FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD PUBLIC MEETING

August 2, 1999

Fish and Wildlife Service
1101 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, Alaska
Gordon Watson Conference Room

Members Present:

Mitch Demientieff, Chair (Telephonically)
Niles, Cesar, BIA
David Allen, U.S. F&W Service
Curt Wilson, BLM
Judy Gotlieb, NPS
Ken Thompson, U.S. Forest Service
Keith Goltz, Solicitor
MR. BOYD: We have Ken Thompson who is representing
Jim Capland, and is with the Forest Service. Keith Goltz
from the Solicitor's office. Ida Hildebrand, BIA. Niles
Cesar, Board member, BIA. Dave Allen, Board member, Fish and
Wildlife Service. George Constantino, Fish and Wildlife
Service. Judy Gottleib, Board member, Park Service. Sandy
Rabinowitch, Staff Committee, Park Service. Curt Wilson,
BLM. I'm assuming, Curt, that you're representing the BLM
Board member?

MR. WILSON: Yes.

MR. BOYD: And that's the Board that's present today,
Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, good.

MR. BOYD: The first item is to review the agenda.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Unit 23 sheep, is that right?

MR. BOYD: Yeah, we have Unit 23 sheep status report
and then we go to the special actions on 99-02 and 99-04.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: 99-04 and 99-02.

MR. BOYD: Right. It doesn't appear that anyone in
the room has any comments on the agenda.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, good. Well, let's go
ahead then.

MR. BOYD: All right. We'll go ahead with the status
report on Unit 23 sheep. I'm assuming that's going to be
you, Mr. Spirites.

MR. SPIRITES: Hi, this is Dave Spirites. Do you want
me to go ahead with that status report?

MR. BOYD: Yeah, go ahead, Dave.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Please.

MR. SPIRITES: Yeah, okay, on Friday, July 16th, NPS
wildlife biologist Brad Shults informed me of the results of
the cooperative sheep count in the Baird and DeLongs that was
done by our wildlife biologist and an ADF&G biologist. And I
asked that he set up a meeting with Jim Dau, ADF&G wildlife
biologist and with Willie Goodwin to review that count that
day. The two biologists informed us that the number of 7/8ths
or larger rams counted in the Bairds had dropped from 70 to
28, and they stated that this was the lowest number counted
in 13 years.

The told me that the decline was probably caused by
older sheep reaching the end of their life span in addition
to the 16 that were harvested under the Federal subsistence
hunt in 1998. And in the De Longs, they only counted 12
7/8ths or larger rams. Based on these numbers, Jim Dau
stated that ADF&G supported an emergency closure for sheep in
the Bairds and DeLongs. And they scheduled an open public
meeting on Wednesday on July 21st to inform the public about
the results of the hunt. We attended that meeting and Jim
presented the count numbers along with Brad Shults. The
public was satisfied that the general population trend was
still encouraging and that land production still favored
recovery, however, they also agreed that the number of full-
curl rams was dropping off and that there was no longer a
harvestable surplus. Jim Dau asked the public if anyone was
interested in supporting a sheep hunt, no one responded.

I wanted to make sure to see if there was any
traditional, ecological knowledge that any local person might
have to indicate a difference of opinion. Willie Goodwin
supported the closure and Barb Armstrong consulted with
several other RAC members who also supported a closure.
Based the advice of the wildlife biologist, we -- that is,
Ken Adkisson and Jim Dau went to discuss the numbers on the
radio and I talked this over with John Cody, who agreed that
we -- we should coordinate an ADF&G emergency order closing
the hunt with my announcement that there was no harvestable
permits for the sheep. And this was done -- we were trying
to wait for the state of Alaska to put out an emergency order
but because our hunt was scheduled to begin on August 1st, on
the 28th I released a press release stating that no Federal
subsistence permits would be issued for sheep in the Bairds
and DeLongs. And just a few minutes ago I spoke with Jim Dau
and he's anticipating the actual release of emergency order
by ADF&G at any time.

MR. BOYD: Okay.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Tom, I'm going to ask you to
go ahead and help me out because I don't have any of the
materials here.

MR. BOYD: Sure. Dave, does that conclude your
report?
MR. SPIRITES: Yeah, pretty much. Either Ken Adkisson or I would be happy to answer any questions.

MR. BOYD: This is a status report, Mr. Chair. I think the upshot here is that the Park Superintendent does have the authority, as delegated by the Board, not to issue permits this year. It's already been delegated so no Board action is required.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: Based on the survey that has been done.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Are we ready to move on to 99-04?

MR. BOYD: Yes.

MR. WOLF: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. WOLF: Yes, Hi, this is Matt Wolf. I am also representing Foundation for North American Wild Sheep and I asked the Federal Subsistence Board if they would consider changing the airplane -- use of aircraft in the harvest of these sheep for this hunt.

I don't think that proper customary and traditional, if any, has been used, and at this time I ask the Federal Subsistence Board to withdraw the use of airplanes for this hunt if, in fact, it does happen to occur in the future.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, I think we could probably deal with that in terms of our normal regulatory process in the spring. When is our deadline for proposals, Tom?

MR. BOYD: We'll be submitting a call for proposals in late August.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Right.

MR. BOYD: And it will culminate in early November.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Right. Because there's not going to be a hunt this year so we can deal with that -- your request in terms of the normal regulatory process.

MR. WOLF: Very good, thank you.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other discussion on this matter?

MR. OLSEN: Yeah, Mark Olsen here. Just curious as to why we have such a tight rope here between the season and the emergency closure? It just seems that we could have had information or should have had information prior to such a deadline here.

MR. SPIRITES: Yeah, this is Dave Spirtes. I think the real problem is that timing of the count. We basically have to wait until the snow melts before we can get an accurate count. So we really weren't able to start until about the 4th of July. And then by the time you get several weeks of good weather to count all the sample areas, we're basically only about a week before the season starts. But the wildlife biologists tell me there's no other option for doing an accurate count.

MR. OLSEN: Is this normal as far as time frames?

MR. SPIRITES: Yes. Normally that's the -- normally we have to wait for the snow to melt and we really can't get an accurate count until July.

MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other discussion? If not, let's move on to 99-04 then.

MR. BOYD: Okay. 99--04, we have Donna Dewhurst that will be moving forward to present the Staff report.

MS. DEWHURST: 99-04 is the request for a Federal subsistence harvest in Unit 10, Unimak Island. It would be for one caribou harvest limit and the season would be September 1st through March 31st of the year 2000. And it would include a designated hunter provision.

As far as the analysis goes, to boil it down to a nutshell, the current estimate for Unimak Island is 600 caribou. Recent surveys have shown good calf production so the population appears to be healthy and appears to have good growth potential. So biologically, there's no reason to oppose the request for a Federal subsistence harvest for this year.

MR. BOYD: That concludes the Staff report, Mr. Chair. The Staff Committee recommendation is that they recommend adopting the proposal to open a caribou hunt in
Unit 10, Unimak Island, September 1 to March 31. One caribou harvest limit with a designated hunter provision. The most recent population estimate for caribou is 600. Just in short, we feel like there is no real problem biologically.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Now, are we ready for public testimony?

MR. BOYD: Well, we have Refuge comments, then State comments and then public comments.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: And then we go to Council and Board deliberations.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: We'll go to Refuge right now to see if Refuge has any comments on this particular proposal?

MR. PEOTTER: This is Rick Peotter from Izembek Refuge. We have no comments but we support the proposal.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, Fish and Game comments.

MR. SELLERS: Hello, this is Dick Sellers. I was waiting to see if Matt Robus was going to respond, I don't know if Matt's still on the line or not.

But in general, we support harvesting this Unimak Island population. And because the vast majority of the land is Federal land, it seems to be the most expedient way to allow for a harvest.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Was that Matt trying to comment?

MR. SELLERS: No, this was Dick Sellers.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Public testimony, I'm not sure?

MR. BOYD: Well, we don't have anyone in the room that wants to comment on this particular proposal. I'm not sure about those on-line. I might ask, Mr. Chair, there have been a number of people, about two or three beeps since we started this discussion and perhaps we should pause to get those people coming on line to identify themselves.
MR. ROBUS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Boyd, this is Matt Robus of Fish and Game. I was one of the beeps because I made an error here and dropped myself off, so I'm back up.

MR. BOYD: Okay.

MR. ROBUS: And I wondered, did you ask for any State input on this one, yet?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, we did. Dick Sellers made some comments. Do you have additional comments for us, Matt?

MR. ROBUS: No, that's fine. If Dick covered it that's fine and I'll try to stay on the line here now.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: And there were one or two other beeps. Are there any new parties that have joined us in this? Apparently not. We are at the point of public comment on Special Action 99-04 to open up a hunt Unimak Island, Unit 10 for caribou.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Is there anyone on-line wishing to testify under public comment?

(No response)

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Hearing none, we'll move on into Regional Council comment.

MR. OLSEN: Mark Olsen here.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mark, go ahead.

MR. OLSEN: I believe this is the first I have heard of the SAPCH herd being divided into two different units. Is this the first time it's being done? How is this strategy going?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Do you have someone that could respond to Mark, Tom?

MS. DEWHURST: Yeah, I assume Dick Sellers would.

MR. SELLERS: Dick Sellers with Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Just for a long time had different hunting regulations, the Unimak Island segment of the Southern Peninsula population and we could maybe have some discussion
about how distinct the group of caribou are on Unimak Island. But given the logistics and the extent of the habitat there that it's appropriate to consider different regulations for those caribou on the island versus the mainland, and that's not a new phenomenon.

MR. OLSEN: Is this open to the public or just the residents of the Unit?

MR. BOYD: Mr. Olsen, this is Tom Boyd. The action before us is specific to those communities in the local area, you know, those who have customary and traditional use determination.

MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other comments?

MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della from King Cove.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Hello.

MS. TRUMBLE: Hi. Mr. Chair, we just wanted to say that we do support this hunt. And we also would just like to add of a concern that we've been sparse for these last couple of years and that is an accurate survey of the caribou on Unimak. But it hasn't been totally complete the last two years because of weather and various conditions and timing, whether someone can get out and fly.

But we do support the hunt for the people in our region and we also, like I say, would really hope that this next year that an accurate survey by State and Federal can be completed.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

MS. SHELLIKOF: Gilda Shellikof.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MS. SHELLIKOF: Yeah, I would like to reiterate what Della said about getting an accurate count of the caribou on the island. Because I think that's very important especially when they're going to open up the seasons. Because we don't want to end up like we did the last four years and not have any caribou hunt at all.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Is there any response to that, Tom?
MR. BOYD: Let me go to either the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or the Refuge to see if they have a response to that.

MR. ROBUS: This is Matt Robus from the Refuge. Everything is copacetic. Yeah, good comments. We did have trouble this year getting out and we've got some plans with Dick Sellers' office to step up on our efforts to get a good count on that, and we'll proceed that way.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Any other Regional Council comments?

MR. OLSEN: This is Mark Olsen again. Is there a number of permits that are going to be issued or is that an issue?

MR. BOYD: It's not an issue. The proposal is not limiting the number of permits.

MR. OLSEN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other Regional Council comments? Hearing none, let's go ahead and advance this to Board deliberation.

MR. D. ALLEN: Are you ready for a motion?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, Dave Allen, I move that we adopt Special Action S99-04 to open the season as represented in the Staff analysis proposal.

MR. CESAR: I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, who seconded the motion?

MR. CESAR: Mr. Cesar, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, thank you. Discussion on the motion. Hearing none, all those in favor of the motion please signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Those opposed, same sign.

(No opposing votes)
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Motion carries. 99-02.

MS. DEWHURST: 99-02 was originally submitted to close Federal public lands for caribou hunting in both Units 9(D) and 10. Unit 10 is kind of a moot issue that we aren't really considering because there is not a State hunt. So there aren't any other users. The request is to close then primarily Unit 9(D) from September 1st through March 31st to all non-Federally qualified users.

Unit 9(D) has about 20 percent Federal public lands, and that is all administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service. As far as the biology of the caribou herd, the caribou herd -- the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd has gone through some very large fluctuations over the past 100 years. And at its peaks it usually hits around 10,000 animals and at its lows it moves down to a couple hundred. And it's done that. It just had a peak in the mid-80s and then it crashed after that and it closed hunting for several years.

A few years ago we had the first Federal subsistence hunt, it allowed the opening of a very limited hunt. It was a bulls only. And then last year the hunt was expanded a little bit and granting up to 235 harvest permits for bulls only. This is also a Federal subsistence hunt only. In both years of the Federal hunt the harvest was low. Of course our reporting is only about -- it's been averaging about 60 percent. But from the reporting we have, we're talking 20 to 30 animals, and in one case 32. So even if the reporting, we're only getting half, you know, it -- you played that liberal and doubled it, you'd be looking at around a 50 animal harvest. So the harvest has still been very low on both years. As far as the surveys go, the recent, most recent State survey indicates an estimate of the population of still around 3,500.

The ADF&G wishes to cap the population between four and 5,000 animals. That is to -- mainly for range reasons. When the population grows up to 10,000 animals, the range can't support it being a limited size peninsula and hence the periodic cycles of crashes and booms. And so to try to prevent that, the State is trying to do a management strategy of capping off the population between four and 5,000. So the current estimate of 3,500, of course, is approaching that again. It rebounded quite quickly from the recent decline. And the indications from the past two years' surveys, last summer and this summer's indicate very good calf crop. Which indicates the potential for further growth to be high.
So overall the population has recovered quite nicely from the decline, and it appears to be continuing to recover at this point.

Harvest wise, it really isn't a biological issue here as far as being able to support a harvest. At the Staff Committee meeting Dick Sellers was asked what his harvest goal is and he had mentioned basically one percent or three to 400 animals were the harvest goals right now. When you look at the history of the harvest, the concern -- this was mainly presented, this proposal was presented as a user conflict issue, not so much that the animals, the population couldn't support the harvest.

The specific issue that was raised in the actual proposal request was the issue of the Cold Bay road system. The Cold Bay road system does have a history of conflicts. But that was primarily in the mid-1980s when hunting of Arctic nesting geese was still permitted and caribou population was at a thousand animals and the bag limit was more than one. So there was a lot more interest and there was pretty good harvest pressure back then. But even at that peak, the harvest pressure was around 400 animals. And that was when the population was three times the size it is now. So that's the highest the harvest ever got when things were wide open and everybody was allowed to come down. And there was a lot of interest in Arctic nesting geese which brought other hunters into the area.

To try to prevent that sort of a situation again, it was part of why when the Board of Game approved the State hunt which is currently what's on the books for this year, it was closed to Alaska residents from September 21st through November 14th. That was an attempt to prevent the conflicts -- potential conflicts with goose hunters or waterfowl hunters. And the only issue left then became nonresident hunt which is only limited to a 15 day period from September 10th through the 25th, bringing nonresident hunters into Cold Bay. But most of those nonresidents will probably be guided and will probably be off the road system. And then the issue came of conflicts after November 15th or after the State residency system would open back up.

And as far as Staff analysis was concerned, it was felt that there probably isn't going to be that much of a harvest pressure from nonlocals, given the high cost of air transportation being six to $800 to get there, and then a one caribou limit. There are a number of places in the state where you can get more caribou than that, like for example, the Mulchatna herd. You could fly a lot cheaper to
Dillingham and get four animals versus paying that money to go to Cold Bay. So it was felt that there probably is not going to be a big incentive out there to draw in-state residents like Anchorage based residents down to Cold Bay. And there was concern from the Staff of -- if there really would be an issue of all these folks coming down to Cold Bay. All of these issues of user conflicts are basically a potential risk, not anything we have any real history of. The hunt has been closed for a number of years to state hunters so there hasn't been any competition for a number of years. So anything, as far as what we're looking at this year is speculation on the part of both the subsistence hunter and anybody else looking at the situation. We are playing a little bit of a game of trying to guess at what could happen.

The bottom line is biologically the herd could support a wide open hunt right now, a full -- if the harvest was kept three to 400 animals. And as far as the user conflict issue, it's the -- the information right now doesn't lend itself to show that the potential is very high for that. But that's hard to say because it is a potential.

That concludes the Staff analysis.

MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, this is Tom Boyd. The Staff Committee recommends adoption of the proposal to close Federal public lands in Unit 9(D) and Unit 10 for the taking of caribou by non-Federally qualified subsistence users from September 1 to March 31 with the modification that Federal lands be closed to non-Federally qualified subsistence users only in 9(D), given that the issue is moot in 10.

In regard to 9(D) the Staff Committee supported the concern expressed by the Council members who stated that local residents who are heavily dependent on caribou are not able to hunt this resource now for several years. And then were prevented by bad weather from doing much hunting when the Federal harvest was open to subsistence users for two years. The Staff Committee members agree that, especially since there have been wide fluctuations in the herd's population, it's better to move slowly in the opening of the harvest.

It was also noted that Federal land is only about 20 percent of the Unit in 9(D) and that State had been unable to accurately monitor hunting of caribou in the Unit.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay. Department comments.
MR. BOYD: I think we want to go to Refuge comments.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, yes. Refuge comments.

MR. PEOTTER: This is Rick Peotter, Izembek Refuge. In essence, we do agree with the subsistence Staff comments that Donna just put forward. So all of that information is agreed upon. And we recognize the Regional Council's concern, and because of that, I guess, we'd like to make the recommendation, basically it would be to close Federal lands within the Izembek Game Guide Unit. In essence, this is the road system bear hunt area as described in Page 48 of the Alaska hunting regulation, State regs.

Basically surrounds the road area of Izembek Refuge and portion of Alaska Peninsula Refuge. And in essence, that's where the prime public interaction would be located. And this would free up the area north of here to allow the guides access to Refuge lands and fill their nonresident permits, 50 of them are being issued for that. Provide for other local or Alaska residents to be able to come here and be able to go outside to provide some of the caribou that are in here.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Department comments.

MR. ROBUS: Yes, Mr. Chair, this is Matt Robus. The Department has approached this State hunt, the institution of a State hunt pretty conservatively. And as was mentioned during the earlier report, hunting may become a pretty important tool to cap this herd at a healthy level but doesn't damage the range.

One of the things that happened at the Board of Game meeting in spring was to carefully craft the timing of the season to reduce user conflicts. And we believe that that's sufficient to give local hunters an opportunity to hunt caribou without a lot of outside influence or conflict. And the Staff analysis, the Federal Staff analysis dated July 15th agrees with that approach, and so we ask that -- rejected. We don't feel that it's necessary to protect local hunters.

And I'd like to defer to Dick Sellers, who's actually managing this herd, to make any specific comments that he'd like.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mr. Sellers.
MR. SELLERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, this is Dick Sellers. I'd first like to bring the Federal Board up to the latest in terms of population numbers. At last week's Staff Committee meeting I didn't have the photographs from this post-calving census. I've since then been able to count the caribou off the photos and the photo count for this year was 3,612 caribou with 26 percent calves. And that represents another good calf production year following the kind of banner year that we had last year. And given this number of caribou and the level of productivity the last two years, I think the appropriate harvest level is between three and 400 caribou.

I would like to emphasize that given the last two banner years in calf production, we can anticipate a rather large potential for increase two to three year from now when these young caribou reach a maximum reproductive potential. So I think it's incumbent upon us to look ahead a little bit and start to ratchet back on the rate of growth. I'd also like to recognize that during this period of population decline there's been huge public sacrifice in terms of closed seasons from 1993 to 1996. During that period, starting in both 1995 and 1996, there were public proposals to reopen the season and in both those years the State and the Federal system took a very conservative approach and hunting was not reinstated until 1997, with two recent Federal openings. And I would again like to emphasize the harvest estimates were achieved during those two recent Federal harvests of 32 and 23 caribou. And I recognize that might be somewhat under-reported and I also recognize that the weather conditions were not real favorable to wintertime hunting the past two season, but the difference between what could be anticipated under continued Federal closure of the lands and just an open season, I think it's pretty minuscule. I think the benefits to be gained in terms of competition, reduced competition for overall harvest levels are not significant.

That will wrap up my comments.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Do we have anybody wishing to testify from the public?

MR. BOYD: We do have Mr. Gunlogson in the room. He would like to address this proposal.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: I might add, while he's coming forward, that he has passed out a handout and I presume he may address that also.
MR. GUNLOGSON: Board members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this issue. I have given you written comments and I am reluctant to read them all into the record if you're going to read them and consider them. On the other hand, if that's necessary, I could so do. I know your time is valuable and so I'll forgo that except for maybe some brief comments to that.

I am an Alaska registered master guide number 51. And I've hunted this area for over 35 years now, every year that there has been a season for a bear or caribou to hunt. And I currently hold special use permits to hunt on the Refuge land. That is traditionally a part of the area that I have hunted over the years. I also have the only, to my knowledge, and I think that's accurate, permanent lodge in Unit 9(D) that is an ongoing facility.

As Dick Sellers mentioned, we incurred a lot of financial loss starting in 1993 when we were unable to hunt caribou in this area. We chose not to -- because of our investment in this area and all, we chose not to wander off to other areas during that time to hunt in other places.

The concern that I'm going to address in this issue right now has to -- it specifically relates to the nonresidence season September 10th to the 25th. This is the one that will enable us to participate in the hunt and the State has given us that opportunity. Our harvest will be very limited and it will be limited to a small number of old bulls. The biologists have agreed that there is a high percentage of old bulls in this herd to harvest. They're going to die anyway of old age. I further understand that we have -- have or are witnessing a modern miracle at this point, in that, the -- my understanding, that both the State and the Federal biologists in the field recognize that there is no problem with an opening of hunting on State and Federal lands jointly at this time.

As a practical matter it won't make -- we will conduct our hunts either way for the small number of animals that we plan to take because we will take them on State land if that's the only thing that's available to us. It's a bit confusing in the field because the caribou haven't recognized the line between State and Federal land out there to my knowledge. The line angles kind of right through the middle of the area that we traditionally hunt in that area, and so it can be really confusing in the field if we were out with a client representing ourselves and the state of Alaska, to have a good hunt and we're pursuing a caribou and that caribou has proceeded a mile and now he's 10 yards across the
boundary in the Federal land and we go back to camp and drink coffee. However, as I say, we will hunt one way or the other. It also limits our opportunity to take the oldest and most desirable of the harvest animals that are out there, the old bulls.

Last year Federal land only was open in that area to any hunters. And my lodge is very close to Nelson Lagoon village and they're all old friends of mine. They have, you know, were not able to hunt on State lands which lies around their village, and Federal land is a long ways away. I think that at this point in time now that the State has cooperated by opening State land to these people, as well as other users, that it's time for the Federal government to share in that cooperation and allow hunting for all user groups on a limited basis because it's been already indicated it's biologically justified.

I think that the rapid growth, as Dick Sellers referred to in this herd, is of an extreme concern at this point. If this herd goes into another crash within a short period of time due to the abuse of the habitat, it's going to be a long time in coming back again. This is, I think, as real a problem as there is in the whole area because caribou do not grow -- herds do not grow by addition. Caribou herds grow by multiplication. This herd has already doubled and more than doubled since its low point. And we are in real danger of abusing this herd if it is allowed to reach the point where it crashes again.

If the Board does feel that there is a need to address closures in certain small areas such as the Cold Bay road system in November, they can so designate. But there is no reason at this time to close all remote areas in the September hunt of other users, especially based on the fact that this is going to be such a tiny harvest. As I say, I've hunted in that area an awful long time and I do not expect a deluge of hunters to show up in that area from the 10th of September to the 25th.

Traditionally, in the past we have been virtually the only guide operation that was hunting on that. And I requested the State Board not to run the caribou season in conjunction with the bear season this fall so that there would not be a conflict between excessive number of nontraditional guides in that area hunting these caribou.

One thing that the State -- or that could be done in regulation to control the Cold Bay road system is that there could be a regulation that no State or Federal employees can
go to Cold Bay on an inspection trip when they hear the caribou just got in. And if this Board has an agenda that's unrelated to biological justification on this issue, I guess that would be of grave concern to me.

Thank you very much.

MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, this is Tom again. I have some folks on line who may wish to testify as the public.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Do we have any additional requests for public testimony at this time?

MR. WOLF: Yes, Mr. Chairman this is Matt Wolf.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. WOLF: Yes, I would like to reiterate the testimony of Mr. Dick Gunlogson and further it by stating that this proposal is driven by concerns about hunter and human conflict. I have been down in that area and have hunted for the last 15 years and I have never, ever in that time come upon a human conflict. That area is just so remote, no other operators are down there. And I stress leave this open for Federal open for nonresidents.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Any additional requests for public comments at this time? Hearing none, then we'll move on with Regional Council comments.

MR. TRUMBLE: This is Della Trumble in King Cove. I don't know where to start here. First of all, this rapid population growth. I'd just like to add that for those four years that we weren't allowed to hunt it was because of the decline in the caribou population. The people in this region were not able to hunt for the past two years. The first year we had extreme high winds and the people were not able to harvest their caribou. The second year, which is this past year, we had a tremendous amount of snow which is quite unusual for the region and it has been many years that we've had that much snow.

The permits that were drawn out -- a lot of people turned in the permits, their names to harvest the caribou, some people that maybe even don't hunt, people that normally do hunt maybe didn't -- weren't issued them. And still a lot of the people that do hunt that received the permits were not able to harvest because of the weather.
Population over the four year period, this herd was not allowed to open, only by subsistence harvest, which we appreciated because of one thing, one major factor in these surveys. That local hunters for those two years were going out with the game biologists to survey these caribou because the low amount of numbers that were given to us as this population was increasing slow when we weren't able to hunt, that has also helped in determining where these caribou were.

Another concern, the decline, ethnically in my mind and a lot of us here don't believe, you know, we're not really -- there's nothing that says exactly why this herd declined as fast as it did. People in this region have not been able to harvest caribou because of the weather. State lands are open and it's my understanding that it is to bulls and cows. At the last (inaudible - telephone cuts out) talked about this, that the areas around Pavlof and Morzhovoi are places these guys out here would rather hunt and normally do hunt. They've hunted Izembek and gone into -- tried to get into Izembek to hunt the past year and the weather has been bad.

The lands that are open are closer to home. The Pavlof area, King Cove hunters go to, Sand Point and Nelson Lagoon. False Pass hunt the Morzhovoi area. With these lands open, all of our corporation lands and State lands, I think the impact of that is going to be a lot higher harvest in the next year even if we do have some good weather and these guys are able to get out and hunt.

I really think that being able to go into Izembek and hunt if they can get up there is going to be a good thing.

I'm really -- my concern is there's 2,300 residents in this region, and if the limit is three to 400 caribou, I think that those harvest limits are going to be higher because we're going to be able to hunt, not only closer to home, but areas that are easier to get to. And until we can get a little bit accurate hold of what's going on with this herd, I really feel that this -- a lot of the people here in this community have supported this, we feel that this should -- Izembek, or Federal lands should only be open to residents in this region, at least, one more year until we can determine what is happening with this herd; whether it can be harvested.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Additional Regional Council comment.

MS. SHELLIKOF: Yes, this is Gilda Shellikof.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

MS. SHELLIKOF: I feel much the same way Della does in talking to the people around here, you know, with being so long without any caribou hunt and then all of a sudden it's open up to everybody and nobody seems to really know -- they don't even know for sure how many are on this island, you know, it's obvious you don't have accurate numbers. And I feel like, you know, if we could just have this closed just one more year, which to try to make a more accurate counts. And so that -- and I think that it's going to be, with the State open, there's going to be a lot more caribou taken by local people this year. And we're just asking, you know, just for this one year so that we'll get a better handle on what's going on.

So maybe if you guys know what's going on you should share it with the communities beforehand and maybe have community meetings so that people know what's going on. Because I know there was one year they had local people going up with the counters and that opened up a lot of communication, it made people feel more comfortable about what's going on. And you know, that's one of the things you should consider when you're doing counting. And so we just -- that's the reason for requesting that the Federal lands be closed, is just so that we don't end up back where we started from the first year, open to everybody.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Additional Regional Council comments.

MR. OLSN: Yes, Mark Olsen here.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Mark, go ahead.

MR. OLSN: Thank you. I have to agree with what has been said as we have worked on this project here for four years as we have mentioned. I guess I have several concerns here as far as the opening proposed here.

I recall back as to what was designated as the reason for the decline of this herd from 10,000 animals, which was the grazing, which I had a hard time and still have a hard time ever believing that could have been it. For the simple fact is, we never did find 8,000 carcasses laying around at any given time or any -- any suggestion that that's what had happened. And here again, if the grazing was the problem we were told that it'd probably take an astronomical time, 10 to
20 years before this grazing lands would be suitable for the animals once again.

Here, in the good times though we have experienced a good growth of the resource, production here. So that brings us a great question here as to we have not answered what has happened. I think we need more time to study these and look at the situations so we don't get ourselves in trouble again with a nonharvestable resource due to population.

The other concern that I have is to look at the way subsistence and the other user groups and how the government has set up for what's known as the peer hunts. Now, we have never, State or Federal, as far as I know, have never set up thresholds or counts or numbers that is going to alleviate this problem that we would know where and when -- when it'd open to public, when is it open to the commercial hunters, when's it open to sport hunters, when is it open to the subsistence hunters? I believe this is a very crucial tool that needs to be fulfilled, that we don't have to come through this year after year and have the displeasure of not being able to meet the needs.

At any rate, I certainly support the issue that we do hold off one more year and that we can once again get together with the State and Federal governments as well as the communities involved in these areas to once again sit down and look at a long-range plan of how this might be handled better.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Regional Council comment.

MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della again, if I can add two more things, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

MS. TRUMBLE: I think concerning to the growth of this herd. I think a lot of the contribution that has gone into this is the limited harvest in the region. They also -- the State lands will allow for the nonresidents, the limited hunt on State lands.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any other comments. Hello?

MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, are you there?

(No response)
MR. BOYD: Mitch, are you there?
(No response)
MR. BOYD: Let's standby, it appears we lost the Chairman.
(Off record)
(On record)
MR. BOYD: Let's go ahead and get started again. I think we have some Board members taking a break.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Just let me know when everybody gets assembled.
MR. BOYD: We're ready to go, Mr. Chairman.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, let's carry on. Is there any other Regional Council comments? If not, then we'll go ahead and advance this to Board deliberation.
MR. CHRISTENSEN: Is this an opportunity to say something?
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Who's this?
MR. CHRISTENSEN: This is Duane Christensen, Anchor Point.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Are you a Regional Council representative?
MR. CHRISTENSEN: No.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Oh, are you wishing to testify; is that it?
MR. CHRISTENSEN: Yes.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: All right.
MR. CHRISTENSEN: I don't actually know how I got involved in this. I just tried to call and make some comments to the Board and they patched me through to you folks.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, go ahead, Mr. Christensen. Yeah, public testimony had ceased a little
while ago but we'll go ahead and give you the opportunity to testify.

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Okay, well, my name's Duane Christensen, Anchor Point. I've been an Alaska resident for 49 years. I'm a White male. And I had the unfortunate experience of overhearing some conversation with the Board down in Ninilchik, talking about subsistence and it got me a little bit upset over what's going on here with subsistence.

Like I said, I've been here 49 years and I'm about to be excluded, it looks like to me, from the right to hunt and to subsist because I'm White. And this is wrong, totally wrong. I heard these Board members in Ninilchik saying that it wasn't about culture, that it was about their right to take away my hunting privilege because I'm White, and I just -- I got to say, that if they're arguing for limited subsistence for the Native culture, then you have to consider what is culture. High powered rifles and snowmachines and four-wheelers and such are White man's culture, and it's not the Native culture. And I think it's totally wrong to start dividing the people of Alaska up, and I don't think that we have the right to say to somebody because they happen to live on Fourth Avenue in Anchorage that they can't hunt, subsist in this state.

So I guess I wasn't prepared to say, public testimony, but I guess I'll let it go at that.

Thank you.

MS. SHELLIKOF: Can I make a comment?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Uh-huh.

MS. SHELLIKOF: This is Gilda. When we talk about our subsistence down here, we don't divide it into Native or non-Native, it's for the residents of this area regardless of what race they are.

MR. CHRISTENSEN: That's not what I heard at the Board.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, I'm sure -- you're talking about something on the Kenai Peninsula?

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah, okay, that's got nothing to do with what's on the agenda here today.
MR. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: We're discussing (inaudible - telephone cuts out).

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Oh, I see, okay.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yeah.

MR. CHRISTENSEN: Well, they patched me through to the wrong people. I'm sorry. Okay, bye-bye.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: It's okay, bye-bye. Okay, let's go ahead, is there any other -- if there are no other comments then we'll go ahead and move on to Board deliberations.

MR. GOODWIN: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. GOODWIN: Yeah, this is Willie Goodwin from Kotzebue. I've been listening but I wasn't sure until I questioned a biologist of whether or not this herd fluctuates in population, and she told me it does. You know, up in Kotzebue, our Western Arctic herd fluctuates. Local knowledge says it's, you know, it's every 40 years or so it takes a nosedive down to about 100,000. Now, if this herd fluctuates every 15 years, it's a natural thing.

Because what our knowledge knows up north is that the herd can only eat so much food. So if the food is depleted, then naturally it's going to decline. So if this happens every 15 years, I think that the action that's before you would be consistent to make sure that the local people have the priority over these animals. Because at some point in time it will come back up, and then consideration for other users can be considered.

And as far as I can tell, just based on what I heard this morning, State regulations can't keep it stable, even if they open it up. So I think that with Federal action to close it to other people is consistent with what's happening with the natural growth and decline of the herd, and I certainly would support it.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Further Regional Council comments.
MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della again. I just want to reiterate that we're really are only asking for one more year. Like we haven't been able to hunt for four years, weren't able to hunt because of weather for the past two years to at least get close to the harvest levels, and at least give us a chance to be able to hunt the State lands and see what that looks like for one year and then go from there.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Further Regional Council comment. Let's move it on to Board deliberation.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen. One thing I wanted to get clear in my mind was the -- I understand the State regulation allows for a harvest in 9(D). This is the first time it's been open or was it open last year? Could you give me a recap on exactly what the State regulations have done to allow Federal harvest in 9(D)?

MS. DEWHURST: Okay. The last time the State hunt was open, I believe was '92, was the last year that there was a State hunt. What the Game Board did, and there are State folks on-line that can correct me if I state this wrong, they closed it to in-State residents from September 21st to November 14th, and that was to try to eliminate the conflicts with in-State residents coming down and shooting caribou as a separate -- or as a secondary thing. They were actually coming down either for goose hunting or bear hunting. And so the idea was to close it during that period to try to limit the conflicts.

Then they also restricted the nonresident season to that September 10th to the 25th, and it is a bulls only with a cap on it. That is a restricted season.

So those were the two restrictions the State did put on the State season to try to -- it is an attempt to reduce the number of potential conflicts.

MR. D. ALLEN: Okay. So if I understand what the State has done in 9(D), is they have opened up 80 percent of the area which had previously been closed since '93. The Federal lands we have had a permit hunt for local users for what, the last two years?

MS. DEWHURST: The last two years.

MR. D. ALLEN: The last two years.
MS. DEWHURST: Now, keep in mind, even though the 80/20 split on Federal lands, I did look at the harvest data base and I looked at what information I had from the State, and historically a very large percentage of the harvest had always been from the Cold Bay road system. Even though that only represents 20 percent of the lands, most of the harvest has been from that 20 percent of the lands, upwards of 75 percent or 80 percent of the harvest, so that's something to consider relative to the amount of land.

MR. D. ALLEN: Well, that's what I wanted to zero in on. So given those facts, that the issue of concern seems to revolve around these levels associated with the road system, right?

MS. DEWHURST: Uh-huh. (Affirmative)

MR. D. ALLEN: And right now, the State has closed that area between September 21st and November 14th, right to.....

MS. DEWHURST: And that was mainly during the goose season and the bear season to reduce the.....

MR. D. ALLEN: .....to nonlocal users?

MS. DEWHURST: Right. To reduce the potential for somebody wanting to come down and do a combo hunt.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, what I'm trying to get at here is I'm not -- you know, I'm having difficulty seeing what real impact the closure actually has on the lands. And given the actions that have already been taken by the State to close it during periods that are known to be potentially high user conflicts, and while it is open later on in the year, I guess the idea that it would be users that were interested in trophy hunting would be coming in the spring, I assume -- is there a bear hunt in the spring? Are the reasons hunters are in the.....

MR. GUNLOGSON: The bear hunting season is in the spring in the even numbered years, and the bear hunt in the fall is the odd numbered years.

MS. DEWHURST: This season ends March 31st.

MR. D. ALLEN: So the State season actually closes right now for caribou before.....

MS. DEWHURST: The spring bear hunt.
MR. D. ALLEN: .....before the spring bear hunt.

MS. DEWHURST: Well, actually it's closed during the fall.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, the reason for these questions was to try to bring some focus to the issue and maybe we can get some clarification. But it would seem that the greatest concern revolves around potential conflicts on the Izembek road system by some of the local users and others outside, but that, in fact, during the period in which we would expect most outsiders to actually be there from September 21st to November 14th is closed to those people for caribou.

I'm having some difficulty understanding, you know, completely, what we hope to accomplish by this particular closure to, in fact, benefit the local users. It seems to me that the combination of things and the normal user patterns would indicate that it would do very little if anything. What might be open to discussion is the period September 1st to September 20th currently open, and that would enable nonlocal users to use the road system.

But I'd be interested to hear anymore information, specifically about where people expect conflicts to actually occur and during what periods.

MR. SELLERS: Mr. Chairman, this is Dick Sellers. Can I comment on Mr. Allen's question?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Go ahead.

MR. SELLERS: I'd just like to add that there were other considerations that played into the way the State season was crafted. And one of the most important was to have it closed during the rut and that's been done. And then in terms of when it reopened, November 15th, that was set recognizing that a good portion of the mature bulls will have dropped their antlers or in the process of it, so that the appeal of going to Cold Bay after November 15th for one caribou and not likely to be a trophy size or at least have trophy antlers would not be real appealing given the cost. So you know, we certainly recognize the need to accommodate local use and try to do that without incurring a big influx of nonlocal hunters.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: yes.
MR. WILSON: This is Curt Wilson, BLM. I wanted to follow up with the Refuge comments. I believe I heard something that they were maybe modifying the position that they were taking the other day a little bit in reference to the road system. Could somebody explain to me what you were thinking there?

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: (Inaudible - telephone cuts out)

MR. BOYD: Yes, we hear you. Is Rick Peotter there?

MR. PEOTTER: I am, but I didn't hear the question. You guys cut out for some reason.

MR. BOYD: Okay.

MR. WILSON: Yeah, the question was, I thought I heard in your comments earlier, that maybe you had changed your thinking a little bit on the road system in Izembek. Could you follow up with some more on that?

MR. PEOTTER: Yeah, I probably wasn't clear. The bottom line is we do not support the closure but as a compromise I would recommend just closing the area around Cold Bay. That's the bottom line of it.

MR. WILSON: Would that be easy -- would that be relatively easy to show on a map and those kinds of things?

MR. PEOTTER: It's currently described in the State regulations for brown bear hunting on Page 48, so yeah fairly easily. We're going to have to -- if we oppose the closure of Federal lands, we would have to develop maps here anyway that would show the open -- or actually the closed area. Because we have a -- well, a smattering of some Federal lands such as the FAA withdrawal inside the Refuge would be still open for a resident of Alaska for hunting. So, you know, we would be developing some maps plus there's other corporation lands, you know, that need to be identified around here.

MR. WILSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TEMIENTIEFF: Additional questions.

MR. GOODWIN: Mr. Chairman, this is Willie Goodwin. I'm just wondering if the State has a Tier I or Tier II hunt in the area?

MR. BOYD: The answer, Mr. Chair, is that there is no Tier II permit -- there is no Tier II situation here.
CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen again. If I may, again, I'm trying as best I can to understand and isolate the concerns of potential competition to make sure that our local users certain have the opportunity to take animals. But the picture so far to me is still not very clear as to how significant that potential competition is. Perhaps Della or someone else would like to comment, you know, once again, other than the road system around Cold Bay, is there something specific about Federal lands, an area on Federal lands that is of concern given the fact that outside of the Cold Bay road system, basically the Peninsula is unroaded and access is only by other means?

MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della. On the State land portion of it, like I say, there's some bays and areas that the people will hunt and they will go in by boat. As far as the Izembek/Cold Bay, the main concern is the road system. If you look at the past years and the harvest of caribou, then probably the Cold Bay residents that drew the permits were able to harvest, my guess is at least 100 percent of those permits.

I also know and am I aware that residents from Sand Point, were having designated hunters in Cold Bay harvest their caribou off that road system. The access is easier.

Our concern -- our major concern at this point, is not only just the impact of what's going to happen with the State opening is -- and not being clear, and whether the weather will be a factor. We've had winters that we've had this extreme good weather all winter. We don't know yet what's going to happen. And I feel, the major part of this is we feel that, given that we were closed down for four years, we weren't able to harvest the last two years, I think all of that has contributed to the population. Give us at least a chance, the people in this region, one more year to take a look at what's happening. And the road system in Cold Bay is a major concern for us.

And the other part that hasn't been mentioned in the seasons is there's a lot of sports fishing that happens in August and September in Cold Bay. People do fly in to Cold Bay to go sport fishing, and later the hunting and then we get into the bear season. But it's also been in our experience that we get stuck in Cold Bay a lot of times and when you're stuck there for two to three days -- if you're Alaska resident. And we have a lot of people flying back and forth -- back and forth between here and King Cove, that does
give some other people an opportunity to hunt. And just --
just maybe those thoughts to consider.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah, if I could have one follow-up
question with Della then. Della, do you have an opinion
you'd care to share with us about the alternative that the
Refuge has recommended?

MS. TRUMBLE: I appreciate, you know, they're trying
to come to some terms with this. I guess if it's -- if the
road system is closed to nonresidents but it's open to
residents, then maybe there's something there. But I think
the major concern about all of this is the fact that 80
percent of these lands are open. Federal lands only take in
20 percent. And the impact of those 80 percent, and I know
just in King Cove you can drive out to the airport, get on a
four-wheeler and go up toward Mt. Dutton and people can get
caribou there.

Just trying to look at the impact of this and for one
year, give us one more year to look at it. We've suffered
our losses for the past six years due to closures and
weather, all we're asking for is one more year to truly
determine what could happen here.

MR. D. ALLEN: But again -- Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. D. ALLEN: You know, other than the road system,
what are the concerns about conflicts with other users in
this regard, and if so, you know, can you be specific on
Federal lands? I'm sorry, Della, I meant that question for
you.

MS. TRUMBLE: I'm sorry, could you please ask again?

MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah. I was just asking, again, other
than the road system in Izembek, are there some concerns
about conflicts with nonlocal users, and if so, can you be
specific where they might be?

MS. TRUMBLE: I don't know specifically where that
would be. Like I said, my understanding that the State regs
will allow for a limited hunt by permit drawing for
nonresidents. And I guess, like I say, the biggest conflict
or concern is the fact that a lot more lands are open and what impact that will be.

I'm not sure exactly where everybody goes to hunt up in Cold Bay over and above on the Federal lands around that area. Whether they're residents or nonresidents. Well, mainly nonresidents.

Gilda.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes, go ahead.

MS. SHELLIKOF: Yeah, I think, you know, what we're trying to say is that what we would like to see is what impact on the herd the State opening is going to have because as Della said, there's going to be a lot more caribou taken by local residents this year. And that, you know, 80 percent of the land that wasn't open the last three years is going to be open this year, and I think what we're trying to say is, is just to be more cautious and if we could have this 20 percent of the land closed, you know, to nonresidents, just for this one year just so that we could see what kind of impact that it's going to have on the herd, you know, after.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you. Go ahead, Dave, do you have another question?

MR. D. ALLEN: Yeah, I've got another question. Could I have Donna tell us exactly what the Federal hunt is right now on Federal lands for caribou on 9(D)? What is the regulation?

MS. DEWHURST: It isn't a Federal hunt. There is no Federal hunt, it's the State hunt.

MR. D. ALLEN: In 9(D)?

MS. DEWHURST: Oh, you mean the past two years?

MR. D. ALLEN: Yes.

MS. DEWHURST: The first year, you'll have to excuse me because this is not normally my area. The first year I believe it was 160 permits were issued for bulls only. Sixty of these were for False Pass for use on Unimak. Out of that 32 caribou were reported harvested with about 63 percent reporting. Then the next year it was increased it 235 bulls only permits. Of those only 61 were issued -- or was applied for. Everybody that applied for got one. Only 61 people applied for permits out of 135 possible. Out of the 61
people who got permits, 23 caribou were harvested -- reported harvested. That's the past two years of the Federal hunt.
There is no Federal hunt on the books for this year. So the only hunt would be the State open hunt.

MR. D. ALLEN: So the only hunt right now that's on the books is State open hunt which means that there's no hunt even for local residents between -- am I understanding this?

MS. DEWHURST: The State open hunt is -- the Federal lands are not closed under the State hunt. Everybody -- you can hunt anywhere.

MR. D. ALLEN: No, I understand that.

MS. DEWHURST: Yeah.

MR. D. ALLEN: But there is no Federal permit hunt regulation books in 9(D) at all?

MS. DEWHURST: Correct. Correct, because both the previous hunts were special actions that were only good for one year.

MR. D. ALLEN: How did we deal with this during our spring regulatory season? There was no recommended hunt, subsistence hunt for this year in.....

MR. EDENSHAW: Mr. Allen, this is.....

MR. D. ALLEN: .....9(D).....

MR. EDENSHAW: .....Cliff.....

MR. D. ALLEN: Go ahead.

MR. EDENSHAW: Mr. Allen, this is Cliff Edenshaw, the Regional Coordinator for Kodiak Aleutians. At the meeting in February in Port Lions, Robert Willis, at the time who was the biologist for the regional team presented the proposal on behalf of the State. The State was not at the meeting. Mr. Sellers nor Steve Machita or Larry VanDaele, who normally speak on behalf of the State. Mr. Willis recommended to the Council in Port Lions that they should forego a Federal hunt in terms of a State hunt, that was his comments at the Port Lions meeting that was in February.

MR. D. ALLEN: That was the Regional Advisory Council meeting?
MR. EDENSHAW: Yes.

MR. D. ALLEN: So the Regional Advisory Council had no recommendation, in other words, for a Federal hunt this year. And what you're saying is that was because the State at that time was acceptable and agreeable to the Regional Advisory Council; am I correct in that?

MR. EDENSHAW: At the Regional Council meeting in Port Lions, the Board of Game wasn't to meet until March and Robert Willis' comments were that it would be more favorable for the residents of the region to forego a Federal hunt and to see what the outcome of the proposal, when the Board of Game was to address that in March, which was to have a wide open hunt. And basically Mr. Willis expressed to the Regional Council in Port Lions, that if the proposal went through then they would -- it would be more favorable for them to hunt on the State to....

MR. D. ALLEN: All right, well, thank you. I think I understand now so that this special action is just meant to further modify what they had more or less agreed to last spring in anticipation of a hunt this fall.

Mr. Chairman, I guess, I'm not prepared to make a motion but I'll just make a comment. I'm not sure I am prepared to make even a modified -- what I'm prepared to move on, but I am concerned at this point in just a blanket closure given the testimony that we've heard so far. I think it is important that we hear substantial evidence of need to close an area. What I have been hearing are many expressions and concerns about moving cautiously and I certainly would not disagree with that. I think we've -- I think our biologists, or at least my sense is, both on the part of the Federal biologists and the State biologists, have been very cautious. In fact, we've been -- we've taken a lot of criticism in the past for being too cautious, with respect to allowing and reopening this hunt.

So given that, I'm not -- should this motion be made, I think I would just make people aware of the fact that as it's presently constituted, I cannot support a complete closure to Federal areas in 9(D).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, is there a motion?

MR. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is Ken Thompson with the Forest Service. I guess I look around the room and
I see nobody particularly jumping up ready to make a motion.

I know, given the evidence that I have listened to here and speaking on the side with our Staff about the relative likelihood of the desirable harvest of three to 400 animals being met is nil to none, even if we leave all of these Federal lands open. I, as a biologist, understand the importance of trying to address and balance populations with habitat needs, desirability of trying to come to grips with achieving that balance.

So I guess I would offer the motion to reject the special action.

MR. D. ALLEN: I'll second that motion, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CESAR: Mr. Chairman, this is Niles Cesar. If I may make some comments. I, too, am troubled by the notion of shutting it down just as a general rule without some supportable biology involved. And what I keep hearing from the biologists and Refuge managers and the ADP&G, there seems to be more concern about the herd growing too big. And that when we've opened this thing up in the last two years, notwithstanding the weather problems that we've had, we've only gotten a fraction of the take that could have been taken. And that if someone were to craft a compromise which dealt with the Cold Bay road system, then I think that is something I'd be interested in. But I don't see a lot of support for even that. I see moving cautiously. We still have the ability to intervene on Federal public lands should we need to if, in fact, there is a lot of conflicts and there is some concern about overreaching the harvestable level. But everything I am hearing says, we're not going to come close to that harvestable level, and we're more concerned about the herd overreaching the carrying capacity.

And so I'm -- I as, of course, unlike some folks, I've only been here 58 years and maybe I haven't seen as much as other folks, but I'm not a hunter and so I defer, you know, to the guides who tell me from their perspective about what they're doing out there and what they're seeing out there. I don't see a major concern. I think that the concern of the Regional Advisory Councils and of the residents of King Cove and False Pass is duly noted, and it's something that if we believe or if I believe there is going to be a conflict or an expressed conflict, one that we can see on the ground, then I'm willing to support immediate shut down of Federal public lands. But I'm not willing, I don't think, to support a complete closure of Federal public lands given the information we have today.
MS. GOTTLEIB: Mr. Chair, this is Judy.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Further discussion.

MS. GOTTLEIB: Mr. Chair, this is Judy. I'm not sure if part of the compromise wording, if it would help, would have to do with what the Refuge manager had mentioned about the Izembek controlled use area. So if that's beneficial, I'm sure the Board would be open to modifying the motion.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Was that a question, Judy, I'm sorry?

MS. GOTTLEIB: Yes, please. I wonder if the Refuge manager might have a comment on that?

MR. PEOTTER: Mr. Chairman, I'm not -- Judy, I'm not sure I understood your question, could you repeat it for me?

MS. GOTTLEIB: Sure. Well, I see the description of the Izembek controlled use area in the book and I didn't know if any of that wording might be helpful to answer some of the local and regional concerns, to be incorporated into a motion?

MR. PEOTTER: You say you did not find it or you did?

MS. GOTTLEIB: I see the wording, I'm wondering if that would be helpful to our discussions here?

MR. PEOTTER: Yeah, basically it reads, the south and west of a line from Moffet Point to the side of the eastern entrance of Kimseroff Lagoon (ph), and north of a line from the base of Cape Glazenet (ph) to Frosty Peak and to the mouth of Old Man's Lagoon.

MS. GOTTLEIB: Well, I guess, Rick, I don't have a sense of how much of the Refuge that encompasses. So if that's useful for our discussions, if you can give a brief description of that area in terms that we can understand not having a good map in front of us?

MR. PEOTTER: Okay, yeah. Basically that would cover the entirety of the road system and a small portion there beyond, you know, allowing for a little bit of walking access. It includes all of Izembek Lagoon, and a good portion of Moffet Lagoon. I guess the key is really, you know, the road system. Anybody that would access from there. Keep in mind out in this area you cannot use (inaudible - telephone cuts out) ATVs, all terrain vehicles off of the
road system here so anybody that's going to hunt off the road couldn't be going more than a mile or two away from there, in generalities.

I hope that helps.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Is there any more questions on the motion?

MS. TRUMBLE: This is Della, can I make a comment?

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MS. TRUMBLE: I'm curious about something. The Refuge wants to open these lands for caribou hunt then why can't they just stipulate that it's for residents as it has been in the past two years?

MR. BOYD: Let me respond to that Mr. Chair. The State already has the area open through their regulation. And I think that we have been opening it up the last two years by special action. We have not had such an action before us to consider. The proposal before us now is simply to close Federal lands. I'm not sure that answers the question but it is open now under State regulations, and so locals can hunt under State regulations.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Thank you.

MR. WILSON: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Yes.

MR. WILSON: This is Curt Wilson, again to pursue this question of some sort of compromise, I still don't have the exact wording but what I'd like to throw out for maybe some discussion is, reject Proposal -- this would be a move to reject the proposal to close public lands in 9(D) with the modification that lands near the Izembek Refuge road system be closed. And that may not be the exact wording but that's -- I think that's the idea.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Well, I don't have any of the wording so I'm not any help on this particular question.

MR. D. ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, this is Dave Allen again. I guess, you know, once again, even the compromise language, as I understand it, seems more -- potentially more cosmetic, I hate to use that word but in terms of its real effect. Right now the area is open to all State residents
from the 1st of September to the 20th of September but closed after that until November, when bear season opens and most of the waterfowler's are in that area. Though, as Della pointed out, during the month of September, you do have some people going to the Cold Bay area for salmon fishing that might be potential caribou hunters as well. And after November 15th, I think -- there's been no evidence to indicate that there is significant use by anyone other than local -- other than local residents. So I'm having a real, real hard time understanding what is being accomplished, either for conservation or concerns by local users, by any kind of a closure to nonlocal users.

I would also suggest, Mr. Chairman, that concerns and questions raised about use levels certainly between Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Wildlife Service, I would hope that as we monitor the growth and the reopening of this area, certainly it's important that we do gather good information on use in that area. Just an outright closure after it's been closed by the State already, since 1993, doesn't give us any information. I'm not sure I see that by keeping it closed to nonlocal users right now will be very helpful to anyone in addressing the question of nonlocal users. So actually there may be some advantage to get some information about what potential use level is incidental to people who hunt off the road purposes.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Any further discussion? Are we ready to vote?

MR. D. ALLEN: I would call the question, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay, the question's been called for. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

IN UNISON: Aye.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Those opposed same sign.

(No opposing votes)

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Motion carries. Any further business to be brought before us?

MR. BOYD: Mr. Chair, there's no further business with regard to the public session of the Federal Subsistence Board today.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.
MR. BOYD: We will reconvene at 1:00 in work session.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: What time is it right now?

MR. BOYD: I have seven or eight until noon.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

MR. BOYD: And we'll get in touch with you.

CHAIRMAN DEMIENTIEFF: Okay.

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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CERTIFICATE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

STATE OF ALASKA )

I, Joseph P. Kolasinski, Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska and Owner of Computer Matrix, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 37 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD PUBLIC MEETING and TELECONFERENCE, taken electronically by me on the 2nd day of August, 1999, beginning at the hour of 10:00 o'clock p.m. at the Offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gordon Watson Conference Room, 1101 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by Salena Hile to the best of her knowledge and ability;

THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or party interested in any way in this action.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 8th day of August, 1999.

Joseph P. Kolasinski
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 4/17/00