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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PROCEEDINGS

(Teleconference - 4/14/2022)

(On record)

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Operator. I just want to check and make sure, Tina, are you recording this now, court reporter.

REPORTER: Sue, I am. Go ahead.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. Okay. Well, this is Sue Detwiler, Assistant Regional Director for the Office of Subsistence Management. I'm -- this is day three of the Federal Subsistence Board 2022 to 2024 wildlife regulatory meeting and I'm just going to go through a roll call here to see who we have online.

Starting with Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

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

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Sarah.

BLM. Thomas Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: Good morning everyone. Tom is present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario

MS. BOARIO: Good morning, Sue, and everyone. I am on.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Good morning, Sue, and all. I am here.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Dave.

BIA. Gene Peltola.
MR. PELTOLA: Good morning, everyone.

BIA is on.

MS. DETWILER: Great.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Good morning, I'm on.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning, Rhonda.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Not on yet.

Chair Anthony Christianson, are you on.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Okay, so we're still waiting on members Charlie Brower and Anthony Christianson. I'll move on to legal counsel, Department of Interior Regional Solicitor's Office. Ken Lord, are you on.

MR. LORD: Good morning.

MS. DETWILER: Good morning.

USDA Office of General Council, Jim Ustasiewski.

(No response)

MS. DETWILER: Liaison to the Board, the 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.

Regional Advisory Council Chairs. Starting with Region 1, Southeast, Don Hernandez.

MR. HERNANDEZ: I am here.
MS. DETWILER:  Good morning, Don.

Region 2, Southcentral.  Gloria Stickwan, Vice Chair, standing in for Greg Encelewski. Gloria, are you on?

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER:  Region 3, Kodiak Aleutians, Della Trumble, are you on.

MS. TRUMBLE:  Yes, good morning.

MS. DETWILER:  Good morning, Della.

Bristol Bay, Nanci Morris Lyon.

MS. MORRIS LYON:  Good morning, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER:  Good morning.

YKDelta, Ray Oney.

MS. PATTON:  Good morning, Sue and everyone. This is Eva.  And I will be presenting on the YKDelta RAC's behalf if Ray is not able to connect. No phone lines are going through yet in Alakanuk yet today. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER:  Okay, thank you, Eva.

Western Interior, Jack Reakoff.

MR. REAKOFF:  Jack Reakoff's here. Good morning.

MS. DETWILER:  Good morning.

Seward Peninsula, Louis Green.

MS. PILCHER:  This is Nissa Pilcher, Council Chair [sic] for the Seward Peninsula RAC. I still don't believe Louis will be able to join us today. I will be representing him instead.

MS. DETWILER:  Okay, thank you, Nissa.

Region 8 Northwest Arctic, Thomas
Good morning, Sue. This is Council Coordinator Brooke McDavid. Chairman Baker will not be available this morning.

Okay, thank you, Brooke.

Region 9 Eastern Interior, Sue Entsminger.

This is Brooke McDavid again. Sue will be joining us later today.

Okay, thank you.

And North -- North Slope, Gordon Brower.

Good morning, again. This is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator. And our Chair Gordon Brower will be joining us a little later this morning for the North Slope region proposals. Thank you.

Thank you, Eva.

So we are still missing Public Member Charlie Brower and Anthony Christianson, Chair, are you on.

(Pause)

Good morning, everybody. Can you hear me now Sue.

Yes, good morning. Ton, we just finished going through the roll call and we have eight -- or seven of 8 members. Charlie Brower has not signed on yet but other than that we have seven members online.

Thank you, Sue. I was stuck in that one room.

(Laughter)

I could hear you guys but you couldn't hear me. So welcome
everyone. Welcome to the Federal Board meeting here this morning. We'll go ahead and get started since we have a quorum and we'll hope that Charlie can join us soon. This is the third day of our Federal Board meeting and we hope to have a productive day and get through most of the agenda that we can today.

We'll start this morning off with public testimony on non-consensus agenda items. And so if there's any public that would like to speak to non- -- I mean non-agenda items, sorry not non-consensus, non-agenda items, this is the time. There are agenda items that will be available for discussion later but this is for items for the public that may not be on the -- or I mean topics that may not be on the agenda. So at this time we'll go ahead and open up the floor for any public comments on non-agenda items.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: And to ask a question, please press star, one. Please ensure that your phone is unmuted and record your name clearly when prompted and to withdraw your request please press star, two. Again, that is star, one to ask a question or comment.

MR. BROWER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.

(No comments)

MR. BROWER: Hello.

(No comments)

MR. BROWER: Hello.

(Pause)

REPORTER: Hi Charlie, I can hear you.

MR. BROWER: Okay. Okay, I'm online.

REPORTER: Yes, yes you are.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Charlie, this is Sue Detwiler. The Chair may have dropped off or may be on mute but we were just waiting to see if there were any
public comments on non-agenda items.

OPERATOR: You have a question or comment from Bill. Your line is open.

MR. SHERWONIT: Hi. Thank you. I'm Bill Sherwonit. I guess this is actually related to an agenda item but if I could just have a (indiscernible - breaks up) I'm just kind of popping in for the meeting -- and I'm interested in addressing Proposals 22-46 and 56, and I guess my question is looking at the online, what you've covered so far, I guess I would just like to confirm or not that No. 46 will likely be taken up this morning. That's my question. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Maybe Sue or Lisa, you can answer that for him. Thank you.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay, this is Lisa. I'm not hearing Sue so I'll jump in. Lisa Grediagin for the record. My understanding is he's asking if WP22-46 will be taken up this morning, and, you know, it's hard to give a definitive answer on when the Board will take up specific proposals because they're just going in order and it's hard to know how long some proposals will take. But it seems pretty likely, given the order of proposals, that that one will come up this morning. But it's definitely on the non-consensus agenda so the Board will be considering that proposal, you know, individually, and there will be a time for public testimony on that one. But to be able to give an exact time on when the Board will be addressing that proposal is, you know, beyond the scope of my authority.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa.

OPERATOR: Next question comes from Robert, your line is open.

MR. JEWELL: Hi, Robert Jewell, Cordova. I'm one of the co-sponsors for subsistence fishing on the Copper River, Cordova, myself and my co-sponsor are at work so we're not going to be able to attend but I wanted to make a comment about the last
comments made. Currently, a Board Member spoke up, Sue
Entsminger, about coming down here and no one wants
this and I would totally disagree. The person cherry-
picked. When we had our conference call with them we
said we would show them everything, they never
contacted us, never reached out and I'm just really
frustrated. I'm curious why all these special
interests get priority over rural Alaskan residents to
obtain subsistence fish. I'm sorry I couldn't call in
during the proper time but I just wanted to get my
comments stated.

Thank you all for what you're doing.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Appreciate you taking the time to call in.

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

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
thank you, Operator, appreciate it. Sue, or Board is
there any information sharing this morning before we
get started with the agenda, this opportunity for the
Board to bring up anything for -- discuss anything
before we get started with the next proposal.

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

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

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, I don't know if the
last speaker is still with us. I believe it was Mr.
Jewell and I'm not sure whether he was aware that that
action that he was referencing will be taken up by the
Board. It's near the tail end of our agenda, as well
that was 21-10, I believe. But there may be another
opportunity to comment on that before the proposal is
actually deliberated on.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Dave, for that clarification and point. Thank you.

All right, hearing no more Board
discussion or information we'll go ahead, Sue, and
we'll call on the next order of business for wildlife proposals today and call on the Staff to provide the analysis.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. We're in the Bristol Bay non-consensus agenda items, wildlife proposals and closure reviews so we are on WP22-40 and that will be presented by Robbin LaVine.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board. For the record my name is Robbin LaVine and I'll be presenting the analysis for WP22-40. It begins on Page 280 of Volume I of your meeting materials. If you will recall this was pulled from the consensus agenda.

Proposal WP22-40 was submitted by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and it requests that Federally-qualified subsistence users be allowed to use a snowmachine to position wolves and wolverines for harvest on Federal public lands in Units 9B, 9C, 17B and 17C provided the animals are not shot from a moving snowmachine.

The regulatory history is important for understanding WP22-40. So I'm going to apologize in advance if it's rather lengthy. Again, this is really critical for you to understand all the various different working parts of this proposal.

In 2016 Wildlife Proposal 16-48 requested that Federally-qualified subsistence users be allowed to use snowmachines to position a caribou, wolf or wolverine for harvest in Unit 23. The Board adopted the proposal with modification to allow this method of harvest on BLM land only as the regulatory language for this agency does not specifically prohibit the use of snowmachines to position animals for hunting. The Board also noted at this time this harvest method is allowed on some State managed lands. In 2017 Wildlife Proposal 18-24 requested pretty much the same thing as 16-48, that Federally-qualified subsistence users be allowed to use a snowmachine to position caribou, wolves and wolverines for harvest in Unit 17 provided the animals were not shot from a moving vehicle. The same proposal, 148, was submitted to the Board of Game. During its fall 2017 meeting, the Bristol Bay Regional
Advisory Council opposed 18-24, however, in February 2018, the Alaska Board of Game adopted Proposal 148 with modification limited to the taking of a caribou only short from a stationary snowmachine with further clarification describing exactly how the snowmachine may be used for assistance, and I'll read that language in just a minute. During the April 2018 Federal Subsistence Board meeting, the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council requested Proposal 18-24 be taken off the consensus agenda and some public testimony was received in support of 18-24. The Board deliberated the proposal on record and rejected it, citing concerns over a lack of clarity and consistency among existing regulations. In 2020, the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council submitted Proposals WP20-26 and 20-27. Wildlife Proposal 20-26 requested that Federally-qualified subsistence users be allowed to use a snowmachine to position wolves and wolverine for harvest on BLM managed lands only in Units 9B, 9C, 17B and 17C. Proposal 20-27 also submitted by the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council requested a unit-specific regulation for Unit 17 allowing use of a snowmachine to assist in the taking of a caribou and allowing caribou to be shot from a stationary snowmachine using the regulatory language adopted by the Board of Game on the aforementioned Proposal 148 back in February of 2018. That regulatory language read:

In Unit 17 a snowmachine may be used to assist in the taking of a caribou and caribou may be shot from a stationary snowmachine. Assist in the taking of a caribou means a snowmachine may be used to approach within 300 yards of a caribou at speeds under 15 miles an hour in a manner that does not involve repeated approaches or that causes a caribou to run. A snowmachine may not be used to contact an animal or to pursue a fleeing caribou.

During the April 2020 Board meeting, the Board took up Proposal 20-27 discussed and adopted it. The Board then considered Proposal 20-26, the wolf and wolverine proposal. The Board deferred Proposal 20-26 and suggested further consideration of the proposal by the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council working group to, and here's the direction:

1. Expand the analysis to include all Federal lands in Units 9B, 9C, 17B and 17C, so not just BLM lands only.
2. Identify specific language that may reduce complexity between State and Federal regulations, and;

3. Anticipate and address regulatory conflicts between the proposed regulatory language and agency-specific regulations.

The working group met several times via teleconference. At the February 2021 Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council meeting, the working group reported to the Council they were in agreement to expand the analysis to include all Federal lands in the units and not just BLM lands, but did not request a -- a suggest in specific language. Upon the working group recommendation the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council submitted this proposal, WP22-40 for the 2022 regulatory cycle. However, the working group met again in May and suggested further clarifications of the term, position, using the same regulatory language as proposed in WP20-27, the caribou proposal. And at the fall 2021 Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council the Council developed their recommendation accordingly. You can find the Council recommendation on Page 295 of your meeting materials.

Other notable events include that the same proposal was submitted to the Board of Game by the local AC. Proposal 23 suggested the use of snowmachine to position wolves or wolverine for harvest in Unit 17 only provided they are not shot from a stationary snowmachine. The Board of Game took up this proposal in early 2022 but took final action after the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council held their winter meeting.

Currently the wolf population in Units 9 and 17 is believed to be stable. Less is known about the resident wolverine population and this change in regulation could result in increased biological vulnerability.

The OSM preliminary conclusion -- or actually the OSM conclusion is to support Proposal 22-40 with modification to utilize the same regulatory language as Wildlife Proposal 20-27 and to include all Federal public lands in Unit 17. The modification should read in both Unit 9 and 17, unit-specific regulations:
On Federal managed lands a snowmachine may be used to assist in the taking of a wolf or wolverine and a wolf or wolverine may be shot from a stationary snowmachine. Assist in the taking of a wolf or wolverine means a snowmachine may be used to approach within 300 yards of a wolf or wolverine at speeds under 15 miles per hour in a manner that does involve repeated approaches or that causes the animal to run. A snowmachine may not be used to contact an animal or to pursue a fleeing animal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm ready for questions.

(Momentary pause)

MS. LAVINE: I would note that once again the materials for Wildlife Proposal 22-40 can be found on Page 280, beginning on Page 280 of Volume I of your meeting materials. Remember this was on a consensus agenda, and I will also note that there were no public -- written public comments on this item.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ms. LaVine. I just got dropped off there but came back on and so did we do the public testimony.

MS. LAVINE: I just got to the point Mr. Chair, -- through the Chair. I just got to the point where I noted there were no written public comments on this proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ms. LaVine. We'll go ahead and move on to open up the lines for any public comment that may be online. Operator, at this time this is when we would make available for anybody who would like to speak.

Thank you.

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

(Momentary pause)
OPERATOR: No questions on the phone at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, appreciate that, Operator. We'll go ahead and move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Nanci Morris Lyon, Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council Chairman. Yeah, this proposal has been a long hard fought battle for us and we thought we had it conquered and then we realized that we were not capturing the intent. So the comments that we have on this proposal at our deliberation that caused us to request it to be moved off the consensus agenda are as follows.

The Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council requests that 22-40 be removed from the consensus agenda and for Board action to be deferred on this proposal. During the winter 2022 meeting the Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council took up WP22-40 stating there were parts of the OSM modified regulatory language that did not capture the Council's intent. Some Council members spoke with hunters from the region. Hunters did not support the proposed regulatory language and expressed concern with the speed parameters and prohibition against hunters making numerous approaches. This regulatory guidance is not realistic for harvesting a wolf. A hunter would not be able to (indiscernible - muffled) traveling at or under 15 miles an hour awhile attempting to take a wolf. By the time a hunter is within 300 yards a wolf will hear you and run. The Council expressed concern that at speeds of 15 miles an hour it is impossible to (indiscernible - muffled) up on a wolf. In order to effectively and efficiently harvest a wolf, a hunter will generally have to make numerous approaches before the hunter is able to harvest a wolf.

WP22-40 could also impact subsistence activities and the subsistence economies. Many hunters sell the hides from wolves and use those funds to purchase fuel to hunt caribou.

The language before the Board will reduce harvest opportunities in the field.

Finally, the Council noted that the
Alaska Board of Game was scheduled to address a similar proposal known as Proposal 23 during the winter 2022 meeting. The Council expressed interest in the Board of Game action on this proposal and expressed support for keeping regulations align on State and Federal land. The Council recognizes the complexity and the widespread ramification the regulation may have. We are asking that the Board defer action on the proposal until more information can be gathered and more user groups can be fully informed and their input considered.

On January 24th, 2022 at the central Southwest Board of Game meeting the Board of Game passed Proposal 23 as amended to include Unit 17 and included language that allows the use of snowmachines to approach within 300 yards of wolf or wolverine at speeds less than 15 miles an hour and prohibited repeated approaches. The Board of Game also expressed intent to define position at the following statewide meeting. On March 7th at the statewide meeting, the Board of Game passed Proposal 271 as amended which removed the restrictions on distance speed and repeated approaches for harvesting wolf or wolverine. The language that the State finally adopted was as follows:

A snowmachine may be used to approach and pursue wolves and wolverines but may not come in contact with live animals.

And that basically concludes the Board's comments for this proposal.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. We'll go ahead and move on to summary of tribal comments and I believe that's you Robbin.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Council.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, sorry, there's more on this one, sorry, I'm just looking at my agenda. Thank you, Jack for intercepting, you have the floor.

MR. REAKOFF: That's fine. So at the fall meeting WIRAC supported WP22-40 as modified by OSM and at the time the Council felt that the refined language recommended by OSM and the working group addressed the Federal Subsistence Board's previous concerns on this issue and was an equitable accommodation of both agency-specific and Federal subsistence regulatory systems. The Council also noted that Unit 19 residents who lived within Western Interior region would be affected by this proposal. But subsequently the Board of Game promulgated Proposal 271 and then the Koyukuk River Advisory Committee met in regards to this proposal and so we opposed it as written. And so the -- with the restrictions of approaching wolf and wolverine at 15 miles an hour, that -- we wanted to see that the caribou regulation was divided out -- that it was adequate for caribou but not for wolf and wolverine harvest and so as Nanci's saying there, the Council's previous comment are now qualified by the State Board of Game action and so at this point we supported the proposal but at this point I would agree with Nanci.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. any questions for Jack.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Regional Advisory Council Chairs like to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Thank you to the two Chairs there and we'll go ahead and move on. Thank you to Nanci and Jack. We'll go ahead and move on to Orville, you have the floor. Tribal Native Liaison consultation.

MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Federal Subsistence Board members. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the August 19th
consultation sessions we did not have no comments or recommendations on this.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MULLIGAN: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Ben Mulligan here for the day. For the record, ADF&G supports the proposal with modification that would align State and Federal regulations. I will note for the record since -- we just checked in yesterday with our Board of Game regulatory specialist and unfortunately we don't have our final regulatory language available for your guys' review for this discussion or else we would have provided that to you to help make your discussion a little easier. My apologies.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll go ahead and move on to ISC comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chair. Again, this is Robbin LaVine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator and the InterAgency Staff Committee Chair. For Wildlife Proposal 22-40 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. That'll open up the floor for Board discussion with Council Chairs and State.

(No comments)

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

MS. CREAMEAU: Mr. Chair, National Park Service.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to defer Wildlife Proposal 22-40 to use snowmachines to position wolves and wolverine in Units 9B, 9C, 17B and 17C. If I get a second, I will explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. During the most recent meeting and today, the proponent asked the Board to defer Wildlife Proposal 22-40 to allow the Council another regulatory cycle to formulate language defining positioning of wolves and wolverine. The Council noted a discrepancy between traditional harvest methods and the OSM modification to allow for the use of snowmachine to assist in the take of wolverine and wolf. In deference to the Council, I intend to support my motion to defer Wildlife Proposal 22-40.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Gene, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BIA's very much in support of deferring this proposal for further clarification of verbiage to be considered by the Board. My question would be, up until what point are we deferring, would it be the winter meeting coming up next winter, or temporarily, I was wondering - although I made the motion to support I also would like to get clarification, possibly an amendment, to at what point we would defer to.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. Any other Board questions or comments.

(No comments)
Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Gene.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to make an amendment to the motion that we defer to the January upcoming winter Board meeting.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Is there concurrence by the maker of the motion?

MS. CREACHBAUM: Yes, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Any opposition from the Board to defer this to our winter meeting.

(No opposition)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no objection to the deferral motion carries to defer this to the winter meeting. Okay, we'll go ahead and move on, Staff, if you'd call upon the next wildlife proposal and the analysis. Thank you.

MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. HOLMAN: Okay. Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Kendra Holman and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. Wildlife.....

MS. GREDIAGIN: Mr. Chair, this is Lisa Grediagin. I'm sorry to interrupt but could you just clarify on the record the vote for WP22-40, I never heard a vote and I'm hearing from other Staff they didn't hear a vote for that one as well.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: When you have a motion on the floor and you second it, if there's no
opposition from the Board then it's unanimous consent that we move forward, for the record. No opposition.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

MS. GREDIAGIN: Thank you for that clarification.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Lisa. We'll get back to the Staff for presentation.

Thank you.

MS. HOLMAN: Okay, Mr. Chair. So this is Wildlife Proposal WP22-41 that was submitted by the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and can be found on Page 300 of your meeting books. This proposal requests that the Federal in-season manager be delegated authority to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits, and set sex restrictions for caribou in all portions of Unit 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A and 19C via delegation of authority letter, which is appendix 1 and can be found on Page 327 of your meeting books.

The proponent states that the summer of '19 and 2020 population estimates of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd was 13,500 caribou which represents a five -- a 50 percent decline from the previous five years and is below the State's minimum population objective of 30,000 caribou. The proponent notes that the 2019/2020 Federal and State seasons were shortened due to conservation concerns. The 2020/21 season was also shortened providing for a bulls only harvest in August and September while the rest of the season remained closed. This request will help to conserve and recover the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and provide flexibility needed to make harvest management decisions in a timely manner. The proponents recognize that the request will reduce harvest opportunity in the short-run but that conserving the Mulchatna Caribou Herd now will increase harvest opportunity in the future. The proponents also state that the -- that harvest of other resources such as moose may increase the response to this proposal.

Until 2014 the Mulchatna Caribou Herd
experienced harvest regulations that had been liberalized and then restricted as a result of dramatic population increases and decreases. In 2015 to 2018 the Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board began liberalizing Mulchatna Caribou Herd regulations. 2019 ADF&G decreased the harvest limit of the RC503 caribou registration permit -- registration hunt permits. This was followed by the Federal Subsistence Board approving a special action request to decrease (ph) the harvest limits for the 2019/2020 regulatory year. This included closing Units 18, 19A and 19B caribou hunting except by Federally-qualified subsistence users with a harvest limit of one bull and delegating authority to Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager to open and close seasons throughout the herd range. This request was approved due to serious conservation concerns for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and support from the affected Regional Advisory Councils and local users. In 2020 ADF&G began liberalizing regulations by announcing a bulls only hunt across the range of the Mulchatna Herd. The Togiak National Wildlife Refuge manager announced an identical Federal hunt in 2020/2021.

The population size and distribution of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. The current range of the Mulchatna Herd is depicted on Figure 1 of Page 306 of your meeting book. The herd primarily occurs in two distinct populations, an eastern segment and a western segment that lives separ -- that has separate -- with separate calving and seasonal areas based on radio collared animals. Mixing between these two subpopulations is low.

The herd peaked at 200,000 caribou in '96 and declined steadily to 18,000 in 2013. Between 2014 and 2016 the herd stabilized around 28,000 caribou. Then most recently in 2019 population estimates indicate the herd has declined to 13,500 which is well below the State's minimum population objective of 30,000. The western's segment's population has declined since 2012 while the eastern segment's population increased between 201 -- between 2014 and 2016 and then declined back to 2012 levels in 2019. Population numbers can be find on Figure 2 on Page 314 of your meeting book.

While the cause of the decline is
unknown, decreased range quality, predation, particularly by brown bears on the calving grounds, ice events, deep snow and harvest pressure may all have contributed to the decline. Given the recent substantial decline to the Mulchatna Caribou Herd population conservation measures are warranted.

Reported caribou harvest has declined in correlation with the caribou population from almost 4,000 to 2,000 -- in 2000 to 28 caribou in the 20/2021 season. Reported harvest numbers can be found on Figure 5 -- in Figure 5 on Page 318 of your meeting and within Table 2 which starts on Page -- also starts on Page 318 of your meeting book.

Household harvest surveys as well as law enforcement information and observations indicate actual harvest is much higher than reported harvest, although the magnitude of unreported harvest is unknown.

While this change may decrease harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users in the short-term, it may help to conserve the Mulchatna Caribou Herd to ensure further harvest opportunities. If this request is approved the Federal in-season manager would be delegated authority to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits and set sex ratios across the range of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. Conservation benefits of adopting 22-41 are uncertain. Delegating authority to an in-season manager to provide management flexibility, which is critical in responding to achieving herd conditions in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Council.

I'd be happy to address any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, did we get any public comment during this proposal.

MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, this is Kendra
Holman again. And we did not receive any written
public comments on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Kendra. And at this time we'll go ahead to move on to
the online. Operator, if there's any public online
that would like to speak to this agenda item this is
their time to do so.

Thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No questions on the phone at
this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank
you. We'll move on to Regional Advisory Council
recommendations.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Mr. Chair, for the
record Nanci Morris Lyons, Bristol Bay Regional
Subsistence Advisory Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have
the floor.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Bristol Bay Regional Subsistence Advisory Council was
in support of WP22-41. The Council agrees with having
one in-season manager for streamlining the process as
well as being responsive to the needs of the caribou
population and the subsistence users.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
other Regional Advisory Council.

MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, this is Eva
Patton on behalf of the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

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

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
Members of the Board. For the record, Eva Patton,
Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta
Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. And, again, unfortunately phone lines in Alakanuk have been down as well as internet. I was able to connect with somebody from Alakanuk and they're communicating with me just within the community. So these are the challenges rural communities face and having meetings by teleconference but I will be providing the Council's recommendation.

And, again, the Council had requested that this proposal moved to the non-consensus agenda to address some further concerns that the Council has with the viability of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and wish to be able to share this concern and potential conservation strategies, both with the Board and with the other Councils within the range of this herd, Bristol Bay and the Western Interior Regional Advisory Councils.

So at their fall meeting in 2021, the Council voted to support Proposal WP22-41 and the Council supports the Refuge manager's delegated authority for flexibility to engage conservation measures as needed to manage the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. The Council is very concerned about the decline in the herd and supports the manager having the ability to open or close the hunt and set harvest and sex restrictions in order to maintain a viable population for subsistence harvest opportunity in the future. The Council requested that the Refuge manager work closely with local communities and include their observations in management decisions for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. People from the villages are always out on the land and observing and have in-depth historical knowledge of this herd over the years.

Further, at the Council's recent winter meeting in March 1st, 2nd and 3rd, the Council heard reports -- updated reports on the status of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and was very, very concerned about, you know, the 50 percent reduction in the herd size and deliberated further about conservation or management actions that they would like for the Refuge manager to consider and for the Board to consider in support of the Refuge manager with the delegated authority.

So the Council had deliberated a request for a five year moratorium on hunting the
Mulchatna Caribou Herd. And, again, because they're very concerned about the dramatic decline of this herd and an incredibly important subsistence resource for numerous communities throughout the range of the herd, and the Council has endeavored to ensure that the herd will be able to recover so it will remain a subsistence resource in the future. And, therefore, the Council is requesting a full closure to any harvest of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd until it rebounds to an established stable population objective of at least 30,000 caribou. And the Council further requests to establish jointly with the Federal Subsistence Board or the Federal land managers a five year moratorium to close to the harvest of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd or until that population objective of that 30,000 caribou has been met in order to help that herd rebound to once again be able to reach a population size that can sustain subsistence harvest into the future.

So the Council's recommending to close all State and Federal lands. They did provide comment to the Board of Game as well. Requesting to close all Federal lands to the harvest of Mulchatna Caribou Herd throughout their migratory range and that includes all portions of Units 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 17C remainder, 18, 18 remainder, 19A and 19B, and to maintain a sex ratio of 30 bulls to 100 cows that would ensure herd productivity and they're asking for continued outreach hunting regulations, closures, education and incentives for caribou conservation measures and improve knowledge of and compliance with harvest reporting requirements.

So, again, as you heard in the analysis, the herd has reduced to approximately half its size in the past few years and as a result of this decline, conservation measures were implemented in the past two seasons by both State and Federal managers. And since receiving management authority, the Togiak Refuge manager in collaboration with Staff from Alaska Department of Fish and Game have determined that there is no harvestable surplus that would allow the herd to grow, and, therefore, the Council is requesting this hunting moratorium in the interest of allowing time for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd to recover and a closure across the entire range of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd is warranted.

A hunting moratorium will help send a
clear message to all communities across the range of
the herd about the dire situation of the herd's
population size and need to work together on
communications and outreach to build support for these
conservation efforts for a sustainable subsistence
harvest opportunity in the future. This Council has
experience with success of a similar hunting moratorium
efforts in the past for moose on both the Lower Yukon
and Kuskokwim Rivers and now those moose populations
have rebounded to provide once again for ample
subsistence harvest opportunity and the Council
believes the same can be achieved for the Mulchatna
Caribou Herd.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the
Board.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
was there any other Regional Advisory Council.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman, this is
Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Advisory
Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
door, Jack.

MR. REAKOFF: So the Western Interior
Regional Advisory Council supported WP22-41. The
Council supports the delegated authority and an in-
season manager to help manage and conserve the herd.
This delegation of authority was initially put into
place by approval of a temporary special action request
submitted by the Western Interior Council and Yukon
Delta Regional Advisory Council. The Council believes
that it should remain in place becoming part of the
codified Federal regulations.

Further comment. The Western Interior
Regional Advisory Council was very concerned about the
Mulchatna Caribou Herd way back in the early-2020. If
you look at the data there, the herd, bull/cow ratios
were going completely into the toilet as far back as
below management objectives as far back as 2000/2001.
That herd got down to one large bull per 100 cow. The herd went into reproductive failure. So that's what happened to the herd. I talked to herders, reindeer herders in Scandinavia, they don't breed reindeer unless they're eight years old for breeding cows and they -- they have 15 cows per one large bull, no six -- I asked them about younger bulls, no, way. This population has been staggering for years. It was starting to recover and through comments from the Yukon Delta Subsistence Staff let the Western Interior Council know that there was exceptionally high harvest of caribou in the winter of 2018/19. Under further investigation we decided that -- had a discussion with the YKDelta RAC, that there was a significant winter harvest occurring and that's where the most recent decline, especially in the western component. We did not deliberate.

Our meeting was before the Yukon Delta's meeting, we were meeting about a week before them, we would have probably went along with this moratorium idea but I can't speak to that. The Council has not deliberated that.

But I do feel that extreme measures of conservation need to be put into place. An in-season manager needs to be given delegation of authority because it's predominately federal public lands and this herd is under -- it's in a real critical condition. It needs to have conservation of -- especially the cow component and large bull component at this time.

So those would be my comments to the Federal Subsistence Board and I would entertain any further questions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. Any other Regional Advisory Councils who would like to speak to this.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chair. Members of
the Board. For the record my name is Nissa Pilcher, I'm the Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Nissa.

MS. PILCHER: Hello. The Seward Peninsula supported WP22-41. The Council supports closing the Mulchatna Caribou Herd to protect the herd until the population is healthy enough to support harvest. The delegation of authority will allow timely decisions to be made to respond to changing conditions of the herd.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other Regional Council who would like to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no more Regional Advisory Councils, we'll go ahead and move on to tribal, Alaska Native Corp comments. Native Liaison.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind. Native Liaison, OSM. There were no comments or recommendation on this.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports giving the State in-season manager the flexibility to manage the Mulchatna Herd by allowing them to open and close the season, announce harvest limits and set sex restrictions. The Togiak National Wildlife Refuge has been a partner in research, monitoring and education when it comes to the land has been a partner towards the longstanding common goal of conserving the herd throughout its range.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the State.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben. We'll move on to ISC comments.

MS. LAVINE: Good morning, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Proposal 22-41 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. That opens the floor for Board discussion with the Council Chairs and State Liaison.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: 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 22-41. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I intend to support 22-41 that requests that the Togiak Refuge Federal in-season manager be delegated authority to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits and set sex restrictions for caribou in all or portions of Unit 9A, 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18 and 19A and 19B via delegation of authority letter. Adoption of this proposal will delegate authority to manage the herd by delegation of authority letter that has been supported by the Western Interior Council, Bristol Bay Council, Seward Peninsula Council. We recognize the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Council's interest in a moratorium to protect the herd for future generations and we share their concern about reduction in the herd size and in response the manager has closed the hunt in 2021 and 2022. The delegation of authority letter provides management flexibility for the Togiak Refuge Manager to continue to work closely with local
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

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

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate the comments provided by the Regional Advisory Councils. The Bureau of Indian Affairs have been very supportive of delegated authority with regard to management of this herd at the field level.

In response to the YKDelta's request for a five year moratorium.

Although it might not specifically be what the YKDelta would be pleased with, although if the Board was to adopt this, it would be well within the purview of the in-season manger, i.e., the Refuge manager of Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, to work at a local level and exercise that delegation of authority to open and close, so something similar could be accomplished. My concern would be that the Board try to tack something on at this juncture that, one that may be inappropriate because it did not go through the public process. Although, specifically, YK's concern, something similar could be accommodated by working with the in-season manger for the herd.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, please, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The motion is to adopt WP22-41. I'll start out with Sara Boario, Park -- Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: The Fish and Wildlife Service supports the motion.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service supports. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hi, I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: Support.
MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Charlie.

Chair Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

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

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue we'll call on Staff for the next WP proposal. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: This should be Wildlife Closure Review 22-05 presented by Kendra Holman.

MS. HOLMAN: Again, this is -- hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Kendra Holman and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. This closure review can be found on Page 1048 of your meeting books.

Unit 9C -- the closure location is within Unit 9C, that portion draining into the Naknek River from the south. Public lands are closed in December for hunting of moose except by Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

The regulatory history for this area. In the 1990s ADF&G emergency orders closed the December antlerless moose in all or parts of the Naknek drainage in Unit 9C. In '92 they proposed that the harvest limit be changed from one moose to one bull in the entire drainage. As a result of this action the Naknek drainage was divided into hunt areas when the December hunts were closed except to Federally-qualified subsistence users. This area draining into the Naknek River from the north and the area that drains into the river from the south. Additionally, this action closed Federal public lands for moose harvest during December except for qualified -- Federally-qualified users. In '95 the fall season was extended and Federal registration permit required during the August -- in 2006 the antlerless harvest was eliminated but a Federal registration permit was required for both fall and winter season. In 2008 a Unit 9 moose working group was established to better understand the conflicts in the region and develop management
strategies and recommendations. In 2011 and 2012 regulations were liberalized as the recommendations on -- on the recommendations of the working group. In 2016 it was determined that the registration permit is required for both fall and winter seasons. To close a -- the closure was reviewed with a determination -- and the closure was reviewed with the determination to maintain status quo.

Since the early 2000 -- 20th Century, the moose of the Alaska Peninsula gradually expanded their range southward. This expansion was accompanied by a dramatic population increase until the 1960s when the population began to decline.

Moose population status and trends in Unit 9 is difficult for several reasons including low moose density and snow and weather conditions are frequently inadequate for surveys. In 1991 the Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuge began conducting aerial surveys of moose. The surveys provided the bull/cow and calf/cow ratios for the total density estimates. Figures 1, 2 and 3 on Pages 1056 and 1057 of your meeting books show this information.

Alaska resident moose harvest in Units 9B and 9C occur by registration permit RM272. The non-resident moose harvest in Unit 9B and 9C occurs under registration RM282. While reported moose harvest can be parsed out by subunit it's not possible to distribute it by hunt area. Therefore, the number of moose reported harvest only within the closure area is not available although reported moose harvest within Unit 9C provides some insight.

In 2020 to 2019 [sic] total reported harvest moose harvest of Unit 9C averaged 29 moose ranging from 16 to 43 moose per year. Between 2010 and 2015 80 to 90 percent of the Unit 9 moose harvest occurred in September. Figure 4 on Page 1058 of your meeting book shows the breakdown of moose harvest in Unit 9C by local and non-local years from 2000 to 2019. Local users is defined as those with a customary and traditional use determination.

If this closure is rescinded, non-Federally-qualified users would be able to harvest moose on Federal public lands within that portion of Unit 9C draining into the Naknek River from the south
in December. It may also result in the increase moose harvest though increase are expected to be small. Moose density within the closure areas below State management harvest levels for moderate density moose population. Moose densities within the closure are very low and the population trend is uncertain. The conservative approach is to maintain the closure until the moose densities increase and the population exhibits an increasing trend.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Member of the Board.

I'd be happy to address any questions.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue, did you drop off the line. Do we need to hand off to Rhonda while you get back online.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: Hello.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: Hi, this is Rhonda, am I taking over now?

MS. DETWILER: I'm not hearing Tony, Rhonda. He may have just dropped off or he's trying to get back into -- back into this room. I think the next step that we were at was written comments or actually Board questions on the Staff presentation and written comments.

MS. PITKA: Okay. So can we get a summary of the written public comments. Thank you for that, Sue, I appreciate it.

MS. HOLMAN: So this is Kendra Holman. There were no written comments received on this proposal.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much. At this time I'd like to open the floor to public testimony. Operator, is there anybody cued up for questions.
OPERATOR: This is the Operator. As a reminder, to ask a question or give a comment or testimony please press, star, one.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: This is pretty funny but actually I thought that I got dropped from the call because I couldn't hear anything after awhile. So it was just Tony and not me.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No questions or comments.

MS. PITKA: If we don't have any public comments I would like to -- Operator, were there any public comments.

OPERATOR: No questions over the phone at this time.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Okay, so we are at Regional Advisory Council recommendations. Bristol Bay.

MS. MORRIS LYON: Thank you, Madame Chair. Nanci Morris Lyon Bristol Bay for the record.

So the Council recommended for original closure that, although local residents desired an antlerless moose season, the Council questioned whether this population could sustain a cow harvest. In order to protect the herd and to provide priority to Federally-qualified subsistence users the Council believed that a bull harvest only should be allowed and that Federal lands draining into the Naknek River from the south should be closed to Federally-qualified subsistence users. The Council believes that this would result in a greater numbers of bulls available for subsistence users and a larger cow base for herd expansion in the future. When the -- then the closure was then put in place and we support maintaining status quo on WCR22-05. The Council believes that there appears to be available moose for harvest in December, however, the population may not be high enough for the elimination of the closure to be sustainable. The Council agrees that maintaining the subsistence priority should continue.
And I'd just like to point out, too, if you look at the graph on Page 1058 we've had some push back in the area, some guided hunters who also use these areas for their hunts. You can see recovery happening, however, it has not completed yet, so we're totally in favor of maintaining this status quo and protecting what harvestable surplus there is for our subsistence hunters.

Thanks.

MS. PITKA: Thank you so much, I appreciate that. Next Regional Advisory Council or was that it.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: I believe that was it, Madame Chair.

MR. LIND: Good morning. Good morning, Madame Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the consultation session there were no comments or recommendations.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, Orville, I appreciate it. Now we are on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of this closure. Current moose population in this area is stable with a density for which there is no conservation concern. In looking at the movements of collared cow moose in the area this indicates that there's enough movement through the trend count areas that multiple bccs should be pooled and that is what we do here at ADF&G. Pooling with nearby Park border and King Salmon River count areas from 2018 to 2020 resulted in counts of 192, 220, 221 respectively, and a density of .8 moose per square mile. Cow/calf ratios were 49, 34 and 22 per 100 cows. This data indicates a stable population of moderate...
density.

There was a proposal at the Board of Game earlier this year and given the data the Board of Game chose to increase the moose season length in GMUs 9B and 9C for resident Alaskan hunters that extended the moose hunt in those units for five days in the fall and 15 days in the winter.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you for your comments. Right now we're at the InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Closure Review 22-05 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much. I appreciate that. We are at Board discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello.

MS. PITKA: Hi, Tony. Right now we're at Board discussion and deliberation on WCR22-05.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Rhonda.

MS. PITKA: I wasn't hearing any so our next step would be Federal Subsistence Board action and now you're online so you can take this over.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Rhonda, appreciate it. Board action is -- the table is open for Board action.

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the Fish and Wildlife Service moves to maintain status quo for Wildlife Closure Review 22-05 which keeps Unit 9C closed to the taking of moose except by Federally-qualified subsistence users. Following a second I will
Moose densities within Unit 9C closure area remain low and the population trend is uncertain. Maintaining the closure as supported by the Bristol Bay Council will continue to provide a conservative approach until moose densities increase continues to provide a subsistence opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, very much. Appreciate that. Any questions, comments or discussion from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.

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

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, motion carries unanimously. Sue, please call on the Staff for the next WP proposal analysis.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So that concludes the Bristol Bay non-consensus items, now we're moving into the YKDelta and we'll start with WP22-44 presented by Tom Plank.

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 WP22-44 submitted by the
Yukon Delta Wildlife Refuge requesting that the fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 be extended from September 1st through the 30th, to September 1st to October 15th, and that a may be announced season be established from December 1st to January 31st with a harvest limit of one antlered bull by Federal registration permit. This is beginning on Page 1063 of your book.

The proponent states that the average moose harvest since 2017 for the RM615 hunt within Zone 2 has been 78 moose, which is below the quota of 110 moose. The proponent further states that extending the season in Zone 2, which is predominately Federal public lands, will allow for additional hunting opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users and the announcement of a may be announced winter season would allow the harvest of any remaining fall quota.

Federal public lands in the Kuskokwim hunt area have been closed to non-Federally-qualified users since 1991. Between 2004 and 2008 the Federal Subsistence Board and State Board of Game enacted a harvest moratorium to promote growth of the Unit 18 moose population. Since 2009 moose harvest in the Kuskokwim hunt area has been managed by quotas. And in 2017 ADF&G and the Yukon Delta Refuge began managing this hunt in two zones. Zone 1 is primarily non-Federal lands and quotas are set by ADF&G. Users can easily access Zone 1 by boat along the main stems of the Kuskokwim River and quotas are quickly met. Zone 2 is primarily Federal lands and the Yukon Delta Refuge sets quotas. Zone 2 is much more difficult to access and quotas are not usually met.

For regulatory year 2020/21 emergency special action request, WSA20-05 extended the season seven days.

Of note, the Alaska Board of Game extended the State season in Zone 2 until October 15th at their January 2021 meeting through adoption of Proposal 7 as amended. The extended close date of October 15th was recently updated and enacted for the 2021/22 season and Wildlife Special Action WSA21-03 was approved by the Board in August 2021 which extended the fall moose season to October 15th in Zone 2 to align in 2021/22 season with the current State regulations.
During the 1990s moose populations in the Kuskokwim River drainage were low and hunting pressure limited growth of the population. The 2004 to 2008 moratorium was effective in establishing a harvestable population and since then the moose population has continued to grow. Currently ADF&G estimates 4,000 moose in the Kuskokwim hunt area which exceeds population objectives. Bull/cow ratios are high as are cow/calf ratios, which indicate a growing moose population.

Since 2011 reported harvest has averaged 183 moose per year, although harvest has increased as the moose population and, therefore, harvest quotas have increased. Federally-qualified subsistence users account for 95 percent of the moose harvested and demand far exceeds moose availability.

As previously mentioned ADF&G and the Yukon Delta Refuge cooperatively manage the Kuskokwim hunt areas in two zones. Prior to adopting a fixed season, quotas in Zone 1 were quickly met and seasons closed early by State emergency order. Under the fixed season, Zone 1 was open for 11 days in 2020 and open for nine days in 2021. However, since 2017 average harvest in Zone 2 has only been 78 moose, which is well below the quota of 110 moose. Harvest from 2019 to 2020 when the season was extended seven days and a harvest increase of 20 percent with 90 moose harvested in 2020. This could be an indication that the season extension was effective for 2020. Zone 2 consists of tributaries to the Kuskokwim River and requires specialized boats to access as well as longer travel times and more fuel. The unmet quota in Zone 2 is likely a function of difficulties in access rather than the lack of need for moose meat.

If WP22-44 is adopted, the moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 would be extended 15 days closing October 15th instead of September 30th and a winter season would be announced if the fall harvest quota was not met. This would increase hunting opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users and could increase total moose harvest in the area. If water levels are too low in the fall to access Zone 2 a winter season could be announced providing easier access via snowmachine which would also address the concerns expressed in WP22-43. Alternatively if the harvest quota is met in the fall then the Yukon Delta
National Wildlife Refuge Manager would not announce a winter season.

The OSM's conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-44 with modification to clarify the regulatory language and to delegate authority to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager to announce the winter season via delegation of authority letter only.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to field any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Did we receive any public comment during this proposal.

MR. PLANK: This is Tom Plank with the OSM again. There were no written public comments submitted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. With that we'll move on to the Operator. Is there anybody online who would like to be recognized at this time to provide public comment for this agenda item.

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

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No questions over the phone at this time.

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

MS. PATTON: Good afternoon -- good morning, Mr. Chair, and members of the Board. This is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and I will be providing the Council's recommendation on behalf of
Chair Raymond Oney.

The YKDelta RAC supports WP22-44.

Moose harvest quotas for Zone 2 of the Kuskokwim hunt area are often not met due to difficulty in reaching upper river tributaries of this area. Extending the fall season may allow for easier access when water levels rise with the fall rains. Also, moose are not moving around as much with warmer temperatures.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MS. PATTON: .....in the early season.

The Council has heard requests from local communities and tribes in this area that an extended season would give hunters a better opportunity to be successful. The winter, may be announced season, will also help subsistence users meet their moose harvest needs if the harvest quota is not met during the fall hunt.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Eva.

Any questions from the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Are there any other Regional Advisory Council Chairs who would like to speak to this.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Advisory Council.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Jack.

MR. REAKOFF: So Western Interior Regional Advisory Council opposed Proposal WP22-43 and we support 22-44. The reason we opposed WP22-43 is access to Zone 1 is easy and the quotas are met rapidly. The Council is also concerned about the really low bull/cow ratios. The Council believes the moose population in Zone 1 can't support additional harvest.

We support WP22-44 because by December -- December 15th, 60 percent of moose have lost their
antlers, timing for the announced hunt should consider this information. The Council supported the proposal, as submitted, to align with the Yukon Delta Regional Advisory Council's recommendation. Western Interior deliberated a winter hunt proposal with the State Board of Game and we were informed by Glenn Stout, Area Biologist for the Koyukuk that 60 percent of bull moose have lost antler by December 15th, and that's a consideration in this winter hunt opening date.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other Regional Advisory Council wish to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Hearing none, we'll move on to the tribal, Alaska Native Corporation comments. Orville.

MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the consultation session there were no comments or recommendations on Wildlife Proposal 22-44.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Orville. We'll go ahead and move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Mr. Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the aspect of the proposal that would align the Federal and State fall moose season but opposes the proposed winter season. We do recognize that the moose population in the Kuskokwim hunt area continues to increase, however additional opportunity for a winter hunt has the potential to increase harvest to a level that would decrease bull to cow ratios quickly and curbing that positive trend in the population.

Thank you, sir.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Ben. We'll go ahead and move on to InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. The InterAgency Staff Committee provided the following comment.

Adoption of Proposal 22-40 [sic] would provide additional harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users through the extension of the fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 from September 1st through 30th to September 1st through October 15th, and a winter may be announced season will be established from December 1st through January 31st with a harvest limit of one antlered bull by Federal registration permit.

The winter hunt will not increase the quota and, instead, will potentially allow for the current quota to be met. Additional harvest opportunity is warranted given the current quota was not met in 2020 and 2021 during the fall moose hunt in Zone 2 despite extending the season into October by special action. Therefore, a winter season was proposed by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge allowing additional harvest opportunity may help to meet the quota in Zone 2, which is primarily Federal public lands and it's difficult -- which is difficult to access and in an area where quotas have not been met.

Residents of the Yukon Kuskokwim region have repeatedly expressed a need for additional hunts. In addition the caribou season has been closed for the last two years in the local area which has placed an additional burden on subsistence users. After the mid-2000 moose hunting moratorium the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service along with partner agencies promised more hunting opportunities once the moose population increased. This hunt proposal is an effort to fulfill those promises.

The InterAgency Staff Committee recognizes the support of this proposal from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council and the suggestion by the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council to consider the timing of the winter, may be announced season, with respect to when moose shed their antlers. The Refuge manager already has delegated
authority to establish an annual quota and to close the season once the quota is met. The fall hunt requires the use of a State registration permit under Federal regulations. The adoption of this proposal would require the creation and issuance of a Federal registration permit for the winter season. Delegating this additional authority to the in-season manager to announce the winter season would provide management flexibility and simplify unit-specific regulations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Any questions for ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, open the floor for Board discussion with Council Chairs or State Liaison.

(No comments)

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

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service moves to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-44 as modified by OSM. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I intend to support my motion to extend the fall moose season in the Kuskokwim hunt area of Unit 18 from September 1 to 30, to September 1 to October 15 and that a may be announced season be established from December 1 through January 31 with a harvest limit of one antlered bull by Federal registration permit. Adoption of this proposal will offer additional subsistence harvest opportunity to Federally-qualified users with more harvest opportunities in Zone 2 of the Kuskokwim hunt area by extending the fall season for easier access when water levels rise with the fall rains. Also moose are not moving around as much with warmer temperatures early in the season. We support
the modification by OSM to delegate authority to the
Yukon Delta National Wildlife manager to announce the
winter season. The manager already has delegated
authority to set quotas. While the Council supported
the proposal as originally submitted without the OSM
modification, the ability of the manager to open a
winter, may be announced hunt, provides a tool for
managers to use to provide additional opportunity for
Federally-qualified subsistence users. A bulls only
hunt will alleviate concern for overharvest of the
population especially when current quotas are not being
met.

This proposal provides additional
subsistence opportunity while taking measures to ensure
conservation when needed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All those in
favor of the motion say aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
unanimously, thank you. Sue, can we move on to the
next one please.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. Wildlife Proposal
22-45 also presented by Tom Plank.

MR. PLANK: Hello, again, Mr. Chair and
members of the Board. For the record my name's Tom
Plank, I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management. I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-45 submitted by ADF&G requesting to create specific harvest regulations for Alaska hare in Units 18, 22 and 23. And this is starting on Page 1094 in your books.

The proponent states that the once abundant Alaska hare in Units 18, 22 and 23 is now at a very low density and has a patchy distribution throughout the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta, Seward Peninsula and Northwest Arctic Alaska -- Northwest Alaska region. The Alaska hare is sometimes called jackrabbits, Tundra hare, or Arctic hare. 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 you can see the comparison chart table on Page 1100.

Federal subsistence regulations for the hares in Unit 18 and 23 have not changed since 1990 when the Federal Subsistence Management Program began. At that time, a year-round season with no harvest limit was adopted from State regulation. Federal subsistence regulations for hare in Unit 22 were established in 1990 and in 1995 the Board adopted a proposal to shorten the season for hares in Unit 22 from July 1st to June 30th to September 1st to April 15th with intent to close the season for hares during the mating, breeding and birthing seasons. ADF&G submitted Proposal 15 and 43 for the Alaska Board of Game's consideration during the January 2020 meeting noting very low densities and patchy distribution of Alaska hares in the units. ADF&G requested the reduction of season and harvest limits in Units 18, and 22 and for consistency the Board of Game adopted an identical management structure in Unit 18, 22 and 23 for the Alaska hare consisting of a harvest limit of two per day with a total of six per season and an August 1st to May 31st season that required hunters to salvage the hide or meat for human usage.

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. 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 surveys -- household harvest surveys indicate that it is harvested throughout the communities of western and the 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 proponent requested a season which would be more restrictive than exist in State regulations. If adopted, as requested, Federally-qualified subsistence users would still be able to harvest Alaska hare in August and May under State regulations.

So the OSM conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-45 with a modification to shorten the season to August 1st to May 31st and to modify the definition of hare in Federal regulation.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to field any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Hearing none, any public comment received during this proposal Tom.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is, again, Tom Plank with OSM. There were no written
comments received for this proposal.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom.

At this time is there any public online that would like to be recognized at this time. This is their time to be recognized for this.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing no public online, I'm going to go ahead and call for a few minute break before we get to the Regional Advisory Council. We'll go ahead and take a few minute break here and reconvene at 11:00 o'clock.

Thank you.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and make sure, Sue, that we do have a quorum and we're ready to get started. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. This is Sue Detwiler. I'll just quickly go through the -- and make sure we have a quorum of the Board members.

Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: I am present, Sue.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BLM, Tom Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: Present.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Present.

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

MR. SCHMID: I'm here, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. CHEN: Hi, Sue, this is Glenn Chen. Gene is just right outside the conference room, he'll be back in shortly.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hi, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: And, Chair Anthony Christianson. It looks like we have seven out of eight on.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and get back to the order of business, we were just concluding public testimony online and now we have a series of RAC that will be up next and so we'll call on the first RAC, you have the floor.

OPERATOR: Okay, this is the Operator, one moment and I'll get us connected.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Eva, are you able to hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. PATTON: Okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and I will be providing the Council's recommendation on behalf of
Chair Raymond Oney.

The YKDelta RAC supports WP22-45 with the OSM modification. The Council supports reducing the harvest limit for Alaska hare due to observed low population levels and lack of biological data for the species. The Council discussed seeing few jackrabbits, which they're called locally in the YKDelta region, referring to Alaska hare, that they see few Alaska hare, jackrabbit tracks anymore in the areas where they used to be abundant and the decline has been a common observation around communities across the YKDelta region. Council members noted that Alaska hare used to be abundant in snares around 30 years but perhaps fast moving snowmachines made it easier to track them down and based on these local observations reducing the harvest limit now is warranted.

The Council requested more data but noted it is hard to study something when it is so scarce and the Council supports the OSM season date and modification so that the Federal season will not be more restrictive than the State season.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Sue, would you call on the next RAC, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. We have four additional Regional Councils that may wish to comment and the next one would be Seward Peninsula.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chair and members of the Board. For the record, my name is Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Council. I'll be speaking on their behalf.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MS. PILCHER: All right. The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council voted to support as modified by OSM. The Council supports this proposal for the conservation of the Alaska hare as the population has been reported as low.

Thank you.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: The next Council would be Western Interior.

MR. REAKOFF: Jack Reakoff, Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. We deferred this proposal to the regions that would have Alaska hare. So I misstated last night last regarding these proposals -- I was cooking dinner, so, sorry -- and that's what the Council decided to do.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Northwest Arctic.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair. For the record, Brooke McDavid, Northwest Arctic Council Coordinator. The Northwest Arctic Council supported WP22-45. The Council noted that they have not seen the Alaska hare in the region recently. People used to teach their young children to hunt them since they were easy to catch. The Council supports maintaining the opportunity to still harvest some Alaska hare when they are available. They are good eating and providing subsistence opportunities to help address food security is important.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: And the North Slope.

MS. PATTON: Good morning, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. And Chairman Gordon Brower is not able to connect at the moment so I will provide their recommendation.

The North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supports WP22-45 with modification to change the harvest limit for Alaska hare to 15 per season and support the longer season as recommended by OSM.

And the Council supported a reduction in harvest and seasons to help conserve the Alaska hare but expressed concern that only six Alaska hares per year is not enough for making traditional cultural
garments like parkas or blankets and the Council considered going from a no limit on the hare to six per year as too drastic of a change, but that that perhaps 15 hares per year would provide for subsistence needs as well as conservation. Hares are an important resource for food security and traditional cultural fur sewing practices. The Council highlighted the importance of making fur parkas, mittens and ruffs, especially for children and elders. March is the optimum time to harvest hare for their fur and making the longer season in the OSM preliminary conclusion as preferred.

The Council did also stress that because Alaska hare are not commonly seen in the North Slope region or specifically around Point Hope in Unit 23 that there is likely confusion between Alaska hare versus snowshoe hare and the Council reiterated the importance of making it very clear that these regulations are targeting Alaska hare only and not the more abundant snowshoe hare. They suggested using pictures and range maps to highlight the differences between the two species so that the local communities aren't unnecessarily restricting harvest of an important subsistence resource where snowshoe hares are plentiful.

And their suggested modifications can be found on Page 1106 requesting the two hare per day, 15 per season, and, again, in support of the OSM modification for a longer season.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, those were the Councils that made recommendations. Thank you.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure whether you have dropped off again or if Rhonda Pitka's on. I think that would move us to the next stage of tribal, Alaska Native Corporation comments.

Are you on, Mr. Chair.

MS. PITKA: I'm on Sue. Let's go to Regional Advisory Council comments.
MS. DETWILER: Oh, sorry, Rhonda, yeah, I think I misspoke. We just finished with the five Regional Advisory Council recommendations and we're ready to go to the tribal corp -- tribal and Alaska Native Corporation comments.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue.

MS. PITKA: I'm sorry, I misheard that also. Okay, tribal and Alaska Native comments.

Orville Lind.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: And I'm back on now too.

MR. LIND: Thank you, Madame Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison for OSM. During the consultation sessions we had no comments or recommendations on that proposal.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Can you guys hear me, Sue?

MS. DETWILER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, I tried to speak a couple of times and you guys weren't hearing me. Thank you. Sorry about that. We'll move on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal and also supports the modification to match the State season of August 1st to May 31st as it still addresses the conservation concerns we have and that local residents have also expressed along the way and while aligning the State and Federal regulations to reduce hunter confusion.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Ben. We'll move on to ISC Committee comments.

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

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. We'll move on to the Board discussion with the Council Chairs, State Liaison.

(No comments)

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

MS. BOARIO: Mr. Chair, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service moves to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-45 as modified by OSM to establish specific seasons and harvest limits for Alaska hare in Units 18, 22 and 23. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.

MS. BOARIO: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I intend to support my motion to establish specific seasons and harvest limits for Alaska hare in Units 18, 22, and 23 in deference to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and Seward Peninsula RACs. The analysis presents evidence for the need to establish specific regulations for Alaska hare in these units distinct from those for snowshoe hare.

Local knowledge indicates a reduction in the amount of Alaska hares over the recent years. Reducing the amount of harvest is a biological appropriate means of aiding population recovery.

The OSM modification to align Federal season dates with State seasons will reduce regulatory complexity and provide subsistence harvest opportunity through the fall, winter and spring seasons. A harvest limit of two per day and six per year will be more effective in reducing overall harvest than shortened seasons.

Finally, OSM's modification to put the definition of hare in Federal regulations will clarify any confusion that may arise from the use of different terms referring to Alaska hare such as Tundra hare.
The YKDelta RAC supports reducing the harvest for Alaska hare due to observed low population levels and the Seward Peninsula RAC supports conservation of the Alaska hare. This population has been reported as low. And we recognize the North Slope Council's request that we make it very clear that these regulations are targeting Alaska hare only and not the snowshoe hare which is more abundant in that region.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Is there any further Board discussion, comments or questions on this.

(No comments)

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

MR. PELTOLA: Question, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go ahead and do roll call on this one, Sue. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. Mr. Chair, the motion is to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-45 as modified by OSM. I'll start with Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports the motion.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Sara.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports for reasons previously articulated in the motion.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.
Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Chair Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support.

MS. DETWILER: Yeah, thank you. So the vote passes -- motion passes with seven votes and one -- one person not present.

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

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. So we're moving out of the YKDelta into Western Interior and the first -- the one proposal is WP22-46 presented by Tom Plank.

MR. PLANK: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Tom Plank, I'm a Wildlife Biologist in the Office of Subsistence Management. I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-46 submitted by the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission requesting that brown bear harvest limits for the
portion of Unit 24B within Gates of the Arctic National Park be increased from one bear to two bears. And this one would be found in your first volume of the consensus on Page 361.

The proponent submitted this proposal because residents have observed brown bear populations growing and believe the harvest to be far below sustainable year -- yield. The Commission states that the proposal would afford Anaktuvuk Pass residents hunting brown bear additional harvest opportunities.

In 2020 the Alaska Board of Game adopted Proposal 72 at their March 2020 meeting to increase the brown bear harvest limit to two bears in Unit 24B under State regulations. The Commission also submitted Wildlife Proposal WP22-56 to increase the brown bear harvest limit to two bears in Unit 26A, that portion within the Gates of the Arctic National Park. Using the extrapolated data from similar habitats and units, the estimated brown bear population for the northern portion of Unit 24 and southern portion of Unit 24 are 450 bears and 180 to 320 bears respectfully. Gates of the Arctic National Park has an estimated density of 33.4 bears per 1,000 kilometers. The units brown bear population is thought to be stable or slowly increasing, however, reproductive output for Gates of the Arctic is among the lowest in Alaska, limited food resources and a short growing season are likely a contributing factors to this pattern.

The three year mean reported harvest is 15 bears, including 14 bears harvested on average in the northern portion of the unit and one bear in the southern portion. 51 percent of the harvest was by Alaska residents. The total estimated harvest has consistently been below two percent of the estimated bear population per year. This harvest rate is well below the State management objective and sustainable harvest rate is estimated at five to six percent of the estimated bear population per year or 39 of 56 bears per year could be sustained for all of Unit 24.

If adopted, this proposal would align Federal regulations within Gates of the Arctic National Park with State harvest limits which would simplify regulations and lead to less confusion for users in Unit 24B. Current harvest rates are well below the State recommended sustainable harvest for Unit 24.
Alaska residents can already harvest two bears in Unit 24B under State regulations. Adoption of this proposal is not expected to have a substantial impact to current harvest levels and should have minimal impact to the brown bear population given the low level of harvest in the area but would increase harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users.

The OSM's conclusion is to support WP22-46.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to field any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Any public comments received during this proposal period.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, this is Tom Plank with OSM. There were three written public comments, all opposing citing concerns over low density and the low reproductive rates of bears in the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The commenters are concerned of an increased potential for overharvest.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Operator, at this time if there is anybody online who would like to speak to this proposal this is the opportunity for them to speak to this agenda item.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: As a reminder if you would like to make a public testimony please press, star, one at this time.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No questions or comments on the phone at this time.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll go ahead and move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman, this is Jack Reakoff, WIRAC.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Jack.

MR. REAKOFF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The Council deliberated this proposal, WP22-46 and the Council states the brown bears are a vital subsistence resource and especially in the Gates of the Arctic Park, especially when the caribou aren't available, and that brown bear population within the Gates of the Arctic National Park is currently quite high and the proposal provides additional subsistence opportunity.

I'm the Vice Chair of the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission and the Gates of the Arctic National Park is an 8.2 million acre Park. And the primary and beneficiaries of this proposal would be Anaktuvuk Pass. When we had a meeting in mid-April of 2019 several people were stating that there are a lot more brown bears around than there used to be and that the caribou migrations have been coming later and later. So there's -- the reason for an addi -- for a two harvest bag limit because not all hunters harvest, there's specific hunters that actually will target brown bears and know how to skin them and how to cut them and like to eat the meat and there's hunters that don't. It's not like everybody in Anaktuvuk's going to be hunting these bears but it did give the -- would give the people who do do the hunting share this meat throughout the community additional harvest opportunity. And so the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission submitted the proposal for the community.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. Appreciate that. And we will take a second here to take a step back, we did have one public comment online and at this time, Operator, if you want to make that line available for them we will give them an opportunity to testify today.
Thank you.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Bill, your line is open.

MR. SHERWONIT: Okay, thank you. My name is Bill Sherwonit. I've spoken to you a couple times. I'm happy to have a chance to talk. I've been following the discussions today. I live in Anchorage, Alaska and I am not a -- I do not practice a subsistence lifestyle, I am not a hunter. However, I would like to speak a few words on behalf of brown bears or grizzlies that inhabit Gates of the Arctic National Park. Although I'm speaking here for Proposal 46, I -- this will also apply for Proposal 22-56. I will not be able to be around but you can apply my comments to that proposal as well.

So I live in Anchorage. I have a long relationship with Gates of the Arctic National Park that goes back to the 1970s. Gates of the Arctic is -- and the Central Brooks Range. I was introduced -- obviously that was before the -- the '70s was before there was a Gates of the Arctic National Park but the Central Brooks Range and then later Gates of the Arctic, are one of the special places in my life. I have a special relationship and -- and one of the -- with the wilderness. And in my -- I've had encounters with grizzly bears a number of times during my times up in the Brooks Range and in Gates of the Arctic National Park and I'm presenting the perspective of someone for whom grizzly bears enliven the landscape and enrich my experience.

So I am speaking in opposition to the expansion of the hunt. And while you folks may not -- or you may wonder what my expertise is or why -- why you should pay any attention to me, I will instead refer to the fact that the InterAgency Staff Committee spoke in opposition to this proposal and I would -- I simply hope that your discussion will include the perspectives of that Committee. While the Fish and Game representative said that there are no problems with -- no concerns about overharvest of the bear, in fact, that Committee did express conservation concerns for this brown bear partly because of the low reproductive rate that was previously mentioned.
I guess my argument is that I -- I think based on the Committee's information and my own limited -- admittedly limited perspective, I don't see a need for an increase in the bear harvest and I would say that the conservation concerns for brown bears or grizzlies within Gates of the Arctic outweigh the need for increased harvest by subsistence residents. I would also point out that Gates of the Arctic National Park has much different perspectives and values than the State Department -- the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. And the fact that the Alaska Board of Game has approved such an increase in harvest is no rational or no good reason for an expansion of the hunt within Gates of the Arctic National Park.

So I guess that's all I have to say for now. I -- I appreciate you hearing the perspectives of someone who lives a long ways away from the area of concern but as I've mentioned, and I really need to emphasize that, though, I don't live there those -- those places and the animals that reside within them have a special meaning to me.

And I thank you for your time.

OPERATOR: There are no further comments or testimonies on the phone at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We were on Regional Advisory Councils -- so, thank you for taking the time to call in today. Are there any other Regional Advisory Councils.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, hearing none we'll go ahead and move on to tribal, Alaska Native Corp comments.

MR. LIND: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Orville Lind, Native Liaison, OSM. There were no comments or recommendations on Wildlife Proposal 22-46.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal. As previously stated, Federally-qualified users can and do currently hunt brown bears in the remainder of GMU 24B under the more liberal State regulations. The Department estimated a population of 450 bears in northern GMU 24 and a range of 320 to 480 in the remainder of the unit. Based on estimated sustainable harvest rates of five to six percent within the GMU a minimum annual harvest of 39 to 56 bears can be sustained for all of the game management unit. The three year mean harvest from regulatory '16 to '18 in northern GMU 24B was 14 bears. There has been one brown bear reported harvested in the southern portion of GMU 24B during the same regulatory period. Based on this harvest history, harvest is not anticipated to increase to unsustainable levels.

And, as always, the Department has a history of supporting the alignment of State and Federal regulations to reduce user confusion.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on to InterAgency Staff Committee.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The InterAgency Staff Committee provided the following comment for Wildlife Proposal 22-46.

While adoption of Proposal 22-46 would provide additional opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users conservation concerns also exist for this brown bear population. Brown bear densities and reproductive output within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are among the lowest in Alaska. Limited food resources and a short growing season are likely major factors contributing to these demographic patterns. Based on a reported subsistence use within the region there does not appear to be a subsistence need to justify doubling the harvest limit from one to two brown bears within Gates of the Arctic portion of Game Management Unit 24B. According to harvest survey reports within Anaktuvuk Pass, only four
to 10 percent of households use brown bears and across Game Management Unit 24, on average, only 15 bears were harvested per year between 2016 and 2018 and, on average, only half the harvest was by Alaska residents.

Reported brown bear harvest has remained consistently low over the last 20 years, not reflecting an increasing subsistence need and low density and recruitment within the brown bear population across GMU 24B increases the risk of overharvest.

The ISC acknowledges the concerns for the conservation of brown bear populations within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. This proposal contradicts the affected land management agency's mission where harvesting predators is not permitted when there is no documented subsistence needs.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chair, this is Chairman Reakoff.

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

MR. REAKOFF: In response to the InterAgency Staff Committee. As I stated, and I appreciate you recognizing that there's only a certain -- certain households that harvest brown bears, four to 10 percent. That's exactly why we submitted this proposal, because those households, with caribou coming later and later every year, those households harvest bears for basically a wider range of households than that. They share this bear meat. The perception is that brown bears are inedible, and that's a very common misperception. Here in the upper drainages of the Koyukuk River and Brooks Range, brown bears dig (indiscernible) referred to as masso, and those roots give -- impart the bear with a very mild flavor and when bears are harvested in late fall they have a really high fat content and fat is very valuable in the subsistence economy. So the reality is there are specific individuals that will utilize the additional bag limit to harvest for the community, they're stating to us that there's actually more bears and so there's more bears arriving. So the bear population is very
healthy, it's not that they're eliminating the bears
around the community for predation control, they're
looking for additional meat resources when they are
having hardship with caribou coming later in the year,
with migrations coming later.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Jack. Any other questions, comments or Board
deliberation, this is the time.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
floor, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
I'm not sure who the author of the ISC comments were
but this comment is specifically for the author of the
comments written. I think an opposing statement is a
very strong statement and I would like to understand
how they came to this position, especially the part, it
says: When there is no documented subsistence need.
So I'd like to get clarification on that terminology
which is utilized and what led up to that statement.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Gene. I think that was a question for Staff.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, BIA for
clarification. That was specifically addressed to the
author, not necessarily the ISC as a whole because the
ISC, as a whole, did not prepare that ISC comment, the
author of the statement, I'd like to have clarification
of how they determined there was no documented
subsistence need.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I was
just getting at, is the clarification for the question
and thank you, Gene. So that would be to the author of
the proposal [sic], thank you. Is someone from the ISC
available to contact the author to answer the question?
Thank you.
MS. LAVINE: One moment, Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine, and I am the InterAgency Staff Committee Chair. If you'll just pause for a moment we may have someone who is able to respond to you.

(Pause)

MS. LAVINE: Regardless of authorship, as you know, the InterAgency Staff Committee comes together and reviews and edits these comments as a group and so I'll just put that out there. And, thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin.

(Pause)

MS. LAVINE: And we do have an ISC member on hand to respond to Board Member Peltola's question. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. JOCHUM: Hello, this is Kim Jochum, ISC member for the National Park Service. I'm happy to respond to the question. So, yeah, we have information or, you know, from -- from the past comm -- community harvest surveys that were conducted over the years in that region so that data is what was used for that comment in the analysis overall. So there's no -- from -- from our understanding and interpretation of the data available there's no documented unmet subsistence need or hasn't -- hasn't been in the past. Does that help, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

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

MR. PELTOLA: I'm not totally pleased with the response but if that's the best we can now I thank you for the effort.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other Board questions, comments or deliberations for this proposal, now is the time. Thank you, Staff.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no more discussion we'll call for Federal Board action on this.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chairman, National Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, thank you.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The National Park Service moves to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-46 with the modification to only adopt this proposal for one full regulatory cycle, 2022 to 2024. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MS. PITKA: Second.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. Wildlife Proposal 22-46 requests that the brown bear harvest limit for that portion of Unit 24B within Gates of the Arctic National Park be increased from one to two bears. The analysis of this proposal points out the sensitive conservation status of this species. Brown bear densities with 33.4 bears per 1,000 square kilometers and reproductive output within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are among the lowest in Alaska. Limited food resources and a short growing season are likely major factors contributing to these demographic patterns. According to harvest survey reports within Anaktuvuk Pass, only four to 10 percent of the households use brown bears. Additionally, across all of Unit 24 on Anaktuvuk -- oh, I'm sorry -- additionally across all of Unit 24, on average, only 15 bears were harvested per year between 2016 and 2018, and, on average, only half of the harvest occurred by Alaska residents. Although brown bear harvest has remained consistently low over the last few decades, low density and recruitment within the brown bear population across 24B increases the risk of overharvest.

We do recognize the hardship of our Subsistence Resource Commission submitting this proposal and supporting Western Interior Regional Advisory Council, therefore, although we do have a strong conservation concern for this species in that...
region we move to adopt this proposal for two years, one full regulatory cycle only, to support these identified immediate needs of the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission and the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other further questions or comments from the Board.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

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

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Hearing the motion and looking at the total situation, the proposal was submitted by the SRC and supported by the Western Interior, I understand the Park Service's concerns about potential for overharvest, therefore their modification to one full regulatory cycle or two years, although in supporting the motion I'm inclined to support with a caveat and I'll explain why I'll have my caveat, is that:

1. The current trajectory of caribou in the region is not the greatest.

2. Bear can supplement a protein diet, red meat -- utilizing red meat and if caribou aren't available, bears is a species which can be utilized by subsistence users.

Park Service lands are a bit more restrictive than some other Federal conservation unit -- Program lands with regards to subsistence harvest. With that being said, I move to drop the previous modification of one full year -- I mean one full regulatory cycle or two years only.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I'll second that -- was that a motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So there's a.....
MR. PELTOLA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: motion to amend the original motion to the language included there by Gene and seconded by Rhonda. Any further discussion on the motion.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, this is Sue Detwiler. I'm sorry, could someone state what the motion with the modification is.

MR. PELTOLA: Yeah, Mr. Chair, BIA. My motion was to drop the temporary limitation of one regulatory cycle or two years, and let the motion proceed, if my modification is accepted to go through as a permanent change to the regulations because there are checks and balances within the Federal system to address the concerns, I believe, of a conservation agency.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. Any other questions for Gene.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's been a motion made and seconded to amend the original motion to take off the language as stated. Any further questions on the motion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the.....

MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair, question on the amended motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. We'll do roll call on the motion to change the original motion, Sue, please.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Let's see, we'll start with the maker of the original motion.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: The National Park
Service opposes the modification to the National Park Service's modification.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service is opposed.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports.

MS. DETWILER: Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM is opposed.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service supports the modification offered by BIA to the original motion.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, so the motion passes with five votes yea, three nay, and that is the motion to amend to remove the time limit modification.
So.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes. Okay, then.....

MS. DETWILER: .....that motion has passed so we would go back to the original proposal.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, we'll go back to the original motion at this time, with the changed language of the modification that passed to include dropping the modified language to what Gene stated in this motion that passed, so now the original motion shall read -- I'll have Staff read it and then we'll go ahead and vote on it.

Thank you, Sue.

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, you need a second on it still.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, we didn't have a second to the maker of the motion.

MR. LORD: No, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So now we need a second to the original motion since it was a modified motion.

REPORTER: Yes, there was a second.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I'll second that motion, the main motion.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Rhonda and thank you Ken for the process clarification. Any further discussion on this proposal, as stated -- maybe for the record we can have the Staff read into the record what the motion and that has now been seconded. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, Mr. Chair, I'll take a stab at that. The motion is to adopt the proposal as submitted.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Without modifications, right?
MS. DETWILER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. I just wanted to get that on the record. Okay. And we'll now go ahead and do roll call vote for the original motion now to be reflective of the original proposal. Thank you. Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. And I'm sorry but I can ask who -- who was the maker of that -- the original motion on this.

REPORTER: The Park Service.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA. The original motion was made by the National Park Service. BIA made a motion to modify it and we're back -- and now we're going back and voting.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Okay, I got it, right, so it goes, yeah, back to Park Service, I understand thank you. So -- yeah, so starting with Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service opposes.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM opposes.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service
supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

And, Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The vote is six yeas and two nays and so the motion is adopted so the proposal passes as submitted.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. Thank you, Staff. We'll go ahead and break at this time for lunch. I know we did have, yesterday, scheduled a time to be determined to look at a proposal we were looking at yesterday but I think what we will do just for the order of time today is just keep going as we are going and put that to the last on the agenda. If nobody objects to that we'll just give it as much time as we can and we will just continue on down the line and use that proposal as the last order of this agenda item.

(No opposition)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we'll come back at 1:30 and pick up where we're leaving off now. Thank you. Recess until 1:30.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Hello, Sue, I'm on.
MS. DETWILER: Great, thank you. Mr. Chair, I just want to confirm with Tina that the recording has started now.

REPORTER: Sue, I am recording. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. So Mr. Chair we haven't gone through a roll call yet so I'll just quickly go through and see which Board members are on.

Sarah Creachbaum from Park Service.

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

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: Good afternoon, I'm on.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara, I heard you on, are you still on.

MS. BOARIO: Yep, I'm here Sue, thanks.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, good afternoon, Sue, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: Good afternoon all, BIA's on board.

MS. DETWILER: Thanks Gene.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

(No comments)
MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Chair Anthony Christianson, I just heard you. So it looks like we have six of eight Board members on right now.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, Sue, we'll just give everybody another minute or two and hope they chime in.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, Sue, I think Charlie was going to be a little bit late this afternoon so maybe if we could just check and see if Rhonda's on.

(Pause)

MS. DETWILER: Robbin, is there any way to check with the Operator to see if Rhonda is in the participants room and not able to get into the speaker's cue.

OPERATOR: Hello, this is the Operator. So I don't see anyone with the host passcode but, Rhonda, if you are on and you have a guest passcode please press star, zero.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: And, Rhonda, if you're on please press star, zero.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: So it does not look like she's joined the call yet.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: At this time I still don't see a host passcode.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator. Sue, we'll just give her another minute and then we'll go ahead and get started. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll just go ahead and get started this afternoon. Thank you for everybody coming back. Again, Sue, we'll just check if she's on and then we'll get started with the next order of business where we left off before lunch.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We left off before lunch with a Western Interior proposal. We completed that and now we're moving into the Seward Peninsula proposals and wildlife closure reviews and we will start out with Proposal WP22-47 which will be presented by Brian Ubelaker.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Can everybody hear me all right?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. As Sue said my name is Brian Ubelaker and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I will be giving you a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-47 which was submitted by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. And this analysis begins on Page 1109 of your meeting books.

Proposal WP22-47 requests that caribou calf harvest be permitted in Unit 22. The proponent states that the intent of this proposal is to allow for the harvest of orphaned calves and that this change would align Federal and State regulations.

In 2016 the Board of Game established the current registration permit hunt for caribou in Unit 22 with a harvest limit of 20 caribou per year. Then in 2018 the Federal Subsistence Board adopted...
regulations to require a State registration permit for Federal users in Unit 22. In January of 2020 the Board of Game adopted a proposal to allow calf harvest in Units 22, 23 and 26A. Also in 2020 the Federal Subsistence Board established a year-round bull season and allowed calf harvest in Unit 23. The justification for this change to allow calf harvest was to permit the taking of orphaned or injured calves.

Caribou calves of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd are typically born in May or June, are typically weaned by October and usually stay with their mother for the first year of their life. If a calf is orphaned after they are weaned they have a much greater chance of survival than if they are orphaned before they are weaned, provided they stay with the herd.

The current population estimate of 188,000 places the Western Arctic Caribou Herd in the preservative declining management level as determined by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group. Some harvest recommendations of this level include no calf harvest, limiting cow harvest by residents and restricting harvest to residents only. Factors leading to the declining population are not known for sure but it is believed cow mortality and decreased calf recruitment are factors.

Residents of Unit 22, on average, account for 17 percent of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd harvest. From 2016 to 2019 reported harvest averaged 377 caribou per year, of which, 74 percent were bulls and 26 percent were cows. It is unknown how many cows have been harvested as that is not a reportable category. The majority of Unit 22 harvest occurs in the winter when caribou are found on the Seward Peninsula.

If calf harvest is allowed it may present a minimal conservation concern as most hunters do not specifically target calves. However, it would allow the harvest of orphaned calves who may die otherwise. One consideration of this point is that it is difficult to tell if a calf is orphaned or not as caribou herds tend to be quite spread out. Orphaned calves that stay with the herd are much more likely to live than a single calf on its own. Adoption of this proposal may also reduce wanton waste. It has been mentioned at RAC meetings that rural residents have...
discovered calves that have been shot and left to lay
in the field. It is believed these were shot
mistakenly by hunters who realized too late their
unintended harvest and then left it in the field rather
than bringing back an illegal harvest and face
repercussions. This would also align Federal and State
regulations. Currently, Federal regulations are more
restrictive than State regulations.

Therefore, OSM's conclusion is to
support Proposal WP22-47.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.
I'd be happy to answer any questions
anyone may have.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none,
any public comment received during this proposal.

MR. UBELAKER: Yes, Mr. Chair. The
Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group submitted one
comment. At their December 15, 2021 they voted 15 to 2
in support of this proposal. Their intent behind
submitting it was to allow the harvest of calves who
would die because they are alone. This type of harvest
is already allowed on State land and on Federal land in
Unit 23 and this proposal will align Federal and State
regulations.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
Operator, at this time is there any public online who
would like to speak to this proposal, now is the time
for them to speak to this agenda item.

OPERATOR: As a reminder -- thank you
-- as a reminder to ask a question please press star,
one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No questions or testimonies
on the phone at this time.

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

MS. PATTON: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. For the record, this is Eva Patton, Council Coordinator for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. And currently phone lines are still down in Alakanuk and I'll be providing the RAC recommendation on behalf of Chairman Raymond Oney.

The YKDelta RAC Subsistence Council supports WP22-47. The Council supports reducing regulatory confusion by aligning the more restrictive Federal regulation with the more liberal State regulation so that subsistence hunters will not be cited for taking an orphaned caribou calf. Council members noted that while people do not target calves in the Yukon Delta region, if one were orphaned it would die anyway.

Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. And, Sue, can you call on the next RAC please.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. That would be Western Interior.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: After Western Interior would be Seward Peninsula.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record my name is Neesa Pilcher, I am the Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Council. I'll be providing the Council's recommendation for Chairman Louis Green at this time.

The Council chose to support WP22-47. The Council voted to support this proposal as it increases harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users. However, as hunters do not specifically target calves, no impacts to the calf
population or herd recruitment are expected. Supporting this proposal will also align State and Federal regulations.

If Jack isn't online as well I can give the Western Interior recommendation as well as -- if I can be given a moment to find it.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman, this is Jack Reakoff.

MS. PILCHER: Thank you.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman, this is Jack Reakoff.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor Jack.

MR. REAKOFF: Okay. The Western Interior Regional Advisory Council supported Proposal WP22-47. Council recognizes while most people do not target calves, the harvest of calves made orphaned -- or who are vulnerable to predation available for harvest. It's an unusual event but it does happen.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Next Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, I wasn't sure if Seward Peninsula was finished, and after Seward Peninsula would be Northwest Arctic Council.

MS. MCD AVID: Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Brooke McDavid, the Northwest Arctic Council Coordinator. I'll be presenting on behalf of Chairman Baker.

The Northwest Arctic Council opposed WP22-47. The Council opposes allowing the harvest of caribou calves because they are the future stock of the herd. The Council received feedback from local elders that calves should not be hunted in order to sustain and grow the caribou herd and strongly encouraged opposition to this proposal so that calves would not be targeted.
Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: And next, finally, the North Slope Subsistence Regional Council also had a recommendation.

MR. BROWER: Yeah, good afternoon this is Gordon Brower, Regional -- North Slope Regional Advisory Council Chair. And the Council did support WP22-47 with modifications to only allow harvest of orphaned calves on 1134. And I personally, you know, witnessed, you know, calves, not the yearling type one that are capable to be away from its mother but those that are still being weaned by a -- by a cow. And we've seen -- and I -- and personally observed, you know, like red foxes and other predators continually harass some of these orphaned, very young ones so we talked about that a little bit and, you know, in our own history, too, our people up here have harvested calves before for clothing and that's -- and probably same as other tribes in other areas. But this -- this intent here is just to look at and probably on the humane side of things because sometimes a hunt can allow a calf to get orphaned or a predator may have got the cow or something like that. So the Council supported inserting orphaned in front of calves, may be taken in the regulatory language to make it clear that the intent was not to target -- not to target calves but rather to legalize subsistence harvest if a calf was injured or orphaned. Council members discussed that an orphaned caribou likely would not -- would likely not survive based on some of the things we described and their meat and hides would not go to waste. The opportunity to hunt the orphaned calf would be beneficial in providing soft meat for elders and making traditional clothing.

However, the Council considers conservation and insuring the growth of the herd as a priority and it is very concerned about the decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The Council does not want to send the wrong message with a regulation about the harvest of calves when they are essential to conservation as they are the future of the herd.

The modified regulation should read as referenced on Page 1135 of the Federal Subsistence Board book to see where orphaned would be inserted into the regulation.
That concludes the North Slope's recommendations.

(Pause)

MR. BROWER: Was I on or am I off or.....

MS. DETWILER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you're on Gordon Brower, sorry. This is Anthony Christianson, thank you for your comment today. My phone is just not responding.....

MR. BROWER: Oh, okay.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....yeah, I heard you loud and clear. Next Sue. Thank you, Gordon.

MR. BROWER: Okay.

MS. DETWILER: That concludes the Regional Council recommendations. The next step would be the tribal, Alaska Native Corporation comments.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, 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 for this proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. No comments received during this, then we'll move on to the State Liaison please.

MR. MULLIGAN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal as it will reduce hunter confusion by aligning State and Federal regulations.

You know the Department heard discussions at the community level that calves would not intentionally be targeted but opportunistically harvested if abandoned, orphaned or injured. With herd
animals it can often be difficult to determine which
cows have attending calves, as a result maternal are
occasionally harvested unintentionally leaving a calf
orphaned. In general, the removal of these calves
through human harvest would be largely compensatory in
nature and not consume a significant portion of the
harvestable surplus of the herd.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any
questions for Ben.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right,
hearing none we'll move on to InterAgency Staff
Committee recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
This is Robbin LaVine. And the InterAgency Staff
Committee provided the following comment.

Adoption of Wildlife Proposal 22-47
would provide additional harvest opportunity for
Federally-qualified subsistence users, though most
rural residents do not target calves. Because of this,
any additional harvest of calves due to adoption of
this proposal is not expected to affect the
conservation status of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
Additional harvest opportunity may also be warranted
given that calf harvest is already allowed under State
hunting regulations and allowing such harvest may help
to minimize wanton waste when calves are mistakenly
shot while also allowing for the harvest of orphaned
calves.

The ISC recognizes the concerns
regarding calf harvest by brought up by the Northwest
Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, however,
as previously mentioned the minimal amount of calf
harvest already occurring does not indicate that
allowing such harvest under Federal regulations would
cause a conservation concern for the Western Arctic
Caribou Herd and, therefore, such harvest does not
violate recognized principles of fish and wildlife
conservation and is consistent with ANILCA, Section
.805(c).
One topic that the ISC would like to bring to the attention of the Board is that in December 2021 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, the proponent of WP22-47 voted to change the management status for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd to the preservative declining level. This was in response to the recent population estimate for the herd being counted at 188,000 animals, a decline from the 2019 estimate of 244,000 caribou. One of the recommendations that may be included under this management level is the prohibition on calf harvest.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Any questions for ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right. Hearing none, we'll move on then and open up the floor for Board discussion on this agenda item.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go ahead and move on, no Board deliberation questions, we'll open up the floor for Board action. Thank you.

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Tom Heinlein, BLM.

(Pause)

MR. HEINLEIN: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I could hear you.

MR. HEINLEIN: Okay. Mr. Chair, Tom Heinlein, Bureau of Land Management. I move to adopt Proposal WP22-47 and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you. Adoption of this proposal will provide Federally-qualified
subsistence users with more harvest opportunities while also helping to reduce wanton waste by allowing the harvest of calves mistakenly shot by hunters. It will also allow for the harvest of orphaned calves. Since most Federally-qualified users do not target calves the impact on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd should be negligible and the harvest of calves is already allowed under State regulations. Adoption of this proposal would give Federally-qualified subsistence users the same opportunities afforded under State regulations and is consistent with the recommendations of the Seward Peninsula, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other Board questions or comments.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. One thing -- we've had a lot of discussion about caribou here in this meeting and also prior in the month with another administrative action we took, one thing I wanted to point out is that earlier on in the month when we addressed the caribou regulatory scenario, we invoked one of the four criteria on the preservative management under the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan. And the very first one listed, it specifically addresses this and I appreciate the ISC pointing that out in their comment section on this proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. Any other Board questions or comments.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue, please.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-47. Starting with Mr. Heinlein, BLM, your vote.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM votes to support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: Bureau of Indian Affairs votes to oppose, and since it is in opposition to the Regional Advisory Council I'd like to stipulate the .805(c) aspect of it. When the Board votes -- in a prior administrative action invoked the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan at preservative management, it also calls for a prohibition on calf harvest and based on the management plan criteria for preservative management we feel that it violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation identified in the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan recommendations.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service supports with the justification provided by BLM. Thanks.
MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I vote to oppose using the same justification that the BIA put forward.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

MS. PITKA: This herd has been in decline and I don't think that this is -- that this action is warranted. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower, are you on.

MR. BROWER: Yes, I am. I oppose, same reason that BIA gave. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

And Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I oppose.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. So we have four ayes and four nays so the motion does not pass.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. And we'll go ahead and move on to the next proposal, thank you. Call on the Staff to present the analysis.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. We are moving into a series of Unit 22 moose proposals, the first one being Proposal 22-49 presented by Brian Ubelaker.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Good afternoon again, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. Once, again, for the record my name is Brian Ubelaker and I am a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be giving you a presentation, summary of the analysis for Wildlife Proposal WP22-49, which was submitted by Lance Kronberger of Eagle River. This analysis begins on Page 1138 in your meeting books.

Wildlife Proposal WP22-49 requests that
the Federal public lands closure for moose in a portion
of Unit 22 north of and including the Tagoomenik and
Shaktoolik River drainages referred to as Unit 22A
north be rescinded September 1st through the 20th to
coincide with the State's non-resident moose season.

The proponent states that Federal
public lands which are remote and difficult to access
compromise a large portion of this hunt area while the
communities in the area are surrounded by State managed
land. He states that the Federal public land closure
serves to concentrate all moose hunting activities on
to the small area of State managed lands and that
rescinding the closure would reduce the potential for
conflicts in the field.

In recent regulatory history the Board
of Game extended the State non-resident season in 22A
north in 2017 and then in 2018 the proponent submitted
a similarly worded proposal to the Federal Subsistence
Board for the first time. The Board considered this
proposal and opted to open Federal public lands to all
Federally-qualified subsistence users stating that
although the moose population was growing, densities
were too low to open to all users. In 2020 the
proponent submitted the same request again to the
Federal Subsistence Board. The Board rejected this
proposal stating the biological information was lacking
for the area. The Board committed to working with
ADF&G to conduct moose surveys in Unit 22A in 2020.

The moose population in Unit 22A is
considered to be increasing. In 2020 ADF&G estimated
the total Unit 22 moose population at 6,775, which
falls within their management objective. The most
recent 22A population estimate is 2,043 moose. Due to
budgetary restrictions, information concerns and time
constraints Unit 22A surveys are conducted in the
Unalakleet River drainage and population estimates are
extrapolated for adjacent areas from these surveys.
ADF&G estimates the 22A north population at 645 moose
with a density of .35 moose per square mile. The
extrapolated data appears to show this population has
been increasing since 2003. Recruitment is estimated
for the area and is characterized as adequate and the
observed bull to cow ratio is above State population
objectives.

Reported moose harvest in Unit 22A has
increased over the last 20 years. The average yearly harvest from 2003 to 2018 is 27 moose per year with 72 percent being harvested by Federally-qualified subsistence users, seven percent by non-local residents and 18 percent by non-residents. But since 2014 the average has been 39 moose harvested per year, with 66 percent going to Federally-qualified subsistence users and 24 percent being reported by non-residents. Moose harvest among sub-units of 22A is not distributed equally with the population throughout sub-units. In 22A central, for example, home to 36 percent of Unit 22A residents claim 64 percent of the reported moose harvest. One explanation of this inconsistency may be the fact 22A central requires a registration permit which has a failure to report punishment and 22A north uses a harvest ticket which has no report requirement associated with it. This is of interest because household surveys show higher annual harvest than ADF&G harvest reports. ADF&G estimates that as many as 20 moose are harvested annually and not reported in 22A north. And there are currently five permitted guides in 22A north.

If the closure in 22A north is rescinded all users would be allowed to hunt moose on Federal public lands, including the five guides that operate in the area. Lifting the closure may increase moose harvest by non-local and non-residents in Unit 22A north. This increase in harvest may be detrimental to the moose population which, in turn, would affect Federally-qualified subsistence users ability to meet their needs. The Shaktoolik River is the main artery used to access Federal public lands and increased use by sporthunters may lead to increased pressure in user conflict. Limited understanding of population limits the ability to judge if an increase in harvest will affect the moose population in Unit 22A north. But the very high bull to cow ratio suggests the population could withstand more bull harvest. Rescinding the closure may alleviate some hunter pressure and user conflict by spreading non-resident hunters out to Federal public land not easily accessed except by plane which may take pressure off of river corridors but with the population appearing recovered, the original conservation concern is over.

Therefore, OSM's conclusion is to support WP22-49.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.
I would be happy to answer any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, we'll take any public comment received during the proposal period. Thank you.

MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, there were no comments submitted regarding this proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Operator, we'll now provide an opportunity for the public to speak to this agenda item, if anyone online who would like to be recognized please let the Operator know.

OPERATOR: Absolutely. As a reminder if you would like to make a public comment please press star, one.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none we'll go ahead and move on. Nobody online so move on to the Regional Advisory Council.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. My name is Neesa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I'll be providing the Council's recommendation for Chairman Green.

The Council opposes WP22-49 because the idea of opening Federal lands to non-residents if the locals are not able to hunt there due to the access difficulties still does not favor the subsistence user. The population estimate is not based on data from Unit 22A north but rather it's extrapolated from data over -- excuse me -- from data from the neighboring hunt area, Unit 22A central. The Council considers it wiser to protect resources for subsistence users until proven
they can support sport uses as well.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any other Regional Advisory Councils.

MS. DETWILER: I believe that's the only one, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Sue. We'll move on to the tribal consultation summary. Orville.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, 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 on this closure review.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Or actually, sorry, this proposal 22-49. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll go ahead and move on to the State Liaison, Ben Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal. Biological circumstances that warranted the initial closure of Federal public lands in 2003 no longer exist. Recent regulatory changes have been adopted by both the Alaska Board of Game and this Board as well. In 2017 the State non-resident season in 22A north was extended from September 1st to September 14th, to September 20th. The Federal Subsistence Board, through WP18-38 with modification to open Federal public lands for the harvest of moose by all Federally-qualified users, which includes all residents of GMU 22. In looking at these extensions of the regulatory hunt cycles, neither of these most recent changes have resulted in an increase in moose harvest from the 22A north hunt area and so the State believes you can lift this closure.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll call on the InterAgency Staff Committee.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine. The InterAgency Staff Committee has the following comments.

Adoption of Proposal 22-49 would open Federal public lands within the Unit 22A north moose hunt area to all users September 1st through 20th a period that coincides with the State's non-resident season. Recent surveys completed in 2020 and 2021 in Unit 22A central, adjacent to the area in question show extremely high bull to cow ratios and a population estimate that is above State management objectives.

Additionally, low reported harvest and estimates of total harvest that are below the harvestable surplus indicate that the Unit 22A north moose population can withstand increases in harvest that may result for rescinding the closure during September. Furthermore, current hunting pressure seems to focus on the area of more easily accessible State lands along the river corridors whereas Federal lands are more remote and more difficult to access. Part of the Board's rationale for not rescinding the closure in 2020 was due to the lack of recent biological information for the Unit 22A north hunt area. The Board now has current biological metrics from an adjacent hunt area to make an informed decision on WP22-49.

The Board's closure policy states that Federal public lands and waters should be reopened as soon as practicable once the conditions that originally justified the closure have changed to such an extent that the closure is no longer necessary.

The original justification for the closure in this area was due to conservation concerns. Recent surveys indicate that these conservation concerns may no longer exist warranting rescinding of the current closure.
It should be noted that BLM does not limit the number of guides permitted in the area or the number of hunters that they can bring in, therefore, guided hunts do have the potential to take more moose from 22A north if Federal lands are opened. Harvest in this area by non-Federally-qualified users should be closely monitored if the closure is rescinded.

The Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council opposes this proposal because poor access to the area in question makes hunting difficult for Federally-qualified subsistence users and because the biological metrics used to justify rescinding the closure are based on extrapolations on the adjacent Unit 22A central hunt area. Recent surveys indicate that rescinding the current closure would not violate recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation and retaining the closure is not supported by substantial evidence, both of which are consistent with ANILCA Section .805(c).

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Any questions for ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none that opens up the floor for Board deliberation.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. HEINLEIN: Mr. Chair, Tom Heinlein, BLM.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor Tom.

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to adopt Proposal 22 -- Wildlife Proposal 22-49 and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MS. PITKA: This is Rhonda, I'll second.
MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you. Recently completed surveys in 2020 and 2021 in Unit 22A central adjacent to the area in question showed extremely high bull/cow ratios and a population estimate that is above State management objectives. In addition, the estimates of the total harvest that are below the harvestable surplus indicate that the moose population in Unit 22A north can sustain additional harvest pressure that may result from rescinding the closure to non-Federally-qualified users.

Current harvest pressure has been mostly focused on the more easily accessible State lands adjacent to river corridors and not the more remote and difficult accessed Federal lands in the area. The last time this came before the Board part of the rationale for not lifting the closure was a lack of recent biological data. This is no longer the case and the Board's closure policy states: That Federal public lands and waters should be reopened as soon as practicable once the conditions that originally justified the closure have changed to such an extent that the closure is no longer necessary.

Since the closure was originally put in place due to conservation concerns continuing the closure is no longer supported by substantial evidence and recent biological metrics indicate that opening the closure to non-Federally-qualified users would not violate recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation.

The BLM takes the concerns of the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council seriously and acknowledges that any additional harvest by non-Federally-qualified users that may take place because of the opening of this closure should be monitored closely to prevent overharvest.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any further Board questions or discussion.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor, Gene.
MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have some questions for BLM. It is mentioned in the analysis that BLM does not limit the number of permits issued to big game guides, nor does it limit the number of clients that are able to be serviced under those permits. Is that because you don't have a mechanism to do it and choose not to, or do you have a mechanism in place to cap the number of clients taken in by permitted guide. And the reason I ask that is that it's -- the ISC had made the recommendation that there's a potential for overharvest in the long run and if that was to occur, how could BLM address that before -- if the Board was not able to address it in a timely manner. And the reason I ask that is the history of BLM with regard to some discussions in this body in the past, we look at the progression and evolution of the BLM permitting process.

So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank.....

MR. HEINLEIN: Mr.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....you. Any other Board questions or comments, discussion. You have the floor, sorry.

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Tom Heinlein, BLM. In response to the BIA question. You know I'd need to do a little more research on that question, Gene. You know I think BLM maintains mechanisms to actually look at, you know, putting in processes and procedures to manage permit numbers in instances where more use were to accelerate, or use is judged to be, you know, expanded. I believe in this case the number of operators, transporters is not at that level but I would be happy to do more leg work on that question if that is in any way unsatisfactory.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: And, Tom, the reason that I ask that question is that we -- the Board here in recent history has addressed several proposals and we've opened up some areas, we've had some remain
closed, we've always looked towards and hoped for survey data but that's not necessarily the case in this situation, I'm a tad uncomfortable, as the Seward Penn Council had stipulated about using adjacent data. I'd be a lot more comfortable to getting closer to supporting the proposal if BLM had a mechanism to address the commercial use of those Federal lands under their purview if required to do so.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hello, call for the question Board.

MS. PITKA: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, we'll go ahead and do roll call please. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to adopt WP22-49. Start with Thomas Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM votes to support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service will support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: The Park Service supports.

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

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports with the statement made by BLM, they'd look into to inquire about their abilities on their permitting system in place, in addition to there are checks and balances with the Federal Program to address it if needed to in the future.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MR. BROWER: I support. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Motion passes unanimously.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and move on to the next agenda, thank you. Call on the Staff.

MS. DETWILER: The next agenda item is Wildlife Closure 22-09(b) also presented by Brian Ubelaker.

MR. UBELAKER: Thanks Sue. Good afternoon, again, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. For the record I am Brian Ubelaker and I am a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I
will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-09(b). This analysis begins on Page 1158 of your meeting books.

Wildlife Closure Review 22-09(b) pertaining to Unit 22A, that portion in the Unalakleet River drainage and all drainages flowing into Norton Sound, north of the Golsovia River drainage and south of the Tagoomenik and Shaktoolik River drainages. Federal public lands are closed to the harvesting of moose except by residents of Unalakleet. This closure was initially established in 1995.

The moose populations in the Unalakleet River drainage of Unit 22A has been increasing since 2011. In 2011 and '12 the harvest quotas were not met during the regular season and they established a winter season for moose. Then in 2013, '14 and '15 the regular season quotas were not met yet again, prompting the State to extend the regular moose season by six days via emergency order. In 2017 the Board of Game permanently established the moose season for 22A central as September 1st through the 20th. That same year with an increase in moose population the State opened, then extended the winter moose season. Then in 2018 the State extended the fall moose season through September 30th via emergency order. In 2020 the Board of Game extended the fall season through September 30th and the winter season through January 31st. This closure was last reviewed in 2015 and the Council recommended to maintain status quo.

The moose population in Unit 22A, Unalakleet drainage has been showing signs of increasing since 2003. Most recent population estimation is 766 moose in the unit, which is approaching the upper end of the State management objective of 800. The bull to cow ratio is also higher than population objectives for the unit at over 120 bulls to 100 cows.

Moose harvest has increased in the Unalakleet drainage since 2008 keeping pace with increasing quotas. Total reported harvest has ranged from 14 to 45 moose during that timeframe. Federal harvest during this time has averaged 16.5 percent with the average Federal success rate at 13 percent.

This closure could either be modified
to allow moose hunting on Federal public lands by all 
Federally-qualified subsistence users or it could be 
completely rescinded to allow harvest by all users. As 
the hunt is closely managed by harvest quotas little 
conservation concerns exist for overharvest if this 
closure is completely lifted. The moose population and 
harvest quotas have increased in Unit 22A central and 
the bull/cow ratio is high indicating surplus bulls a 
available for harvest. Therefore, providing harvest 
opportunity for all Federally-qualified subsistence 
users in the central portion of Unit 22A is warranted. 
Opening to only Federally-qualified subsistence users 
rather than all users represents a conservative 
incremental approach that is consistent with Board 
action in Unit 22A north and 22A remainder in 2018. 

Therefore, it is OSM's conclusion to 
modify the closure to allow all Federally-qualified 
users to hunt on Federal public lands.

Thank you.

I'd be happy to answer any questions 
anyone may have.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing no 
questions was there any public testimony during this 
proposal process.

MR. UBELAKER: No, Mr. Chair, there 
were no written public comments submitted.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. 
Operator, at this time we'll make available anybody 
online who would like to speak to this agenda item, 
this is their opportunity.

OPERATOR: Again, for recollection, if 
you'd like to make a public comment press star, one.

(Pause)
OPERATOR: There are no comments in the cue.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move on at this time to Regional Advisory Council recommendations.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. My name is Neesa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I'll be providing the Council's recommendation for Chairman Green today.

The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council voted to support this proposal. I will note that it was actually a split, which is not -- it appears not to be very usual for this Council. The majority of the Council felt that the residents of the Unalakleet rely the most on moose in Unit 22A central therefore they deserved the majority of the harvest. Moose harvest is improving for residents of Unalakleet but it is still not like it was historically.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Native Tribal Liaison.

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

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

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of the current closure prohibiting non-Federally-qualified users from hunting for moose on Federal public lands in GMU 22A central. The current composition and historical harvest levels indicate that additional harvest opportunity is warranted. There is no concern that the harvest of moose by non-resident hunters in the area would increase because there is no non-resident season in the area. Dramatic increases in the harvest of moose by resident hunters are not likely to occur because of challenges associated with
accessing the hunt area. Even the substantial harvest of bulls by non-Federally-qualified users that are Alaska residents would have little effect on the population due to the extremely high bull/cow ratio with the latest in 2020 being 122 bulls to 100 cows respectively, well above the management objective of 30 bulls to 100 cows. Furthermore, ADF&G has the authority to issue emergency order closures as needed to maintain harvest at sustainable levels within the hunt area eliminating any overharvest concerns.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll go to the ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. For Wildlife Closure Review 22-09(b), the ISC provided their standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

That opens up the floor for Board discussion, questions with State Liaison or ISC.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, hearing none, that will open up the floor for Board action on this proposal. Thank you.

MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair, this is Chris McKee, can you hear me?

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

MR. MCKEE: Yeah, just to note that Tom is going to have to step away from the meeting for about the next 90 minutes so I'll be standing in for him and I'll be making the motion for this.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
Chris. Welcome.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair, I move to modify the closure to moose hunting in the Unit 22A central hunt area to open to all Federally-qualified subsistence users and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you. Moose populations and the harvest quotas have increased in the hunt area and bull/cow ratios are extremely high, all of which indicates that there is a surplus of bulls available for harvest. Opening the area to all Federally-qualified subsistence users is a conservative and appropriate incremental approach consistent with past Board actions in other areas of Unit 22 in 2018. Additionally, given the improved biological metrics keeping the area open to only a subset of Federally-qualified subsistence users is not supported by substantial evidence as stated in ANILCA Section .805(c).

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any more questions or discussions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Did we get a second for that -- sorry, Chris.

MR. MCKEE: I believe BIA seconded.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, BIA did second.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. Okay, thank you, so the floor is open for discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue,
MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to modify the closure to open to all Federally-qualified subsistence users. We'll start with BLM, Chris McKee.

MR. MCKEE: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports for reasons articulated by BLM in their motion.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Fish and Wildlife Service Sara Boario.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service supports with the justification provided by BLM.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.
And Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Motion passes unanimously.

(Pause)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sorry, I got spaced out there, are we still voting on this.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, we just concluded the vote and the outcome was to retain the closure with the modification to include all subsistence users.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go ahead and take a five minute break here. My attention span got a little stretched out there so we'll take a five minute break and we'll come back.

(Off record)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and get started, Sue, whenever everybody makes it back on the line. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, I'll go ahead and see who's back on the line.

National Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

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

MS. DETWILER: Great.

BLM, Thomas Heinlein.

MR. MCKEE: Hi, Sue, this is Chris standing in for Tom.

MS. DETWILER: Oh, thank you for reminding me Chris.

Okay, Fish and Wildlife Service, Sara Boario.
MS. BOARIO: I'm here, Sue, thank you.

Forest Service, Dave Schmid.

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

MS. DETWILER: BIA, Gene Peltola.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA is back on, thanks.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Hi, I'm here.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Charlie Brower.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: And Chair Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I'm on, thank you, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. It looks like everybody's on except one member.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: Did I get cut off?

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, you're still on.

MS. DETWILER: You're still on Rhonda.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I think we're just letting everybody get back on the line here and then we'll get started where we left off, Sue, thank you, when we're ready.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Just let me know when you're ready.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah, I'm ready, Sue.
MS. DETWILER: Okay. Let's see where we left off was we were just going to be starting off Wildlife Closure Review 22-11/12 and that will be Brian Ubelaker again.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Hello, again, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. For the record, Brian Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist with OSM. I will be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-11/12. This analysis begins on Page 1173 of your meeting books.

Wildlife Closure Review 22-11 and 12 pertaining to Unit 22B west of the Darby Mountains. WCR22-11 closes Federal public lands to the harvest of moose during the fall season except by Federally-qualified subsistence users. WCR22-12 closes Federal public lands to the harvest of moose to all except residents of Golovin and White Mountain for the winter hunt. This closure was initially established in 2002.

These closures were enacted -- sorry, I am getting some notes that it is hard for people to hear me. Is this any better.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I can hear you fine, thank you.

MR. UBELAKER: Okay, great, I will continue then. These closures were enacted to conserve a declining population of moose. ADF&G had closed this hunt by emergency order several times when the harvest quota of 20 moose was met. Last year the Board of Game changed permit availability by only allowing them to be picked up in person in an effort to limit the number of hunters. These closures have been reviewed by the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council at their winter meetings in 2011 and 2015.

The moose population in Unit 22 is estimated at 6,775, which is within State management objectives. ADF&G considers the moose population in Unit 22B to be stable to increasing but below management objectives. The last estimate completed for 22B west was 728 moose in 2016. A composition survey from 2015 determined the bull/cow ratio to be 41 bulls to 100 cows which is above the State management objective.
Most of the moose harvested in 22B occurs under State regulations with a State permit. Only one moose was reported harvested by Federal permit in 2001 and since 2014 harvest has met or exceeded quotas in all years except for 2018.

One alternative considered is an incremental opening of the closure to allow all Federally-qualified subsistence users from Unit 22 to hunt in 22B west during the winter hunt. The possible increase in hunting pressure and competition from Federally-qualified subsistence users within Unit 22 alone would likely reach the quota within several days as most State hunts in Unit 22 currently do. If these closures are rescinded non-Federally-qualified users would be able to harvest moose on Federal public lands within Unit 22B west of the Darby Mountains. Unit 22B west moose population is currently below State management objectives. But as moose harvest in Unit 22B west is managed by harvest quotas, rescinding or modifying these closures would likely result in a zero to minimal increase in harvest. However, competition with non-Federally and other Federally-qualified users on Federal lands could reduce harvest opportunity for residents of White Mountain and Golovin.

Therefore, it is OSM's conclusion to maintain status quo.

Thank you much.

And I would be happy to answer any questions anyone might have.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, did we receive any public comment during this proposal period. Thank you.

MR. UBELAKER: Mr. Chair, no, there were no comments submitted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Operator, at this time we'll provide a line for anybody
online if they want to provide public testimony at this
time to this agenda item.

OPERATOR: If you would like to ask or
make a comment please press star, one. Once again, for
any comments, please press star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: I'm showing no comments at
this time, sir.

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

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of
the Board. For the record, Nissa Pilcher, Council
Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory
Council. I'll be providing the Council's
recommendation for Chairman Green.

The Seward Regional Advisory Council
voted to support this closure. The Council believes
that since the moose population is below State
management objectives and the recruitment is low,
Federal lands should remain closed to all but local
residents. This will allow for the continuation of
subsistence uses.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Is
there any other Regional Advisory Council who would
like to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none
we'll move to Tribal 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 on this review.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
we'll move on to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Ben.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of these two closures. The measures the Department and the Board of Game have taken in managing moose populations in GMU 22B west makes it so that maintaining the closures in this area is unlikely to result providing any additional harvest opportunity to Federally-qualified users or increase any potential increase in non-Federally-qualified users coming into the area. In 2020 the Board of Game directed ADF&G to limit the availability of the pertinent registration hunt permit and are now only available during a set timeframe in the local communities. Given this information the Department is more than capable of sustainably managing this moose population while providing reasonable opportunities for subsistence users.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll move on to InterAgency Staff Committee recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Closure Review 22-11/12 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided their standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, hearing none we'll move on. Open the floor for Board action for this proposal. Thank you.

MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair, Chris McKee with
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Chris, you have the floor.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to maintain the status quo for the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 22B west of the Darby Mountains. And if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you. The moose population in Unit 22B west hunt area continues to be below State management objectives with continued low recruitment, therefore, the closure to non-Federally-qualified users should remain in place to allow for the continuation of subsistence uses of the moose resource during both the fall and winter hunts and is consistent with the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Chris. Did we get a second for Chris.

MR. PELTOLA: Yes, BIA seconded.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, thank you. The floor is open now for discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for.....

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: .....the question. Thank you, Gene. We'll go ahead and do roll call, Sue, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion on the floor is to maintain the status quo on this closure. Chris McKee, BLM, your vote.

MR. MCKEE: BLM supports.
MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports to maintain the status quo as recommended by the Seward Penn Council.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service supports in deference to the RAC and the justification provided by BLM.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support in deference to the Regional Advisory Council and as stated by BLM. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Christianson.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support, Sue.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Motion passes unanimously.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, Sue, we'll call on the next proposal to be presented by Staff. Thank you.


MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Hello, Mr. Chair and Members of the Board. I promise, you only have to listen to me one more time after this -- well, for today anyways. Sorry. For the record my name is Brian Ubelaker, I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. I'll be presenting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-13 and this analysis begins on Page 1185 of your meeting books.

Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-13 pertaining to Unit 22D within the Kougarok, Kuzitrin and Pilgrim River Federal public land (indiscernible - cuts out) residents of Units 22D and 22C. This closure was initially established in 2002.

This enclosure was enacted to restrict heavy hunting pressure to conserve a declining population of moose. Since then the season has been shortened on three separate occasions. Overharvest from the herd has occurred in 2003, 2004 despite efforts to close the hunt by ADF&G. The Seward Peninsula RAC reviewed this closure in 2011 and 2014 and recommended to maintain status quo.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)

MR. UBELAKER: The moose population in Unit 22 is estimated at 6,775 moose.

Sorry, was that a question.

REPORTER: I think people need to mute, star, six, you're talking over Brian. Star, six.
MR. UBELAKER: Okay. Let's see, the moose populations in Unit 22 is estimated at 6,775, which is within State management objectives. ADF&G considers the moose population in Unit 22D to be decreasing to stable with population estimates below their management objective. The bull/cow ratio has averaged 26 bulls to 100 cows, which is above their management objective.

No non-resident harvest has occurred in 22D since the non-resident season closed in 2002. All harvest under State regulations has occurred on non-Federal lands. Moose harvest in Unit 22D are managed by quotas. Between 2014 and 2019 reported moose harvest has exceeded harvest quotas. Since 2017 the season has closed in five days or less.

If this closure were rescinded, non-Federally-qualified users would be able to harvest moose on Federal public lands within Unit 22D, that portion within the Kougarok, Kuzitrin and Pilgrim River drainage. As the State hunt is managed by harvest quotas rescinding the closure would likely result in zero to minimal increase in harvest. Unit 22D moose population is below management objectives, bull to cow ratios are relatively low indicating few surplus bulls available for harvest and calf and cow ratios are very low indicating a declining population. Increased hunters would lead to decreased harvest opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users by increasing competition for a small, quickly met quota of harvestable moose.

Therefore, it is OSM's conclusion to maintain status quo on this closure.

Thank you.

I am available for questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, did we receive any public comment during this proposal period, thank you.

MR. UBELAKER: No, sir, there were no
public comments submitted. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Move on to anybody online who would like to be recognized at this time, Operator, this is the time for them to speak to this agenda item.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: As a reminder star, one if you would like to make a comment.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Once again that is star, one for any comments.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No comments at this time, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go ahead and move on to RAC Chair recommendation.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record, Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I'll be providing the Council's recommendation in the absence of Chairman Green.

The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council voted to maintain the status quo for WP22-13. The Council felt that with population below State management objectives and a low bull/cow and calf/cow ratios the population in the unit is declining. And with the State managing harvest using a quota system that is usually met or exceeded, the closure should be maintained at this time.

That is all, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. That'll open the floor for Tribal Native Liaison.

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

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Move on to the State Liaison, Ben Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of this closure. Elimination of the Federal public lands closure in this area is unlikely to result in any changes to the harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified users. In order to hunt in this area ADF&G administers Registration Permit RM840 with harvest quotas. These seasons are subject to emergency order closures once on the quota is met and successful hunters are required to report their harvest within a day of the kill. This registration permit is only available in person at licensed vendors within the area during the timeframe of July 25th to August 25th, making it a high bar for those outside the area to hunt in this particular hunt.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, hearing none we'll move on to ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Hello, Mr. Chair, this is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Closure Review 22-13 the ISC provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. That opens the floor for Board discussion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, that opens the floor for action. Thank you.

MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair, Chris McKee for BLM.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the
floor, Chris.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to maintain the status quo for the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 22D with the Kougarok, Kuzitrin and Pilgrim River drainages and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you. The moose population in Unit 22D is below State management objectives with relatively low bull/cow ratios showing a lack of surplus bulls available for harvest. Low cow/calf ratios in the area indicate a declining population with State hunting quotas often being exceeded. Maintaining the closure will help ensure harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users and is consistent with the recommendation of the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, please, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. The motion is to maintain the status quo on this closure.

Chris McKee, BLM.

MR. MCKEE: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports maintaining
status quo as recommended by the Seward Penn RAC.

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

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Yeah, the Forest Service supports in deference to the RAC and as stated by BLM.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support as stated by BLM.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Anthony Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. Motion passes unanimously. And the next item on the agenda is Wildlife Closure Review 22-14 and I believe that is Tom [sic] Ubelaker once more.

MR. UBELAKER: Thank you, Sue. Yes. Hello again, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. Brian Ubelaker, Wildlife Biologist with OSM. And you'll be
getting a summary of the analysis for Wildlife Closure
Review WCR22-14, which the analysis begins on Page 1197
of your meeting books.

Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-14
covering Unit 22D west of the Tisuk River drainage and
Canyon Creek. Federal public lands are closed to the
harvesting of moose except by residents of Units 22D
and 22C. This closure was initially established in
2002.

This analysis is for a small portion of
Unit 22D that abuts 22D Kuzitrin that was analyzed in
the previous presentation. The regulatory history and
biological data and harvest information is identical
with that analysis so for brevity I will refrain from
restating the same information, however, if anybody has
any questions regarding this please let me know and I
will be happy to answer them.

Jumping ahead to effects. If this
closure is rescinded, non-Federally-qualified users
would be able to harvest moose on Federal public lands
within Unit 22D west of the Tisuk River drainage and
Canyon Creek. Unit 22D west moose population is below
State management objectives and metrics point to a
decaying population. Federally-qualified subsistence
users may experience increased competition and
decreased harvest success if this closure is rescinded.

Therefore, it is OSM's conclusion to
maintain status quo.

Thank you.

And if anybody has any questions,
please let me know.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, hearing
none, Tom [sic] did we get any public comment during
this proposal [sic] period. Thank you.

MR. UBELAKER: No, Mr. Chair, no
written comments were submitted. Thank you.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you, Tom [sic]. And we will move on to anybody online who would like to speak to this agenda item at this time. Operator, at this time would be their time to be recognized.

OPERATOR: As a reminder, for any comments star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Showing no comments at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move on to the Regional Advisory Council Chair recommendations.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record, Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I'll once, again, be providing the Council's recommendation for Chairman Green.

For WCR22-14 the Council requested to maintain status quo. The Council feels, again, that with populations below State management objectives and low bull/cow and calf/cow ratios that the population in Unit 22D is declining. If the State is managing harvest with a quota then the moose population is not strong enough to support removing the closure and should be maintained at this time.

Thank you.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Moving on to Tribal Native Liaison.

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

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.
We'll go ahead and move on from there to State Liaison.
Thank you.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this -- supports the rescinding of this closure. It's the same reasons. Because the same registration permit is involved for our comments pertaining to WCR22-13 so I will just reference those. And our support for elimination of the closure.
Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for the State.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: ISC recommendation.
MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Closure Review 22-14 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. That opens the floor for Board discussion.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. MCKEE: Mr. Chair, Chris McKee for BLM.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: You have the floor.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you. Mr. Chair, I move to maintain the status quo for the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally-qualified users in Unit 22D west of the Tisuk River drainage and Canyon Creek and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of motion.
MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.

MR. MCKEE: Thank you. The moose population in Unit 22D is below management objectives with relatively low bull/cow ratios showing a lack of surplus bulls available for harvest, low calf/cow ratios in the area indicate a declining population with State hunting quotas often being exceeded. Maintaining the closure will help to ensure harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users and it's consistent with the recommendations of the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Chris. Anybody, questions or comments or discussion.

(No comments)

MR. PELTOLA: BIA calls for the question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. Sue, I'll just do an all in favor on this one, signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. Thank you. We'll go ahead and move on to the next proposal there, Sue, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. The next proposal is Wildlife Proposal 22-50 and we're moving into the Northwest Arctic region.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Sue. Hello, Mr. Chair. 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 WP22-50 submitted by the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council requesting the beaver harvest limit be changed from 50
and 30 beaver in Unit 23, Kobuk and Selawik River
drainage and Unit 23 remainder, respectfully, to no
harvest limit in both trap areas.

This one was removed from Volume I so
it's starting on Page 420.

The proponent states that the proposed
changes would align Federal beaver trapping regulations
with the more liberal state regulations as well as
provide increased harvest opportunity for Federally-
qualified subsistence users.

There has been a general trend for
liberalizing trapping and hunting regulations in Unit
23. In 1999 the Alaska Board of Game adopted a year-
round hunting season for beavers in Unit 23 with no
harvest limit or sealing requirements. In addition the
trapping season was extended to year-round with no
harvest limit and no sealing requirements. In 2007 the
Board adopted a proposal requesting a hunting season
for beavers in Unit 23 with no closed season and no
harvest limit.

Arctic landscapes are in transition due
to changes in the climate. Increased warmth in the
summer and longer growing seasons are contributing to
the increasing Tundra productivity and shrub dominated
vegetation. Beavers have increasingly moved into
Tundra areas during the last 20 years. Beaver numbers
remain high in Unit 23 particularly in the Selawik and
Kobuk River drainages where beavers have fully occupied
high quality habitat and now widely occur in large
areas as well.

Current harvest data is limited because
few people have sealed pelts since ADF&G made beaver
sealing requirements voluntary for Unit 23 in 2000.
The most recent community harvest surveys in the
community subsistence information system is in 2014,
the data suggests that beaver harvesting varies greatly
by year and community as you can see in Figure 1 and
Table 1 on Page 423.

If this proposal is adopted the beaver
harvest limit would be changed from 50 and 30 beaver
per season in Unit 23 the Kobuk/Selawik and Unit 23
remainder respectfully to no harvest limit in both trap
areas. No impacts to the beaver population or user
groups are expected as Federally-qualified subsistence users can already trapped an unlimited number of beavers on most Federal lands under the more liberal State regulations. Additionally, adoption of this proposal would align Federal and State regulations reducing the regulatory complexity for users.

The OSM's conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-50 with the modification to combine Unit 23 trap areas.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to field any questions.

(Pause)

MS. PITKA: Hello, did I get cut off.

MS. DETWILER: You are still on, I think we're waiting for Chair Christianson. I'm not sure if got dropped off or not.

OPERATOR: He disconnected, yes.

MS. PITKA: Oh, okay.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

MS. PITKA: Well, then how about we go to the next thing on the list Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Which would be summary of written public comments on this closure -- on this closure review.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much.

MS. DETWILER: Or, I'm sorry, proposal.

MS. PITKA: Uh-huh.

MR. PLANK: Thank you, Madame Chair and Sue. This is Tom Plank with OSM. There were no written public comments for this proposal. Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much for that. I'd like to open the floor now for public
comment.

OPERATOR: And, once, again, star, one for any comments.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Once again that is star, one for any comments.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: No comments at this time.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much. Regional Advisory Council recommendation. I believe that's Robbin LaVine, or wait, no, what I am I thinking I'm sorry, Western Interior.

MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair. Jack Reakoff here, Western Interior Regional Advisory Council. The Council supports as modified by OSM. The Council feels that some residents of the area use beaver for meat, particularly before caribou migrations migrate into the area.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much, I appreciate that. Seward Peninsula.

MS. PILCHER: Madame Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record, Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. I'll be providing the Council's recommendation for Chairman Green.

The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council voted to support with modification suggested by OSM. The Council supports this proposal as modified because beaver are populous and expanding further northward. The Council said they are concerned the dams created by beaver will have a negative impact on salmon and salmon streams. This proposal would aid in keeping beaver populations in check, thereby helping salmon populations.

Thank you.
MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much.
Northwest Arctic.

MS. MCDAVID: Thank you, Madame Chair.
This is Brooke McDavid, the Council Coordinator for the
Northwest Arctic Council. I will be standing in and
presenting the recommendation for all of the Northwest
Arctic proposals today on behalf of Chairman Baker who
is unable to make it.

The Northwest Arctic Council submitted
WP22-50 and supports this proposal. Beavers are
extremely abundant across the region and are continuing
to expand their range way up into river tributaries.
Beaver dams are negatively affecting fish, fishing
access and water quality. Additional beaver harvest
opportunity supports subsistence and may help to keep
the beaver population in check.

Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much.
North Slope.

MR. BROWER: This is Gordon Brower with
the North Slope Regional Subsistence Advisory Council.
We chose to support WP22-50 for our neighbors. The
Council justification. Beavers are extremely abundant
in Unit 23 and their range keeps expanding. The
Council fully supports increased subsistence
opportunities to harvest the super abundant beaver
population in Unit 23.

And that's the end of our comment.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, I appreciate all
of your comments from the Regional Advisory Councils.
Right now we are at tribal, Alaska Native Corporation
comments and I believe that's Robbin LaVine.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair.
This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Orville Lind.
There were no comments or recommendations during the
consultation on this proposal.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much for
that. I appreciate that. Next on the list would be
the Alaska Department of Fish and Game comments. State Liaison.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Madame Chair. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal. We have no conservation concerns as users could already participate under our more liberal State bag limits and it -- but in the end it will align State and Federal regulations, which eliminates user confusion, which we always support.

Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much for that. I appreciate that. Now we're on InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Proposal 22-50 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, I appreciate that. We're at Board discussion with Council Chairs and State Liaison now.

(No comments)

MS. PITKA: Hearing none, I'll open the floor for Federal Subsistence Board action.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Madame Chair, Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. PITKA: Yes, go ahead.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Madame Chair. I vote to approve Wildlife Proposal WP22-50 with the OSM modification to combine the Unit 23 trap areas to reduce confusion in the regulations. And with an additional modification to set the harvest limit at 100 beaver per person. If I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The National Park Service understands that beavers are increasing in range and activity in Unit 23 and the
surrounding region. However, setting unlimited harvest limits on National Park Service lands without population estimates or robust harvest information violates our recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation as referenced in ANILCA, Title VII, Section .805(c) and is laid out in the NPS Management Policy, Chapter 4.4.2. The Service will assess the results of managing plant and animal populations by conducting follow up monitoring or other studies to determine the impacts of the management methods on non-targeted and targeted components of the ecosystem. Approving an unlimited harvest without a system in place to monitor impacts to the beaver's population would be unwise given the history of overharvesting the species in other parts of their range.

We do, however, recognize that the consistent observations of abundant beavers may represent an increased opportunities for subsistence and creates concerns of environmental impacts to fish streams and other important resources for subsistence users in the region. Affected Councils voiced concerns of beaver dams to have negative impact on salmon and salmon streams and to be negatively affecting fish, fish access and water quality. Therefore, our additional modification is to set the harvest limit at 100 beaver per person.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Hello, can you hear me.

REPORTER: Hi, Rhonda, yes.

MS. PITKA: Okay.

MS. DETWILER: Yes. Rhonda, this is Sue, may I just step in and make sure we got the mod -- the -- the prop -- I'm sorry, the motion correct, which was to adopt the proposal as modified by OSM to combine the Unit 23 trap areas with additional modification to set the harvest limit at 100 beaver per person. I just want to make sure we're correct on that.

MS. CREACHBAUM: That's correct.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. Thank you, very much.
MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you.

MR. PELTOLA: Madame Chair, BIA.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, go ahead, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Madame Chair.
I was wondering if I could get a clarification if I
heard correctly that I thought I heard in the
justification, the history of overharvest potentially
of beaver, is that correct?

MS. CREACHBAUM: Yes, that's correct,
and I referred to other areas, overharvest in other
areas.

MR. PELTOLA: Okay. So I thought this
would be a very, very quick proposal to take up since
it's supported by several Regional Advisory Councils
although in other GMUs throughout the state I know of
numerous individuals that harvest more than 100 per
year, which not only provides a high important local
individuals to utilize, beaver's excellent table fare
in addition to its high fat content and high protein
and context for dogs, I personally have processed 64 in
one day before. And I'm not quite sold on the limit of
100 per person.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. Was there any
amendment to that or was that just a comment under
discussion.

MR. PELTOLA: It's a comment that I was
considering. So at this time I'd like to move to make
a motion to remove the modification of 100 per person.
Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you. So there's a
motion on the table to amend -- to remove the limit of
100 beaver per person.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MS. PITKA: Seconded by Charlie Brower.
Now we're under discussion on the motion.

(No comments)
MR. BROWER:  Question.

MS. PITKA:  Question's been called. Can we get a roll call on the amendment.

MS. DETWILER:  Sure.

MS. PITKA:  Thank you, so much.

MS. DETWILER:  So the motion on the floor is to amend the original motion to remove the harvest limit modification. And I will start the roll call with the maker of the motion, Gene Peltola from BIA.

MR. PELTOLA:  Support for previous reasons articulated.

MS. DETWILER:  Thank you.

Moving to Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO:  Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER:  Thank you.

National Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM:  National Park Service opposes.

MS. DETWILER:  Thank you.

BLM, Chris McKee.

MR. MCKEE:  BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER:  Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID:  The Forest Service supports the amended motion by BIA.

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

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Anthony Christianson, have you come back online.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: It looks like the motion to amend has passed by seven to one.

MS. PITKA: Okay, now we're back to the main motion. Now the main motion would read as modified by OSM to combine Unit 23 trap areas.

MR. BROWER: Question.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, that's my understanding Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much. And I believe Member Brower just called the question.

MR. BROWER: That's right.

MS. PITKA: Okay. Can we get a roll call vote then, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay. So the roll call we'll start with Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Because the no bag limit is outside NPS policy I am -- I will have to oppose.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service
Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: Support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chris McKee, BLM.

MR. MCKEE: BLM supports in deference to the Western Interior and Seward Penn RACs.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service supports in deference to the RACs. And with all due respect to the Park Service within -- working and operating within their policies.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

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

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: Support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

And Chair Christianson, were you able to make it back online.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, can you hear me, Sue, I support.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, okay, thank you.

So the vote is seven to one in favor of the main motion which is to adopt the proposal as modified by OSM.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. Sorry, I keep getting dropped down here. I think we're having sun flares, that's what I'm going to blame it on today.

MS. DETWILER: That must be a tough problem to have down there.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I'm sorry to brag guys but sun shining in Southeast and the fish eggs are spawning and so that's a little update from the Chairman here. So thank you, Sue, I'm sorry I keep getting dropped. My phone ran out of power and thank you to Rhonda for picking it up. So we'll go ahead and move on to the next one, Sue, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: That would be Wildlife Closure Review 22-18 and that will be Kendra Holman presenting that.

MS. HOLMAN: Can you hear me.

REPORTER: Yes.

MS. PITKA: Yes, go ahead.

MS. HOLMAN: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. My name is Kendra Holman and I'm a Wildlife Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. This proposal -- or this closure review can be found on Page 22 -- 1210 of your meeting book.

Unit -- the closure location is Unit 23 south of Rabbit Creek, Kiyak Creek and Noatak River and west of the Cutler and Redstone Mountains, Baird Mountains. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of sheep except by Federally-qualified subsistence users hunting under those regulations. A map of this location can be found on Page 1211 of your meeting book. The initial Federal subsistence hunting regulation in 1991 were established by adopting the existing State harvest limit of one ram with a 7/8ths curl in the fall hunt and one sheep with a harvest quota of 30 animals in the winter hunt. In 1991 and 1992 special actions adopted by the Federal Subsistence Board closed the sheep harvest south and east of the Noatak River. In 1998 the Board adopted the State's sheep harvest zones of Unit 23 dividing it into the Baird and DeLong Mountain ranges and closing Federal
public lands to non-Federally-qualified users in the
Baird Mountains. In 1999 a designated hunter permit
system was adopted by the Board in the Baird and DeLong
Mountain areas -- hunt areas of Units 23 and 26A. In
2014 both Federal and State sheep seasons were closed
in Units 23 and 26A. In 2016 a may be announced sheep
season in the Baird and DeLong Mountain hunt areas of
Unit 23 and delegated authority to open and close the
season, determine annual harvest quotas.

The dall sheep of the Baird Mountains
of Unit 23 are at the northwestern margin of the range
in Alaska and because of the -- the past weather events
affect their populations more than sheep populations in
other areas with more of -- than habitat and stable
range conditions. Severe weather in the 1990s resulted
in a high natural mortality dramatically reduced sheep
area -- sheep numbers in the area and caused the
closure of the general and subsistence hunts between
1991 and 1995. The sheep population ranged from 643
sheep in 2011 to 140- -- 74 sheep in 2019 representing
a 73 percent population decline. This is shown on
Figure 1 on Page 1216 of your meeting book. Between 2011 and 2019 the lamb per ewe-like sheep ratio
ranged from one to 52 lambs per 100 ewe-like sheep.
This can be seen on Figure 2 on Page 1216 of your
meeting book. Low lamb reproductivity in 2013 was
partially attributed to the long and cold 2012 and 2013
winter, late spring and record cold temperatures in May
2013. Between 2011 and 2019 the total number of rams
per ewe-like sheep ranged from 17 to 29 lambs per ewe-
like sheep seen on Figure 2, found on Page 1216 of your
meeting book. Between 2011 and 2018 the full curl ram
per ewe-like sheep ratio ranged from one to nine full
curl rams per 100 ewe-like sheep. These low ratios
indicate there are very few to no large rams available
for harvest. Low sheep abundance resulted in closures
of both the State and Federal hunting seasons in the
subsistence hunt was opened in the 1998/99 regulatory
year and harvest occurred each year through 2014 except
the 1999/2000 and the 2000/2001 regulatory years when
low numbers of full curl rams were observed during
surveys and the hunt was -- was closed.

No sheep harvest has occurred in the
Baird Mountains under State or Federal regulations
since 2014 when the seasons were closed due to
conservation concern. Between 2004 and 2014 the annual
reported sheep harvest in Unit 23 and 26A averaged 23 animals under both State hunting and Federal subsistence regulation. The majority of this harvest came from Federal subsistence regula -- registration hunts in Unit 23.

The sheep population in the Baird Mountains remains low declining 17 -- 73 percent since 2011 with few large rams and no harvestable surplus. If this closure were lifted no Federally-qualified subsistence users would be allowed to hunt sheep on Federal public lands in the Baird Mountains.

The closure would be maintained -- this closure should be maintained due to conservation concerns.

The Western Arctic National ParkLands Superintendent has a delegated authority letter to announce the Federal in-season sheep maintaining the may be announced season and delegated authority allows for flexible -- hunt flexibility and harvest opportunity in the event that the sheep population recovers and a harvestable surplus exists. The delegation of authority letter is attached as Appendix 1 found on Page 1222 of your meeting book.

Preliminary conclusion is -- the OSM conclusion is to maintain the status quo.

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

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, thank you. Hearing none, did we receive any public comment during the proposal period, thank you.

MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, this is Kendra Holman. There were no written comments received.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Operator, at this time if there's any public that would like to be recognized this is their time to speak to this agenda item. Thank you.
OPERATOR: And if you would like to make a comment please press, star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: I'm showing no comments at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Operator. We'll move on to Regional Advisory Council Chair comments.

MS. MCDAVID: Mr. Chair, this is Brooke McDavid, Northwest Arctic Coordinator.

The Northwest Arctic Council voted to maintain the status quo on Wildlife Closure 22-18. The sheep population remains very low and needs to continue to be protected. The Council noted that the population has been too low even for a to be announced winter season for Federally-qualified subsistence users. Local observations indicate a low and dwindling sheep population that is stressed by challenging winter weather conditions and predation. The Council requests ongoing monitoring of the sheep population.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move on to Tribal Native Liaison.

MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Oh, yes, sorry, there's other RACs, go ahead, Eva, you have the floor.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I do believe North Slope Regional Advisory Council Chair, Gordon Brower, is online to provide recommendation. Thank you.

MR. BROWER: Thank you, Eva. And we are on WCR22-18.

MS. PATTON: Yes, correct. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. You know we heard some concerns in Unit 23 and, in fact,
I'd like to thank Jack Reakoff for attending the North Slope Regional Subsistence Advisory Council meeting to express some concerns that we heard in our village in the Anaktuvuk area, having some Federally-qualified subsistence users identified.

So the Council recommendation is to maintain status quo.

Justification. The sheep population remains very low and needs to be continued to be protected. The Council supported maintaining the closure due to continuing conservation concerns. The Council member from Point Hope, that's Steve Oomittuk, noted that sheep haven't been seen locally in the DeLong Mountains or Cape (Indiscernible) in quite some time as their population declined. Those were his own personal knowledge regarding that.

So with that, that would be the end of our comments for WCR22-18.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Mr. Brower. Are there any other RACs who would like to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move on to 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 on this proposal.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of this closure because as of right now currently no open State season for sheep within GMU 23 and what harvest does occur, the superintendent of the Western Arctic National ParkLands has the delegated authority on Federal public lands to provide
opportunity to Federally-qualified users when appropriate. ADF&G would not consider any hunting under State regulations until such a time until the population reaches the appropriate size.

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll go on to ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine, Policy Coordinator and InterAgency Staff Committee Chair. For Wildlife Closure Review 22-18, the ISC provided the standard comment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair, National Park Service.

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

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. Mr. Chair, the National Park Service moves to maintain status quo for Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-18 which keeps Unit 23 closed to the taking of sheep except by Federally-qualified subsistence users. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, second.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The sheep population in the Baird Mountains remains low and has been declining by 73 percent since 2011 with few large rams and no harvestable surplus. Further, the State sheep season has been closed since 2014 and the Western Arctic National ParkLand superintendent has delegated authority to announce a Federal sheep season and to close sheep hunting to non-Federally-qualified users,
when necessary. No Federal sheep hunting season has been announced since 2015 due to conservation concerns. In case the sheep population would recover to the degree that a harvestable surplus exists harvest opportunities can be created through the delegation of authority in place.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any further discussion by the Board.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA, question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Question's been called. All in favor of the motion as presented signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. Thank you. We'll go ahead and move on to the next one, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: That would be Wildlife Closure Review 22-45 and that will be presented by Hannah Voorhees.

MS. VOORHEES: Hello, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. This is Hannah Voorhees, Anthropologist with Office of Subsistence Management. And I'll be presenting Wildlife Closure Review 22-45 located in Unit 23. The analysis begins on Page 1226 of the Board book.

A description of the closure reads Federal public lands within a 10 mile wide corridor, five miles either side along the Noatak River from the western boundary of Noatak National Preserve up stream
to the confluence with the Cutler River within the
northern and southern boundaries of the Eli and Agi
River drainages respectively, and within the Squirrel
River drainage are closed to caribou except by
Federally-qualified subsistence users.

This is a year-round closure that was
initiated in 2018 and has not been reviewed since.

All Federal public lands in Unit 23
were closed to caribou hunting by non-Federally-
qualified users for the 2016 to 2017 regulatory year.
That closure was due to conservation and the impact of
non-local hunting. Beginning in 2017 the current
targeted Noatak closure went into place, first as a
special action and then as a standard regulation in
2018.

In other regulatory context that did
not make it into the Board book, on May 30th [sic] this
year, the Board approved Wildlife Special Action 21-
01(a) with modification to close Noatak National
Preserve including the Nigu River portion of the
Preserve in Unit 26A in BLM-managed lands between the
Noatak and Kobuk Rivers in Unit 23 to caribou hunting
by non-Federally-qualified users from August 1st
through September 30th during the 2022 to '23 and 2023
to 2024 regulatory years.

In terms of biological background, the
Western Arctic Herd peaked near 500,000 caribou in 2003
decreasing to about 200,000 in 2016. In recent years
the herd seemed to be recovering with approximately
244,000 caribou in 2019 but the most recent photo
census in 2021 estimated the herd at only 188,000.
Local hunters account for approximately 95 percent of
the total herd harvest.

The next -- effects of the closure to-
date. The most recent subsistence survey of caribou
harvest in Noatak dates to 2016 to 2017, there are no
new data available that would allow for a comparison of
household harvest before and after implementation of
the closure. However, testimony reflecting the success
of the closure for Noatak has been given by Northwest
Arctic Council members every year since the closure was
implemented. If the closure is lifted, non-Federally-
qualified users would be able to hunt caribou on
Federal public lands along the Noatak River and within
the Squirrel, Eli and Agi River drainages. Of note, since the approval of WSA21-01(a) following production of your Board book, this would apply except for August and September during the next two years when the targeted closure, currently under review, will be encompassed by and duplicated by the new larger temporary closure area. If the closure is lifted this could result in more user conflict and interfere with caribou harvest by Federally-qualified subsistence users.

The OSM conclusion is to maintain the status quo with the following justification. The current closure is still necessary to continue subsistence uses of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd for Federally-qualified subsistence users, specifically Noatak residents. The underlying factor leading to the closure, user conflict, has persisted overall in Unit 23 but has been mitigated in the closure area. Additionally the herd is now being managed at the preservative declining level under the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group management framework.

Thank you.

That concludes my presentation and I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any questions for Staff.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, was there any public testimony given during this proposal period. Thank you.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Was there any public testimony received during this proposal period, thank you.

MS. VOORHEES: Mr. Chair, my apologies, I had an issue with mute. This is Hannah Voorhees again. A written public comment was received from Resident Hunters of Alaska. The group supports eliminating the closure because it excludes non-local residents of Alaska. They suggest eliminating access
to non-resident hunters through the Board of Game process instead.

The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group submitted the following brief comment to the Federal Subsistence Board on February 3rd, 2022. The working group voted to support WCR22-45 and the continuation of the current closure.

And that was the extend of the comments.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Operator, at this time is there anybody online who would like to be recognized to speak to this agenda item, now would be the time to be recognized.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: And as a reminder, for any comments please press star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: I'm showing no comment, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

We'll move on to Regional Advisory Council recommendation.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, there were several Regional Advisory Councils that had comments on these and might start with Western Interior.

MR. REAKOFF: Mr. Chairman, Jack Reakoff.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, Jack, you have the floor and Sue will call it from here forward.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Okay.

MR. REAKOFF: The Western Interior chose to defer this to back to the affected region, we didn't take any comments on it.
Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Northwest Arctic.

MS. MCDAVID: For the record, Brooke McDavid, Northwest Arctic Council Coordinator. The Northwest Arctic Council voted to maintain the status quo for WCR22-45. The Council recommended maintaining the targeted caribou closure in Unit 23 as the success of this closure has been time tested now and protects the opportunity of subsistence hunters along the Noatak River and other river drainages.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: North Slope.

MR. BROWER: Good afternoon, Gordon Brower, Regional Advisory Council Chair for the North Slope. And the North Slope did make a recommendation. The Council recommendation is to maintain status quo. Justification. The Council recommended maintaining the targeted caribou closure in Unit 23 in support of Noatak to continue to reduce previously significant user conflict in the area and because the targeted closure provides a needed priority for subsistence users to put food on the table.

That's the end of our comment.

MS. DETWILER: Seward Peninsula.

MS. PILCHER: Mr. Chairman. Members of the Board. For the record, Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator for the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council. The Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council voted to maintain the status quo for WCR22-45. The Council recommended maintaining the status quo because the closure is still necessary to continue subsistence uses of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and due to the proximity of Unit 23 to the closure area -- excuse me -- and due to the proximity of the Unit 23 closure area to Unit 22.

Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Mr. Chair, I believe those are all the Regional Advisory Council recommendations.
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions from the Board for any RAC Chair.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll move on to the State -- I mean the Tribal Native Liaison.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Orville Lind. There were no comments or recommendations during the consultations on Wildlife Closure Review 22-45.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. State Liaison, Mr. Mulligan.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, sir. For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports the elimination of this closure. Harvest by non-Federally-qualified users is minuscule when compared to the overall harvest on the Western Arctic Herd. Bulls are overwhelmingly harvested by non-Federally-qualified users and the herd's bull to cow ratio is above the objective and there is still a harvestable surplus available to meet the amount necessary for subsistence. If migration of the herd is a consideration of this closure caused by non-Federally-qualified users hunting practices, and/or airplane activity, then, as we have previously stated on comments on this issue before, there are more appropriate mechanisms through the State's public regulatory process available to address those issues.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Moving on, ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine. And for Wildlife Closure Review 22-45 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

That opens up the floor for Board deliberation, comments or questions.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair, National Park Service. Mr. Chair, the National Park Service moves to maintain status quo for Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-45. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MS. PITKA: I'll second.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. The Board enacted the current closure for the continuation of subsistence uses of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The underlying factor leading to the closure in 2018, user conflict, has persisted in Unit 23. Feedback from Noatak residents indicates that the current closure has reduced user conflicts resulting in more successful caribou hunts and allowing for the continuation of subsistence uses. Further, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Management Plan indicates the population to be at a preservative declining level and the Federal Subsistence Board just supported the special action request, WSA21-01 to close large proportions of Federal lands in Unit 23 to non-Federally-qualified subsistence users for one regulatory cycle.

Since the closure has been enacted user conflicts within the closure area have been reduced and the hunt experiences and harvest success of Federally-qualified subsistence users have improved.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted)
CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. All right, the floor is open now for any Board questions, comments, or discussion on this motion.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. PELTOLA: Question, BIA.

MR. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, all in favor.....

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Sue, do you want to do roll call on this one, it got quiet there. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: I was just wondering if I got cut off here. I'll try roll call then.

Starting with -- the motion on the floor is to maintain the status quo on this closure and I'll start out with the National Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.

MS. CREACHBAUM: National Park Service supports.

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 based on the recommendation by the affected Regional Advisory Councils.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.
Chris McKee, BLM.

MR. MCKEE: BLM supports in deference to the Councils.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service also supports in deference to the Councils.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

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

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support as stated.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you, Charlie.

Chair Christianson.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Did we lose you Tony.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: No, I'm here, thank you. I said, yes, I support.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you. The motion passes unanimously. I believe that brings us to our final two proposals on the non-consensus agenda. Eastern Interior's items were all on the consensus agenda and so that brings us to North Slope with their two proposals, WP22-54 and that will be presented by Kendra Holman, if you're ready to go on, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, we'll go on, thank you. Kendra, you have the floor.

MS. HOLMAN: Hello, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. This is Kendra Holman and I'm a Wildlife
Biologist with the Office of Subsistence Management. Wildlife Proposal WP22-54 submitted by the North Slope Regional Advis -- Subsistence Regional Advisory Council can be found on Page 1253 of your meeting book.

This proposal requests modification of the hunt area boundary for moose in Unit 26A identified on Map 1 on Page 1256 of your meeting book.

The proponent states that the moose hunt opportunity in this is -- in this -- is particularly beneficial in the community of Atqasuk and Utqiagvik that have the closest access to the hunt area. The current boundary of 156 west longitude is a 70 mile trip by boat up the Ikpikpuk River for residents of Utqiagvik and expanded -- an expanded hunt area would allow moose harvest west of the Alaktak River and would be beneficial to the local community hunters that don't have to -- that have to travel so far.

The Council recommends establishing this new boundary to follow the natural landscape feature of the Alaktak River which is a tributary to the Ikpikpuk River and runs north/south to Admiralty Bay. The Alaktak River is well known by local communities and will provide a natural hunt area boundary that is easy to identify rather than the current abstract 156 west longitude that is very difficult to locate on the ground. Establishing the hunt area west of the Alaktak River would help local communities and families that hunt and have cabins on the Chipp River and have access to this moose hunt area. Council members have related their experiences of how that encountering a moose in the area is opportunistic and therefore the harvest is anticipated to still be low.

From 1991 to 1996 there was a 75 percent moose population decline prompting stricter State regulation. In '96 the Federal Subsistence Board closed moose hunting to -- on all Federal public lands in Unit 26A except in that portion of the Colville River drainage down stream from the mouth of the -- the -- the Anaktuvuk River. The area did remain open to Federally-qualified subsistence users. From 2002 to 2014 State and Federal hunting regulations were liberalized as the moose population had started increasing. In 1998 [sic]. In 2014 the season was
reduced in length and the non-resident draw hunt closed
due to the moose population decline.

Prior to the 1940s the moose were
scarce along the North Slope. Subsequently populations
expanded along the limited riparian habitat of the
major drainages and had become well established in the
southeast portion of Unit 26A. The northern extent of
the moose's population on the North Slope is limited by
habitat availability. Since the late 1970s ADF&G has
conducted several aerial surveys in all the
major drainages of Unit 26A to assess population status
and recruitment of short yearlings. Between 1970 and
2021 the Unit 26A moose population fluctuated ranging
from 294 moose to 1,535 moose. This can be seen on
Table 1 on Page 1260 of your meeting book. And the
percentage of short yearlings ranged from one to 25
percent. The periods of population declines resulted
from poor calf survival and high adult mortality. Moose mortality was likely due to
malnourishment, bacterial diseases, mineral
deficiencies, predations from wolves and bears, weather
factors and competition with snowshoe hare for browse.
In 2008 weights of short yearlings averaged 322 pounds,
which is the lightest recorded in Alaska and an
indicator of malnourishment. Moose harvest levels have
responded to population levels and
regulations. The peak estimated abundance of moose was
in 1991. The average harvest level at that time was 57
moose per year. In 1995 restricted regulations
implemented and the harvest dropped to 14 moose. In
1996 the use of aircraft in the area was banned and the
moose harvest dropped to an average of four moose per
year until 2004. In 2006 regulations began to be
liberalized including a State draw permit hunt and the
use of aircraft to hunt moose which lasted until 2015.
Non-resident moose hunting in Unit 26A has been closed
since 2014. From 2009 to 2019 the average reported
moose harvest was 3.73 per year. This can be found on
Table 3, which is on Page 1262 of your meeting book.

The proposed changes will have effect
on the moose population of Unit 26A. Regulations of
the affected area would change from one bull during the
season of August 1 to September 1 to one moose during a
season of July 1st to September 14. The change is not
expected to impact the moose population or harvesting
levels. The prohibition of harvesting a calf or a cow
accompanied by a calf would be applicable and would
help to mitigate any conservation concerns.

While the moose population in Unit 26A is below State management objectives, adoption of this proposal is not expected to have the -- to affect the population due to very low harvest. Adoption of the proposal also increases hunting opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users by providing a longer season and a more liberal harvest limit within the affected area and makes it more feasible for Federally-qualified subsistence users to reach the hunt area. Currently the number of animals reported harvest in Unit 26A is less than one percent of the population.

OSM's conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-55 with modification to revise the hunt area descriptor to Unit 26A, that portion west of the eastern shore of Admiralty Bay and the Alaktak River to 155 west longitude excluding the Colville River drainage, one moose, however, you may not take a calf or -- or -- or cow accompanied by a calf.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to address any questions.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, hearing none, any public testimony received during the proposal period.

MS. HOLMAN: Mr. Chair, this is Kendra. There was no public -- written public comments received on this proposal.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Kendra. Operator, this is the time anybody online who would like to be recognized to speak to this agenda item, now is the time.

OPERATOR: As a reminder, if you would like to make a comment please press star, one.
OPERATOR: For any comments please press star, one.

OPERATOR: No comments at this time.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll go ahead and move on, Tribal Liaison.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. Did we jump over Regional Advisory Council recommendation, sorry about that guys.

MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. And we do have the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Chair, Gordon Brower, online. Thank you.

MR. BROWER: Thank you, Madame Coordinator Eva. I'm going to miss calling you that when you move over, was it to the Gates of The Arctic, I think, that you were moving on as our long time Coordinator.

Yeah, Mr. Chair, Gordon Brower, Regional -- North Slope Regional Subsistence Advisory Council Chair. We deliberated on this more than once before and has been a source of dialogue for many years about the descriptor on moose. The Council supported and it was our proposal with OSM modification clarifying the hunt area boundary descriptor. The Council submitted this proposal to provide easier access to traditional hunting areas along the Alaktak River for Federally-qualified users. It's much easier to look at a land feature and determine whether you're in or out of a boundary than turning on a GPS to determine your outside of the 156 west longitude, which also puts that boundary about two miles to the west and until you reach somewhere around Price River or Price...
or Valley of the Willows area then you can get in the
hunt area and there are some more opportunistic
provisions we're looking at that once in awhile a moose
will come and meander down the river and it's much
easier to use the bank of the Alaktak River until it
terminates up by Ikpikpuk where the Chipp and Alaktak
reach up that way and then -- and -- so right now the
subsistence hunters from Utqiagvik and Atqasuk have to
come extremely long distances and when we get to
these places we're already committed to bringing
probably in excess of, you know, $700 worth of fuel to
got this far to get to go to our hunt areas and long
distances to reach the current hunt area, which is
difficult to access and prohibitive due to high cost of
fuel. And we know that fuel is one of those things
that, you know, sometimes families subsidize each other
in order to try to be more successful.

Changing the hunt area boundary so that
it follows the natura river corridor rather than 156
west longitude will also help the hunters know for
certain they are in -- within bounds.

The Council also noticed that this
proposal would not pose a conservation concern because
hunters can only travel to the hunt area on occasion
due to the high cost and time involved and the moose
are not always available for harvest along the river
corridors. Council members reported that moose are
often in excess of 130 miles from Utqiagvik so harvest
is still very opportunistic.

The Council supports the OSM
recommendation to include the eastern coastline of the
Admiralty Bay as it clarifies the description of the
hunt area boundary where the Alaktak River enters the
bay.

That concludes our comments on the --
and our justification for the proposal.

Thank you.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Appreciate
that. Any other RACs wish to speak to this.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay. We'll move on to the Tribal Native Liaison comment.

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

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. We'll move to the State Liaison comment.

MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the record, Alaska Department of Fish and Game opposes changing the border for any moose hunt in GMU 26A because it will result in a misalignment in Federal and State regulations possibly creating confusion amongst not only the hunters but enforcement officers who are on the ground.

Thank you, sir.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none, we'll go ahead and move on. ISC recommendation.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is Robbin LaVine again. For Wildlife Proposal 22-44 the InterAgency Staff Committee provided the standard comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MR. HEINLEIN: Mr. Chair, Tom Heinlein,
BLM.

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

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you. Mr. Chair, this is Tom Heinlein, Bureau of Land Management. I move to adopt Proposal WP22-54 as modified by OSM and if I get a second I'll explain why I intend to vote in support of my motion.

MR. BROWER: Second.

MR. HEINLEIN: Thank you. If this proposal is adopted it would increase harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified subsistence users by providing for a longer season and more liberal -- liberal harvest limit while also making it more feasible for hunters to reach this new hunt area. Harvest in the area is currently very low and is not expected.....

(Teleconference interference - participants not muted - on hold)

MR. HEINLEIN: .....to affect the moose population. The modified hunt area descriptor does not leave any gaps for ambiguous areas while using a hunt boundary that follows the natural river corridor more easily know where they're located. The modification is also consistent with the recommendation of the North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question on the motion.

MR. SCHMID: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead and -- question's been called. All in favor of the motion as presented signify by saying aye.
IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries unanimously. Thank you. We'll go ahead and go on to the North Slope last proposal. Thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Yes, Mr. Chair, that's Wildlife Proposal 22-56 and that will be presented by Tom Plank.

MR. PLANK: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board. Again, 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 WP22-56 submitted by Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission requesting that brown bear harvest limit for that portion of Unit 26A within Gates of the Arctic National Park be increased from one bear to two bears and that is starting on Page 477.

The proponent submitted this proposal because residents of Anaktuvuk Pass have observed brown bear populations growing and believe that the harvest is far below sustainable yield. The Commission states that the proposal would afford Anaktuvuk Pass residents hunting brown bears additional harvest opportunities.

At its January 2020 meeting the Board of Game adopted Proposal 29 to increase the resident State brown bear harvest limit in Unit 26A from one bear per year to two bears per year. The Board of Game concluded that there was no biological concern, furthermore, they concluded that the residents harvest was low and comparing data from eight other units with a two bear harvest limit, the change in harvest limit was not likely to increase bear harvest significantly.

Densities of brown bear vary widely in Unit 26A with densities highest in the foothills of the Brooks Range and lowest in the northern portion of the unit. The current population estimate for brown bears in Unit 26A is 900 to 1120 bears. Brown bear densities and reproductive output within Gates of the Arctic
National Park are among the lowest in Alaska. Limited food resources and a short growing season are likely major factors contributing to these demographic patterns.

The ADF&G management goal is to keep the harvest at or below an average of five percent of the bear population during any two-year period. Under these guidelines, the maximum allowable harvest would be approximately 151 bears per year.

Between 2008 and 2018 total reported harvest in Unit 26A ranged from 10 to 31 bears and averaged 20 bears per year. With the resident reported harvest, on average, accounting for eight bears per year. A significant management problem in Unit 26A continues to be unreported harvest and non-compliance with bear hunting regulations, however, community-based harvest assessment studies indicate a potential of three to four harvests of brown bears per year that are not reported but does not appear to be a level that causes a biological problem.

Current harvest rates are below the State recommended sustainable harvest rate for Unit 26A. This proposal may result in some increase in harvest but it is not expected to increase total harvest rates above the minimal sustainable level but it would increase harvest opportunities for Federally-qualified users, specifically within Unit 26A, the portion within the Gates of the Arctic National Park.

Adoption of this proposal, as submitted would retain the more restrictive harvest limit of one bear per year on other Federal public lands within Unit 26A, although under State regulations Federally-qualified subsistence users can already harvest two bears on these Federal lands not within the Gates of the Arctic National Park.

The OSM conclusion is to support Proposal WP22-56.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of the Board.

I'd be happy to field any questions.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Any questions for Staff.
(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right, was there any public testimony received during the proposal period. Thank you.

MR. PLANK: Yes, Mr. Chair, there were two written public comments, both opposing citing concerns over low density and the low reproductive rates of bears in the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The commenters are concerned of an increase potential for overharvest.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Tom. Operator, at this time make available anybody online who would like to publicly testify, this is their opportunity to speak to this agenda item.

Thank you.

OPERATOR: Certainly. Once again that is star, one.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: Once again that is star, one if you would like to speak at this time.

(Pause)

OPERATOR: I'm showing no one in the cue at this time, sir.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, very much. At this time, we'll, again, call on our Regional Advisory Council Chair to give us the position. Thank you.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I believe that's the North Slope.

MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Board. I believe Gordon Brower is still online.
MR. BROWER: Yes.

MS. PATTON: Great, thank you.

MR. BROWER: Thank you. Gordon Brower, North Slope Regional Advisory Council Chair. We rose to support WP22-56 on the brown bear in Unit 26A, increase harvest limits. Justification. The Council believes it is important to recognize that this proposal came from the Gates of the Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission based on the request of residents of Anaktuvuk Pass to increase the harvest limit of brown bears. This regulation also -- this regulation change is also consistent with current harvest limits for brown bear in Unit 26A and 24 under State regulations and create more uniformity across different land jurisdictions. Council Member Williams of Anaktuvuk Pass noted that typically they do not harvest many bears but when the brown bear population is increasing they've become more frequent around the village and it would be helpful to have the opportunity to harvest more.

That is the extent of our comments, thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you for your comment. I'm not sure if Tony Christianson is still online.

(No comments)

MS. DETWILER: Madame Chair. I'm just getting some messages that people have been dropping off. I think it's those solar flares down in Southeast.

MS. PITKA: Okay. So thank you, Mr. Brower, for your comments. Tribal, Alaska Native Corporation comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair. This is Robbin LaVine standing in for Orville Lind. there were no comments or recommendations during the consultation on this proposal.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much. And now we're on to Alaska Department of Fish and Game
MR. MULLIGAN: Thank you, Madame Chair.
For the record, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game supports this proposal. Harvest of brown bears in GMU 26A is low and very few are reported harvested within the Park boundaries. Only Federally-qualified users of the area are allowed to hunt within the Gates of the Arctic National Park so this increase in the bag limit will only apply to those limited amount of the hunters.
In other parts of the state a change in bag limit of brown bears from one to two has resulted only in a moderate or no increase in harvest. We also support the proposal as it aligns State and Federal bag limits.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, very much for your comments. InterAgency Staff Committee comments.

MS. LAVINE: Thank you, Madame Chair.
This is Robbin LaVine with the InterAgency Staff Committee. The InterAgency Staff Committee forwarded the following comments.

While adoption of Proposal WP22-56 would provide additional opportunity for Federally-qualified subsistence users, conservation concerns also exist for this brown bear population. Brown bear densities and reproductive output within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are among the lowest in Alaska. Limited food resources and a short growing season are likely major factors contributing to these demographic patterns. Based on reported subsistence use within the region there does not appear to be a subsistence need to justify doubling the harvest limit for brown bears from one to two within Gates of the Arctic portion of Game Management Unit 26A. According to harvest survey reports within Anaktuvuk Pass only four to 10 percent of households use brown bears and across Game Management Unit 26A, on average, only eight bears were harvested per year between 1985 and 2014, and, on average, only half of the harvest was by Alaska residents. Reported brown bear harvest has remained consistently low over the last 20 years not reflecting an increasing subsistence need and low density and recruitment within the brown bear population across GMU 26A increases the risk of overharvest.
The ISC acknowledges the concern for the conservation of the brown bear population within Gates of the Arctic, this proposal contradicts the affected land management agency's mission where harvesting predators is not permitted when there is no documented subsistence need.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Robbin. And so we'll go back to Board discussion, deliberation. Thank you, Rhonda, for stepping in.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. BIA would like to express our utmost concern about the last sentence in the ISC position, or comments, similar to those that I forwarded when we deliberated 22-46 in GMU 24B as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Gene. Let the record reflect that statement. Any other Board comments, discussion, deliberation prior to Board action.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is open for Board action.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Mr. Chair, National Park Service.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, you have the floor.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thanks, Mr. Chair. The National Park Service moves to adopt Wildlife Proposal 22-56 with the modification to only adopt this proposal for one full regulatory cycle, 2022 to 2024. Following a second I will explain why I intend to support my motion.
MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconds.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Thank you. Wildlife Proposal 22-56 requests that the brown bear harvest limit for that portion of Unit 26A within Gates of the Arctic National Park be increased from one to two bears. The analysis of this proposal points out the sensitive conservation status of this species. Brown bear densities with 33.4 bears per 1,000 square kilometers and reproductive output within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are amongst the lowest in Alaska. Limited food resources and a short growing season major are likely factors to contributing to these demographic patterns. From harvest survey reports within Anaktuvuk Pass, four to 10 percent of the households use brown bears. Further, across all of Unit 26A, on average, only eight bears were harvested per year between 1985 and 2014. Although reported brown bear harvest has remained consistently low over the last few decades, low density and recruitment within the brown bear population across 26A increases the risk of overharvest.

In support of our Subsistence Resource Commission submitting this proposal and supporting North Slope Advisory -- Regional Advisory Council, we do support increasing the bag limit from one to two bears per year but only for one regulatory cycle. This would allow us to better understand both the subsistence need and the potential ramifications on the population because we do have a strong conservation concern for this species in that region. The information on the level of additional harvest following the increase in the bag limit is congruent with our recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation as referenced in ANILCA, Title VIII, Section .805(c) and as laid out in the NPS management policy, Chapter 4.42 [sic] that states: The Service will assess the results of managing plant and animal populations by conducting follow up monitoring or other studies to determine the impacts of the management methods on non-targeted and targeted components of the system [sic].

Thus, we move to adopt this proposal for two years, one full regulatory cycle to support those identified immediate needs of the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission and the North Slope Regional Advisory Council.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, go ahead, Gene.

MR. PELTOLA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. BIA would move to modify the existing motion to strike the two year, one regulatory cycle requirement similar to when the Board engaged in a discussion and vote on WP22-46 for GMU 24B as:

1. In the analysis there was not identified a potential biological problem.

2. That in the lack of other protein sources bear meat can be utilized supplement those that may not be readily available otherwise, and;

3. There are precautions in place with the existing Program without putting a temporary limitation on the regulations to address any concerns that may arise.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. BROWER: Second that amendment.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, there's a motion on the floor with a motion now to amend the original motion to strike the language of the two year. Any further Board discussion about the modification language.

(No comments)

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the question.

MR. BROWER: Question.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

Roll call, Sue, on this motion to strike that language on the original motion of the two year. Thank you.
MS. DETWILER: Okay. Yes start with Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: Support.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sara Boario, Fish and Wildlife Service.

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service opposes.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Sarah Creachbaum, National Park Service.

MS. CREACHBAUM: Since the modification is outside of National Park Service regulation and policy, the Park Service opposes.

MS. DETWILER: Okay, thank you.

Thomas Heinlein, BLM.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: The Forest Service supports the amended motion.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support the amendment.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support the amendment.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: I support,
thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you. The motion passes five to two.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you, Sue. We'll go back to the main motion, is there any discussion on the main motion now that it reads, to take the two year cap off.

MR. LORD: Mr. Chair, if there was a second, I didn't hear it.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, there was a second -- sorry, Ken, so the maker of the motion and was seconded.....

REPORTER: The main motion was seconded by BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA.

MS. DETWILER: I believe the motion was -- oh, the first.....

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The first motion was seconded by BIA, I believe.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA seconded the motion.....

MS. DETWILER: Yeah, I.....

MR. PELTOLA: .....the first motion and Charlie seconded the amendment. Thank you.

REPORTER: That's correct.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you. Call for the question on the amended motion.

MR. PELTOLA: Question, BIA.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Roll call, Sue, please.

MS. DETWILER: National Park Service, Sarah Creachbaum.
MS. CREACHBAUM: Oppose.

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

MS. BOARIO: Fish and Wildlife Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Gene Peltola, BIA.

MR. PELTOLA: BIA supports as recommended by the Regional Advisory Council.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

BLM Tom Heinlein.

MR. HEINLEIN: BLM supports.

MS. DETWILER: Dave Schmid, Forest Service.

MR. SCHMID: Forest Service supports.

MS. DETWILER: Public Member Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Thank you.

Public Member Charlie Brower.

MR. BROWER: I support, thank you.

MS. DETWILER: Chair Christianson.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes, I support, thank you, Sue.

MS. DETWILER: Motion passed seven to one.

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay, thank you. Well, that motion passes, we'll go ahead and conclude the business for today. That will give our partners there a little time to look at the maps so tomorrow we'll be picking up the final non-consensus agenda item, WP-something-10. So we'll get started
there first thing in the morning and then we'll move on
to adoption of the rest of the agenda items.

So tomorrow look forward to coming back
and doing business at 9:00 a.m. Thank everybody today
for the diligence and the patience and stepping in
where we have dropped calls, thank you, Rhonda and
Staff, and we'll catch everyone back here tomorrow at
9:00 a.m.

MR. BROWER: Goodnight, thank you.

Thank you.

MS. PITKA: Thank you, have a good
night.

MR. SCHMID: Thanks all.

(Off record)

(PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)
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:

THAT the foregoing, contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD MEETING, VOLUME III taken electronically by our firm on the 14th day of April;

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 15th day of May 2022.

____________________________________
Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22