.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don. Gene, I hope that helped answer your question.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, it did, Mr. Chair. And thank you much, appreciate the effort.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And, again, Operator, we had somebody online from the public who would like to be recognized.
OPERATOR: Yes. We have a question or comment from Todd. Your line is open.

MR. SHARP: Thank you. I'm asking the Board to reject this proposal and I didn't submit any letter previously. My name is Todd Sharp. I'm currently residing in Juneau. I, myself, have hunted deer and met my needs in this specific area for over 40 years. Angoon, in the western shore of Admiralty Island is where my family, my father, my grandfather and ancestors have hunted deer. I've hunted this area mostly during the months of August and November, sometimes in September, and I've hunted this area also several times in October and December over the years.

First, I'd like to address the section of the proposal stating why this regulation should be changed. The statement is over the past years it has become more challenging for subsistence hunters in Angoon to harvest sufficient deer. Over the past several years, the winters have generally been milder which has resulted in an increased deer population, but due to these mild winters the majority of deer have not been forced to the beach and estuaries. This is most likely the major factor that has reduced harvest by local subsistence hunters. There are many times in late November and early December when I harvest deer at or well above 1,200 feet. I find a very good number of deer residing high on the terrain as possible and I've noted this by citing deer, taking deer and observing a great deal of fresh pellets at these higher elevations.

There's also the statement that statement says, as hunting pressure from non-subistence hunters has increased, concern has risen for the future prospects of local subsistence hunters. One this one I'm wondering and questioning what data was used to determine the increased use by non-subistence hunters. But my statement, personal kind of observations, during the periods of time in the area where I've been hunting which is generally from south of Cube Cove to Whitewater Bay in the last four years, I have rarely and almost never seen any other hunters other than local hunters. Two years ago, in November, there was a big game guide vessel anchored in the south arm of Hood Bay, which appeared to have been deploying a couple of hunters there in the south arm.

As a side arm, I think, and agree
moving forward with this proposal could have some unintended consequences, specifically for tribal members and others who presently are not qualified as subsistence hunters due to the location of their residences based on economic and other reasons that require them to live outside of the area that they traditionally hunt and gather.

Also, if this proposal does move forward I question why the month of December has been excluded. The proposal states, the regulation change includes the dates closing deer hunting to non-subsistence hunters between September 15 and November 30th, excluding the month of December seems counter-productive to the objective of this proposal by not allowing non-qualified hunters to hunt deer in December. The month of December should be one of the most concern for external hunting pressure by non-qualified Federal subsistence hunters due to urban hunters having holidays, time off work, et cetera, and the greater potential of heavier snowfall that forces deer on to the beach where they're more easily harvested. If non-qualified Federal subsistence hunters are responsible for reduced harvest by qualified Federal subsistence hunters, it seems more appropriate to close during the month of December than any other time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Todd, for taking the time to call in today.

MR. SHARP: Yeah.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, is there anybody else in the public who would like to be recognized.

OPERATOR: No further questions on the phone at this time. And as a reminder to ask a question or comment, please press star, one.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll get back to the order of the agenda, which was the InterAgency Staff Committee comments. ISC Chair.
Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-07, the InterAgency Staff Committee acknowledges the extensive discussion by the Council members about the closure policy application to this situation. This was one of four proposals for Unit 4, which overall has a healthy population deer, but is experiencing sub-areas where subsistence users are not able to harvest enough deer for their needs.

The Council submitted this proposal because of concerns brought to them by the affected Federally-qualified subsistence users in Angoon about not meeting subsistence needs for deer.

The proposal review process allowed them to review the available data and hear testimony from all affected users of the resources. During the meeting they acknowledged that the data and the State reporting system used to measure effort does not reflect success in subsistence hunting because subsistence hunting of deer is opportunistic and users generally only report when they are successful. They crafted a modification in area and season that limits the impacts to the non-Federally-qualified users and addresses the needs of subsistence users.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, ISC. At this time I'm going to recognize, Operator, I hear there is one more public commenter online so we want to make sure we give everyone the opportunity so I'll entertain it again at this time.

OPERATOR: Yes, sir, just a moment.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: The question or comment over the phone comes from Steve, your line is open.

MR. HOFFMAN: Yes, this is Steve Hoffman. I live in Ketchikan, Alaska. And I want to address the Chairman and the Board members concerning Proposals 22-07, 08 and 10. I've hunted in those areas
for the last 40 years and stuff and I've never seen a shortage of deer for both rural and urban residents except following the heavy winter kill that we all experienced in '07/08, therefore I'm encouraging the Board to vote these proposals down because I think it's unwarranted and ADF&G's data indicates that the deer populations in all these areas are doing quite well and I think it would be unfair to pass these proposals.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you for taking the time to call in today. That opens up the floor for Board discussion with Council Chair and State Liaison. Any questions from the Board, any further discussions, questions, comments.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: How am I coming through, I was told we were really weak on the volume earlier.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, you were a little bit, now you sound a lot better. Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay. I think we found -- located the speaker in the ceiling in our office building, apologize for that. I'd like to put forth something for the Board's consideration on this proposal as well as a couple others.

I, as a Board member and the Bureau of Indian of Affairs has been supportive of closures in the past although like when we've discussed other closures we wanted to be as specific as we can be. In light of the testimony we've received and the analysis which is given and discussion with some of my colleagues I would like to put forth to the Board for their consideration to defer Wildlife Proposals 07, 08 and 10, excluding 09 which is on the consensus agenda and that would be taken up for consideration in the winter meeting, in addition to, I do not want to speak on behalf of the Forest Service, but I think they would be willing to facilitate with OSM a group of users together to try to fine-tune something for our consideration in the immediate future.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. Any other Board wish to discuss. Dave, any comments.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, this is Forest Service. Dave. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I concur here, I believe, with BIA and Gene Peltola. Based on our OSM analysis, based on some of the testimony we've heard, I would -- I'm going to -- or ask BIA to maybe put a motion forth here to move to defer those deer proposals, I believe it is 07, 08 and 10 until we can see if there's opportunity to work between some of the user groups and some of the members there on the RAC to see if we can't come up with a little bit better solution that's supported more by some of the evidence here. And so that's what I'm looking forward to moving forward with.

I do certainly appreciate the testimony that was given to the Southeast RAC from members but at this time I'd like to put some more work in and I do commit to working with OSM and working with the RAC and the other user groups here in Southeast Alaska to see if we can't craft a proposal that might work a bit better.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. Yes, Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BIA moves to defer as stipulated.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service seconds.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a motion made and seconded to defer this wildlife proposal -- I have a question, as the Chair, now we have four of these proposals before us, are we looking at a suite of these or are we looking at specific -- this proposal?

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA, if I may.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My motion was to defer '07, 08 and 10, with 09 being on the consensus agenda so therefore impacting and potentially deferring the three proposals in question -- 07, 08 and 10.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I was just trying to make sure everyone was clear on the record. Thank you for that, Gene. Any other Board comments, questions or discussion about the motion to defer as specified.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no comments we'll call for the question.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All in favor of the motion to defer signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously to defer these proposals to a future meeting so we get more time to work out some specifics that might incorporate a little more of the user groups of the area and give us a better handle on all the -- all that it entails, and so I appreciate the leadership on the Board here in wanting to fine-tune something that doesn't create additional user problems but may clearly find a priority use for the rural residents of Angoon and so just thanks everybody. Also keep in mind that we want to still keep this on top of the plate and make sure that we can pull this together sooner than later.

So thank you guys.

(Teleconference interference -
participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and move on to the next proposal. Sue, could you call up that one, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, it's Wildlife Closure Review 22-01 and the lead for that is Greg Dunn.

MR. DUNN: Hello, Mr. Chair, can you hear me this is Greg Dunn.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MR. DUNN: Thank you. Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Greg Dunn and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Tongass National Forest.

Wildlife Closure WCR22-01 is a review of the closure to non-Federally-qualified subsistence users for deer from August 1st to August 15th in Unit 2 and can be found on Page 912 of your meeting books.

Federal public lands in Unit 2 are closed to deer hunting in early August to non-Federally-qualified users.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: .....for the continuation of subsistence uses. A number of reasons were discussed for the justification for the closure. The long-term trend of declining deer habitat, which we only have 6 percent of clear-cuts remaining huntable; size of deer population in Unit 2; apparent increase in hunter participation and the competition between user groups that resulted in a decline in subsistence opportunity, especially in the most road accessible portion of Prince of Wales Island and to coincide with the earlier July 24th start date for Federally-qualified users.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: In 2003 the Federal Subsistence Board adopted WP03-05 which initially
closed Federal public lands for deer hunting August 1st through August 21st. August was chosen to coincide with the earlier start date of July 24th with Proposal WP03-04 to provide a total of 28 days to hunt for Federally-qualified subsistence users. In 2004 the Board adopted Proposal WP04-15 with modification to change the Federal public lands closure date from August 1st to August 21st -- from August 1st to the 21st to August 1st to the 15th and to keep the closure in perpetuity.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: So Prince of Wales has the highest amount of old growth Forest in Southeast Alaska. Since 1954 Prince of Wales has received the most logging activity (indiscernible - interference) which resulted in a 94 percent reduction of contiguous (indiscernible - interference) production. Logging activity has reduced deer habitat in north central Prince of Wales by 46 percent and in south Prince of Wales by 18 percent.

Pellet group data in Unit 2 suggests an increasing population trend since the lows in 1990s when it was developed, you can see that in Figure 2. Recent indices and harvest statistics suggest the deer population is currently stable. Both pellet count data of 1.4 and deer harvest data have exceeded minimum objectives since 2008.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: Alaska Board of Game in fall 2000 established a harvest objective of 2,700 deer for Unit 2 and a population goal of 75,000 deer and considered the population as important for satisfying high levels for human consumption. The estimated average total annual harvest of 3,467 deer in Unit 2 from 2005 to 2018 and you can see those in Figure 5. Harvests were at or above the Unit 2 harvest objective in 2005 to 2016 but fell below harvest objectives during the.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)
MR. DUNN: ....2017 through '19 season. Deer harvest reached historically high levels in 2015 and then began to decline. There's a similar pattern seen with hunter participation in the Unit 2 deer hunt, also you can see that in Figure 5.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: Much of the harvest in Unit 2 takes place during three time periods. Late July or August, October and November. This is when competition is greatest between user groups. July/August is the opening of the hunt in Unit 2 and people are in alpine areas looking for mature bucks. November is the most popular month to hunt because it coincides with the rut. Federally-qualified subsistence users in Unit 2 had a higher success rate than other hunters from '97 to 2017 with an average success rate of 74 percent compared to 60 percent success rate for non-Federally-qualified and you can see that in Table 3.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: Rescinding the closure would increase opportunities on Federal public lands for non-Federally-qualified users during August. This could increase both the number of non-Federally-qualified users and encounters between Federally-qualified subsistence users and non-Federally-qualified subsistence users. This could potentially decrease harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users (indiscernible - interference)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. DUNN: Long-term trend of declining deer habitat, decreasing deer population size of Unit 2, increase in hunter participation, competition between user groups on the most road accessible portions of Prince of Wales Island have affected perception of increased competition between Federally-qualified users and non-Federally-qualified users. The harvest objective has not been met since (indiscernible) 2017 and the deer per user has dropped as well. Finding deer in traditional areas has decreased because of weather, competition, stem
exclusion, predation and road access. This shows there may be less deer on the landscape and could be a reason to maintain the closure.

And the OSM preliminary conclusion was to maintain the status quo. That is all I have.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I'd be happy to address to any questions.

(No comments)

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll move on to summary of written public comment.

MR. DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Chair this is Greg Dunn again. We had one written comment and it opposed so it -- we should rescind the closure order is what they came -- is -- because people want to hunt in June and July and July and August again.....

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And there is somebody with a line open, if you can please mute it.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll go ahead at this time and open up the floor for public testimony on this proposal.

OPERATOR: As a reminder to ask a question or comment, please press star, one. As of now there are no questions or comments over the phone.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go ahead and move to the Regional Advisory Council recommendation.
MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay, thank you. This is Don Hernandez for the Southeast RAC. The Council voted to maintain the status quo on this closure. This season closure has been in place for a good number of years. It was originally recommended by a stakeholders group that sought solutions to Federally-qualified subsistence users needs for deer not being met in Unit 2.

So I just want to point out on that statement that much like was suggested on the previous deferrals on Unit 4 deer proposals, for a stakeholders group, we did convene a stakeholders group, I think it was 18 years ago now. Chairman Christianson and myself both took part in that stakeholders group and this -- this closure policy was initiated from that effort and it was an effort that had participation from all users. So that's the history behind that.

So this closure is one of the solutions crafted by that group, which is a compromise of both Federally-qualified subsistence users and non-Federally-qualified hunters. This closure is in align with recognized principles of fish and wildlife management. It doesn't exclude non-subsistence hunters, they still have opportunity but it does provide a meaningful priority for subsistence users.

In addition to the seasonal closure there is also a harvest limit restriction for non-Federally-qualified users. That was implemented by the Board just several years ago. A harvest limit restriction has resulted in less hunter effort from non-Federally-qualified subsistence users, most of whom live in Ketchikan. Ketchikan is in Unit 1, which has a greater harvest limit as well as a good success rate for deer hunters so the harvest limit restriction in Unit 2 may have shifted some effort to Unit 1. All of this has worked towards solving a problem in Unit 2 where there was a lot of competition which resulted in subsistence users having a hard time meeting their needs. The seasonal closure and harvest restriction, collectively, have been a good, successful strategy ensuring that subsistence needs are being met.

That concludes our comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Don. Thank you for the shout out there too. That was always
a fond memory of mine getting involved in the Unit 2
subcommittee work and trying to find a user group
conflict resolution so I am a believer in that being
part of the process. So thank you for your position
there. Any questions for Don.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll move on to tribal, Alaska Native Corporation
comments. Native Liaison, we'll be calling on Ms.
LaVine at this time.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine standing
in for Tribal Liaison Orville Lind. There were no
comments or recommendations during the consultation.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll call on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
comments. State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
supports eliminating the restricted bag limit for non-
Federally-qualified deer hunters in GMU 2. Those
restrictions have never been and cannot be justified as
necessary to assure the continued viability of a fish
or wildlife population or the continuation of
subsistence uses of such population. Maintaining this
closure will continue to deprive non-Federally-
qualified users of deer harvest opportunity in GMU 2.

Over 70 percent of land in the unit is
Federally-managed and the pre-2018 Federal regulations
already provided a greater opportunity to Federally-
qualified deer hunters compared to non-Federally-ones.
Those advantages included a season with 54 days when
only Federally-qualified users were eligible to hunt, a
higher Federal bag limit, including one doe, harvested
after October 15th and a Federal season that extended
through January when deer are at low elevations. In
contrast, non-Federally-qualified users hunt under
State regulations with an open season from August 1 to
December 31 and a bag limit of four bucks -- four male
deer, however, currently only two bucks may be taken on
Federal land and most Federal public lands are closed
to hunting by non-Federally-qualified users in the
month of August.

As directed by Congress in Section .802
of ANILCA, subsistence uses of wildlife shall be the
priority consumptive use on Federal public lands when
it is necessary to restrict taking in order to assure
the continued viability of a fish or wildlife
population as a continuation of subsistence uses of
such population. Section .815 of ANILCA provides that
a restriction on taking wildlife for non-Federally-
qualified users is only authorized if necessary for the
conservation of healthy populations of fish and
wildlife for the reasons in .816 to continue
subsistence uses of such populations, or pursuant to
other applicable law. ADF&G can find where none of
these reasons applied. There is no conservation
concern for GMU 2 deer populations and no restrictions
are needed to continue subsistence use of deer in GMU 2
as ANS has consistently been met. The deer population
continues to be viable and productive.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
we'll move on to InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

ISC Chair.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, again, Mr.
Chair. This is Robbin LaVine, Policy Coordinator and
the InterAgency Staff Committee Chair.

For Wildlife Closure Review 22-01 the
InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard
comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll move on to Board discussion and Council Chair and
State Liaison.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll go ahead and open up the floor for Board action.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, Mr. Chair, I move to maintain status quo for the WCR22-01. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Second.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you. So my justification is based on the analysis by OSM and the comments given by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Overall, the long-term trend in the deer population on Prince of Wales can be summarized by declining deer habitat, decreasing deer population size, increase in hunter participation, decreased harvest success, inability to meet the harvest objective since 2017 and increased competition between user groups in the most road accessible portions of Prince of Wales Island in Unit 2. Based on the testimony from Federally-qualified subsistence users the current seasonal closure and harvest restriction appears to be a successful strategy that is helping meet subsistence needs.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. Any comments, questions, discussion.

OPERATOR: No questions over the phone.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll call for the question.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. All in favor of the motion to keep status quo signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
unanimously. Thank you, guys. We'll move on to the
next proposal on the agenda. Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, that action closes
out the non-consensus agenda items for the Southeast
region and so we'll now be moving into the
Southcentral proposals starting out with Wildlife
Proposal 22-12. And I believe Milo Burcham is going to
be presenting that one.

MR. BURCHAM: Can you hear me.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Milo, you
have the floor.

MR. BURCHAM: Hello. This is Milo
Burcham of the Chugach National Forest and I'm here to
present a summary of the analysis of WP22-12. The full
analysis begins on Page 941 in your book.

Proposal WP22-12 submitted by the
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
Council request that the deer season in Unit 6 be
extended from the current closing date of December 31st
to January 31st. The proponents believe that
lengthening the deer season in Unit 6 from December
31st to January 31st should be authorized because many
subsistence users are not able to harvest enough deer
to feed their families due to mild winters which
decreases hunter success. Winter snows that push deer
to the beaches where they are more easily accessed by
hunters have occurred later in recent winters. Hunters
that cannot participate in early season hunts must wait
until later in the season when reduced foliage allows
deer to be more easily seen and heavy snow-pak forces
deer down near the coast where they are more
accessible.

In 1990 the Board adopted subsistence
regulations for deer hunting from State regulations.
The initial Federal deer season was August 1st to
December 31st with a limit of five deer but antlerless
deer could only be taken September 15th to December
1 31st. The current season dates, including the October
through December 31 antlerless deer season was adopted
in 1991.

Sitka black-tailed deer were introduced
to Unit 6 between 1916 and 1923. The deer population
in Prince William Sound is limited by snow depth and
duration. Heavy snow events have caused major winter
mortality in the area. Deep snow concentrates deer
along beaches and if deer are forced to remain there
for an extended period of time can -- it can result in
starvation. Deer are also more vulnerable to harvest
while concentrated on beaches and harvesting under
these circumstances could -- harvest under these
circumstances could become additive mortality rather
than compensatory mortality and result in higher total
winter mortality. Approximately 45 percent of the
reported harvest -- reported resident harvest is by
local Federally-qualified subsistence users and that
would be residents of Cordova, Chenega Bay, Tatitlek
and Whittier and 50 percent is by non-Federally-
qualified Alaska residents and five percent by non-
local Federally-qualified subsistence users.
Approximately 98 percent of the reported harvest by
local Federally-qualified subsistence users are from
Cordova residents.

From 2006 to 2012, the sex ratio of the
harvest was approximately 63 percent male and 38
percent female. Harvest reports between 2005 and 2006
and 2009 and '10 show that most of the annual dear
harvest occurred during October and that was 19 to 35
percent; November 25 to 35 percent and December 18 to
24 percent. Few deer have been harvested during the
extended January season since the season was lengthened
in 2016. A large proportion of the yearly take of deer
by residents of Cordova, the largest of the three
communities occurs on Hawkins Island which is in
relative close proximity to town.

If this proposal is adopted it would
lengthen the deer season by one month through January
31st in Unit 6. A longer season would provide
increased opportunity for Federally-qualified
subsistence users to harvest deer during the winter
when they are more accessible because snow often pushes
deer to lower elevations and on to beaches in Prince
William Sound. By allowing the harvest of either sex
deer during the extended season, hunters would not have
to discriminate between does and bucks that have already shed their antlers. Although the deer population in Unit 6 has largely recovered from the decline after the severe winter of 2011/12, deer are more vulnerable to harvest when pushed to beaches where they are easily accessed by hunters on boats. It is thought that when winter conditions are severe hunter harvest can become additive source of mortality to winter kill, additionally heavy harvest of does can slow the recovery of deer after severe winter events. Federally-qualified subsistence users, especially residents of Cordova, harvest a significant portion of the deer taken in Prince William Sound and are responsible for most of the harvest from Hawkins and Hinchenbrook Islands. While few bucks have been harvested from 6D during the January season since 2016, increasing the harvest limit and allowing the harvest of does late in the season would likely increase participation in the late season hunt.

The OSM preliminary conclusion of this -- from this analysis was to support WP22-12 with modification, to restrict the harvest limit during the January season to two deer rather than the five proposed. And the justification is that while lengthening the deer season by one month through January 31st and allowing the harvest of does would provide additional opportunity to harvest red meat. It also increases harvest pressure at a time when deer could be pushed to beaches by deep snow where they are most vulnerable. Qualified rural residents already have a long and liberal season for deer in Unit 6 extending five months from the 1st of August through the 31st of December for up to five deer, and an additional month through January 31st for up to one buck. The proposed modification would reduce the impact to deer populations by limiting the harvest during the time when they are most vulnerable but still provide additional opportunity for qualified rural residents. This would also reduce additive mortality during more severe winters and speed recovery of the deer population following these events.

That concludes my presentation of the analysis.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the Staff.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on to summary of written public comments.

MR. BURCHAM: There were two -- the Federal Subsistence Board received public comments in the form of two letters on WP22-12 both in opposition. While both letters focused on issues surrounding Southeast Alaska deer proposals, they included concerns that non-Federally-qualified hunter opportunity was being unfairly reduced and that extending the season in Unit 6 would harm deer populations there.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move on to open the floor to public testimony. Anybody online Operator that would like to speak.

OPERATOR: Thank you. As a reminder, to ask a question or comment or testimony please press, star, one.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: No questions or comments over the phone at this time.

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

MS. PERRY: Mr. Chair, this is DeAnna Perry, Council Coordinator. I believe Vice Chair Gloria Stickwan is online to provide that.

MS. STICKWAN: Yes. Yes, I am, I'm just waiting to be -- I thought -- okay, the Council supported this proposal with modification to restrict the harvest limit during the January season to one deer in all of Unit 6. Lengthening the season better serves the Federally-qualified user in adapting to climate change situations and increase harvest opportunities. It also recognizes the mobility issues of some hunters and allows more choice for timing the hunt, youth tend to climb mountains and hunt easier and elders tend to hunt during the second phase of the season when deer are in the lower lands. Removing the buck only requirement will lessen the likelihood of unintentional illegal harvest and decreasing the number of deer to be
harvested in January, from OSM's suggested -- suggested
two deer -- Council's suggestion -- one deer should
address any conservation concerns with the deer
population in Unit 6. This action is supported by
local knowledge and biological information presented in
the analysis including consideration of weather
conditions during the hunting season and it benefits
subsistence users.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Gloria. Moving on tribal, Alaska Native Corp comments.
Native Liaison. Robbin.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Native Liaison
Orville Lind. There were no comments or
recommendations during the consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game
comments. State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game
opposes this proposal. Excessive harvest of female
deer resulting in this proposal is likely to affect
sustainability of the current level of deer in GMU 6
and cause conservation concerns for the population
which runs contrary to ANILCA. Deer were introduced to
Prince William Sound and occur at the northern most
extent of their range. As a result the population is
very susceptible to mortality during extreme weather
events. Snow accumulation that could lead to major
concentrating events at sea level is far more common
after January than in the last two months of the
existing season. Harvest of females is higher in years
with significant late winter harvest which can slow
population rebounds following large snow events. With
the high number of Federally-qualified users in close
proximity to Federal public land harvest in January
could be very high and potentially detrimental to the
population. The existing season on bucks only in GMU
6D provides reasonable opportunity while slowing
harvest and protecting females. Analysis given
indicate recent harvest is normal although available
household survey data -- survey data and harvest data were not included in the analysis. There's also little information to suggest that users are not able to meet their needs with the existing season.

And one last important point to make is that, you know, acknowledged by the proponent of the proposal as well as OSM, that you just heard, often times deer during this time of year during the proposed extension are located on the beaches below the ordinary high water mark and, therefore, cannot be legally harvested as that would be the jurisdiction of State regulations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

InterAgency Staff Committee comments. ISC Chair.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine, Policy Coordinator and ISC Chair. For Wildlife Proposal 22-12 the ISC provided the standard comments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. We'll move to Board discussion with Council Chair and State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We will open up the floor for Board action.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Dave.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you. I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-12 as modified by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to extend the deer season through the end of January while restricting the January season harvest limit to one deer in all of Unit 6. Following a second I will explain why I support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.
MR. SCHMID: Thank you. My justification is based on the analysis by OSM and as modified by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Lengthening the deer season by one month through January 31st but limiting the harvest to either one buck or one doe would provide additional opportunity to harvest red meat by Federally-qualified subsistence users while minimizing pressure at a time when deer are most vulnerable.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. Any Board discussion, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. All in favor of the proposal as presented signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. I think we're moving right along, thank you guys for this diligence this morning. We'll go ahead and come back at 1:20 so if we could have everybody coming back after lunch at 1:20 that'll give us a few minutes to get everybody online, check our quorum and get back with the order of business in the Southwest there. So we'll take a quick lunch break and be back at 1:20. Thank you all.

MR. SCHMID: Thanks, Tony.

(Off record)

(On record)
MS. DETWILER: Tina, are you on, have you started recording.

REPORTER: Sue, I am on and ready to go.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. I'll start going through the roll call but first, Tony Christianson, Chair, have you called in yet.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Okay, while we're waiting for Tony we'll see what other Board members we have online starting with the Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Good afternoon, Sue, and everyone. I'm present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Sarah.

Thomas Heinlein, BLM. I think I heard you earlier. Are you still on.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM is still on.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Hi, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Hi, Sara.

Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: I'm on, Sue, thanks.

MS. DETWILER: Thanks, Dave.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka, I heard you earlier, are you still on.

MS. PITKA: I am on.
MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Public Member Charlie Brower. I heard you also, are you still on.

MR. BROWER: I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Charlie.

Chair Anthony Christianson.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Okay, and so we're waiting for Chair Christianson and Gene Peltola.

OPERATOR: This is the Operator, so there are about three speakers coming in right now, they're being prompted.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: We're just waiting on Tony Christianson and Gene Peltola.

MR. CHEN: Good afternoon, Sue. This is Glenn Chen with the BIA.

MS. DETWILER: Uh-huh.

MR. CHEN: And I'm calling in on behalf of Gene Peltola until he's available to join the meeting. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. So we're just waiting on Tony Christianson for now. And if Tony Christianson is having troubles logging on, the default would be to go next to Rhonda Pitka as the Chair.

MS. PITKA: Absolutely. So I believe that we are on Wildlife Proposal WP22-20; is that correct?

MS. DETWILER: Yes, that is correct. Would you like us to get started with that, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Yes, is Member Charlie
Brower on?

MS. DETWILER: I believe Charlie is on.

MS. PITKA: Okay, cool. Okay, yeah, let's get started then. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: And that would be -- I believe that's Hannah Voorhees presenting that proposal.

MS. VOORHEES: Good afternoon.....

MS. PITKA: Go ahead, Hannah.

MS. VOORHEES: .....Mr. Chair -- Madame Chair. Good afternoon, Madame Chair. Members of the Board. This is Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist with OSM and I'll be presenting Wildlife Proposal WP22-20. This proposal was submitted by Michael Adams and the analysis begins on Page 158 of the Board book.

This proposal requests that the Board recognize the customary and traditional use of moose in Unit 15C by residents of Cooper Landing.

The proponent states that residents of Cooper Landing have a history of customary and traditional use of resources including moose throughout Unit 15. He indicates that Cooper Landing residents participate in all subsistence opportunities in the region. The proponent argues that exclusion from these customary and traditional use determinations has denied Cooper Landing residents subsistence opportunity.

Currently the customary and traditional use determination for moose in Unit 15C includes residents of Ninilchik, Nanwalek, Port Graham and Seldovia. Cooper Landing's use of -- customary and traditional use of moose has been recognized by the Board for much of the Kenai Peninsula. In 2008 the Board recognized the customary and traditional use of moose in Unit 7, 15A and 15B by residents of Cooper Landing. In 2014 the Board rejected a proposal requesting the recognition of Cooper Landing's customary and traditional use of moose in 15C. At that time the Southcentral Council did not support the proposal due to lack of information and testimony from residents of Cooper Landing. In 2020 the Board
recognized customary and traditional use of caribou in Unit 15D and 15C and use of goat in all of Unit 15 by residents of Cooper Landing.

Therefore, customary and traditional use determinations have previously been made for residents of Cooper Landing for other wildlife species in Unit 15C specifically for goat and caribou.

When conducting a customary and traditional use determination analysis eight factors are holistically considered. These are listed started on Page 163 of the Board book but please note that this is not a checklist.

C&T determinations are made for recognizing the pool of users who generally exhibit the eight factors and not for resource management or restricting harvest. Of note, at the fall 2013 meeting the Southcentral Council made a recommendation to, "change the way determinations are made by making area-wide customary and traditional use determinations for all species."

In June 2016 the Board clarified that the eight factor analysis applied when considering customary and traditional use determinations is intended to protect subsistence use, rather than limit it.

In terms of Cooper Landing's use of moose, ADF&G, Division of Subsistence conducted a subsistence survey in Cooper Landing in 1991. 28 percent of surveyed households hunted moose and moose were shared among residents. As part of the same study ADF&G matched 50 Cooper Landing household's use area for moose during their lifetime living in the community. Mapped community use areas should not be considered exhaustive but do provide some useful information. Cooper Landing residents harvest resources most intensively in areas closest to the community typical of a subsistence practice characterized by efficiency of effort and cost, however, they also harvest resources throughout the Kenai Peninsula. Areas used for moose hunting by residents of Cooper Landing included the far northern portion of Unit 15C. You can see the map on Page 166 of the Board book. From 1987 through 2019.....
MS. VOORHEES: State harvest records show there were 14 hunts for moose in Unit 15C by residents of Cooper Landing.

MS. VOORHEES: The OSM conclusion is to support WP22-20 with the following justification. The Board has previously recognized Cooper Landing's customary and traditional use of other wildlife in Unit 15C. Based on these previous determinations Cooper Landing has already established a recognized pattern of harvest and use of wild resources in these areas consistent with the eight factors. Cooper Landing residents pattern of moose hunting and harvest generally exhibits the characteristics of customary and traditional use as shown through subsistence surveys and data from residents hunting under State regulations.

Thank you, that concludes my presentation.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Hannah.

MS. DETWILER: I believe -- is Charlie back on, I got a text he was on, I'm not sure if he's in the speaker's room -- I mean not Charlie, I'm sorry, Tony.

MS. PITKA: Oh, okay, I'm not sure, I haven't heard anybody come on. The next, I believe, we're on the summary of written public comments.

MS. DETWILER: Yes.

MS. VOORHEES: Madame Chair, for the record this is Hannah Voorhees again. Two written public comments were received on this proposal. Both in opposition.

The Alaska Kenai Chapter of the Safari Club International stated that they do not support a subsistence priority for rural residents on road connected portions of the Kenai Peninsula.
The Alaska Outdoor Council specifically states that providing a priority to certain users on the Kenai Peninsula exacerbates conflict between Federally-qualified hunters and Alaskans living in non-Federally-qualified areas of the state.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Was that it for written public comments.

MS. VOORHEES: Yes, that completes the comments.

MS. PITKA: Thank you very much. At this time I'd like to open the floor to public testimony on Wildlife Proposal 22-20.

OPERATOR: Thank you. As a reminder to ask a question or give a testimony please press, star, one.

(No comments)

OPERATOR: We do have a comment.....

MS. PITKA: Operator.....

OPERATOR: .....Mr.....

MS. PITKA: .....any testimony.

OPERATOR: Yes, ma'am, just a moment.

MS. PITKA: Thank you.

OPERATOR: First question or comment comes from Darrel, your line is open.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. I hope everyone can hear me. My name is Darrel Williams. I'm here today representing Ninilchik Traditional Council. And I'd like to be able to speak to Wildlife Proposal WP22-20 regarding Cooper Landing's C&T for moose in Unit 15C. And I want to be able to -- since this was a discussion item that was brought up from the comments from yesterday morning, I wanted to communicate our position and contribute to this discussion.

I guess the place to start is that this proposal had been reviewed by the Southcentral Regional
Advisory Council and was voted down. We've had several of these kind of proposals over the years we've had to deal with. For example, Ninilchik, when we presented our information, gosh, it was like 2006, 2007, our C&T, or the -- the data supported C&T much, much further than what anybody even asked for. However, when we start looking at this particular proposal, we start looking at this idea of historical use, I remember some of the conversations we had at the Regional Advisory Council was that most of the use seemed to be indicated that it was on State land versus Federal lands and, of course, we know that Federal lands is where subsistence takes place. We also saw that there was some really clear delineation in use when we look at the material that was presented at the Federal Subsistence Board we can see that delineation in the maps on Page 166 and 167. Page 166 shows the Game Management Units and how they're laid out and on Page 167 is the results from the survey information. And it's pretty clear that it doesn't look like any harvest goes down beyond Game Management Unit -- beyond 15B. So that was -- I remember that was a big part of that discussion that we had.

There was also some questions in the analysis that was discussed at the Regional Advisory Council here they did not feel that the eight factors were supported well enough to provide the C&T determination and there's also the issue of the data that was used. And we've made this argument for many, many years, where data that's prepared by the State of Alaska, tends, you know, to be referred to as a stratified random sample and, really, it's a way to stratify random sample, it's different. There's some interesting quirks on how data is managed. And it's actually -- it shows up in the stuff that's submitted to the Board, if you look at the table on Page 168, you know, it's really interesting because you have 13 years of reported harvest activity, right, with zero harvest, however, it also details that there was one moose taken. Well, you know, I mean there's a big question there how do you have zero harvest and then all of a sudden say, oh, yeah, we took a moose. I mean you got to be real careful with that. This is where these weights and types of evaluations start to show up.

It changes how subsistence is looked at and how it's evaluated. Especially from the Federal Subsistence Board, you know, it's not really clear on
how that's actually put together.

So we want to look at that carefully, you know, when we're viewing this kind of stuff. But at the same time, this is one of the reasons why we really oppose this kind of proposal, there is an awful lot of area that is open in Game Management Units that is supported by the data. It seems like we're just starting to reach further and further and further into things. You know the example that we had, that we experienced many, many years ago was, you know, some of our data supported subsistence use in Kodiak, strong support for it, significant, and there was an awful lot of trouble because that didn't work well with how the Regional Advisories are set up and how these decisions were made and it wasn't something that we wanted, it was supported by the information and that was really good support. But the difference here is is that this information demonstrates zero with an implied value of one which really doesn't -- I don't think it meets that criteria very well.

You know, the other thing I think is worth talking about that is part of this discussion is that the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council also went through another rigorous set of proposals for Moose Pass and they were Proposals 22-16 through 26 and this is the kind of discussion, same kind of evaluation, where we had to do due diligence in looking at what the proposals are and where these areas are and how this is going to work.

So, in short, the Ninilchik Traditional Council, the tribe, we oppose the C&T determination.

But I also want to comment about, you know, this can be to get to be a really slippery slope when we start doing things like this because somebody may go to the Regional Advisory Council and not get the answer that they like and then they call the Federal Subsistence Board and it gets brought back up and put into the process and, you know, there is a due diligence to the RACs for a reason, it's actually there, but when we start using weighted averages, and applied numbers and things like that, it's a slippery slope, because when you have no harvest that statistically becomes harvest it's a different problem and we're going to end up reinventing how subsistence works and how it's measured by making these kind of
determinations and I think that's a larger issue when
we're looking at proposals like this. I think the
weight and the review process needs to really be looked
at before we pick up different proposals because it
seems to be something that somebody would like.

Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.
Thank you very much. If you have questions or
comments.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Mr. Williams.
Just to clarify Ninilchik opposes, the tribe opposes.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, that is correct.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Is there any
other additional public testimony or questions for
this.

(No comments)

MS. PITKA: Operator, do we have any
additional public comments.

OPERATOR: Yes, we have a question or
comment from Michael, your line is open.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Go ahead,
Michael.

MR. ADAMS: Good afternoon, Madame
Chair and the Board. Thank you for the chance to speak
in favor of Proposal 20. I spoke about this yesterday
but I know that since then the Board has heard
testimony on lots of proposals so I hope you'll forgive
me if I repeat some of the points that I mentioned
before. Can everyone hear me okay.

MS. PITKA: Yes, please go ahead.

MR. ADAMS: Okay, thank you. I'd like
to start by pointing out that the OSM findings do
support this proposal and that this proposal was also
initially supported as written by the Southcentral RAC
with the majority of votes in favor to one against.

After being modified by the RAC, the
RAC -- or excuse me, after being modified the RAC seems
to have voted on three proposals all at once, not
taking up Proposal 20 individually. They voted five votes in favor to four against with two abstentions and the modification effectively killed Proposal 20, which the RAC had already voted strongly in favor of. So although this resulted in a RAC recommendation against the proposal, I think that this shows that the RAC was not strongly or unanimously opposed to it. In fact, it appears that they didn't vote on this proposal on its own and their votes were for support of three proposals together. It just came out that this ended up being opposed so I just don't see that as a very clear position against the proposal by the RAC.

I can tell you that from my own personal experience, Cooper Landing community members do have a history of traveling to Unit 15C to harvest game, including moose, shellfish, ocean fish and gather products from the Forest, and this is supported by the OSM conclusion.

You know we'd all like to provide food from the land close as possible to home. The nature of subsistence has always required people to travel to areas of greater abundance and Cooper Landing residents have and do travel to Unit 15C to hunt and gather just as Ninilchik residents travel to Cooper Landing to harvest salmon, and we also travel to Kasilof and Ninilchik and Deep Creek and Anchor River and Homer and other areas of the Peninsula to hunt and to gather. And I can tell you that myself and many of my neighbors in Cooper Landing do travel to those areas to put up food under existing regulations. Wildlife populations fluctuate over time and regional subsistence users should be allowed to exercise their time honored practice of traveling within the region to feed themselves and the community members by utilizing the areas of populations of greater abundance in accordance with their customary and traditional practices. And there does seem to be consensus on this point demonstrated by the OSM findings and their statement justifying support.

I also agree with the OSM that the data does show proof of use. I also don't think the data tells the whole story. I think there's probably more moose hunting -- well, I'm sure there's probably more moose hunting in Unit 15C by Cooper Landing residents than is reflected in the data. I also think that many hunters hunting on a State harvest ticket might hunt
several different areas and it's possible that not all areas hunted are reported when those hunts are not successful. I also feel that the lack of a subsistence priority for Cooper Landing residents has contributed to lower participation in sections of Unit 15C and that additional community members would like to participate, especially during the late season hunt, if given the opportunity. And I've personally known several people who travel to Tustumena Lake to hunt for moose and under current regulations we have the opportunity for subsistence moose harvest on one side of the lake and not the other.

As I mentioned yesterday, I wrote this proposal as a result of multiple conversations with Cooper Landing community members and I can attest that many subsistence users on Cooper Landing do support the proposal. I'd also like to point out that Cooper Landing is a small community and many community members are older and do not hunt for themselves anymore so even one moose harvest is significant and can provide meat for several community members.

Furthermore, a decision to not support a C&T determination in this case seems out of balance. In the past the Board has approved proposals to allow subsistence harvest of fish and wildlife resources in Unit 7 by residents of Unit 15C sometimes despite very strong opposition from Cooper Landing community members. The case in point is the subsistence dipnet fishery at the Russian River Falls. Unit 7 is in a period of historical low moose abundance and non-subistence hunters from other areas besides the Kenai Peninsula seem to be hunting here more often. This proposal will create opportunity for subsistence harvest for community members that might not otherwise have that opportunity, particularly in the late season hunt when fewer hunters are on the landscape encouraging greater subsistence community participation. I believe this proposal will restore some balance of the sharing of resources between communities on the Kenai Peninsula and that Board support for this proposal would show fairness to both communities in Unit 7, and 15C.

And, once, again, thank you to the Board for your time and for the chance to speak today.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much for
your comment. Do we have any additional public
comments, Operator.

OPERATOR: No further comments over the
phone at this time. As a reminder press, star, one to
ask your question or comment.

(No comments)

MS. PITKA: Okay. Then.....

OPERATOR: No questions or comments
over the phone at this time.

MS. PITKA: Oh, sorry, go ahead.

OPERATOR: No questions or comments
over the phone.

MS. PITKA: Oh, there are none, okay.
At this time I'd like to ask the Regional Advisory
Council recommendation.....

MS. STICKWAN: The Council on
reconsideration.....

MS. PITKA: .....Southcentral.....

MS. STICKWAN: .....supported WP22-20,
25(a), 27 with modification to include only those lands
within Unit 7, 15A and 15B. Initially the Council
supported all proposals but then realized that
reconsideration was necessary to address an
inconsistency between the Council C&T recommendation
for Moose Pass and those for moose -- for Cooper
Landing. As with the decision on Moose Pass C&T and
WP22-16 plus it provides resources needed by Cooper
Landing subsistence users. The Council supported
granting C&T for Cooper Landing in Units 7, 15A and 15B
but felt that the data showing proof of use did not
support granting C&T in Unit 15C. The Council found
that the combination of these proposals were a little
confusing but did eventually support WP22-20, 25(a)/27
to include only those lands in Unit 7, 15A and 15B.
The vote passed 5/4 with two abstentions.

Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. And I believe
Chairman Christianson's back on the line so please take it away.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: Okay, maybe he's not online again. Okay, so just to clarify, Gloria, the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council supported.....

OPERATOR: Mr. Christianson is on the line.

MS. PITKA: .....WP22-20; is that correct?

MS. STICKWAN: I would like you to have DeAnna Perry answer that question, she's online.

MS. PITKA: Oh, okay. Because in our Board book it says opposed so I just want to make sure that we're clear on that.

MS. PERRY: Madame Chair, this is DeAnna Perry, Council Coordinator for the Southcentral.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: They were having problems with my line being muted so.....

MS. PERRY: .....Council.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....I appreciate everybody -- Rhonda, picking up on this proposal. So DeAnna, you have the floor.

MS. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I could clarify that, Rhonda. When these proposals came before the Southcentral Council, they came combined, 20, 25(a) and 27. When the Council gave its recommendation, it supported that group of proposals with modification to include only those lands in 7, 15A and 15B. So in a sense it actually opposed 20 because 20 only addresses Unit 15C. Does that help?

MS. PITKA: Yes, thank you, I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other questions from the Board.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you, hearing none, where does that put us on the agenda, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Next would be tribal corporation comments, ANCSA Corporation comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Tribal Liaison Orville Lind. There were no comments or recommendations during the consultation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Next will be State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record ADF&G is neutral when it comes to the eligibility to participate in Federal subsistence hunting opportunities. I will say, though, that we do encourage that additional subsistence harvest and use research for Kenai Peninsula residents be conducted to provide adequate data when assessing subsistence harvest needs before any C&T use determinations are made.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll go on to the InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Yes, hello again Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-20 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Open up the floor for discussion or a Board motion.

(No comments)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No discussion, the floor is open for a motion.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair (indiscernible - breaking up)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Somebody's breaking up there, the floor is open for a motion.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Whoever's trying to be recognized keeps breaking up.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, can you hear me on this one?

MS. DETWILER: Yes, I can hear you and I can also hear whoever is trying to speak is breaking up.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, so I believe this is the time for Board action and somebody is trying to be recognized at this time but -- I'll call again for a Board motion on this.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, I believe it might be Sara Boario trying to call in.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Okay. So, yes, I understand Sara Boario is trying to ask a question but she can't get through. So we need to figure out a way to get her question asked and so -- so that she can hear the answer so if someone....

OPERATOR: If she....

MS. DETWILER: .....could forward that question we'll.....
OPERATOR: .....would.....

MS. DETWILER: .....get it out on the floor.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, may I read the question I’m seeing it on my screen here?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, please, Sue, do.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The question is from Board Member Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service. The question is Mr. William with Ninilchik Traditional Council related the data that was included in the analysis for the decisionmaking of the eight factors that show use patterns, can OSM respond to Mr. Williams with respect to the data used in the analysis, and that is question one.

I can read that question again while folks are pulling their thoughts together on this one.

MS. VOORHEES: Sue, this.....

Mr. Williams with NTC -- I'm sorry, was somebody trying to interject there.

MS. VOORHEES: Sue, this is Hannah and I am looking forward to responding but I'm not sure I understand the question completely and was hoping that maybe Member Boario could clarify what she's looking for.

Thank you.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: I also see a message that Member Boario is also trying to join in on a different phone now so maybe that connection will be better. So maybe there was -- maybe there was another Board question or comments in the interim if somebody wanted to jump in.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, the floor is open for Board deliberation or discussion as we're
waiting for Sara.

MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair, this
is Hannah again.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
floor, Hannah.

MS. VOORHEES: Thank you. So I will try
to just give an overview of the data that we use when
making -- when doing analysis for C&T determinations.

The primary data source that we'll go
to are subsistence surveys that are conducted by ADF&G.
Those are surveys conducted approximately every 10
years for communities, in which we -- is separate from
harvest reporting. House -- very high percentage of
households in a community are surveyed and from that
data we are able to see -- we're able to develop a good
sense of what the overall harvest patterns are for a
community, what percentage of households might attempt
to harvest and actually harvest a particular species
and what percent is using and sharing species. Those
surveys also include key informant interviews
that might give us a picture of long-term use for
resources in that community. Traditional means of
harvest and preserving, patterns of seasonal harvest et
cetera. And I can list the eight factors but I don't
want to necessarily belabor the point. But another
feature of those surveys is that we often get search
and use areas for a particular species, so there's maps
data that shows, you know, within a certain time span
where people have looked for species and have harvested
a species, and that's not considered exhaustive but it
is -- it is very useful for this kind of an analysis.

I'm happy to answer further if that
hasn't hit the nail on the head.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that discussion. I believe Sara's on now as well.

MS. BOARIO: Yes, Mr. Chair, and,
Hannah my apologies for the technical difficulties on
my end. I think I heard some of your answer. I
apologize Hannah, Mr. Chair, I have another question
maybe that will be a little clearer, if I may.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Sara.

MS. BOARIO: I understand in 2014 the Board voted down something similar due to lack of information and testimony and I was wondering if there is new information from that time, and maybe Hannah you already answered that but I didn't catch all of it if you did.

MS. VOORHEES: Through the Chair. Thank you, Member Boario. And so the primary subsistence survey that was used in this analysis dates to 1991. It -- well, that was when the study year was and there hasn't been any significant new data since 2014. There's, I believe one more year of data on harvest reported from the State in 15C but other than that, no, no new significant data.

Thank you.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board questions or discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll open up the floor for Board action.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. BOARIO: I move to adopt Proposal 22-20. Following a second I will explain why I oppose the motion -- my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second. Public Member Brower.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you. I recog -- am I still there, I apologize.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you're still on.
MS. BOARIO: Yes. I recognize that the Board has a history of inclusiveness on C&T proposals and the OSM analysis does show a history of use for residents in 15C for Cooper Landing and deference provided from the RAC, the Southcentral RAC citing insufficient evidence, and while new significant data would be useful, we would want to provide -- or, excuse me -- and the lack of insufficient evidence -- or new information since the last vote.

And I oppose.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for discussion, comments, questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Sue, do you want to do a roll call on this one, please.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. The motion is to adopt WP22-20. I will start out with the maker of the motion. Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: No.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Yes.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. CHEN: Hello, Sue, this is Glenn Chen. And Mr. Peltola has asked me to sit in for him for this vote.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.
MR. CHEN: The BIA votes to oppose this motion for the reasons articulated by Board Member -- from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Glenn.

Thomas Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: Yes, adopt.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service will oppose the motion as with the justification provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I oppose based on the justification by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Rhonda.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I oppose for the same reason. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

And, finally, Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose as stated.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. So the motion fails six to -- or fails, two yea's, and six no's.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and -- I'll just call on you to call on the Staff for the next proposal. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: And that would be
Wildlife Proposal 22-25(b) and I'm not sure who's -- that would be Brian Ubelaker would be presenting that one.

MR. UBELAKER: Correct. Hello. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. For the record my name is Brian Ubelaker, I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I will be presenting the summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal 22-25(b), which was submitted by Michael Adams of Cooper Landing and WP22-26(b) which was submitted by Lisa Slepetski of Moose Pass. The analysis begins on Page 5 -- I mean 958 of your meeting books.

Both of these proposals requested a Federal subsistence sheep season be established in Unit 7. Proposal WP22-26(b) asks for just that, and while Proposal WP22-25(b) specifically requests establishing a season of August 10th through September 20th with a harvest limit of one dall sheep and that the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Manager be delegated authority to open and close the season in consultation with ADF&G and the Chair of the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

The proponent state these changes are needed to provide Federal subsistence opportunity to harvest sheep in Unit 7 and that there is a history of sheep harvest by rural residents of Unit 7. The proponents further state that the requested change would provide opportunity for rural residents of Unit 7 to engage in subsistence sheep hunting and provide a meaningful subsistence priority.

Historically, sheep hunting has occurred on the Kenai Peninsula for as long as it has been inhabited, however, sheep hunting was closed in 1942 due to a conservation concern. Since then, sheep hunting has changed little to the recognized regulations of today. In 1959 a three-quarter curl harvest limit was established. Then in 1964 the season was extended and a 7/8ths curl harvest limit was established. In 1989 the harvest limit was changed to a full-curl. Sheep populations had recovered enough by 2016 for the Board of Game to establish a non-resident and a youth only hunt. No Federal sheep hunts existed on the Kenai Peninsula prior to 2020 when WP20-24 established a Federal sheep hunt in Unit 15 for
residents of Ninilchik.

The Kenai Peninsula sheep population experienced a sharp decline in the early 20th century. The population then increased through 1968 to 2,190 individuals before declining to 1,600 sheep in 1992. There has been an estimated population decline of 80 percent since the 1960s. The 2011 to 2020 population estimate on the Kenai Peninsula ranged from 379 to 644 individuals. As of 2015 the sub-population estimates for the Kenai Peninsula -- excuse me -- as of 2015 the sub-population estimates were 163 for the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, 165 for the Resurrection Trail sub-population, 77 to the Grant Lake sub-population and 50 for the Cooper Mountain and Crescent Lake sup-populations. It is not believed that harvest is limiting the population but rather results of climate change and habitat loss.

As stated before, historically, there has never been a Federal sheep hunt in Unit 7. Federally-qualified subsistence users have had to compete with sport hunters for a limited number of State sheep permits which currently total nine. A full-curl management plan has been in place since 1989. Average harvest from 2010 to 2019 is 3.9 sheep, while from 2000 to 2009 the average was 6.9 sheep. Since 2000 the number of sheep hunters on the Kenai Peninsula has decreased by roughly half. Reported harvest over the last 10 years is broken down to 10.2 percent non-resident harvest, 15.7 percent rural resident, and 74.1 percent non-rural resident.

Other alternatives considered included setting a harvest limit of three-quarter curl horn or greater by Federal drawing permit and another was to delegate authority to an in-season manager who would set harvest limits, sex restrictions and quotas.

If this proposal is adopted the established Federal sheep hunt would provide additional opportunity to Federally-qualified subsistence users. However, declining sheep populations are susceptible to overharvest if not managed carefully, therefore, Federal drawing permits should be established within the harvest framework used by the State. In-season management should be delegated to the Seward District Ranger to set harvest quotas, number of permits, and any needed permit conditions.
The OSM conclusion is to support WP22-25(b) with modification to establish a Federal drawing permit hunt for sheep in Unit 7 with a harvest limit of one ram with full-curl horn or larger and to delegate authority to the Seward District Ranger of the Chugach National Forest and to take no action on WP22-26(b).

That concludes my summary. I would be happy to answer any questions anyone might have.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: If not we'll move on to summary of public comments.

MR. UBELAKER: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, was that somebody trying to ask a question or just background noise?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That was me saying the floor was open for questions and if there was none we could move on to summary of public comments.

MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Brian Ubelaker, OSM. The only submitted written comment was one letter in opposition and that letter came from the Kenai Chapter of the Safari Club International. They were opposed because they do not support any rural determinations or subsistence priorities for the road-connected Kenai Peninsula.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Appreciate that. We'll move on to open up the lines for any public who wants to comment on this proposal. Thank you, Operator.

OPERATOR: Yes, sir. If you would like to make a public comment please press, star followed by one. Please make sure that your phone is unmuted and record your name when prompted. Thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: The first comment comes from Michael, your line is open.
MR. ADAMS: Thank you. I'd like to once again thank the Board for the opportunity to provide testimony. I'm testifying in support of Proposal 25(b). I strongly support a subsistence priority on sheep in Unit 7 for the Cooper Landing community. However, in consideration of the current sheep population in Unit 7 I think it is appropriate to modify the proposal. While I do not feel that the modified language provides for a subsistence priority, it does provide for a subsistence opportunity. I believe a three-quarter curl regulation would provide a subsistence priority and would support that modification instead but I understand the current conservation concerns for sheep and I trust the discretion of the Board. I believe that any subsistence hunt should take into account the conservation of the sheep population and harvest opportunity should err on the side of caution so that opportunity will continue to exist in the future.

I would fully expect that delegating authority to manage this hunt in such a manner as to protect the resource for future generations while providing opportunity when possible. And I hope the Board will be very conscious of the language adopted so that the manager will have the ability to manage the hunt with a conservation priority including the ability to cancel or close the hunt if necessary.

If the Board, at their discretion, decides to wait until a future cycle to establish a subsistence season in light of current population concerns I would also support that decision. However, I believe that if the population is considered healthy enough for a State season to occur, a subsistence opportunity should also exist.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

OPERATOR: There are no other.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
public to comment on the line, Operator. Thank you for calling in Mike.

OPERATOR: No, sir, there is not. No other public comment at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator. We'll go ahead and move on to the tribal consultation. Native Liaison.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Tribal Liaison Orville Lind. There were no comments or recommendations during the consultation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Moving on to the ISC recommendation -- or RAC Chair -- sorry, sorry, RAC -- Regional Advisory Council.

MS. STICKWAN: The Council supported it with OSM modification of one ram with full-curl horn or larger by Federal drawing permit and to provide for delegated authority. The Council believes that a Federal drawing permit is warranted because of the significant interest of hunting sheep in Unit 7. There are a few permits given by the State and under ANILCA a priority needs to be extended to the Federal subsistence user. With the declines in sheep population in recent years, establishing a preference for rural residents to meet their subsistence needs and delegating authority to a manager to protect the sheep populations will provide a priority and additional opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Thank you.

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

(No comments)

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

MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, this is Robbin. Did we miss State Liaison response -- thank you, Mr.
Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we did. Sorry about that, Mr. Mulligan. State Liaison. I'm operating off memory today so sorry -- my computer just crashed on me -- sorry.

MR. MULLIGAN: No worries, Mr. Chair. If you don't mind, did we miss -- oh, never mind, we did get the RAC, my apologies, I'm going off of memory myself. So for the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes this proposal.

Any additional harvest jeopardizes the population of dall sheep in the area. If a Federal season is established, current harvest restrictions only one ram, full-curl horn ram with both horns broken or a ram at least eight years old as determined by counting annual horn rings should be maintained. Harvest should only be allowed in areas where a harvestable surplus is available as indicated by an open State season. Allowing Federally-qualified users to hunt within boundaries of closed areas could lead to these hunts never again being opened under a State permit system and would disrupt the current State management system.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, we'll move on. Thank you.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, again, this is Robbin LaVine, Policy Coordinator and InterAgency Staff Committee Chair. For Wildlife Proposal 22-25(b) and 26(b), the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Appreciate that. That opens up the floor for Board discussion, deliberation.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, the Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Dave, you have the floor.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt WP22-25(b)/26(b) as modified by OSM to establish a Federal drawing permit hunt for sheep in Unit 7 with a harvest limit of one ram with full-curl horn or larger and delegate authority to the Seward District Ranger of the Chugach National Forest to close the season, set the harvest quota and number of permits to be issued and any needed permit conditions via delegation of authority letter. Following a second I will explain why I support my motion.

MS. BOARIO: Second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

There's a motion that's been made and seconded, the floor is open for discussion.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. My justification is based on the analysis by OSM as modified and the comments given by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Currently there is no Federal subsistence season for sheep in Unit 7 and Federally-qualified subsistence users must rely on the limited number of State drawing permits in Unit 7 or use a harvest ticket in Unit 7 remainder in order to harvest sheep. Establishing a Federal sheep season in Unit 7 would provide additional opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users consistent with Section .804 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act which calls for a priority consumptive use of fish and wildlife populations by rural Alaska residents. In addition, delegating authority to the Seward District Ranger of the Chugach National Forest to open and close the season, set harvest quota, determine the number of permits to be issued and any needed permit conditions would be the most efficient way to implement the proposed Federal sheep season.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. The floor is open for discussion, questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, question's been called. We'll go ahead and do roll call on this one, Sue. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, will do. The motion is to adopt as -- as modified by OSM. Start with Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Yes, thanks. I support the motion that I -- with the justification I just provided.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Thomas Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BIA, Glenn or Gene.

MR. CHEN: Yes, Sue, this is Glenn Chen from BIA. I'll be casting the vote for Regional Director Gene Peltola. And the BIA votes to support the Forest Service motion which also concurs with the recommendation from the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: The Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

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

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support in deference to the Regional Advisory Council. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: May be on mute or trying to get back in.

Chair Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support.

MS. DETWILER: Charlie Brower, did you come back on.

MR. BROWER: Yeah, I'm back on, I had to step out real quick.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. We are taking a vote on WP22-25(b)/26(b) and the motion to adopt as modified by OSM has been made and all seven members who have voted so far have voted in favor of the proposal. So yours is the last vote Mr. Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. So the motion passes unanimously. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and call on Staff to move on to the next proposal.

MS. DETWILER: That would be WP22-28 and 29 and that would be Mr. Ubelaker, I believe, presenting that.
MR. UBELEKAR: Yes, good afternoon again. Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. For the record, my name is Brian Ubelaker and I am a Wildlife Biologist with OSM. I will be presenting a summary for the analysis of Wildlife Proposal WP22-28, which was submitted by Michael Adams of Cooper Landing and WP22-29, which was submitted by Seth Wilson of Glennallen. And this analysis begins on Page 983 of your meeting books.

Both of these proposals request to extend the length of the length of the moose season in Unit 7 remainder from September 20th to September 25th. The proponent state the Federal subsistence season should not be more restrictive than the State season, which currently closes five days later than the Federal season and that this proposal would allow more opportunity for participation by Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Relevant regulatory history includes a Board of Game adoption in 2015 where the moose season was shortened and shifted to later, from August 20th through September 20th to September 1st through September 25th. This caused the season closing dates between Federal and State regulations to be misaligned. Then in 2018 the Board of Game established a 50-inch plus or three or more brow tine harvest limit.

A unit-wide survey and population estimate has never been conducted in Unit 7 but the population trend has decidedly declining and has been since the '70s. The most recent trend count conducted in Unit 7 has a bull to cow ratio of 25 to 100, which is within ADF&G's management objective. Moose harvest in Unit 7 has been declining since 2000 with the average harvest from 2015 to 2019 being 20 moose per year.

Another alternative to consider was suggested by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. It stated that since the current Federal season is longer than the State season, the season opener should be shifted from August 10th to August 20th but still maintain the proposed close date of September 25th. While this would shorten the overall Federal season by five days, it would move it closer to when the rut occurs which should allow for hunter success more like current levels, plus Federally-qualified subsistence
users would still be able to hunt without State
competition for 12 days at the beginning of the season.

     Adopting the proposal and extending the
season would allow Federally-qualified subsistence
users greater access to the resource. It would also
allow for the alignment of Federal and State seasons.

     Therefore, it is OSM's conclusion to
support Proposal WP22-28 and to take no action on WP22-

     That is the end of my summary. If
anybody has any questions I would be happy to answer
them.

     CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for Staff.

         (No comments)

     CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll go ahead and move on to any public comment.
Thank you.

     OPERATOR: If you.....

     MR. UBELAKER: Yes, Mr. Chair, Brian
Ubelaker once again. There was one letter submitted in
opposition to this proposal and it also came from the
Kenai Chapter of Safari Club International who were
opposed because they do not support any rural
determinations or subsistence priorities for the road-
connected Kenai Peninsula.

         Thank you.

     CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Operator, at this time if there's anybody who would
like to be recognized online this is time for public
comment online.

         Thank you.

     OPERATOR: Thank you, sir. If you
would like to make a public comment, again, that's
star, one. Please unmute your phone and record your
name when prompted. Thank you.
OPERATOR: First public comment comes from Michael, your line is open.

MR. ADAMS: Thank you. I'm speaking in support of Proposals 28 and 30. These proposals seek to provide additional opportunity for subsistence moose hunting in Unit 7 and 15.

We just heard, I guess, the existing regulation compared to the proposed regulation. I, personally, support both proposals as written and believe that this will provide a meaningful subsistence priority. The amended proposals will eliminate the first 10 days of the existing subsistence season. While I would prefer the proposals to pass as originally written, I do think that the amended proposals do increase the opportunity in comparison to the existing regulation.

In addition to my personal position on these proposals I've also been asked to read the following statement on behalf of the Cooper Landing Fish and Game Advisory Committee. Would it be all right if I read the proposals for both -- or excuse me, the comment for both proposals, Proposal 28 and 30 now or would it be more appropriate for me to call back for the comment period on Proposal 30?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

MR. ADAMS: I was asking a question to the Board if that's all right. I was wondering if it would be more appropriate to read the Fish and Game Advisory Committee for Proposal 30 separately or would it be all right to read the statement for Proposal 28 and 30 right now.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Well, if you plan on coming back -- they're all pertinent -- I mean if you -- if you're going to come back and do it then, or do it now, they're all related.

MR. ADAMS: Okay. So on behalf of the Cooper Landing Fish and Game Advisory Committee I've been asked to read the following statement.

The Cooper Landing Fish and Game
Advisory Committee unanimously supports Proposal --
WP20-28 [sic] as amended by the Southcentral Regional
Advisory Council to include the following language:
With modification of season dates as August 20 to
September 25th.

And the Cooper Landing Fish and Game
Advisory Committee unanimously supports Proposal WP20-
30 [sic] as amended by the Southcentral Regional
Advisory Council to include the following language:
With modification of season dates of August 20th to
September 25th.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Thank you for calling in. Operator, are there any
other public online who would like to be recognized at
this time.

OPERATOR: Not at this time, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
That concludes the public testimony part of this.
We'll next call on our tribal, ANCSA Corporation
consultation.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, actually I
think it would be RAC recommendations before the
tribal.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry,
about that Sue. Yeah, I'm just -- the sun's shining
down here so it keeps making my head jump ahead.
Sorry.

MS. DETWILER: All right.

MS. STICKWAN: Council supported with
modification of season as August 20 to September 25th.
The Council believes this proposal as modified provides
a priority to Federally-qualified subsistence users by
having an extended hunting season. Although this would
result in 10 days eliminated from the beginning of the
season from August 10th to August 20th there would
still be ample opportunity for subsistence users
harvest before the State opens. Addition of extra days
towards the end of the season during prime hunting time
with cooler temperatures is better for subsistence
users having harvesting -- users harvesting meat.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the Regional Advisory Council.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none we'll move on to the tribal consultation.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine and I have been standing in for Tribal Liaison Orville Lind. I believe Orville has rejoined us, Orville are you on the line.

MR. LIND: Yes, Robbin, I'm on now.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back, Orville, you have the floor.

MR. LIND: And this is for Proposal.....

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: 28/29.

MR. LIND: Okay. 28/29. We had no comments or recommendation on that proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. And then we'll move to the next on, State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, ADF&G opposes this proposal this proposal as Federal subsistence regulations already provide a significant advantage for Federally-qualified users over non-Federally-qualified users. Federal subsistence regulations in GMU 7 provide for an extra 17 days on the front end of the season already and so we feel that that's enough of a priority already within the existing regulations.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Moving on to InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

MS. LAVINE: Yes, hello, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-28 and 29, the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll open the floor now for Board discussion, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. SCHMID: Mr. Chair, Forest Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Dave, you have the floor.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt WP22-28/29 as modified by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to shift the moose hunting season in Unit 7 remainder to August 20th through September 25th. Following a second I will explain why I support my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second, Public Member Brower.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Charlie. My justification is based on the comments and modification by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. Recently moose harvest in Unit 7 has decreased during the early part of the season because of warming climatic conditions that make meat spoilage more likely. Extending the shifting moose season in Unit 7 remainder until later in the fall will continue to provide for a subsistence priority and at the same time enable harvest when the weather is more suitable for preservation of the meat.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Dave. The floor is open for discussion, comments.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Question's been called. We'll go ahead and do roll call, again, on this Sue. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. The motion is to adopt WP22-28 and 29 as modified by the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council. Start with the maker of the motion, Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you. The Forest Service supports in deference to the RAC and with the justification I provided.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Thomas Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports as modified by and in deference to the RAC.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. BIA, Glenn, on behalf of Gene.

MR. CHEN: Yes, the BIA votes to support as modified by the Regional Advisory Council and as articulated by Mr. Schmid from the Forest Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.
MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and as articulated by the Forest Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: Support as stated.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support, as stated.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Motion passes unanimously.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. And we'll go ahead and take a 10 minute break until 3:00 o'clock. A 10 minute break. I thank everybody -- so, yeah, we'll make it a brief one but 10 minute break. Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Welcome back. Sue, we'll go ahead and just make sure we have a quorum whenever you're ready. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. I understand we have everybody in listening mode and in the speakers room on the line listening now so I just want to confirm with the court reporter that we're now on the record.

REPORTER: I am, go ahead.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. I'll do a quick roll call.
Sarah Creachbaum, Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Hi, Sue, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Great.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: Present.

Ms. Detwiler: Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ms. Boario: Present.

Ms. DETWILER: Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

Mr. Schmid: I'm here, Sue.

Ms. DETWILER: Thank you.

BIA, Glenn or Gene.

Mr. Chen: Yes, so this is Glenn Chen. I'll continue to represent Gene this afternoon. Thank you.

Ms. DETWILER: Okay. All right, thank you.

Public Member Pitka.

Ms. PITKA: I am here.

Ms. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

Ms. DETWILER: And Chair Anthony Christianson I heard you on, so it looks like you have seven of eight members online right now.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and get started with the next proposal. Thank you.
MS. DETWILER: Okay. That will be Wildlife Proposal WP22-30 and 31 and that will be Brian Ubelaker.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Good afternoon, again, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. For the record, Brian Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist with OSM. I'll be presenting you a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-30 which was submitted by Michael Adams of Cooper Landing and WP22-31, which was submitted by Chugach Regional Resources Commission. This analysis begins on Page 994 in your meeting books.

These proposals request to extend the length of the moose hunting season in Unit 15 from September 20th to September 25th. The proponents state the Federal subsistence season should not be more restrictive than the State hunting season which is currently open five days later than the Federal season and would allow for more opportunity for participation by Federally-qualified subsistence users.

In 2014, establishment by the Federal Subsistence Board of a cow moose hunt in Unit 15C. In 2015 the Board of Game aligned all Federal moose seasons in Unit 15 to September 1st through the 25th with the harvest limit of 50-inch plus or four or more brow tines. They also established a non-resident general season in Unit 15C at this time. Then in 2019 the Board of Game changed harvest limits to 50-inch plus or three or more brow tines. They also established a general season hunt in 15B and a resident any bull draw permit at the same time.

Federal management objectives for the moose population in Unit 15 include in sub-Unit 15A to maintain a post-hunting bull/cow ratio of 25 to 100. In sub-Unit 15B west to maintain a bull/cow ratio of 20 to 25 to 100 for maximum hunting opportunity. In 15B east to maintain a bull to cow ratio of 40 to 100 for maximum harvest of large antlered bulls. And in 15C to maintain a bull to cow ratio of 20 to 25 to 100 for a healthy productive population.

Units 15A and C were under intensive management from 2012 to 2017 when the population objective in Unit 15A at that time was 3,000 to 3,500 with a sustainable harvest of 180 to 350 animals. Unit 15C's population objective was the same at 3,500 but
with a harvest goal of 200 to 350. In Unit 15A bull to cow ratios have been above State management objectives since 2012 but for the same timeframe population estimates have been below management objectives. In Unit 15B there's been no population census since 2001 but all metrics indicate the population is increasing. Unit 15C has a bull to cow ratio at or above the management objective and has been since 2002.

Moose harvest in Unit 15 has been increasing since harvest restrictions were lifted for 2013. Federal harvest has averaged 12 moose per year over the last five years which equates to 4.4 percent of the total harvest. Since the establishment of the cow hunt in 2014 cows have averaged 27.2 percent of the Federal harvest.

Another alternative considered was the same as for the last proposal, WP22-28 and 29. It was put forth by the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and they suggested to shift the start date from August 10th to August 20th but to maintain the proposed end date of September 25th which would shorten the season by five days but would move the hunt closer to the rut and Federally-qualified subsistence users would still have 12 days at the beginning of the season to hunt without competition from sport hunters.

If this proposal were to be adopted, the resulting extension of moose season would allow more Federally-qualified subsistence users greater access to the resource. It would also align Federal and State closing dates.

Therefore, OSM's conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-30 and take no action on WP22-31.

Thank you. And I would be happy to answer any questions anyone may have.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that. Now we'll take any public comment that you may have received. Thank you.
MR. UBELAKER: Yes, Mr. Chair. There was one letter submitted in opposition to this proposal, the same as for the last. It was from the Kenai Chapter of Safari Club International and they were opposed because they do not support any rural determinations or subsistence priorities for the road-connected Kenai Peninsula.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, very much. And with that we'll open it up to the public online, Operator, if anybody online would like to be recognized at this time it's their time to speak.

OPERATOR: Thank you. If you would like to make a public comment please press, star, one. One moment please.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: We do have a public comment from Darrel, your line is open.

MR. WILLIAMS: Hi everyone. Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. My name is Darrel Williams with Ninilchik Traditional Council. We oppose this proposal for a lot of the same reasons that we opposed Wildlife Proposal 22-20. And there's also a little bit of a problem because if we didn't approve the C&T for 15C for Cooper Landing, it would be really difficult to be able to approve a bag limit in 15C with Proposal 22-30. And our concerns are the same reasons I stated before and just for the sake of saving some time for everyone I'd just like to refer to the comments made earlier.

I will say that the analysis in this proposal looks like it's aggregated. Where we're talking about Units 15A, B and C, other than just Unit 15C, which is the large part of the discussion that we had on Wildlife Proposal WP22-20.

So with that said we oppose the proposal. Thank you.

OPERATOR: Once again.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
OPERATOR: .....to make a public.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Anyone else Operator.

OPERATOR: .....please press star, one. I'm showing no further public comment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll move on to the tribal consultation process.

MR. LIND: Mr. Chair, I think.....

MS. DETWILER: Actually.....

MR. LIND: .....it's Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yes it is, thank you, Orville. Regional Advisory Council recommendation.

MS. STICKWAN: Council supported with modification of seasons as August 20 to September 25th. The Council voted to align the same season in -- to Unit 15 that it previously recommended for Unit 7 for the same reasons, to provide a preference to the subsistence user. Adding hunting opportunities during a time when temperatures are better for meat preservation. Climate change in recent years is a factor in considering extensions of seasons to accommodate users of the resource.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on. Orville, Tribal Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Federal Subsistence Board members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison. During the consultation period we had no comments or recommendation on that proposal. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Orville. We'll move on to the State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes this proposal as Federal subsistence regulations already provide a significant advantage for Federally-qualified users over non-Federally-qualified users. Federal subsistence regulations for Federally-qualified users in GMU 15 are currently less restrictive than State hunting regulations. The hunting season for Federally-qualified users in GMU 15 begin 22 days before the general State season and 12 days before the bull only season for 15A and B. Additionally, Federally-qualified users have a late season that runs from October 20th to November 10th for an additional 22 days, which means that Federally-qualified users currently have over a month of additional time to hunt moose not available to non-Federally-qualified users under the State's hunting season. Federally-qualified users also have a more relaxed bag limit as they're able to harvest a fork antlered bull or a cow during the first portion of the season and a fork bull during the late season in addition animals available for harvest under State regulations.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-30/31 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. That opens up the floor for Board discussion or deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, that opens the floor for Board action on this proposal.
MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you.....

MS. BOARIO: I move to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-30 as modified by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council to shift the moose hunting season in Unit 15 to August 20th to September 25th to align with the Unit 7 season and to take no action on Wildlife Proposal 22-31. Following a second I will explain why I support my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MS. BOARIO: My justification is based on the comments given by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the OSM analysis. Recently moose harvest in Unit 15 has decreased during the early part of the season because of warming climate conditions that makes meat spoilage more likely. Extending and shifting the moose hunting season in Unit 15 until later in the fall will continue to provide for a subsistence priority and at the same time enable harvest when the weather is more suitable for preservation of meat. In addition, aligning Unit 15 moose season with the Unit 7 season will create less user confusion.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any further Board discussion, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll call for the question.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Roll call, please, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. The motion is to adopt WP22-30 and 31 as modified by the Southcentral Council. And I'll start with the maker of the motion.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.
MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene -- sorry, BIA, Glenn Chen.

MR. CHEN: Yes, Sue, the BIA votes to support with the modification provided by the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council and for the reasons articulated by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BLM, Tom Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, the Forest Service supports the proposal as modified by the Southeast -- I'm sorry, Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and with the justification provided by Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thanks.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports as modified.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hi. I support as modified and as articulated. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.
MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Charlie.

Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support as specified.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. And the motion passes unanimously, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and move on to the next wildlife proposal and the Staff. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. That would be WP22-35 and that would be Tom Plank presenting that one.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: Hello, Sue, this is Pippa Kenner with OSM. I think we are on WP22-36, am I correct.

MS. DETWILER: I have 22-35.

MS. KENNER: Okay, great, thank you. When there was nobody coming on I thought maybe it was -- thank you very much.

MS. DETWILER: Yeah, I think the presenter for this one is Tom Plank and he may be having trouble getting on but maybe Lisa Grediagin knows what the situation is.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, through the.....

MS. DETWILER: So maybe -- go ahead, Lisa.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, through the Chair, this is Lisa Grediagin. And Tom is trying to unmute his phone. Yeah, I just got a message he's going to call back in. Yeah, and others are saying they're having -- and I think that happened to Pippa earlier too, where she had to call back in to get off of mute. So, Mr. Chair, if you're able to just give
him a couple minutes to call back in.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You bet Lisa.
I got stuck in another room too, thank everyone for
their patience today. It's valuable that we get all
the insight. Thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Mr. Plank, your line is
open.

MR. PLANK: Thank you. Hi, this is Tom
Plank, can you hear me now?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Tom, we
can hear you loud and clear, you have the floor.

MR. PLANK: I do apologize for that.
So I'll go ahead and get started here. Hello, Mr.
Chair, and members of the Board. My name is Tom Plank
and I am a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of
Subsistence Management. I will be presenting a summary
of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-35 submitted
by Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission requesting to
establish a may be announced season in Unit 11 with a
harvest limit of one bull by Federal permit in an .804
analysis. And this begins on Page 1012 in your books.

The proponent states their
understanding is that recent scientific research and
assessment has determined that the Mentasta Caribou
Herd population has stabilized at a lower level than
that envisioned by the now outdated Mentasta Caribou
Herd Management Plan as necessary in order to resume
subsistence caribou hunting opportunities in Unit 11.
The proponent further states that understanding --
their understanding is that Nelchina bull caribou
collared data demonstrates that the Nelchina bulls
currently frequent the Mentasta Herd such that a bulls only
caribou hunt during times that the Nelchina Herd is
present in Unit 11 would not affect the biological
status of the Mentasta Caribou Herd since a distinct
Mentasta cow caribou would not be open to hunting.

The proponent would like to resume the
continued subsistence use of caribou in Unit 11 within
the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory. Note that this
analysis only considers the establishment of a season
and a harvest limit. The .804 analysis may be conducted at a later time if a caribou hunt is open in Unit 11.

There has not been a Federal season for caribou hunting in Unit 11 for most of the last three decades and have been few proposals to establish one. In 1993 a proposal was adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board to close Federal public lands to caribou hunting in Unit 11. The combination of low caribou numbers and low recruitments were direct indicators of a continuing conservation concern which warranted protection of the small Mentasta Caribou Herd population under ANILCA, Section .815, Section (3). In 1996 the Federal Subsistence Board adopted a proposal with modification to reopen the caribou season with a total quota of 15 bulls only to residents of the seven communities identified consistent with the requirements of ANILCA Section .804. Based on the objectives of the Mentasta Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan being met for calf production and recruitment of the Mentasta Caribou Herd despite a declining population. In 1998 the Federal Subsistence Board adopted a proposal requesting to close all caribou hunting within Unit 11 due to the calf recruitment being below the management objective.

Caribou in Unit 11 have been part of the Nelchina Caribou Herd or Mentasta Caribou Herd as these ranges of these herds overlap as you can see on Map 2 on Page 1018. These two herds are considered distinct herds because females calve in separate areas although the herds mix during some breeding seasons. The Nelchina Caribou Herd calving grounds and summer range lie within Unit 13, the Mentasta Caribou Herd and the primary herd within Unit 11 calves and summers within the Upper Copper River Basin and the northern and western flanks of the Wrangell Mountains within the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The Mentasta Caribou Herd declined from an estimated around 3,200 caribou in 1987 to an estimated 495 caribou in 2021 as you can see on Table 2 on Page 1022. The fall population estimate in 2020 was almost 1,200 caribou, however, the increase from 2019 is not explained by calf production the previous year but may be due, in part, to the Nelchina Caribou returning late from the winter grounds or may have failed to migrate back to the traditional calving grounds. The number of caribou observed during the 2021 Mentasta Caribou Herd survey
dropped back down to levels observed in 2019. The Mentasta Caribou Herd population has remained stable at relatively low levels since 2004 as evidenced by low calf survival. The bull/cow ratio, total bulls observed as fluctuated between 1987 and 2021 which is also on Table 2 on Page 1022. While Nelchina bulls have wintered within the range of the Mentasta Herd there is limited ability to predict the extent or frequency of mixing between the Nelchina and Mentasta bulls and is impossible to discern whether the harvest of a bull would be from either herd.

The Nelchina Herd is a popular herd to hunt and experiences heavy harvest pressure due to its road accessibility and proximity to Fairbanks and Anchorage. Over 95 percent of the Nelchina Caribou Herd harvest occurs in Unit 13, and between 2001 and 2019 harvest from the Nelchina Caribou Herd under State regulations has averaged around 2300 caribou a year. Federal regulations for Units 12 and 13 combined averages 421 caribou per year. Harvest for the Mentasta Caribou Herd in the 1996 and '97 season was one caribou with 15 permits issued and in the 1997 and '98 season 12 permits were issued by not harvest was reported for caribou.

There has been no reported harvest for the Mentasta Caribou Herd since 1998 as there has been no State or Federal season for caribou in Unit 11, however, some incidental harvest of Mentasta caribou may take place during winter hunts targeting the Nelchina Caribou Herd and areas of herd overlap in the adjacent units.

If this proposal is adopted the additional harvest is unlikely to have a biological affect on the Nelchina Caribou Herd, however, impacts to the Mentasta Caribou Herd are a conservation concern and deters from the principles in the Mentasta Caribou Herd Management Plan. The Mentasta Caribou Herd has fallen short of any metric that would support opening a season for the past 25 years. Current low population numbers are indicative of poor recruitment and low survival rates among cohorts within the population and an increased opportunity for incidental harvest could further exacerbate a decline of population as currently of conservation concern. If this proposal is adopted it would allow a harvest of caribou when the Nelchina Caribou Herd migrates through Unit 11 providing
increased subsistence hunting opportunities. Based on participation and harvest of Federally-qualified subsistence users from 1996 to 1998 when a very limited open Federal caribou season occurred in Unit 11, harvest from a Unit 11 caribou hunt may be expected to be very low, however, if the Nelchina caribou are easily accessible along the Nabesna Road hunting efforts and harvest could be higher than was experienced in 1996 and 1998.

The OSM's conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-35 with modification to delegate authority to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Superintendent to announce season dates, harvest quotas, and number of permits to be issued, to define harvest areas and to open and close a season via delegation of authority letter only. Timing of this migration differs from year to year and the number of Nelchina bulls that mix with the Mentasta Caribou Herd within Unit 11 also varies year to year. The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve superintendent would have the needed data to make these announcements year to year as timing and numbers vary.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. I'd be happy to field any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, moving on to any public comment received.

MR. PLANK: This is Tom Plank with OSM. And there were no written public comments received.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. We'll go ahead and move on, Operator, if anybody online that wants to be recognized at this time, it's their opportunity for the public comment period for this agenda item.

OPERATOR: Thank you. If you would like to make a public comment please press, star, one. One moment please.

(Pause)
OPERATOR: We do have a public comment.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Our comment comes from Karen Linnell, your line is open.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

For the record my name is Karen Linnell, Executive Director for the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission, which represents eight tribes and two ANCSA Corporations located within the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory.

AITRC submitted WP22-35 to restore at least some of the Federal subsistence hunting opportunity for caribou on Federal public lands in Game Management Unit 11. We've been unable to hunt caribou in Unit 11 since the '90s because of the Mentasta Caribou Herd size was in decline. The Mentasta Herd continues to be in a predator pit, such that the herd has stabilized at a much smaller size than originally desired within the management plan. AITRC requests involvement in a new planning process to revise this plan but in the meantime requests that limited Federal subsistence caribou hunting be allowed for bull caribou during times when the Nelchina Herd is present in Unit 11.

Allowing a limited Federal hunt for those Federally-qualified users who are customarily and traditionally most dependent on resources in GMU 11 and the caribou there can sustainably be provided when Nelchina caribou are present in Unit 11 with bulls only limited hunt. We ask for a bulls only hunt as the Mentasta Herd is only genetically distinct through the mitochondrial DNA, which is passed from mother to offspring. Such take would be sustainable due to the high bull/cow ratio with a 10 year average of 82 to 100 bulls observed in the Mentasta Herd.

AITRC has heard some concerns from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game about allowing take of Nelchina caribou in Unit 11 and given their stated desires to take the allowable harvest prior to the herd crossing the Richardson Highway and entering into GMU 11 is no wonder they are opposed to this proposal.
users should not be prevented from opportunity to hunt Nelchina caribou in Unit 11 when they are present, in fact, ADF&G should not be attempting to take all of the harvestable surplus prior to the herd migrating into GMU 11. Allocation determinations among Alaska residents living within the range of the Nelchina Herd may need to be taken to the Board of Game to ensure reasonable opportunities for State subsistence uses are being provided to all Alaskan residents, however, that is a State of Alaska concern. The Federal Subsistence Board, the concern before the Federal Subsistence Board is whether Federal subsistence uses by Federally-qualified users of caribou in Units 11 and 12 are being provided for, if they're being provided a Federal priority by existing caribou allocations to the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

AITRC supports the amendment proposed by OSM. And we look forward to the passage of this proposal and working with the in-season manager, Wrangell-St. Elias SRC, the RACs, OSM, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in partnership to restore some customary and traditional harvest, opportunities and to develop a revised Mentasta Caribou Management Plan to better restore the herd to abundance and ensure continuation of priority State subsistence uses and reasonable opportunities for State subsistence uses and other uses of caribou in Unit 11.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'll take any questions if you have any.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen. Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate you taking the time to call in today, Karen.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Operator, is there anybody else online who would like to be recognized at this time.

OPERATOR: I'm showing no further public comment.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator. We'll move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

MS. STICKWAN: Council supported with OSM modification to delegate authority to Wrangell-St. Elias superintendent to announce season dates, harvest quotas, number of permits, define harvest areas and open or close seasons via a delegation of authority letter only. The Council supported this proposal which would allow a may be announced season. This would have an opportunity for local people to get caribou and spread the hunt into Unit 11 which could possibly alleviate some of the hunting pressure in Unit 13. Delegation of authority to open and close the hunt helps conservation of Mentasta bulls because Mentasta and Nelschina Herds will be monitored and the in-season monitor open -- manager open or close the harvest based on when the Nelschina Herd is in the area. The opportunity benefits Federally-qualified subsistence users.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Is there any other Regional Advisory Council members who would like to make a comment at this time.

OPERATOR: This is the Operator, we did have another comment come in.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. At this time we'll entertain the public comment, we'll recognize you, you have the floor.

OPERATOR: Barbara Cellarius your line is open.

MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you. Can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Barbara, you have the floor.

MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My name is Barbara Cellarius and I'm the Cultural Anthropologist for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve but what I want to present to you is the
comments from the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. And so the Wrangell-St.Elias National Park -- sorry, I'm sort of rushing here. The Commission advised -- the National -- Wrangell-St.Elias National Park on subsistence issues, it's a citizen's advisory committee.

And so the Wrangell-St.Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission supported WP22-36 with the OSM modification plus an additional modification to establish a working group on the Mentasta Caribou Herd Management Plan with tribal involvement in the plan. The proposal would provide for subsistence opportunity when Nelchina are present in Unit 11. Considerable concern was expressed about potential harvest of Mentasta caribou and the delegation of authority to the superintendent would provide important tools for managing a hunt. Updating the management plan is similarly important for ensuring agreement on the consistent cooperative approach for management.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for taking the time to call in today, Barbara. Any other Regional Advisory Councils wish to speak to this proposal.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair, this is Lisa Grediagin. The Eastern Interior Council also had a recommendation on this proposal and I think Sue Entsminger is on the call but is having trouble being heard.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm not hearing her come through there Lisa. And if.....

MS. GREDIAGIN: Yeah, perhaps the Council Coordinator could provide that recommendation then for the Eastern Interior Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that, yes, we'll hear from that Council Coordinator at
this time. Thank you, Lisa.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: So this is Sue Detwiler. So that would be either Sue Entsminger, and if she can't join then Brooke McDavid, the Council Coordinator would have those comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I think they're calling on Council Coordinator now, Sue, so thank you.

MS. MCDavid: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke McDavid, Council Coordinator for the Eastern Interior RAC. I'm sorry, it appears that both myself and Sue Entsminger, the Chair, are having issues with our phone lines. I'll just give a shout out to Sue, Sue Entsminger, are you on the line.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I am on the line, can anyone hear me.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, you have the floor, go ahead.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank you. Yeah, Sue Entsminger, Eastern Interior RAC Chair. Our Council supports WP22-35 with the OSM modification, with additional modification to reinstate and update the Mentasta Caribou Management Plan.

The Council stated that passage of this proposal, as modified by OSM would be beneficial to subsistence users and additional modification recognizes the importance of updated caribou herd management plans for current and future subsistence needs.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you Regional Advisory Council Chairs for sharing the position of your Board. We'll go ahead and move on to tribal liaison. Orville.
MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Again, Native Liaison for OSM. The consultations,
there were no comments or recommendations made on WP22-
35.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, 
Orville. We'll go ahead and move on to the State 
liason, Mr. Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the 
record, ADF&G opposes to what could amount to the 
harvest of animals from the Mentasta Herd at this time. 
Any additional Federal harvest from the Nelchina Herd 
should only be done by cooperative inter-agency 
agreements to ensure the sustainable harvest of 
Nelchina caribou is maintained. Unrestricted State 
harvest for two existing Federal hunts account for five 
to 34 percent of Nelchina harvest annually with a most 
recent annual five year average of 10 percent of total 
harvest. Federal harvest varies widely due to changes 
in migratory patterns, weather conditions, and hunter 
effort from year to year. Federal harvest for the 
existing two hunts is impossible to predict which makes 
Nelchina management and the goal of achieving, but not 
exceeding, harvestable surplus annually incredibly 
difficult. There are already existing hunts in place 
that allow for the take of any harvestable surplus 
associated with the Nelchina Herd and there's no 
harvestable surplus available for the Mentasta Herd. 
This hunt would unnecessarily complicate hunt 
administration, adding in an additional highly variable 
Federal harvest opportunity with no restrictions or 
framework for inter-agency coordination, would only add 
to the complexity and difficulty currently associated 
with co-management of this important subsistence 
resource.

Harvest when Nelchina caribou are 
present in GMU 11 will require constant monitoring of 
the two herds to ensure Mentasta Herd collars are not 
present in the hunt area and may not be feasible in 
years when GMU 13 State and Federal subsistence 
opportunities have achieved available harvest before 
the herd migrates into GMU 11.

Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll move on to the InterAgency Staff Committee recommendations.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. For this proposal the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. We'll go ahead and move on to Board deliberation and discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, the floor is open for Board action.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Park Service you have the floor.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to approve Wildlife Proposal 22-35 to establish a may be announced caribou season in Unit 11 with the OSM modification. And if I get a second, I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. Approval of Wildlife Proposal 22-35 would increase hunting opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users when the Nelchina Caribou Herd migrates through Unit 11. My support for the proposal as modified by OSM is consistent with recommendations of the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council and the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission. Delegation of authority to the Wrangell-St. Elias superintendent to announce season dates, harvest quotas, and the number of permits to be issued, to
define harvest areas and to open and close the season
would facilitate timely in-season management and ensure
the long-term conservation of the Mentasta and Nelchina
Caribou Herd.

Although updating the Mentasta Caribou
Herd Management Plan is outside the scope of the
proposal, Park Staff are aware of the need and the
Eastern Interior RAC's request for updating the plan.
Regional Office Staff will be available to support that
effort when ongoing analysis, long-term monitoring data
are complete and results can be used to inform the plan
development.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
Board discussion, questions, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA. Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll do roll call again on this, Sue, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to
adopt WP22-35 with the OSM modification. And I'll
start with Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service for
her vote.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The
National Park Service supports Wildlife Proposal 22-35
to establish a may be announced caribou season in Unit
11 with the OSM modification.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.
MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports in deference to the Regional Advisory Councils and in addition to for the reasons articulated by National Park Service in their motion.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BLM, Tom Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, the Forest Service supports in deference to the Southcentral and Eastern Interior RACs and as justified by the Park Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Dave.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Rhonda may be having trouble getting into the speaking line.

I'll move to Charlie Brower, Public Member.

(Telephone interference)

MR. BROWER: Support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Charlie.

Rhonda, was that you?

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Chair Anthony.....

MS. PITKA: Hi, can you hear me.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. Yes, Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: Oh, great. Okay, I support
in deference to the Regional Advisory Councils as modified by OSM. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you, Rhonda.

Finally, Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Motion passes unanimously.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Sue. Thank you everyone for that one. We'll go ahead and move on to one more WP proposal today and I'll call on Sue to call on the next order and Staff. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. This will be the last wildlife proposal for the Southcentral region, that is WP22-36 and that will be presented by Pippa.

MS. KENNER: Thanks, Sue. Now can you hear me?

MS. DETWILER: Yes.

MS. KENNER: Wonderful. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, and members of the Federal Subsistence Board and Regional Advisory Council Chairs.

The analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-36 is part of your supplemental meeting materials. I'll just stop a beat here and make sure you have that in front of you.

(Pause)

MS. KENNER: So my name is Pippa Kenner and I'm an Anthropologist at the Office of Subsistence Management in Anchorage. The topic of community harvest systems and alternative permitting systems in Federal regulations are the focus of this proposal. These systems are intended to provide some flexibility in harvest regulations to make legal the activities of super harvesters in rural communities. You're going to hear more about this during this short presentation.

Proposal WP22-36 was submitted by the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission also known as AITRC and requests to codify temporary special actions
that expire June 30th, 2022. These proposed changes are necessary to fully implement the AITRC community harvest system for caribou and moose in Units 11, 12, and 13. The regulations in this proposal are the result of extensive work by people at AITRC working with a group of people at Federal agencies. Specifically Proposal WP22-36 would codify existing temporary regulations by:

1. Allowing community members to opt out of this community harvest system thereby retaining their individual harvest limits.

2. Allowing designated hunters as part of the community harvest system.

3. Defining the geographic boundaries of eligible communities as the most recent census designated places established by the U.S. Census Bureau.

4. Specifying that harvest reporting will take the form of reports collected from hunters by AITRC and submitted directly to the land managers and the Office of Subsistence Management, which replaces the need for Federal registration permits, joint State/Federal registration permits or State harvest tickets.

5. Setting the harvest quota for the species in units authorized in the community harvest system as the sum of individual harvest limits for those opting to participate in the system and, finally:

6. Adding moose and caribou in Unit 12 to the community harvest system.

The OSM preliminary conclusion that was presented to the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Alaska Councils was to support Proposal WP22-36 with modification to just clarify the regulatory language. However, at its fall 2022 meeting the Southcentral Alaska Council, at the request of AITRC, recommended a further modification which was to restrict the community harvest system in Unit 12 to that portion that lies within the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory instead of all Federal public lands in Unit 12.

Additionally, at its fall 2021 meeting,
the Eastern Interior Alaska Council tabled this proposal until its winter meeting that occurred last month in March 2022. The Eastern Interior Alaska Council requested OSM and AITRC develop language to further modify the proposal before the Council would make a recommendation. Specifically, the Council wanted a description of what lands in Unit 12 would be included in the Ahtna community harvest system and a description of any changes to the framework describing how the hunt is administered. In response, OSM added an addendum and presented it to the Eastern Interior Alaska Council at its winter meeting last month in March 2022. OSM writes an addendum when an OSM conclusion changes from the OSM preliminary conclusion that we presented to the Councils, and our conclusion has changed and I'll describe it to you now.

The addendum begins on Page 16 of the analysis.

So in response to recommendations made by the Councils at their fall 2021 meetings, the addendum recommends the Federal Subsistence Board support this proposal, WP22-36 with two additional substantial modifications.

1. Is to modify a provision in Units 11, 12 and 13 so that participants in the community harvest system may not designate another individual to harvest on their behalf any species for which they have registered within the community harvest system but may serve as designated hunters as the proponent, AITRC, clarified was their intent at the Eastern Interior Alaska Council's meeting in fall 2021.

   And, 2. To specify that the community harvest system in Unit 12 will be implemented only on Ahtna Traditional Use Territory in Unit 12, instead of all Federal public lands in Unit 12.

   This modification was recommended by the Southcentral Alaska Council in response to AITRC's request at its fall 2021 meeting.

   However, we have learned that area descriptors in codified Federal regulations should be geographic features identifiable on the landscape. And thus, the language in this addendum is OSM's best reflection of AITRC's intent. So this map is Figure 2
on Page 20 of the analysis. The map shows the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory in Unit 12 overlaid with the regulatory area described in the addendum. The Ahtna Traditional Use Territory is west of the thick blue line, the OSM proposed area is in diagonal striping or cross-hatching. So AITRC Staff reviewed this addendum with OSM Staff after the fall 2021 Council meeting cycle concluded and indicated that they concurred with this modification but that the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory could be better described.

Continuing with Council actions on this proposal, at its winter meeting last month, the Eastern Interior Alaska Council recommended a further modification. The Council recommended that the Tok River Bridge on the Tok Cutoff Road better reflects the northern boundary of the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory than what OSM proposed. So this is Figure 3 on Page 24 is a map showing this area in Unit 12 in green diagonal striping or cross-hatching, and it was recommended by the Eastern Interior Alaska Council. The Eastern Interior Alaska Council Chair will be presenting its recommendation to you after we hear public comments on this proposal.

So thank you, Mr. Chair. This is the end of my presentation and I will try to answer your questions.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, did you drop off the line?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm on here. I was calling for the next agenda -- maybe I'm not getting picked up, or broken up here.

MS. DETWILER: Yeah, we're having troubles with the phone today. Pippa just finished giving the analysis and it was the time for any Board questions and if not then she could also give the summary of written public comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I was calling for public comment, thank you Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.
MS. KENNER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record this is Pippa Kenner. No public -- written public comments were received for this proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And now we'll go ahead and open up the line, Operator. If there's anyone, now is the time for public comment on this agenda item.

Thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: If you would like to make a public comment please press, star, one. One moment.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Our first public comment comes from Barbara Cellarius, your line is open.

MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, it's Barbara Cellarius. I'm with Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Preserve but presenting comments on behalf of the Wrangell-St.Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission.

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission supported WP22-36 with the OSM modification plus an additional modification to limit the land in Unit 12 to that portion of Unit 12 within the Ahtna Traditional Use Territory. The additional modification was represented by representatives of the Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Thank you for calling. Any other public online Operator.
OPERATOR: Yes, we do have another public comment from Karen Linnell, your line is open.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. In regards to the proposed changes made by Eastern Interior RAC, I think there was some misunderstanding. While we had agreed to the -- the ending point ending at the Little Tok River where it meets the Tok Cutoff and the farthest north point in -- and then going to Noise Mountain, from there the rest of Unit 12 got left out and that includes all the hunting off of the Nabesna Road, and so we have a different descriptor that we would like to suggest, or include. It includes the recommendation from the Eastern Interior RAC for the lands along the Tok Cutoff, Federal public lands in Unit 12 within the Tok and Little Tok River drainages, south of the Tok River Bridge and east of the Tok Cutoff Road, and then from there where it intersects with the Wrangell-St.Elias boundary within the Ahtna Traditional Territory east of this boundary would extend based on existing Unit 12 moose harvest area in Federal regulations -- currently in Federal regulations, specifically, following the lands -- the following lands would be included:

That portion of Unit 12 within the Nabesna River drainage west of the east banks of the Nabesna River up stream from the southern boundary of the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, i.e., the Unit 12 portion of the RM291 hunt area, and that portion of Unit 12 that is east of the Nabesna River and south of the Pickeral Lake Winter Trail running southeast from Pickeral Lake to the Canadian Border.

I do want to stress and state that we have conducted weekly harvest reports although for this community harvest, however, since late October, early November there has not been any caribou within GMU 13 or on Federal lands for any allowable harvest. This year as in several of the past years the caribou have not returned to Federal lands in Unit 13 for quite some time, and actually the snow this year is so deep that they haven't returned at all. They're still way back in the mountains from what I saw this last weekend and I was out on that Unit 12 section at the end of Nabesna Road this weekend. So I just want to stress that we -- AITRC places great importance on Western science in addition to indigenous knowledge, and this includes accurate and timely harvest reporting.
But I have the language here and I worked with Barbara Cellarius with the Sub -- the Subsistence Coordinator at Wrangell-St.Elias to come up with this language to include those portions that were mistakenly left out at the Eastern Interior RAC meeting.

It's hard to see and make decisions on the maps that are provided by OSM when there are no landmarks on there, including the road or any of the river systems so that we can see it. All we have is a color swatch and it's very difficult to make decisions on that type of data. Had the Chair, Sue Entsminger, seen the Nabesna Road she would have known that people hunt in that area and it's just difficult to do and I would encourage OSM to provide better quality maps on this. And I would have hoped that OSM would have contacted AITRC with this modification that Eastern Interior RAC proposed, it would have been really helpful.

And, again, this is -- I'm listening to you folks, and the inability to connect and the -- and be on this meeting, you can see the frustration -- or feel the frustration that we've been experiencing over the last two years in not being able to meet in-person and/or look at the same map at the same time. With technology and things and Teams, and Zoom, and all of this, it seems like there would be a better way to share information with folks. I know some communities don't have the bandwidth but it would be nice to be able to look at the same maps because how I describe something may not be the same way that the Federal Agency Staff would describe those areas.

I can email this to you or Barbara Cellarius can email it to you. She has it. We worked on it together today. So thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Karen.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair. This is Lisa, I'd like to respond to Karen if that's okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Lisa.
This is Lisa Grediagin for the record. I'd just like to say on behalf of OSM, as far as that Unit 12 boundary goes for the community harvest system, we support AITRC, whatever boundary they would like for that area as long as, you know, you use the geographic features. So if you're able to, yeah, send that to us to make sure and I actually agree, I think there was a little confusion and misunderstanding at the Eastern Interior Council meeting, a lot of it due to teleconference issues, and also that OSM is short on map-making capacity right now, but that's something we would agree could be improved on in the future.

So, again, yeah, I'd thank the Chair and Ms. Linnell for the comments, on behalf of OSM. Thank you.

I will get you that description in an email right now.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you.

MS. LINNELL: Thank you, Ms. Grediagin. I will get you that description in an email right now.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there anybody else online that would like to be recognized at this time, Operator. Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was wondering if we can request the National Park Service to send each of the Board members a map so we could briefly see what was explained by Karen from AITRC. And, in addition to, if they could differentiate between what was agreed upon yesterday in that forthcoming map, hopefully, and what is recommended by OSM, I would appreciate that, before we take an action on this proposal.
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Gene, thank you for that. Sue, is that something we can take care of through the Park Service. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, we can delay action on this proposal while we try to get those maps and get them out to the Board members.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. With no objection from the Board, can we just move this order of business and this proposal to later in this, maybe tomorrow, come back and revisit this, or to another meeting time that we determine the situation.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue Entsminger, Eastern Interior RAC. Could I just add a little bit here.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, go ahead, Sue, you have the floor.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thank you, very much. I have to share and agree with Karen about several points and the maps is one because the Nabesna Road was left off the map, which is a very important part of seeing what's in Unit 12 because it doesn't really show in these maps, it's very, very tiny and very hard to discern. And I will say that Karen attended our Eastern Interior RAC meeting and agreed with us when she testified about the Unit 12, that Tok River Bridge -- she said Little Tok but it's not the Little Tok, it's the Tok -- the -- Big Tok we call it, the Big Tok River Bridge on the Tok Cutoff. So that's a very discernible place to put on a map and actually their -- their -- boundary of the AITRC -- or I mean the Ahtna Traditional area is very similar there.

And I just wanted to say that -- just wanted to reiterate the whole problem with teleconferencing and all of this has been very difficult to really do a good job but -- and I also wanted to mention how frustrating and how confusing things get. The Subsistence Resource Commission took this up and both myself and Gloria are on that and it got so confusing that there were four in favor, one no and three abstentions during that meeting. So I think that's important for the Board to know that. And
tomorrow whenever you guys get all your maps, if I can
give our position that would be great.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for
that Sue. Any further discussion, any other RACs or
comments from the Board.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Sarah Creachbaum,
National Park Service. We are prepared to produce a
map that we could get to all members by tomorrow and
also wanted the Board to know that we do have Karen's
specific language within our motion ready to go today
so we should be ready to act by tomorrow if everybody
has an opportunity to look at the map for their comfort
level.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Gene, you
have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
just wanted to clarify something. It's not necessarily
a comfort level but I think it's unreasonable to expect
the Federal Subsistence Board to act upon something if
we have not seen it or not had time to digest it yet at
all. So I would agree to act upon this at a later date
during this meeting, or tomorrow morning or such, but I
think we have to have ample time to be exposed to what
is being proposed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. So
at this time what I'll do is maybe we can table this to
a time to be determined tomorrow. How about time to be
determined tomorrow, after lunch.

MS. PITKA: So that would be a deferral
until tomorrow after lunch.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue
Entsminger again.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Sue.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I still have more information that I would like to provide from the Eastern Interior, can I do it when you guys take this up again.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, we'll pick up this conversation right here at public testimony and Regional Advisory Council conversation so we can continue to deliberate as we get new information. We'll pick this up with that understanding, if we get a second to the motion.

MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay, thank you. I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So I'm seeking a second for the deferral until tomorrow after lunch.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service would second if that was a motion but as I understood it BIA moved to defer until we've had an opportunity to digest the maps and have all the information in front of us and would take this up tomorrow afternoon. That would be my second.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Dave.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. So we'll go ahead and just -- without opposition to the motion.

(No opposition)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no opposition we'll just defer this until tomorrow after lunch until a time to be determined, 1:30-ish. And so we'll go ahead at this time, Rhonda -- it looks like Rhonda has to go. So Rhonda, appreciated you today and good luck on your flight -- have a safe flight.

Sue, so that moves us on to the next agenda item.
MS. DETWILER: Yes. So that, for today anyway, concludes the Southcentral Region 2 proposals. The next one would be the Kodiak/Aleutian proposals but all of their proposals are on the consensus agenda so that would then bring us to the Bristol Bay proposals and that -- the first one would be WP22-39, which would be Tom Plank presenting.

MR. PLANK: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Tom Plank, and I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management. I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-39 submitted by ADF&G starting on Page 1035 in your meeting books.

The proponent requests to create specific harvest regulations for Alaska hare in Units 9 and 17 stating that the once abundant Alaska hare in Units 9 and 17 are now at a very low density and has a patchy distribution throughout Bristol Bay and the Alaska Peninsula. The Alaska hare is sometimes called jackrabbits, Tundra hare, or Arctic hare but the Alaska hare is called the Tundra hare in Federal regulations, but Alaska hare appears to be the dominant term in contemporary usage including in State regulations. The Alaska hare is a different species than the snowshoe hare despite being lumped together in Federal regulations and to help kind of alleviate some of that confusion, please see the comparison table on Page 1040 for the two hares.

The Board of Game adopted a proposal in 2019 establishing a specific State harvest regulation for Alaska hare in Unit 9 for November 1st through January 31st and a limited harvest of one hare per day with a maximum of four per season. ADF&G adopted Proposal 24 when the Board of Game during their January 2022 meeting to include Unit 17 with identical Alaska hare management structure as Unit 9. ADF&G has also submitted Wildlife Proposal 22-45 to create specific harvest regulations for Alaska hare in Units 18, 22 and 23.

Alaska hares are among the most poorly understood game species in Alaska. Anecdotally, abundance is well below historical levels throughout the range of the species. The last known erupted population on the Peninsula occurred in the winter of 1953 to '54 and the Alaska Peninsula and Becharof
Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge ranks the Alaska hare as the Refuge's No. 3 prioritized resource of concern as an ecologically significant endemic species vulnerable to the influence of climate change. In 2018 ADF&G initiated a multi-year study to evaluate movement and mortality as well as long-term capture techniques.

Little is known about the harvest of Alaska hare. Household harvest surveys indicate that it is harvested throughout the communities of western and southwestern Alaska.

If this proposal is adopted the Alaska hare season will be reduced, although hunters will still have the opportunity to harvest hares during winter when they are out engaging in other subsistence or recreational activities. The change in daily and overall harvest limits may be effective in reducing harvest, which could translate into an improvement in the conservation status of these populations.

Any positive effects these changes have on the Alaska hare populations will benefit subsistence users in the long-term despite the immediate reduction in subsistence opportunity.

The OSM conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-39 with a modification to modify the definition of hare in Federal regulations to include Alaska hare.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. I'd be happy to field any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Does that conclude the Staff analysis?

MR. PLANK: It does.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none we'll go ahead and take any public comments received.

MR. PLANK: And, again, this is Tom
Plank with OSM and there were no written public comments for this proposal.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any -- anybody can hear me?

MS. DETWILER: Yes, Tony, you're on.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, sorry, I got cut off there I guess. Operator, anybody online for public comment, this is their time.

OPERATOR: Yes, if you'd like to make a public comment please press, star, one.

(Pause)

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

OPERATOR: I am showing no public comments at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator, we'll go to the RAC. Thank you.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

REPORTER: I think somebody needs to mute their phone, please. Not you Tony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we were calling for the RAC Chair.

MS. MORRIS LYON: This is Nanci Morris Lyon with the Bristol Bay RAC.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Chairman Christianson. Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supported WP22-39 with modification to change the season closing date to March 31. The
Council notes that the number of Alaska hares being seen in recent years has decreased and they appreciate the effort to be attentive to the population. The Council stated that Alaska hare is a winter resource and that as winters are starting later in the years, an extension of the proposed season is reasonable. And I'm not sure why it's in this justification but also we have other closures that would align with March 31st typically our caribou hunters are out and also hunt hare if the opportunity arises, and that's the closure for our caribou so that's why that date was chosen over the one that had been previously offered. And I believe that concludes the just -- the Bristol Bay Subsistence Council's recommendation.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue Detwiler. In addition to Bristol Bay region, the other Regional Advisory Councils who may wish to weigh in may be YKDelta region, Western Interior, and Seward Peninsula if any of them are online.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So any other Regional Advisory Councils, if they want to speak at this time.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, Sue, at this time we'll just go ahead and move on to Orville, Tribal Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank.....

MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, this is Robbin.

MR. LIND: .....you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Robbin, go ahead.

MS. LAVINE: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, we are also looking to hear from Kodiak/Aleutian Chair, Della, and then Western Interior Chair Jack Reakoff.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you. I just wasn't hearing anything on my end, it keeps sounding like I'm dropping the call there or something when I talk. So thank you, Robbin, we'll wait for the other Chairs at this time.

Thank you.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you.

MR. REAKOFF: So, Mr. Chair, this is Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead.

MR. REAKOFF: Western Interior Regional Council supports the proposal. And so we -- we feel that climate change is one of the drivers of this decline, rain on snow events that's caused the decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is also causing hardship for tundra dwelling animals, including Alaska hare.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. Next Chair.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, can you call on the next Chair, please.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, sorry, Mr. Chair. I was actually looking at the wrong proposal line when I went through the list of potential Council Chairs that would speak. So for this proposal, WP22-39, it -- I think -- let's see you've heard from Bristol Bay and Western Interior and the only one left would be Kodiak/Aleutians. And that would be Della Trumble, I'm not sure if she is still on or not.

MS. HONIG: Mr. Chair. This is Leigh Honig, Council Coordinator.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.
MS. HONIG: Della may have had to have stepped away this afternoon so I am prepared to read their recommendation if you would like.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So does that conclude the Regional Advisory Councils?

MS. HONIG: Mr. Chair, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. HONIG: Okay. For WP22-39 the Kodiak/Aleutian recommended they were opposed to this proposal due to a lack of biological data and population estimates. No new information has been presented since last Board cycle. Sporthunters should be limited first before subsistence users. Hares are an important subsistence resource in the region.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other Regional Advisory Councils.

MS. LAVINE: Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. I -- we are having a hard time hearing you, you're sounding a bit muffled, but I do -- I did hear that you are asking if there are any other Chairs on the line and I do believe that Western Interior Chair Jack Reakoff may have something to add. Thank you, Jack, you have the floor.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I can hear you, so Jack you have the floor. Thank you, Robbin.

MR. REAKOFF: I don't have my notes before me on that one, Robbin, if you can clue me in on that. I'm going through my recollection, I didn't get our justification on that proposal.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do understand that the Western Interior deferred Wildlife Proposal 22-39 to the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin.
MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jack, you have the floor.

MR. REAKOFF: Yeah, we did deliberate the proposal, we discussed the proposal, we almost took action on it. It was my recollection that we were going to take action but I see that we deferred. But I do not have my notes before me on that proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Jack. Any questions from the Board for Regional Advisory Councils -- any other questions, comments, deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. Hearing none we'll go ahead and move on to Orville. Tribal Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the consultation session August 19th there were no comments or recommendations on Wildlife Proposal 22-39.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. We'll go ahead and ask the State Liaison.

MR. BURCH: Mr. Chair, this is -- for the record this is Mark Burch with the Department of Fish and Game. Ben Mulligan, our Deputy Commissioner had to step away for a moment and I'll provide the position of the Department of Fish and Game.

The Department of Fish and Game supports the proposal. As the population of Alaska hares is being investigated it has been found that the population is such that -- is at such a level that these restrictions are warranted.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Mark. Any questions for the State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on to the ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine. The ISC submitted the standard comment for Wildlife Proposal 22-39. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Any questions for ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none I'll open the floor for Board deliberation or questions, comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, the floor is open for Board action on this proposal.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service moves to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-39 as modified by the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council to establish specific seasons and harvest limits for Alaska hare in Units 9 and 17 with the season end date of March 31. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I intend to support my motion to establish specific seasons and harvest limits for Alaska hare in Units 9 and 17. The analysis presents sufficient evidence for the need to establish specific regulations for Alaska hare in these units distinct from those for snowshoe hare. Recent observations and local knowledge indicate a reduction in the amount of Alaska hares seen over recent years. Reducing the amount of harvest is a biologically appropriate means of aiding population recovery while we await the results of the study from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
The longer season proposed by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council accommodates winters starting later in their region but still maintains the annual harvest limit of four hare per year which will help achieve the desired management and biological impact for the species which is to reduce overall harvest while still providing subsistence opportunity, and at the same time it should not disturb them during their late spring mating season.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any Board discussion, comments, questions.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair, this is Lisa Grediagin.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Lisa, go ahead.

MS. GREDIAGIN: I would just like to clarify for the record whether or not the Board is including the OSM modification for the definition change. My understanding is this is a somewhat necessary housekeeping administrative change since we're creating a season for a species that currently isn't defined in Federal regulation so I'm -- I'm -- I recognize this also could be addressed under WP22-45, which also addresses Alaska hare for different units but I wanted to just clarify that for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that, Lisa. Any clarification for Lisa by the maker of the motion.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, Fish and Wildlife Service. Yes, that was the intent to include the OSM definition and season and bag limit information.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you for that clarification.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Board comments, questions or clarification.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. All in favor of this motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Motion carries unanimously. That's how the Chairman goes when he starts getting tired and so I think what I'm going to do, guys, I know it's only a quarter to 5:00 here but I think I'm going to call it for the day so we could start fresh in the morning on non-agenda items and then we could get on a fresh proposal. That way we're not starting off the morning in the middle of the business.

MR. BROWER: Sounds good.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So I'm going to go ahead and adjourn this meeting until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m., and everybody have a good evening. We'll come back and reconvene starting with where we just left off.

Thank you.

MR. SCHMID: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PELTOLA: Good night.

MR. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

(Off record)
CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATE OF ALASKA

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter of Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 13th day of May 2022.

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Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22