

1 SOUTHCENTRAL FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME II

7
8 Anchorage, Alaska
9 March 11, 2009
10 9:00 o'clock a.m.
11

12
13 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

14
15 Ralph Lohse, Chairman
16 Tom Carpenter
17 Fred Elvsaas
18 Greg Encelewski
19 Robert Henrichs
20 Donald Kompkoff
21 Chuck Lamb
22 James Showalter
23 Gloria Stickwan
24 Tricia Waggoner

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27 Regional Council Coordinator, Donald Mike
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Anchorage, Alaska - 3/11/2009)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN LOHSE: We'll start this -- we'll call this meeting of the Southcentral Regional Subsistence Advisory Council back into session as soon as Fred sits down, and don't hurry up.

Donald.

MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Before we get started, I handed out this morning some handouts. And in the yellow sheet, there's the Southcentral's 2008 annual report.

And for this morning's presentation, Mr. Doug Burn from the Marine Mammals is going to present sea otter populations in the Southcentral area. And it's that blue handout.

And the Park Service had some handouts this morning, and there's five handouts. One includes maps and the others are just -- two of them are just tables and a report on Nebesna ORV EIS, and a subsistence use of horns, antlers, bones and plants brochure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Donald. With that we'd like to welcome you and your sea otter report.

MR. BURN: Good morning. I'd like to thank the Council for putting me on the agenda first so that I could fit this into my schedule.

As Donald mentioned, you've got the stock assessment report for the Southcentral Alaska stock. This is prepared.....

MR. HENRICHS: Mr. Chairman. Do you have a name?

MR. BURN: Oh, I thought -- yes, I do. My name is Douglas Burn. I'm with the -- I'm the sea otter program leader with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

1 Service in the Marine Mammals Management Office.
2 Sorry.

3
4 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Doug. I'm
5 sorry. I should have introduced you.

6
7 MR. BURN: That's okay. That's okay.
8 Anyway, these stock assessment reports are prepared
9 under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection
10 Act. It's Section .117 of the Act says that the Fish
11 and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries
12 Service need to prepare these stock assessment reports
13 for their trust species. And for the Fish and Wildlife
14 Service in Alaska that's sea otters, polar bears and
15 walrus. And for the National Marine Fisheries
16 Service it's all the other ones: all the whales and
17 the seals and the purposes and whatnot.

18
19 So for sea otters in Alaska, the
20 current stock structure is that we have three stocks.
21 The Southwest Alaska stock, which ranges from the end
22 of the Aleutian Chain up to Cook Inlet. The dividing
23 line there is down Cook Inlet. The Southcentral Alaska
24 stock, which I believe is the stock, you know, that's
25 of concern to this region's Advisory Council, extends
26 then from Cook Inlet over to between Kayak Island and
27 Yakutat Bay, in that area. And then the Southeast
28 Alaska stock goes from there down to the U.S./Canada
29 border.

30
31 And so we recently revised these stock
32 assessment reports last summer, and what -- the purpose
33 of the stock assessment reports is to identify marine
34 mammals species and stocks that have significant
35 fisheries interactions, typically significant bycatch,
36 animals being caught and drowned in different types of
37 fishing gear. We don't think that's the case with any
38 of our sea otter stocks, that the information that
39 we've been getting from the National Marine Fisheries
40 Service on their observer programs and their self-
41 reporting program indicates that the amount of
42 mortality and serious injury of sea otters is fairly
43 low.

44
45 So the other thing we do is we
46 summarize all forms of human removals, including
47 subsistence harvest. And the Southcentral population
48 does have a pretty significant subsistence harvest,
49 primarily from Cordova and Valdez. Those are the two
50 communities where most of the sea otters are being

1 taken. But compared to the population level, we think
2 it's a fairly small percentage of the population, and
3 it does not exceed what we think is sort of a safe
4 removal level for that population. So we don't believe
5 there's any sort of an issue there.

6

7 Oh, one other thing I'd mention is that
8 the Southwest Alaska population is the one that is
9 listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.
10 We have proposed designating critical habitat for that
11 population. The public comment period on that just
12 closed February 17th. And so that population goes up
13 to lower western Cook Inlet, so I don't think there's
14 any overlap with your region.

15

16 So that's just a really basic summary
17 about the stock assessment. We think based on the most
18 recent estimates for sea otters in that area, we think
19 the populations may be about 16,000 -- no, no, I'm
20 sorry. About 15,000. And we don't think there's any
21 real trend one way or another, that it's rapidly
22 increasing or decreasing. We think it's probably
23 stable around this time.

24

25 And really that's all I really planned
26 to present. I know that this was -- the Council wanted
27 to hear about sea otters, and I assume you've probably
28 got plenty of questions, so I think I'd like to use the
29 remainder of my time to answer any questions that you
30 have.

31

32 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Doug, I'll start with
33 the first one. Have you done any studies at all on the
34 condition of the sea otters as far as food or
35 nutrition? You notice that there's, like it says,
36 about 12,000 of them in Prince William Sound, probably
37 about 3500 of them right in Orca Bay. And to some of
38 us that live there, come spring a lot of them looking
39 pretty -- they look in pretty poor condition, the ones
40 that pull out on the beach and sit alongside the road
41 and backbones stick out and stuff like that. It's not
42 so much this year, but there's been other years they're
43 doing nothing except eating tube worms and stuff like
44 that. Have you done any studies at all on population
45 density and nutrition or anything like that?

46

47 MR. BURN: Our office, the Marine
48 Mammals Management Office of the Fish and Wildlife
49 Service, we did a study, a live capture study in 2007
50 in Kachemak Bay. This was related to what's termed an

1 unusual mortality event. In between 2002 and about
2 2005 the numbers of stranded sea otters on the beaches
3 down in Kachemak Bay increased very rapidly. And we
4 found that they -- about half of the animals that we
5 were examining were having a heart defect that was
6 caused by a bacterial infection. So we went out and we
7 captured otters and we looked at their body condition.
8 And they all seemed to be doing -- in that area seemed
9 to be doing pretty good. In fact, I think we had a
10 couple of males that were over 90 pounds, and they were
11 a lot of fun getting out of the net, I can tell you
12 that. And we managed to capture 44 otters and nobody
13 got bit, so that's the big success of that trip.

14
15 As far as the Cordova area and Prince
16 William Sound, that's an area that the U.S. Geological
17 Survey has been doing a lot of research after the Exxon
18 Valdez Oil Spill. They've been doing aerial surveys of
19 all of Prince William Sound, and they've been doing
20 some live capture studies. I don't know -- I don't
21 think they've done any capture work in the Orca Inlet
22 area. I think a lot of their work has been more
23 focused over in the Knight Island area, the area where
24 the oil was. So I don't think we have any studies for
25 the area that you talked about.

26
27 But what we think, at least what the
28 USGS biologists think may be happening, in Prince
29 William Sound, from their observations, is they think
30 otters may be moving from eastern Prince William Sound
31 kind of out towards the Copper River delta, that
32 they're having -- they're finding it hard enough to
33 make a living in eastern Prince William Sound that
34 they're moving elsewhere to try to find new resources.
35 But we haven't done any surveys in that area. We're
36 really limited in our funding for doing that sort of
37 monitoring, those sorts of operations, and although we
38 would like to be able to do more work there, we haven't
39 been able to do it yet.

40
41 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, that was going
42 to be my next question. I noticed that you had other
43 north Gulf from Cape Hinchinbrook to Yakutat -- or
44 Yakataga?

45
46 MR. BURN: Uh-huh. Yes.

47
48 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Is it Yakutat or
49 Yakataga?
50

1 MR. BURN: I think it's Yakataga.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. That you had
4 about 400 sea otters down for that, and I know there's
5 about four people in this room that's made observations
6 in that area, and personally I would say that I've seen
7 more than that myself when I've -- and that's without
8 going any farther than Bering River. And then I've
9 talked to people down at Cape Yakataga -- or down at
10 Yakutat, and they've got a lot of sea otters that have
11 shown up down there, too. And I was just wondering, to
12 me that number looks quite low, and I'd like to ask a
13 couple of the other people, do you have the same
14 feeling or am I -- is it just my observations in the
15 area that I go that there would be a lot more sea
16 otters in that area than 400.

17

18 Mr. Henrichs, what would you think?

19

20 MR. HENRICHS: Yeah. Yeah, there's a
21 lot more than 400. I remember when they counted 13,000
22 in the vicinity of Cordova in the old days, but.....

23

24 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. Well, I'm just
25 thinking on -- you know, out on the -- from
26 Hinchinbrook to Yakataga. And that's why I was
27 wondering. You know, to us it looks like the
28 population, especially in that area, is in a rapid
29 growth, or a phase of rapid growth. And from that
30 standpoint, I kind of feel like the numbers that we're
31 looking at here are -- if I was going to say anything,
32 I would say they're low. Quite low.

33

34 MR. BURN: Well, they're also, if
35 you'll notice that particular survey, information
36 that's also quite dated. That's from 2000.

37

38 In 2005, the Fish and Wildlife Service
39 worked with the U.S. Geological Survey and the Alaska
40 Sea Life Center. We got a panel of people together who
41 have experience with sea otter surveys. We brought
42 Mark King from Cordova in on that. And we developed a
43 monitoring plan for the State of Alaska. It basically
44 divides the state up into different monitoring zones.
45 And I think we identified that area from sort of Orca
46 Inlet out towards the Copper River delta as an area
47 that needs to be surveyed, that has not been really
48 systematically surveyed, you know, in recent times.
49 And when we did our estimates, we think that it might
50 take -- because you can't do the whole state in one

1 year, the idea is to sort of focus, and like the
2 National Marine Fisheries Service does with their
3 harbor seal counts, focus on an area and maybe rotate
4 that around so none of your estimates are too old. You
5 know, you're constantly updating your estimates over
6 time. And we estimated I think it would be maybe 250
7 to \$300,000 a year to implement that monitoring plan,
8 but in today's budget climate that we're in, we haven't
9 seen that increase in funding to allow us to implement
10 the plan, so every year we kind of hold it up and say,
11 we've got this monitoring plan. We need some money to
12 implement it. We really have not been successful at
13 doing that.

14

15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Any questions from
16 anybody else.

17

18 MR. KOMPKOFF: Well, did you guys look
19 in glaciers? They have a lot of sea otters in Icy Bay
20 glaciers, and also Knight Island has all around the
21 island of Knight Island, Chenega, and Nuchek, you know,
22 we had -- I go to Nuchek every year and I take the kids
23 out to observe sea otters and stuff, and observe
24 wildlife, and there's a lot of sea otters out in
25 Nuchek.

26

27 MR. BURN: The U.S. Geological Survey
28 has done their aerial surveys in Prince William Sound
29 since -- well, they've got over a 10-year history, and
30 it's probably -- I think it's probably the most
31 intensively studied area for sea otters in the state,
32 and some of the things you mentioned about in like the
33 fjords area, they have noted I think large
34 concentrations up in the northwest part of Prince
35 William Sound up by Barry Arm and Harriman Fiord and
36 some of that glacial habitat. I think Icy Bay is one
37 place that we haven't looked recently, but Prince
38 William Sound is pretty well studied.

39

40 And I think had I realized, I should
41 have asked the U.S. Geological Survey for some of their
42 more recent data. And I can make a note of that. I
43 can try to get the USGS Prince William Sound
44 information that they have available, and I can get
45 that to Donald, and he can distribute it to the
46 Council.

47

48 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Doug, I have one other
49 question. As we see this increase in sea otters and
50 things like that, the concern in the subsistence

1 community is always the impact of sea otters on
2 subsistence resources, clams and crabs in particular.
3 And as we've seen the effect in Orca Inlet, possibly as
4 a contributing factor to the crash in the Dungeness
5 crabs that we used to have in the inlet. Is there any
6 consideration as to a maximum number to shoot for or at
7 what would be a sustained number of sea otters that the
8 environment can handle without having a totally
9 detrimental impact to, you know, all other resources in
10 the area? And is there anything that can be done from
11 a subsistence standpoint other than at this point in
12 time the only thing going on with the only effect on
13 the sea otters is the Native hunting, but is there
14 anything that can be done from the standpoint of
15 protecting other subsistence resources?

16

17 MR. BURN: Okay. I noticed that you
18 said a number that you can shoot for, not a number to
19 shoot at.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah.

22

23 (Laughter)

24

25 MR. BURN: So I thought that was good.
26 It's interesting that you bring that up. I have -- I
27 think it was last year I went down to the Southeast
28 Regional Advisory Council meeting and they're
29 expressing similar concerns about conflicts over
30 subsistence resources.

31

32 And then I also have here the
33 transcript of the -- I guess it's the statewide meeting
34 from January 15th, and what's really interesting, Denby
35 Lloyd, the Commissioner from ADF&G, I'm trying to find
36 the exact part here where he said it, but -- here it
37 is. He says, competition between two sets of marine
38 mammals, those being humans and those being sea otters,
39 which I thought was an interesting way of putting it.
40 And he also noted that the name of the law that we're
41 acting under is the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and
42 not the Marine Mammal Management Act.

43

44 And so, you know, we are limited in
45 what the law says we can do. And so the Marine Mammal
46 Protection Act, it doesn't really give us the
47 flexibility of the Service, the flexibility of setting
48 a target number of sea otters, a target density, a
49 number of otters per square mile, and then managing for
50 that target.

1 You're right that the Alaska Natives
2 have an exemption in the Marine Mammal Protection Act
3 that allows for subsistence hunting for handicraft and
4 subsistence uses, and there are some Alaska Native
5 tribes that have developed local management plans. I
6 believe the Eyak Tribe in Cordova does have one.

7
8 But I think what you're getting at is
9 that it's a bigger problem that needs to be addressed
10 more comprehensively. Up until now it's been kind of
11 left to individual tribes or regional Alaska Native
12 organizations to develop those sorts of management
13 plans. And whether or not they integrate your concerns
14 or not, it's not clear if that's the case. But it's a
15 tough question, and the only thing I -- is due we have
16 the room within what the Marine Mammal Protection Act
17 says. You know, how much can we do within what the
18 Marine Mammal Protection Act says, and if we can't do
19 enough, or if we can't -- you know, if those
20 limitations aren't -- if those limitations present
21 other challenges, then there's, you know, questions
22 about whether or not, you know, the law could be
23 changed. But again it's a Federal law and that would
24 be a very big task.

25
26 So I think the first step, and what we
27 can do now is to do what we can within the law to
28 address those concern. And I think that's going to
29 involve local communities, it's going to involve I
30 think -- definitely got to involve Alaska Native
31 subsistence users. It's got to be an integrated
32 approach. And it sounds like something that you'd be
33 interested in seeing though, the people here.

34
35 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: No, it was kind of
36 interesting, because we call it the Marine Mammal
37 Protection Act, and if they fall below a certain
38 number, we can institute all kinds of protective and
39 restrictive devices to try to bring their number back
40 up, but if they get past a certain number to where
41 they're actually detrimental to I'll say the
42 environment, other users, or even themselves, we have
43 nothing to protect them from themselves, for lack of a
44 better way of putting it. And that's kind of what I
45 was getting at, is that.

46
47 MR. BURN: Yeah, the Act sets sort of a
48 lower threshold, but it doesn't say anything about an
49 upper threshold, and it doesn't really provide us the
50 tools, you know, to do that sort of management;

1 although I'm aware of cases down I think it's in Oregon
2 or Washington where they've issues of sea lions that
3 hang out by the locks and by the fish ladders and
4 things and locks and they pick off the salmon as they
5 go by. And I think it might be interesting or helpful
6 to look at how the National Marine Fisheries Service
7 has addressed that sort of an issue and see if there's
8 -- if there's something there that we could model the
9 strategy after. I'm not familiar enough with what
10 they've done. And you're laughing, so maybe you know
11 something I don't.

12

13 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, first they had
14 to turn the salmon into an endangered species so that
15 they could go after another species to protect the
16 salmon, so, you know, I mean -- and even then the
17 political outcry on it was something else.

18

19 Okay. But I do thank you, Doug, for
20 the information. It confirms what a lot of us have
21 seen, and that's sea otters in Southcentral are
22 definitely not in trouble and from the opinion of most
23 of us, that deal down there, the population is
24 increasing and in some areas increasing quite rapidly.
25 And over the years we have seen -- well, I think Mark
26 can concur on that. It was -- I don't remember how
27 many years ago we had that pretty much massive -- over
28 the winter we probably lost I would say 1,000 sea
29 otters in just Orca Inlet from starvation that one
30 winter when they were going up, you know, laying on
31 carcasses on the beach. What was that, about eight
32 years ago, Mark?

33

34 MR. KING: Yeah, about 8, 10 years
35 ago.

36

37 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Eight, 10 years ago.
38 So, you know, overpopulation does have a tendency to
39 take care of itself, but it takes care of itself at the
40 expense of a lot of the other resources that are around
41 there, too, you know. And that's just kind of what I
42 was wondering from a subsistence standpoint, those
43 resources are important to the community just like the
44 sea otter is.

45

46 MR. BURN: Right. Well, one thing I
47 would add though is that, as I mentioned earlier, that
48 the folks in Southeast Alaska are way ahead of the
49 curve on this. In fact, when we listed sea otters in
50 Southwest Alaska as threatened under the Endangered

1 Species Act, we had several people in Southeast Alaska
2 who said, well, you know, our otters came from the
3 Aleutians, so you're welcome to put them back with
4 interest.

5
6 (Laughter)

7
8 MR. BURN: And they were serious.

9
10 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Oh, I know they're
11 serious.

12
13 MR. BURN: They were serious, because
14 those animals have only been there since about 1970 or
15 so, and so there are people who remember what it was
16 like, you know, before sea otters were a part of their
17 ecosystem.

18
19 And one of the things that we had an
20 inquiry from a State representative down in Southeast
21 Alaska that we responded to, and as part of that
22 response, what we committed to doing was working with
23 Alaska Department of Fish and Game and we're looking at
24 trying to find a meeting or a venue down there where we
25 could try to get on the agenda, maybe set up a scoping
26 meeting to get a better sense of these concerns, and
27 see what we can do as far as some management
28 strategies. So I think maybe as we -- since the issue
29 is similar, you know, in your area as well, I think
30 what we learn and what we come up with there might be
31 applicable. So this issue of competition, we're aware
32 of it, and, you know, we're scratching our heads and
33 seeing what we can do to address it. And we'll
34 continue to do so.

35
36 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. Their problem
37 stems from us. Our sea otters got numerous enough in
38 our area and multiplied enough that they just spread on
39 down the coast. And, I mean, I can remember friends
40 from Yakutak talking about the sea otters showing up
41 down there, and they were coming from our direction,
42 and ours came from farther out yet, you know. So
43 they're just -- they're an opportunistic animal, and
44 their range is spreading. But it's kind of interesting
45 that their original range is where they're having
46 problems.

47
48 MR. BURN: So I can tell them to send
49 you the bill then?

50

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: No. You can tell them
2 that we'll be happy to send ours to the Aleutians.

3
4 MR. BURN: You'll be able to send those
5 back. Yeah. I understand.

6
7 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: At least some of them.
8 I mean, it's nice to have some of them around, but they
9 are in large numbers and they do have an affect.

10
11 Anybody else have any questions for
12 Doug. Donald. Don.

13
14 MR. KOMPKOFF: I'll just make one
15 comment. You know, basically just echo what Ralph
16 said, that there are other sources of -- you know, you
17 have clams and crabs that are very important to the
18 local cultural communities, and I just -- when you set
19 policy that says that there's minimums that we have to
20 keep to sustain a healthy population of sea otters, for
21 example, but there's no control over the maximum
22 levels. You know, some of these problems that you're
23 going to start seeing in Southeast Alaska, because of
24 the population growth in the sea otter population,
25 they're going to keep -- they're going to continue to
26 get worse, you know, like the issue that was in the
27 paper today, and you're going to see more problems like
28 that, because it just seems to most people that the sea
29 otters are the driving factor in the management of all
30 the other associated resources. And when the clams and
31 crabs start disappearing in Southeast Alaska like
32 they've completely disappeared in Orca Inlet and
33 eastern Prince William Sound, people don't like that.
34 And people think that, you know, are we managing for
35 all species or are we managing for one species. And
36 from the general public's point of view, we're managing
37 from the sea otter population and that's it. Because
38 you can't go dig a clam or you can't go catch a crab in
39 eastern Prince William Sound any more. And that's a
40 problem. And that's what frustrates most people. So,
41 I mean, I would just hope that the National -- or the
42 Fish and Wildlife Service would seriously take some of
43 these considerations into account when they're talking
44 about local subsistence. And it's very important to
45 the people of the coastal communities.

46
47 So that's all I have.

48
49 MR. BURN: Thank you. I guess one
50 thing I would add to that is at that meeting, the

1 statewide meeting, when Commissioner Lloyd gave his
2 statements, our new regional director, Geoff Haskett,
3 was there, you know, to hear that. And, in fact, the
4 reason I have this is -- I'm sorry. The reason I have
5 this is because he sent it down to me and said, you
6 know, I need a briefing on this. So he's aware of
7 this, and, you know, we'll over the next -- you know,
8 in the near future, we're going to be looking at what
9 can we do.

10
11 I think one of the challenges is the
12 way the Marine Mammal Protection Act is structured so
13 that Alaska Natives can take them for subsistence
14 purposes. It's when you take a sea otter -- I don't
15 think too many people eat them, they take them for the
16 pelt, and then, you know, there's a lot of effort that
17 has to go into getting the thing tanned and then as far
18 as being a skin sewer and producing an article of
19 handicraft. It takes a lot of effort. And as a
20 result, those products -- you know, because they take a
21 lot of effort, those products, you know, cost a decent
22 amount of money I think. And so that then limits their
23 marketability to, you know, who can afford them. And
24 so there are some sort of -- some limitations, you
25 know, on that end of things, on the uses of sea otters.
26 And whether or not there's anything that can be done
27 about that, I think that's something we'll have to
28 think about.

29
30 MR. CARPENTER: Well, I would just add
31 to that that, you know, the sea otter, at least in the
32 Cordova area and the other villages in Prince William
33 Sound where the sea otter's an important cultural --
34 has some important cultural significance to people
35 there, you know, if they eat all their food and they
36 start moving, and they move out of what you consider
37 the three areas, if they would move out of the
38 Southcentral area to the Southeastern area, and the
39 levels in that area drop because there's no food, then
40 it becomes a direct impact on the Native populations in
41 Southcentral, because if the level of the population
42 drops enough, then there's either going to be curtailed
43 harvest even from the Native populations. So that gets
44 back to the same problem that I had earlier is that
45 they've got to have food. And you can't let something
46 -- it's just like the deer population, it's just like
47 the moose population. It's just like any population.
48 You cannot let them explode to levels where they have a
49 dramatic impact on the environment around them. And
50 when you have a big die-off or your have a big

1 transition in staging areas because there's no food,
2 you know, those things need to be taken into account.
3 I just hope that it doesn't get to the point some day,
4 I'll probably be long gone by then, that we have to
5 deal with sea otters like they do the sea lions in the
6 locks of Lake Washington where have an endangered
7 steelhead run and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
8 would rather have the steelhead run, the endangered
9 steelhead run totally gone before they figured out a
10 way to manage the sea lions. So, you know, it's an on-
11 going problem, and I don't know what the answer is, but
12 I think there needs to be levels on the upper and lower
13 ends.

14

15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Tom.

16

17 MR. BURN: Thanks, Tom.

18

19 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Any other questions or
20 comments for Doug.

21

22 (No comments)

23

24 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Doug, thank you for
25 coming, and thank you for the information you shared
26 with us.

27

28 MR. BURN: Thanks for the opportunity
29 to talk to you about that. And again I will try to
30 track down the most recent Prince William Sound
31 information and try to get that to you through Donald.

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: We have somebody in
36 the audience that deals with sea otters. I think he's
37 on the Sea Otter Commission and everything. Mark, have
38 you got anything you'd like to add to this at this
39 point in time? You don't have to.

40

41 MR. KING: Do you want me to come up
42 there?

43

44 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah, come up by Doug
45 if you'd like to. I mean, you don't have to.

46

47 MR. KING: Yeah, well, I've been doing
48 a lot of the sea otter work for the Native Village of
49 Eyak, and we implemented a management plan. And what
50 we did is we took the -- we did some surveys. We did a

1 winter mortality survey where we count the dead otters
2 on about 30 miles of beaches. And I used to walk these
3 beaches every spring, and then take the GPS coordinate
4 where the -- where the otter was picked up and take
5 proof of sex and the skull so they can age the teeth,
6 just to see, you know, how old these animals are that
7 were dying. I did that for about eight years I guess.
8 And then in the spring we'd do a pup survival. We'd
9 count the amount of pups that were in the area, and
10 then we'd do our population survey in the fall so we
11 could look at kind of the pup survival rate through the
12 summer into the fall. And then we had the Native
13 harvest, which was -- it was from November to March
14 where we have -- where the otters -- the hunters are
15 hunting the otters, and those otters have to be marked
16 and tagged within a month. So what we were trying to
17 do to manage the herd there or the otters right in
18 front of Cordova is we were looking at how many pups
19 were being born, how -- what the winter mortality was,
20 what the hunters' take was, and the survival rate of
21 the pups, and trying to come up with a number of what a
22 balance would be for harvest. And I think that this
23 was the most in-depth study of any tribe or any
24 organization on the whole coast of Alaska.

25
26 And what we found during this study, at
27 one time when we had a large event of die-off is we
28 identified some parasites that were in these otters
29 that weren't normally found in otters. And what was
30 happening there was the -- we had this pollock fishery
31 that was developed in Prince William Sound, and they
32 were bringing cod and pollock into Cordova to process,
33 and they were discarding the waste into the -- into
34 Orca Inlet which attracted the otters in. And what we
35 saw there was these large adult male otters coming in
36 to feed where the outfall of the processors were, and
37 that's where they were ingesting the parasite. But
38 there was -- they would chase the females and pups
39 away. They wouldn't let the -- the males wouldn't let
40 them come in there, and so we had this huge local
41 population of large adult male sea otters right in
42 front of town. And so our harvest was, you know,
43 fairly close to town. And it was mostly large adult
44 males.

45
46 Once we had that die-off, I don't think
47 it was quite as many as 1,000 otters like Ralph said.
48 I think I picked up 157 dead ones that year off of the
49 30-miles of beaches that I normally walk, and we could
50 directly attribute most of those carcasses that died

1 off with heavy parasite loads.

2

3 So since then we met with the
4 processors and they changed their techniques of how
5 they dealt with fish waste. They put a steam chamber
6 in and they would cook, you know, the fish waste. And
7 they changed their grind on their grinders that dealt
8 with the bones and everything, and they put a finer
9 grind in and then dumped that out into the bay, which
10 the otters weren't attracted to that area then. And
11 then we started seeing a decrease of males concentrated
12 in front of town.

13

14 So our Native harvest is still going
15 on, but what's happening is now the females and pups
16 are moving back in. So I think we're seeing a larger
17 harvest of females. So my opinion is that that's going
18 to cause a more rapid decline of otters in the local
19 areas when you're hunting sea otters. We have a
20 management plan that says no harvest of females with
21 pups, but it's hard to distinguish a female and a male
22 if there's no pup around. So what we're seeing is an
23 increase in the harvest of females. So I think we're
24 going to see a pretty dramatic decrease in our
25 population, our local population of sea otters in Orca
26 Inlet.

27

28 But there's been observations, you
29 know, that we talked about of these -- you know, that
30 there's such a large group of sea otters in Orca Inlet
31 where they were expanding or moving down the coast.
32 They're out on the Copper River delta, Bering River,
33 Kayak Island area. And I have sources that are down
34 the coast between Cape St. Elias and Cape Yakataga/Icy
35 Bay, and the people that lived at Yakataga have been
36 picking not a lot of carcasses, but they found dead sea
37 otters on the exposed gulf there washed up on the
38 beach. So there's no doubt that they are moving from
39 St. Elias to Icy Bay. But that's, like Doug was
40 saying, that's been an area that under this surveyor
41 area that has kind of been left out. There's been some
42 surveys in Yakutat Bay, but there's a large expanse of
43 area there where these otters are transitioning through
44 to get to another area. And usually when that happens,
45 they've seen this down in Glacier Bay, to where the
46 population, the existing populations that's there can't
47 reproduce fast enough to come to the numbers that they
48 have, or they've surveyed in that area, so the only way
49 that that number can get increased is by otters moving
50 in. And we -- you know, they're showing up in the area

1 faster than they can be born, so they have to be coming
2 from somewhere else. And we observed that in Prince
3 William Sound and Orca Inlet in the early 70s. We've
4 seen the otters down in Montague Straits, around Cape
5 Claire, Knight Island area, the Hinchinbrook Entrance.
6 And then we've seen these otters come into Prince
7 William Sound, hit the north shore of Prince William
8 Sound around Unakwit, Eaglek, come around to Valdez
9 Arm, around Knowles Head, and transition the northern
10 coast of the Sound until they finally made it into Orca
11 Inlet, which is ideal habitat for sea otters. And then
12 we saw the explosion of sea otters.

13

14 And it's kind of hard to, you know,
15 call it an explosion when one otter can only have one
16 pup a year. It's not like rats or anything, but, you
17 know, it's -- it did happen, and we have suffered the
18 consequences. We'd catch a million pounds of Dungeness
19 crab in the 60s. I think the last season was about
20 1980 for Dungeness for a local fishery in front of
21 town. And then they closed the commercial harvest of
22 crabs, and then they even closed the subsistence
23 harvest of crabs in Prince William Sound. We've seen
24 our -- which was -- we were at one time the razor clam
25 capital of the world, and now Eyak has a project that
26 we're trying to reintroduce razor clams back into the
27 area, but we haven't been very successful at doing
28 that, because we're sticking them in the ground and the
29 otters are out there in the bay, you know, wondering
30 what we're doing, and, you know, it doesn't take them
31 very long to figure it out. And the oyster, the
32 mariculture people, the oyster farmers had the same
33 problem as the lamprey nets that they use for -- out of
34 nylon, you know, mesh with oysters and there those
35 otters would just get in there and chew a hole right in
36 them. Now they've got to use steel mesh in their
37 oyster farms.

38

39 So anyway, you know, we're still
40 blessed with -- I don't think our numbers are like they
41 were, you know. Shortly after the oil spill, I think
42 our numbers right in the Orca Inlet proper in front of
43 town are about 1,000 less, so there will be -- I'm sure
44 that there will be some concern where we're already in
45 a decline. But the reason being is the food source.

46

47 The Native harvest is about 150 average
48 a year. 150, 175 a year. It's been as high as 300.
49 I'm not sure what it's going to be this year, maybe 200
50 or something. I'm not really sure. I haven't been

1 paying attention this year.
2
3 But anyway that's all I have to add for
4 the record.
5
6 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: One question, Mark.
7 Have you done any observing of the sea otters that
8 they've been getting the last year or two?
9
10 MR. KING: To look at?
11
12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: To look at the
13 carcasses or anything?
14
15 MR. KING: No, I haven't.
16
17 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I was just wondering
18 what the.....
19
20 MR. KING: The general health is?
21
22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah, what kind of
23 shape they were in. Were they healthy, fat and
24 everything else or.....
25
26 MR. KING: I haven't checked, but I'll
27 try and make a point of doing that. That is a good
28 question, but I haven't -- I normally get 15 to 20
29 calls of dead sea otters washing up on the beach. This
30 year the only response -- or the only calls that I had
31 were mostly for otters that were caught in discarded
32 fishing gear in the local harbor. And we had one
33 instance where a snowplow dumped a gillnet into the bay
34 and with otters got caught into the.....
35
36 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Right in the harbor.
37
38 MR. KING: It was actually at the boat
39 yard, at the marina, but that's -- and that's a
40 problem, the way sea otters are, they get into
41 everything, and once you get a pup in a little piece of
42 web or something the other one comes and tries to help
43 out or whatever.
44
45 And Eyak put in a proposal years ago to
46 EVOS to clean up all the discarded nets and debris and
47 everything, and we were turned down, and, you know,
48 that's been several years ago. But it is -- these
49 pieces of web, drag web, gillnet web or stuff like that
50 do get redeposited back into the water on big tides,

1 and it is a problem for birds and marine mammals.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Mark. Any
4 questions for Mark.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Mark.
9 Thank you, Doug.

10

11 Okay. On our agenda we have the
12 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

13

14 MS. CELLARIUS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
15 For the record my name is Barbara Cellarius, and I'm
16 the subsistence coordinator for Wrangell-St. Elias
17 National Park and Preserve.

18

19 And I will start with the planning
20 process that we're going through regarding the
21 subsistence use of horns, antlers, bones and plants.
22 It's a Park Service, Alaska Region effort. And then
23 I'll move onto the report for the Park.

24

25 So you'll have in your packet a
26 handout, it's got some photographs at the top. It's
27 the scoping newsletter on this planning effort, and
28 I'll let you -- I won't straight read through it, but
29 let me just give you some background on it and tell you
30 a little bit about what's here.

31

32 A couple of years ago there was a
33 proposal by the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory
34 Council concerning the subsistence use of horns and
35 antlers. They were interested at the time both in
36 subsistence harvested horns and antlers and in horns
37 and antlers that were picked up off the ground. And
38 the Federal Board was only able to take action on the
39 horns and antlers from subsistence harvested animals,
40 because that was within its jurisdiction. As part of
41 that process they learned that the Park Service
42 prohibits the collection of shed horns and antlers, and
43 so there was a request that we take a look at that.
44 There had been a previous request from the Gates of the
45 Arctic Subsistence Resource Commission for something
46 similar. And so we've undertaken this planning
47 process. So what you have here is kind of our scoping
48 on the draft alternatives. So this is pretty early in
49 the process. We're going to an environmental
50 assessment, and then that will be out for public

1 comment as well.

2

3 But you have here -- so what we're
4 looking at is the collection, the personal use, and
5 then making handicraft for sales from shed or discarded
6 horns, antlers or bones, and then also the collection
7 and use of plant materials to make handicrafts that may
8 be sold. So those are the things that we're looking
9 at.

10

11 And the alternatives, there's a no
12 action alternative which we're required to analyze as
13 part of the process. There's an alternative that would
14 be unlimited collection. And then the third alternative
15 described here is that there would be some management
16 authority at the park level, for example, to require a
17 permit for this activity if we felt that was necessary.

18

19

20 So that's kind of where we are right
21 now. If the Council's interested in commenting, we
22 would be interested if you have comments on the draft
23 alternatives.

24

25 I also have a very specific question
26 that I'm going to be asking the SRC again, which is
27 it's pretty easy -- if you look at the top of the
28 second page, we have this matrix about what animals
29 might be involved in horns and antlers, but when it
30 comes to plants, it's a little more difficult to figure
31 out what it is we need to analyze. I mean there's some
32 obvious things, birch bark baskets, the use of various
33 parts of a spruce tree. But if you want to share any
34 information with us about the plants that are
35 customarily and traditionally used in handicrafts in
36 your region, we'd also be interesting in hearing that.

37

38

39 And I'll stop there and see if there
40 are any questions.

41

42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Barbara, from
43 what I understand, from what you just said then, that
44 this is a process that's going on right now, and that
45 we as a Council could make a recommendation as to your
46 alternatives and could provide you with information as
47 to what kind of plants and that we would consider being
48 included in them?

49

50 MS. CELLARIUS: That's correct. And

1 then when we get to the point of having a draft EA,
2 we'll make sure to share that with the Council, and so
3 there will be a further opportunity to comment.

4

5 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Chuck.

6

7 MR. LAMB: Yeah. You were talking
8 about just plants for crafts; how about for food and
9 medicinal purposes? Will -- is that being considered?

10

11 MS. CELLARIUS: That's already allowed
12 under the provisions of ANILCA, but using -- if you
13 look at the definition of subsistence that's in ANILCA,
14 it doesn't talk about the use of plans for handicrafts.
15 So it's that particular activity that would be allowed.
16 So right now, you know, you can -- if I want to go pick
17 berries, if I want to go pick mushrooms, or you, those
18 are perfectly allowable subsistence activities.
19 Medicinal plans for personal or family use. It's the
20 production of handicrafts for sale.

21

22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And correct me if I'm
23 wrong on this, Barbara, but if you live in the park or
24 in the preserve or in a community zone, you can pick up
25 antlers and horns and take them to your own house. You
26 just can't sell them. And I correct?

27

28 MS. CELLARIUS: Under regulations, that
29 is not allowed.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That is not allowed?

32

33 MS. CELLARIUS: There's a National Park
34 Service regulation, and it's listed here on the first
35 page, second column on the first -- top half. It's a
36 pretty long paragraph. It starts, NPS regulations at
37 36 CFR 2.1, and it's one of the things that is
38 specifically prohibited. It's a nationwide regulation,
39 and so what we're considering doing is putting in place
40 an Alaska-specific regulation that relates to
41 subsistence that would allow that to happen. But
42 currently it's not allowed.

43

44 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Barbara,
45 for that clarification, and thank you for just being
46 interested in putting in an Alaska-specific regulation.
47 That's one of the things I was hoping would happen with
48 the Forest Service's plan, too.

49

50 Council, do we wish to comment on this

1 as it affects our subsistence users all over. Do we
2 have an alternative we'd prefer to recommend. How
3 would we rank these alternatives in the order of
4 preference. And do we wish to add to -- can we just do
5 that on the side, or would you prefer us to do it in
6 the meeting to give you plants and things that we know
7 about.

8

9 MS. CELLARIUS: So at this point we
10 will analyze several different alternatives, but it's
11 possible for them to look a little bit different than
12 what is here. I don't think -- I mean, certainly if
13 you have a preference, you could certainly state that
14 preference, but we'll be analyzing several different
15 alternatives. And if you want to give me some
16 information about plants that you use now or if you
17 want to send it to us. I mean, we're just wanting to
18 -- as I said, animals are easy. We have so many
19 species of animals with horns or antlers, but plants
20 for use in handicrafts is just a little bit more of an
21 unknown. And so you can give me information now, if
22 you want to provide -- you know, anything you can
23 provide would be great.

24

25 And the other thing I would say is that
26 the Council could comment, but also individuals can
27 comment. And so at this point, you know, if the
28 Council's not quite ready to do something on the
29 Council level, we would be very happy to have comments
30 from individuals as well.

31

32 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Barbara. I
33 was just looking at the basic possible alternatives
34 that are here, and this is an opportunity for us as a
35 Council to at least look at those and give our
36 preference on those, and I think that it would behoove
37 us to take this opportunity, because a lot of things
38 slide by and you don't get around to having another
39 meeting in time. So if there's any other Council
40 member that would like to look at these, make a motion
41 as to what our -- how we would rank these alternatives,
42 acceptable, not acceptable, however we would want to do
43 it. First choice.

44

45 I think it would behoove us as a
46 Council to do something like that, because I can see
47 these kind of regulations, like with the Park Service
48 and the Forest Service ending up having a real big
49 effect on subsistence users, especially about the time
50 that you start getting into the area where you start

1 having to get a permit for every time you turn around
2 and do something. It would be a big hassle for the
3 Park Service and the Forest Service, and I think it's
4 an unnecessary burden on subsistence users.

5
6 So if there's any Council member who
7 would like to -- Tricia.

8
9 MS. WAGGONER: I have a question. In
10 the Kobuk River Valley, is it an unlimited collection
11 or a managed collection right now?

12
13 MS. CELLARIUS: So that is -- I just
14 have to remind myself. I would have to check with
15 folks there. I don't know that there's specifically an
16 allowance to have a permit. And I'm looking up the --
17 to see where.....

18
19 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Well, evidently they
20 are allowed to do it in the Kobuk River Valley.

21
22 MS. CELLARIUS: Uh-huh. The question
23 is how is it regulated as I understood. Are there
24 specific rules or is it more of a general allowance.

25
26 MS. WAGGONER: Right. I'm just
27 thinking of consistency on alternatives for existing
28 regulations.

29
30 MS. CELLARIUS: And the Kobuk Valley is
31 -- so it comes under the definition of customary trade,
32 because currently the only allowed activity on Park
33 Service lands in Alaska parks where subsistence is
34 allowed, the only customary trade that's allowed is the
35 sale of furs for cash. And so what this says, under
36 customary trade, the special regulations for Kobuk
37 Valley is that in addition to the exchange of furs for
38 cash, customary trade in the Kobuk Valley National Park
39 shall include the selling of handicraft articles made
40 from plant materials taken by local rural residents i
41 the Park area.

42
43 I'm not aware, and I don't know if
44 there's anyone else here who knows more about this than
45 me. I'm not aware that the have real specific
46 regulations about that, but I can certainly check, and
47 if there is, I'll let Donald know.

48
49 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Sure.
50

1 MR. SUMMERS: Clarence Summers,
2 National Park Service, Anchorage office.

3
4 Yeah, the use of plants, it's allowed
5 in regulations. Currently a permit's not required.
6 That's the point I want to make. There's no permit
7 requirement at this time, but the regulations do allow
8 that. And I believe it's in a portion of Gates of the
9 Arctic National Preserve and Kobuk Valley National
10 Park.

11
12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And there's no permit
13 required. They just.....

14
15 MR. SUMMERS: Not at this time.

16
17 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's just a rural
18 resident that's qualified for subsistence in the area.

19
20 MR. SUMMERS: That's correct.

21
22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Any questions.
23 Gloria.

24
25 MS. STICKWAN: I don't have a real
26 question. I just wanted to say these three
27 alternatives, I like number 2, the unlimited
28 collection. That managed collection is good, too, but
29 in working with the resource commissions, but I don't
30 like the permit part of it, having to go to the -- we
31 have to go get a permit to -- that's a part I don't
32 like about number 3.

33
34 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Personally, from my
35 standpoint, Barbara, I would say that under what I
36 understand ANILCA to speak to, I would say the first
37 alternative is totally unacceptable. I mean, I don't
38 think it meets the letter or the intent of ANILCA, that
39 first alternative. And I think that one could be --
40 that one, if somebody wanted to, could contest it in
41 court even. I'm not sure if anybody ever would, but --
42 because I'm not sure anybody would have the kind of --
43 the kind of people that do that kind of stuff don't
44 have the kind of money to fight the Federal Government
45 in court, but to me that no action, allowing that to
46 stand in Alaska is totally against the intent and
47 actually the written law in ANILCA as I could see it.

48
49 Barbara.

50

1 MS. CELLARIUS: The National
2 Environmental Policy Act requires that we analyze the
3 current situation, and so that's why the no action
4 alternative is there. The reason we're doing this
5 process is that subsistence users have asked that we
6 take a look at this. And so I think the -- unless
7 there's some kind of, you know, environmental impact
8 that we're not anticipating, you know, we're looking at
9 this because we want to move in that direction.

10
11 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I think the Kobuk
12 Valley is a good example, and then if there would
13 become a -- and, again, we can do what we've talked
14 about in the past, if there becomes a problem, that's
15 the time to address the problem and tighten the
16 regulation. If at the current moment there is no
17 problem, I think the Kobuk Valley example would more
18 closely fit what I envision ANILCA as, you know.

19
20 Barbara.

21
22 MS. CELLARIUS: Currently for the Kobuk
23 Valley and the part of the Gates preserve that's on the
24 Kobuk River, the only thing that's allowed is the
25 collection of plants to use in handicrafts. It says
26 nothing about horns, antlers and bones.

27
28 And then the other thing I would say is
29 that with managed collection, we're not automatically
30 instituting a permit requirement. It's kind of a
31 lengthy process to go through the regulatory change
32 process, and so what the regulation that's being
33 considered, at least as far as I understand it, would
34 be that if a superintendent feels that there is an
35 issue that needs to be addressed through more close
36 management, they would have the authority to require a
37 permit, but the permit wouldn't be -- I mean, it
38 wouldn't be -- the regulation that we put in place
39 wouldn't say everybody has to get a permit. It would
40 be allow the superintendents the management discretion.

41
42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Do was as a Council
43 wish to make a statement on this at this point in time.
44 Does anybody wish to make a motion. Gloria.

45
46 MS. STICKWAN: I guess I didn't
47 understand number 3, but I guess out of all of them, I
48 like the part that you would work -- I mean, the park
49 would work with the resource commission, and that it's
50 up to -- whether they get permit would be up to the

1 superintendent I guess working with the local people.
2 I guess that one would be the best one I guess. I
3 don't see -- I guess it could be a potential for abuse,
4 but it doesn't seem like it would be for subsistence
5 user. Maybe for -- I don't know.

6
7 With the list of plants, is there a
8 deadline to get back to you about a list of plants?

9
10 MS. CELLARIUS: I am not remembering
11 off the top of my head what our schedule is. Probably
12 the sooner the better. I mean, you know, in the next
13 month or so would be better than a year from now. I
14 asked this question, as you remember, at the SRC
15 meeting in October, and I'm going to be asking it again
16 next week. I mean, we'll have a draft EA and somebody
17 might say, oh, but what about this. I mean, this is a
18 process. So I would encourage you, if you think of
19 something, let us know, but I don't think there's a
20 fixed deadline at this point.

21
22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Gloria, did you wish
23 to make a motion or will you be leaving that to
24 somebody else or.....

25
26 MS. STICKWAN: I don't know what
27 everybody else thinks, but I guess I'd like number 3
28 more than -- working with the SRCs, local SRCs.

29
30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: So you would choose
31 number 3 as your first choice, right?

32
33 MS. STICKWAN: I guess.

34
35 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Gloria -- I mean,
36 Barbara.

37
38 MS. CELLARIUS: At this point there
39 isn't a requirement that you tell us which alternative
40 you like the best. If you want to talk about what
41 things you think are important to see in the
42 alternatives. Something that I heard Gloria say a
43 couple of times is that she thinks it's really
44 important that the Park work with the SRCs on this. So
45 you don't necessarily have to pick a particular
46 alternative, but if there's things that you would
47 particularly like to see be included in the
48 alternatives, that's another way that you could
49 structure your comments.

50

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Donald.

2

3 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
4 just thinking about future meeting dates, but I know
5 Mrs. Stickwan had concerns about the Park Service
6 brochure as far as getting the SRC involved. My
7 suggestion to the Council is that, you know, if the SRC
8 wants to address this and make a recommendation, and
9 the SRC can come to this Council meeting in the fall
10 and present their recommendations to this Council, then
11 the Council can support or make amendments to their
12 recommendations.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: A question, Barbara.
17 Do you think the fall is too late for us to comment on
18 this? Will this be taken care of by fall?

19

20 MS. CELLARIUS: The EA I don't expect
21 will be completed by fall. We might be further along
22 in the process. If you see a deficiency in the
23 alternatives that we're thinking about analyzing, it
24 would probably be good to comment on that now from the
25 Council. But there will be -- once we finalize the
26 alternatives, then there will be further sort of
27 analysis and it's at that stage where, you know, people
28 will be more talking about what's the preferred
29 alternative. So, you know, if you -- if the
30 alternatives look more or less okay to you in terms of
31 what we analyze, you'll have a further opportunity to
32 comment on the analysis.

33

34 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Then maybe it behooves
35 us, since this has just been brought to our attention,
36 and this is probably a surprise to a lot of us, I just
37 basically got surprised by the Forest Service one and
38 now this one right at the same time, maybe it behooves
39 us to think about it until our fall meeting, and so
40 that we can comment on it more.

41

42 The only comment that I would make is
43 as the Chair, I think the no action alternative on this
44 one is totally unacceptable. And I think our Alaska
45 Park Service people and Forest Service people
46 understand that. It's whether or not they're able to
47 get that across to the powers that be that don't live
48 in Alaska. But from a subsistence users standpoint, I
49 think we can work together on an alternative that meets
50 our needs. But the first alternative of no action

1 probably an awful lot of us have been in violation it,
2 for lack of a better way of putting it, you know,
3 simply because from total ignorance. And so I would
4 think that something needs to be done for the
5 subsistence community in that area.

6

7 So if that's okay with the rest of the
8 Council, we'll just table this whole thing until the
9 fall meeting and do some thinking on it and see if
10 anybody can come up with a.....

11

12 Greg.

13

14 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Yeah. Mr. Chairman.
15 Barbara. Yeah, I think that's a good idea to answer
16 this fall.

17

18 I would like one question to ask
19 Barbara to think about though in the meantime is what
20 would be the impact of your number 2, the unlimited
21 collection? I mean, I would like to understand that a
22 little more about, you know, if you did allow for the
23 families and the people that qualify in the parks, what
24 would be the impact of the unlimited use there. I
25 mean, that I would like to understand.

26

27 MS. CELLARIUS: Well, that is what we
28 will analyze in the environmental assessment. So right
29 now we're just trying to figure out what it is we're
30 going to analyze. And so we're kind of looking at
31 these three alternatives. What I'm hearing is that
32 there are pieces of 2 and 3 that seem to resonate with
33 the Council and I haven't heard comments that indicate
34 there are big problems with those two alternatives.

35

36 The other issue, as I said, is that
37 we're trying to figure out what plants to look at,
38 because we simply -- it's a larger -- there's a larger
39 pool of possibility than there are with large mammals.
40 So we'll be back when we have the answer to that
41 question.

42

43 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: If that's acceptable
44 to the rest of the Council, we'll.....

45

46 MS. STICKWAN: Do you have a list of
47 plants, potential -- all the plants?

48

49 MS. CELLARIUS: We have like a vascular
50 plant inventory at the Park that's a very, very long

1 list.

2

3 MS. STICKWAN: It would help if you
4 could look at a list and think about, you know, what
5 could be made of.....

6

7 MS. CELLARIUS: For the SRC meeting
8 I'll try to -- I'll talk to -- we've got a new
9 ecologist and so I'll talk to her and see if we can
10 maybe not come up with a list of species, but have a
11 list of different types of plants, sort of more general
12 categories that might help folks think about what get
13 used. So I'll talk to Miranda about maybe doing that
14 for the SRC meeting.

15

16 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And correct me if I'm
17 wrong, Barbara, but this would just be horns, bones,
18 and plants for handicrafts and sales, not for -- this
19 does not limit in any way taking plants for food or
20 medicinal purposes or home use?

21

22 MS. CELLARIUS: Yes. So if -- plant
23 use that falls under the existing definition of
24 subsistence, which is personal or family use for food
25 or shelter or heating, those activities are all
26 currently allowed. It's the production and sale of
27 handicrafts that would be added with this EA in terms
28 of plants. And then as I explained currently it is not
29 permitted to pick up shed or discarded horns, antlers
30 or bones, period. And so this would allow you to
31 collect those items, to use them for your own personal
32 or family use and to make handicrafts for sale.

33

34 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: But under this as
35 opposed to under the Forest Service one, the collection
36 of mushrooms for sale, direct sale, would still be
37 prohibited, because they're not a handicraft. You
38 haven't done anything to them to change them?

39

40 MS. CELLARIUS: That's correct.

41

42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Where the picking of
43 berries and turning it into jelly or jam would be a
44 handicraft and you could sell that, because you've
45 added value to it, you've worked on it.

46

47 MS. CELLARIUS: That's a question that
48 I'm not sure we have an answer for right now, because
49 I'm not sure what the definition of handicraft is and
50 whether we need to define handicraft as part of this

1 process.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That's what I'm
4 getting at.

5

6 MS. CELLARIUS: And we're aware of
7 that, that as part of the regulatory process we're
8 going to need to define handicraft. We'll probably
9 look at the Federal Board definition as a place to
10 start, but because we're also talking about plants, the
11 definition may be a little bit different. We just --
12 we haven't actually put pen to paper on the definition
13 yet. And jam is an interesting question.

14

15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: How about a flower
16 corsage?

17

18 MS. CELLARIUS: We need to work on the
19 definition.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Tricia.

22

23 MS. WAGGONER: And I think that's where
24 I have two questions. The first one, in regarding
25 writing your regulations, are you guys going to be
26 looking at species-level identification of plans, or
27 can regulations be written, like you said, in a more
28 general, broad term, because if it has to go to the
29 species level, then the subsistence user has to be able
30 to, you know, understand that regulations and identify
31 which species they're taking. So is it going to be
32 more general or is it going to be species level?

33

34 MS. CELLARIUS: Well, if you look at
35 the current regulations like the one I read you for
36 Kobuk Valley, that was the -- that was verbatim out of
37 the regulation book. It says plants. But in order for
38 us to analyze the environmental impact of allowing this
39 activity, we have to have no more than just plants.
40 And so we're trying to identify what are some of the
41 major plant species that might get used. As I said,
42 birch bark, you know, birch trees, spruce trees, a
43 couple of things we've identified thus far. But right
44 now what the regulation says is plants. There might an
45 opportunity, if there was a particular rare species
46 that the Park had a concern about that somehow was used
47 in a handicraft, that that might be addressed, but I
48 don't -- I'm not aware at this point that we would be
49 real specific in terms of what's allowed.

50

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Trish.

2

3 MS. WAGGONER: And then the other part
4 of my question is are you going to identify
5 potentially, like other parts say, porcupine quills or
6 potentially bones of not the large mammals, but maybe
7 smaller mammals that are used?

8

9 MS. CELLARIUS: That's not a question
10 that I'd heard yet. Porcupine quills, if you had
11 harvested the animal under subsistence regulations, you
12 already have the authorization to use the non-edible
13 by-products from subsistence harvested fish and
14 wildlife for handicrafts, so that's already allowed.
15 If there was an interest in adding quills from a
16 porcupine that was not harvested under subsistence
17 regulations, that would certainly be a comment that you
18 could make. And actually it looks like Clarence is
19 writing it down.

20

21 MR. SUMMERS: It's a good one.

22

23 MS. CELLARIUS: So we'll take that back
24 to Sandy and Bud who working on this. And also she
25 said bones from smaller animals. So that's a good
26 comment. Thank you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Any other
29 questions for Barbara on this. Gloria.

30

31 MR. KOMPKOFF: Ralph. Mr. Chairman.

32

33 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I didn't mean Barbara.
34 I meant Gloria. I think I said Gloria. After Gloria,
35 Donald.

36

37 MS. STICKWAN: At the SRC you'll
38 provide the regulations that are in place right now,
39 right, on this so we'll be able to read it, because I
40 would like to know what the handicraft definition is.
41 Right now, the way it's written.

42

43 MS. CELLARIUS: I don't believe that
44 for the Park Service we have a handicraft definition
45 right now. That's why we need to write one.

46

47 MS. STICKWAN: But there's a handicraft
48 definition somewhere in ANILCA, right? I mean, isn't
49 there somewhere? I mean, they worked the bear's one,
50 right?

1 MS. CELLARIUS: The Federal Subsistence
2 Board developed a definition of handicraft when they
3 were working on the handicrafts, and so that is a
4 Federal Subsistence Board definition. It's not a Park
5 Service definition. I mean, I can get you the -- we
6 can certainly get that definition for you.

7
8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's just a question
9 of whether the National Park Service will adopt that.

10
11 MS. CELLARIUS: Right. And whether
12 that definition works. And certainly we can have
13 copies -- it's in the regulation book. Polly just
14 brought that to me. And we can certainly have copies
15 of that at the SRC meeting.

16
17 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Donald.

18
19 MR. KOMPKOFF: Yeah. Just about
20 everything on the land is used for handicraft, you
21 know, like the trees and plants and the animals.
22 Everything. Bones. And they use the birch trees for
23 baskets and grass for baskets. They use porcupine
24 quills. Porcupine. And feathers from birds. You
25 know, they use -- that's all -- all of that stuff is
26 used and all different kind of animals. Every year,
27 you know, we do that down in Chenega, too. We use
28 everything. Everything is turned into craft, you know.

29
30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Donald.
31 Yeah, I think that you'll probably end up with a fairly
32 long list, but I think if we get right down to crafts
33 that are sold, the list might be a little bit smaller.
34 And I think that's what we're dealing with right here
35 as it sounds like to me, because it sounds like if you
36 use it for your own family, you use it -- then there's
37 no limitation on it. It's when you start selling it
38 that you have the -- okay.

39
40 Any more questions for Barbara on this,
41 and then we have another thing that she's got for us
42 that's on another fairly controversial subject.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Shall we take a --
47 I've just been asked to have a time out for a minute or
48 two. Let's take a 10-minute break.

49
50 (Off record)

1 (On record)

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Barbara.

4

5 MS. CELLARIUS: Before we go on to the
6 other issue that's going to take a little bit more
7 discussion, I just wanted to mention briefly a few
8 other things.

9

10 As I've been mentioning, our SRC
11 meeting is next week. On the 18th we're going to be
12 meeting in a new facility in Gakona. We're excited
13 about that.

14

15 And we've got some new staff at the
16 Park, including a new chief ranger and a new Nebesna
17 district ranger. And we've still got a couple district
18 ranger positions to fill.

19

20 And then I've gotten some funding to do
21 a community harvest assessment. Most of the community
22 harvest assessments for the Park are about 20 years
23 old. And so I put in a proposal to get some funding.
24 I've have some -- a little bit of trouble with
25 logistics of the estimate for the community that I
26 initially planned to do it in, which is Yakutat, came
27 in too high. I didn't have enough money, so now I'm
28 looking at doing the project in one of the small Copper
29 basin communities. And I'm still working with the
30 communities to figure out which community would be
31 interested in having us do the project there.

32

33 And then there's a couple of paper in
34 your packet that are just tables. So there's one for
35 the upper Copper River Federal subsistence fisheries
36 harvest. And I actually just looked at these for the
37 first time, because I got these from our fisheries
38 biologist. And a fairly substantial decline in the
39 Copper River district in the harvest this last year.
40 And that kind of corresponds to some of the things I'd
41 been hearing. People had gotten fewer fish than they
42 might have in the previous years. And I'm not really
43 going to talk about that information. But if you've
44 got questions, we can try to get them answered.

45

46 And then I also had an information
47 request about the Federal subsistence wildlife harvest,
48 and so I put together this table for something, looking
49 at the Federal registration permits that the Park
50 issues over a six-year period, and so you've got that

1 in front of you as well. The moose and the goat are
2 the two hunts that we issue the most permits for. The
3 elder sheep, the rest of -- the other four hunts are
4 elder sheep hunts, and so those are outside of the
5 regular season hunts. We don't have a Federal
6 registration permit for the regular season hunt for
7 sheep.

8

9 And I think that brings us to the EIS
10 if there are no questions on those topics.

11

12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Barbara, just off the
13 top of your head, was there a reduction in effort this
14 year in the fishery, or was it pretty much just a
15 reduction in fish?

16

17 MS. CELLARIUS: I suspect it was
18 something of a combination. I don't know, we probably
19 don't show here how many people didn't actually fish on
20 their permit. I ended up not fishing, because the
21 fishwheel that I use didn't go in the water, because
22 the bank configuration changed. But I've also heard
23 from other people that there were fewer fish. You
24 know, it was the slower return. I also talked to
25 somebody who got on a wheel late in the season and got
26 more fish than he knew what to do with, so it might
27 have been the run timing relative to when people were
28 fishing.

29

30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. And I talked to
31 a few people that didn't put the same effort in, just
32 because fuel prices were so high. They didn't make the
33 number of trips that they usually made. And I was just
34 wondering if possibly it was a combination of lower
35 fish, lower effort, you know, and river conditions.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 MS. CELLARIUS: Yeah. In the community
40 harvest assessment that I'm hoping to ask some
41 questions that look at, you know, how does your
42 subsistence activity relate to, you know, previous
43 years and what might be some factors that affected
44 that. And I think that might be pretty interesting.

45

46 So should I go on to the EIS?

47

48 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Go on to the EIS.

49

50 MS. CELLARIUS: Okay. So there are two

1 handouts relative to this. One is a map that shows the
2 trails off of the Nebesna Road. Most, but not all, of
3 these trails are included in the EIS. The Batzulnetas
4 trail is on there, because we've looked at the trail
5 condition. There's some other segments that go off of
6 longer trails that we've done analysis of the trail
7 conditions, but are not necessarily included in the
8 EIS. In the handout that Bruce put together, you'll
9 have a list of the nine trails that are specifically
10 being included in this environmental impact statement.

11
12 So the Park is developing an
13 environmental impact statement that considers impacts
14 and management of off road vehicles in the Nebesna
15 District. This is in response to a lawsuit and
16 settlement that occurred in 2006 and 2007. We
17 distributed draft alternative packages in December of
18 2008 for public review and comment, getting about 30
19 comments back on the draft alternatives.

20
21 So the next step in the process is
22 writing the draft EIS, which should be out for public
23 review about a year from now.

24
25 Based on public comments and the need
26 to address resource impacts associated with designated
27 -- degraded trails, the Park is expanding the scope of
28 the project to include subsistence ORV use. This means
29 that the impacts associated with all ORV use will be
30 displayed and the alternatives will be considered that
31 monitor resource impacts on degraded trails.

32
33 It's Wrangell-St. Elias' intent to
34 provide access for sport hunting in the preserve, back
35 country recreational activities, and subsistence
36 activities on good trails. The range of alternatives
37 considers trail reconstruction or rerouting to fix or
38 replace most degraded, very degraded or severely
39 degraded trail segments. And you see that the map,
40 that it's color coded. And if I'm remembering
41 correctly, the color coding talks about the condition
42 of the trail. So when you hear those terms, it's
43 referring to kind of the color coding on the map. This
44 is going to cost money and take time reconstructing or
45 rerouting trails.

46
47 In the meantime, some alternatives
48 consider not permitting recreational ORV use on
49 degraded trails where resource impacts are occurring.
50 And some alternatives would monitor resource impacts on

1 unimproved trails. If over time monitoring shows that
2 resource impacts are increasing on these trails, or
3 trail segments where only subsistence ORV use is
4 occurring, management actions would be considered.

5
6 Management actions could include trail
7 maintenance targeted at a particular problem, for
8 example, hardening of stream crossing, reducing use on
9 degraded trails, or trail closures under 36 CFR 13.460.
10 And we currently have that authority, that if resource
11 damage is occurring, that there's a process for closing
12 a trail.

13
14 So some important considerations
15 include the following. Under the current range of
16 alternatives to be analyzed in the draft EIS, there
17 would be no change in subsistence ORV use or access in
18 the Park at the signing of the record of decision on
19 the EIS. Reasonable regulation of subsistence ORV use
20 would only occur if monitoring over time shows that
21 resource impacts associated with degraded trails are
22 increasing on unimproved trails with only subsistence
23 ORV use. Management actions would be targeted at only
24 the trail segments or trails where increasing impacts
25 are occurring.

26
27 NPS regulations allow reasonable
28 regulation of subsistence ORV use if resource damage is
29 occurring as a result of that use. The analysis in the
30 EIS would quantify the impacts associated with ORV use.

31
32 So that's kind of in a nutshell where
33 we are with this process. And if you've got questions,
34 I think the handout's got phone numbers and emails,
35 yeah, or it's got phone numbers for Bruce Rogers, who's
36 the project manager, and Meg Jensen, who's the Park
37 superintendent. And as we go further on in this
38 process, and there's public comment opportunities on
39 the draft EIS, we'll probably ask Bruce to come and
40 talk to the RAC.

41
42 But if you've got question, I can do my
43 best to answer them at this point.

44
45 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Barbara, if I
46 understand correctly, then this more of an
47 informational thing and not an action thing at this
48 point in time?

49
50 MS. CELLARIUS: Uh-huh. This was a

1 recent decision to include the impacts of subsistence
2 ORV use. Before this time we've been talking about
3 this EIS largely as a recreational -- looking at
4 recreational ORV use. This is obviously a significant
5 change for subsistence users just in terms of the fact
6 that we're going to look at these impacts and analyze
7 them in the EIS. We're not proposing at this point, in
8 terms of the draft alternatives, you know, big changes
9 in how we manage subsistence ORV use. We're simply
10 talk -- explain that we're going to be monitoring the
11 trails, and if we see that the trail condition is
12 worsening, then we'll take some management actions.
13 But because this is a big change in terms of including
14 subsistence ORV use, we needed to let the RACs and the
15 rest of the subsistence community know. And certainly
16 if people have comments or questions, they can -- I
17 mean, if there's any comments you want me to take back,
18 I can certainly do that, but you can also get in touch
19 with Meg or with Bruce and talk to them about that.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Does
22 anybody have any questions for Barbara on this.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Barbara.
27 Have you got any more for us?

28

29 MS. CELLARIUS: That's it.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: That pretty well takes
32 care of our agenda. I do have a representative from
33 Southeastern that was willing to give us about five
34 minutes on Southeastern's doing with sea otters if
35 anybody on the Council's interested in hearing it. I
36 have a request from Mr. Henrichs. Okay. If you want
37 to come up and give us a quick little update on what's
38 going on in Southeastern, we'd appreciate that.

39

40 MR. LARSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
41 My name is Robert Larson, and I'm the Southeast
42 Regional Advisory Council's coordinator.

43

44 And we met the week before last at our
45 winter meeting. One of the items on our agenda were
46 sea otters. And we had a number of people that
47 provided testimony, including the University of Alaska
48 and a number of Council members.

49

50 And most of the concerns expressed

1 revolved around both the expansion of the range of sea
2 otters in Southeast and the increase in numbers of sea
3 otters. So that the testimony we heard was directly
4 related at not only the diminished opportunity for
5 subsistence for shellfish, but the serial depletion of
6 shellfish important to commercial fisheries. So
7 there's commercial fisheries for urchins and geoducks
8 and sea cucumbers and crabs, king crab, tanner crabs,
9 and Dungeness crab, and all of those are being, you
10 know, influenced or closed actually by -- and reduced
11 in every case by sea otters.

12
13 The Council, although they recognize
14 they have no direct jurisdiction regarding sea otter
15 management, is concerned over the effect of the otters
16 on the subsistence resources, although again the
17 shellfish that are affected are not part of the
18 jurisdiction of the Council. But they do recognize and
19 feel an obligation to act as a forum for the free
20 distribution of not only testimony regarding the effect
21 of subsistence, after all the people in Southeast, you
22 know, live between the tides, but to use the power of
23 the body to facilitate a dialogue with those people
24 that do manage both the shellfish and the sea otter
25 resources.

26
27 With that in mind, the Council did a
28 couple of things. They agreed to put sea otters on
29 the agenda for their fall meeting, and they wrote two
30 letters. Both of those appear in draft forms. One is
31 to the University of Alaska to support a research
32 project to really describe the effect on shellfish
33 stocks by otters. The other is to Doug Burn who you
34 heard from earlier this morning. And what the Council
35 would like, they're not subject matter experts and
36 neither is the Forest Service, regarding the management
37 of sea otters, and more precisely how sea otters are
38 transferred between individuals, between those people
39 that hunt sea otters and those people that tan sea
40 otters and those people that manufacture handicrafts of
41 sea otters. So if there was some way that the Council
42 could support the continuation of subsistence uses of
43 sea otters, then they needed to understand the rules
44 regarding the take and transfer and manufacture of sea
45 otters.

46
47 So I would guess by next fall we'll
48 have a very clear idea of exactly what the rules are
49 and the Council would have an opportunity to consider
50 how they could affect or facilitate the subsistence

1 harvest of sea otters.

2

3

4 So that's the Southeast take on sea
5 otters is that they've heard a number of very
6 compelling testimony regarding the effects of sea
7 otters, and they feel some obligation to, you know, act
8 as a forum for that discussion, and do what they can to
9 facilitate, you know, the not only protection of
10 subsistence resources, for shellfish, but to facilitate
11 the take of subsistence otters.

12

13 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Yeah, like
14 you and I were talking about yesterday, the whole
15 Southeastern Council pretty much lives between the
16 tides. They're all coastal people where our Council is
17 not all coastal people here. We have quite a number
18 that are.

19

20 At the Southeastern's meeting in fall
21 where they're going to put sea otters on the agenda, do
22 you feel that they would welcome testimony or
23 interaction with some of the people up in Southcentral
24 like Mark King, for example, who've directly dealt with
25 the sea otter issue in the Prince William Sound area.
26 Do you think they'd be willing to welcome or invite
27 some of the people from up here that have faced the
28 same problems.

29

30 MR. LARSON: Mr. Chairman. I believe I
31 can speak for the Council in that, you know, they are
32 always willing to listen to how other units and groups,
33 you know, have addressed and approached problems
34 regarding management of subsistence resources. I mean,
35 that's a given.

36

37 And we haven't really thought through
38 what is going to be an action item or a response or a
39 result of the meeting. It could be informational, or
40 it could be a continuation. It seems like that dealing
41 with sea otters and sea otter management is not a
42 clear-cut issue, and it's not something that has been
43 successful in any place, at least not successful in the
44 kind of responses or result that the Southeast Council
45 is sort of thinking of.

46

47 So, no, I would love to have, you know,
48 people from somewhere else address the Council and I
49 think that I could speak for Mr. Adams, that he would,
50 you know, appreciate that as well. The structure of
the meeting and the time allocated for otters has not

1 been decided, but that is something that, you know,
2 we're going to work on. And they would like to have a
3 continuing dialogue, I know that.

4

5 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Well, as a
6 Regional Advisory Council, we have had no -- other than
7 today have had no action on sea otters or not
8 interaction even with the sea otters other than some of
9 us as individuals, but I do know that we have had
10 people from the Native Village of Eyak and that who
11 have worked in that area for quite some time, and I
12 would just, for lack of a better way of saying this, I
13 would make a recommendation to your Council that if
14 they wish an invitation to some of those people, it
15 might be worthwhile for them.

16

17 MR. LARSON: Yeah. And I think this is
18 -- you know, immediately after this meeting would be a
19 good time for me to, you know, make those introductions
20 and we'll pursue that. It's a good idea.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Any other
25 comments. Mr. Henrichs.

26

27 MR. HENRICHS: Yeah, one of the things
28 you're going to have to do is figure out what to do
29 with the Dungeness crab fishermen after the sea otters
30 ate all the Dungeness, because we don't fish Dungeness
31 any more at home, because the sea otters got them all.
32 And I believe Icy Bay is closed down, too. There used
33 to be a huge fishery, and they've moved down there. So
34 they're coming, and unless you guys do something,
35 you're going to put a lot of people out of business
36 down there.

37

38 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I think that's a
39 concern in Southeastern. I've talked to Mr. Adams
40 myself, and that seems to be the concern, and I'm glad
41 to see that at least they're using it as a forum. Like
42 I said, I actually can see it being more important to
43 Southeastern than to this Council, because that whole
44 Council deals with the coast where this Council deals
45 with everything from the Interior to the coast, and
46 only a small percentage of us are actually involved
47 with coastal things. So I'm glad to see them doing
48 that.

49

50 Thank you.

1 Okay. With that we go to other
2 business. Charter review, Page 31. Donald, would you
3 fill us in with what we need to do on this.

4
5 MR. MIKE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. On
6 the charter, the charters are required to be reviewed
7 every two years on odd numbered years, and this is an
8 odd numbered year for the Southcentral Council to have
9 an opportunity to review the charter right now. And
10 that the Council can make recommendations on the
11 existing charter to make changes to the Council name,
12 membership size and subsistence resource appointments
13 and criteria for removing a member. And the Council's
14 recommendations will go directly to the Federal
15 Subsistence Board and then it will go forward to the
16 Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture for their
17 approval. So this is an opportunity for the Council to
18 make any changes they wish to do on the existing
19 charter.

20
21 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22
23 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Donald. Do
24 any members of the Council wish to make an amendment to
25 our charter at this point in time, or has it fulfilled
26 it's purpose as far as most of us can see.

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I would think a motion
31 to amend or a motion to accept the charter would be in
32 order if anybody wishes to so move.

33
34 MR. HENRICHS: Mr. Chairman. I make a
35 motion to accept it.

36
37 MR. CARPENTER: Second.

38
39 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's been moved and
40 seconded that we accept the charter. Do we have any
41 discussion on this motion. Any comments. Any
42 amendments or anything on that order.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 MR. HENRICHS: Question.

47
48 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: The question's been
49 called. All in favor signify by saying aye.

50

1 IN UNISON: Aye.
2
3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: All opposed signify by
4 saying nay.
5
6 (No opposing votes)
7
8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Donald, at this point
9 in time I guess our charter stands for another two
10 years.
11
12 Now, if at any time during that two
13 years things change, can an amendment be made?
14
15 MR. MIKE: Under FACA that would be --
16 you'd have to wait under the opportunity for charter
17 review and then changes can be made. That would be in
18 two years at the odd numbered year.
19
20 Thank you.
21
22 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Okay.
23 Review our draft annual report. The draft annual
24 report is on this yellow piece of paper sitting in
25 front of -- that Donald handed out. And this is the
26 draft annual report that we kind of put together in
27 October. And Donald's given us a rough draft here. We
28 need to take a look at it, see if there's any changes
29 or additions we'd like to add to it.
30
31 Tom.
32
33 MR. CARPENTER: Yeah. Mr. Chairman. I
34 think it would be important to include in this letter
35 to the Subsistence Board Chair some of the dialogue
36 that we had earlier in this meeting in regards to
37 electronic information being presented to -- I think
38 it's important that we allow the subsistence community
39 to participate electronically if they want to, but not
40 make it mandatory that electronic means be the only way
41 of conveying our information to the Federal Subsistence
42 Board. I think that it's just not appropriate, and it
43 would bear some undue costs to certain individuals that
44 live in Southcentral.
45
46 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Can you synthesize
47 that, Donald?
48
49 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair. The annual
50 report is for 2008 and those 2008 annual reports are

1 from issues from 2008 that you can bring the Board's
2 attention to.

3

4 But as Mr. Carpenter was saying about
5 the electronic issue, the Council can make that a
6 separate motion to send a letter to the Federal
7 Subsistence Board. That's another way to address this
8 issue.

9

10 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Donald for
13 that clarification. And that would also apply to the
14 other thing that we were discussing earlier as far as
15 the access for use of plant materials and things like
16 that on Forest Service and Park Service land, that that
17 would be a 2000 -- that could be a 2009 -- that would
18 be something for our 2009 annual report, not for 2008
19 then.

20

21 MR. MIKE: That's correct.

22

23 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Gloria.

24

25 MS. STICKWAN: We had public testimony
26 in Chisna about the concern about climate change
27 studies, that they wanted to have that as part of our
28 -- their priority, and how it affects like habitat I
29 guess.

30

31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Uh-huh. Now that
32 would be another thing for us to include in our 2009
33 one, wouldn't it, with the information that we got from
34 Chisna, because that happened in 2009.

35

36 MR. MIKE: Yes. That's correct, Mr.
37 Chair.

38

39 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I think we need to
40 keep a note of that, so that we -- of those three
41 issues so that we don't lose them between now and our
42 annual report. Yes.

43

44 MR. KRON: Yeah. Mr. Chairman. I just
45 wanted to comment briefly on the electronic data issue
46 and concerns around that. You know, I've personally
47 heard from a Council Chair in another region that the
48 only web he has in his house is the cobweb up in the
49 corner. Staff at OSM have worked really hard to try to
50 keep things so that those that have web access can get

1 it; those that don't can get it.

2

3 Relative to your annual report
4 question, if Council members feel like OSM or the
5 Federal Subsistence Program is handling things in a way
6 that is difficult for subsistence users, we definitely
7 need to hear it. But we've tried our darndest to keep
8 all the options open so that, you know, the web page is
9 simple and people can get it. It's not going to take
10 up a whole bunch of computer time if they've got an
11 older computer. They can do things on paper if they
12 possibly can to allow for verbal communications. So,
13 again we've really worked hard to try to address that.
14 And I think if you feel like people are being excluded,
15 rural users, you know, we need to hear about it,
16 because we are sure trying to make sure that doesn't
17 happen.

18

19 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I don't think there's
22 any concern at this time with the system as it's
23 working and the concern of the OSM at this point in
24 time. I think what we're dealing with is the fact that
25 this could become Federal policy, and we would like to
26 object to it not from the standpoint of what's
27 happening now, but object to it becoming Federal policy
28 in the future. And I think that that's something that
29 we probably will either write a letter on or include in
30 our 2009 report.

31

32 MR. KRON: Just a quick follow up on
33 that issue, and there was something in the Council
34 books to address it, but the Federal Government
35 nationwide was, you know, trying to put together a
36 policy for how proposals would be received to various
37 forums, and our regulation specialist specifically went
38 to bat to make sure that in our case, because of this
39 very issue, and people aren't all commun -- you know,
40 there's a lot of people in rural Alaska that aren't
41 computer connected, you know, so basically he was able
42 to argue successfully that we would be able to receive
43 proposals in writing or they can go to Donald, for
44 example. You know, those were options that weren't
45 allowed in other parts of the country that we argued
46 successfully for for our program for this very reason.

47

48 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

49

50 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. And I know

1 that we'd like to add our support to that, too, in the
2 future.

3

4 Gloria.

5

6 MS. STICKWAN: I had one other thing I
7 wanted to bring up, was that I would like to be more
8 informed about the BLM 5150 and I would like to have
9 maps presented to us at the next meeting showing where
10 -- you know, these are public maps, they should have
11 been shared with us. I don't see why we couldn't have
12 had a map in front of us showing the potential areas of
13 where, you know, exchange of land -- I don't know if
14 that's the right wording, but, you know, the proposed
15 changes that they're proposing. They should have -- we
16 should have had maps in front of us, and we should have
17 had -- you know, we're supposed to be protecting
18 subsistence uses. And I know they are trying to
19 exchange it, so that it will increase subsistence, but
20 I just think that we should be better informed with
21 maps, and that should be in our letter.

22

23 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. Now, would that
24 be in -- that would be in this year's letter then, not
25 last year's letter, wouldn't it, the need for better
26 information and maps on land exchanges and things like
27 this?

28

29 MR. MIKE: That is correct, Mr. Chair.
30 And, you know, a few years ago that this Council had an
31 opportunity to address 5150 and they made their
32 positions known, and now the issue has come up again,
33 and I think Ms. Gloria Stickwan has a valid concern, so
34 it can be addressed again as far as an annual report
35 item, or the Chair has an opportunity to address these
36 issues to the Federal Subsistence Board next year or
37 when the Board has a meeting.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Uh-huh. Again,
42 Donald, let's keep track of these things for our 2009
43 letter, and see if we can correct -- I think if I
44 remember right, we had a promise of this fall that we'd
45 have better maps for this fall, right?

46

47 MR. CEBRIAN: Can I just say something
48 on the record, sir?

49

50 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Sure.

1 MR. CEBRIAN: Merben Cebrian. I'm BLM,
2 Glennallen Office.

3
4 We do have maps at the office, and it
5 is a public record. And so does the State Department
6 of Natural Resources, DNR. The negotiations right now
7 are between the State and BLM at the State level.

8
9 I'm not aware though if the maps have
10 been given out to the Council. If that is the issue
11 here, then I can certainly make sure that that happens.
12 But it is a public record, and we do have copies of the
13 maps in the Glennallen Field Office.

14
15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: If a Council were to
16 request a map after the meeting, would you just make
17 sure they get one to him?

18
19 MR. CEBRIAN: I don't have one with me.

20
21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: No, but I mean, you
22 could have it mailed out to them?

23
24 MR. CEBRIAN: I can mail it out to
25 Donald Mike and all the members of the Council will
26 have it.

27
28 And just for the record, it's not an
29 exchange. These are State-selected lands.

30
31 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. these would be
32 State-selected lands that the State would be
33 unselecting and they'd be going back to BLM in trade
34 for -- not in trade, but because the other selections
35 were accepted?

36
37 MR. CEBRIAN: Yes, sir. There's a
38 certain limit on the acreage, and once that limit has
39 been reached, then everything else alls back to Federal
40 ownership.

41
42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. Okay. Thank
43 you. Okay. So we have some items for 2009 that have
44 been brought up in this meeting, but let's -- going
45 back and looking at what we came up with, items for
46 2008, does anybody see any changes that needs to be
47 made to this letter that we're submitting for the
48 actions and the concerns we had in 2008.

49
50 (No comments)

1 MR. CARPENTER: Mr. Chairman. I move
2 we approve the letter addressed to the Federal
3 Subsistence Board Chair dated March 11th, 2009 from the
4 Southcentral RAC.

5
6 MR. HENRICHS: Second.

7
8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's been moved and
9 seconded. Any further discussion needed.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 MR. CARPENTER: Question.

14
15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: If not, the question's
16 in order. The question's been called. All in favor
17 signify by saying aye.

18
19 IN UNISON: Aye.

20
21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Opposed signify by
22 saying nay.

23
24 (No opposing votes)

25
26 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Motion carries.

27
28 Tom, you mentioned something about the
29 electronic thing. This may be a time-sensitive thing.
30 Would you like to propose that we as a Council make a
31 resolution or write a letter to whoever. We can find
32 out who it needs to go to in the Federal Government
33 regarding the impact of electronic-filing only on the
34 State of Alaska, on subsistence users in the State of
35 Alaska?

36
37 MR. CARPENTER: Yes, Mr. Chair. I
38 mean, I realize that this could be included in our '09
39 annual letter, but, you know, the possibility of it
40 being time sensitive, I think that it's important that
41 we bring to the attention of the public testimony that
42 was brought before the Council, and also concerns that
43 Council members had, and Staff for that matter, that
44 the transfer of information between the general public
45 and the Advisory Council and the Federal Subsistence
46 Board for subsistence-related matters, that it not be
47 mandated at least for Alaska for subsistence purposes,
48 that information not be transmitted only by electronic
49 means, because it does bear an undue cost to certain
50 individuals at least in Southcentral, Alaska, but most

1 and definitely probably statewide.

2

3 And I would like to make that in the
4 form of a motion that a motion that a letter be sent
5 out from this Council to the Federal Subsistence Board
6 Chairman.

7

8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Do I hear any seconds
9 for that?

10

11 MR. HENRICHS: Second.

12

13 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's been moved and
14 seconded. Discussion.

15

16 I have only one question, and I'll have
17 to ask Polly that. Are we out of order in doing
18 something like this?

19

20 DR. WHEELER: Mr. Chair. Polly Wheeler
21 with the Office of Subsistence Management.

22

23 I would say, no, you're working within
24 your role as advocating for subsistence users. And
25 effective communication is one of those, is what you're
26 speaking to. And I will work with Donald to craft the
27 letter, and we will make sure that it gets broad
28 distribution.

29

30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: And we're not out of
31 -- we're not off of our agenda enough that we're not in
32 trouble that way either?

33

34 DR. WHEELER: I don't believe so, Mr.
35 Chair. No.

36

37 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Because it would come
38 under other business.

39

40 DR. WHEELER: Correct.

41

42 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Okay. So we have a
43 motion on the table. It's been seconded. Any other
44 discussion on the motion.

45

46 (No comments)

47

48 MR. CARPENTER: Question.

49

50 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: The question's been

1 called. All in favor signify by saying aye.

2

3 IN UNISON: Aye.

4

5 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: All opposed signify by
6 saying nay.

7

8 (No opposing votes)

9

10 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Motion carries.

11

12 And, Gloria, on the thing on maps,
13 we'll get a copy soon, but we'll also request that if
14 they have any information for us in the fall meeting,
15 that good maps be provided. And will that take care of
16 that?

17

18 MS. STICKWAN: There's some maps on the
19 back.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Okay.
22 So future meeting plans. We're going to confirm the
23 time and the location for the 2009 meeting. And I
24 think if I remember right our location was down on the
25 Kenai Peninsula. Cooper Landing. And have we run into
26 any snags with that, Donald?

27

28 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair. I've been
29 working with Mr. Bill Stockwell. He lives out in
30 Cooper Landing. And he gave me some contact
31 information as far as meeting location and lodging.
32 And I'm still working on that project, but if there's
33 any significant changes as far as the meeting location
34 and difficulties in lodging, I'll be sure to make the
35 Council of it, but for now I think this can go forward.

36

37 Thank you.

38

39 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you. Is this
40 date and place acceptable to the rest of the Council.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Hearing no objections,
45 a motion to -- do we have to reconfirm it, or we just
46 don't have -- we just can accept what's already been
47 done. It says confirm it. So do we need a motion to
48 confirm our place and date is in order.

49

50 MR. CARPENTER: Mr. Chair. I move we

1 approve the fall Southcentral meeting Cooper Landing,
2 October 13th to 15th.

3

4 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Do I hear a second.

5

6 MR. LAMB: Second.

7

8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It's been moved and
9 seconded to confirm our fall meeting at Cooper Landing,
10 13th, 14th and 15th of October. Discussion.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 MR. CARPENTER: Question.

15

16 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: The question's been
17 called. All in favor signify by saying aye.

18

19 IN UNISON: Aye.

20

21 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: All opposed signify by
22 saying nay.

23

24 (No opposing votes)

25

26 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I think that was a
27 good call, and I don't know if I can tell -- if all of
28 you make it to Cooper Landing by the evening of the
29 12th, one of the members in our audience has invited us
30 to a barbecue at his house. Would he hold up his hand
31 so everybody knows who it is. So it sounds to me like
32 those people who make it to Cooper Landing by the
33 evening of the 12th have an invite to a barbecue, but I
34 think he'll make it more formal later.

35

36 Polly.

37

38 DR. WHEELER: Mr. Chair. Before you
39 adjourn, because I sense it's in your near future, I
40 just wanted to take the opportunity on behalf of OSM to
41 thank you all for this service that you continue to
42 provide. I know it takes a lot of time and energy on
43 your part. You're all volunteers. We very much
44 appreciate the time and energy and wisdom that you
45 bring to this process, and I just wanted to make sure
46 that you knew that we really did appreciate it, and to
47 welcome Mr. Kompkoff to the fray, but to thank you all
48 for your continuing service. We really do appreciate
49 it.

50

1 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Polly, and
2 I see by the fact that most of us up here are men, that
3 we would probably like you to report to our wives that
4 we have wisdom.

5
6 (Laughter)

7
8 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: It might come as a
9 surprise to them.

10
11 DR. WHEELER: That might be beyond my
12 scope of work here, but I'll do what I can. You can
13 give them my phone number.

14
15 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Donald.

16
17 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair. Before the
18 Council adjourns, there's one more item that I'd like
19 to present is the Council recognition. But at our
20 training session we discussed the possibility of
21 tentative meeting plans for next year for March, and
22 I'd like to get a tentative meeting date, you know.
23 Having a meeting in Anchorage is challenging, although
24 there's a lot of meeting places, there's a lot of
25 appointments already placed, so just for future plans
26 on my part, you know, it would be good to have this
27 Council plan for next year's meeting for planning
28 purposes. I don't know if I can go forward or not.

29
30 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: I think what you're
31 looking at would be a tentative areas of dates,
32 somewhere in that neighborhood. Personally from my
33 standpoint, I think we picked a very good time period
34 this year. I think if that would be acceptable to most
35 of the Council, we could shoot for the same time period
36 next year.

37
38 MR. MIKE: Okay. That's good for me.

39
40 And as far as Council recognition, we
41 have some recognitions for Council members that have
42 been serving on the Council either for a full term or
43 five-year term. And I'll Ms. Polly Wheeler do some
44 opening remarks.

45
46 DR. WHEELER: The opening remarks and
47 the closing remarks. I guess again the work that we do
48 at OSM is important for a number of reasons, but the
49 work that you do is most important, and you are, as you
50 hear on many occasions, the foundation of our program.

1 You being Council members, the Council system, and we
2 have a strong and enduring commitment to that. And I
3 just wanted to make sure that you all knew that.

4

5 And again I'm relatively new in this
6 position. I've been in for a couple of months, but
7 it's become abundantly -- I mean, it's very, very clear
8 to me that there's probably more that we can do to
9 support the Councils, to support the coordinators, and
10 I commit to you that I will try to do that from the
11 Office of Subsistence Management.

12

13 The work that you all do again is so
14 important, and the wisdom and the information that you
15 bring is incredibly valuable to the system. I know
16 that we -- you know, we do these transcriptions which
17 at times may seem like overkill, but the number of
18 times that we're able to go back to the actual
19 transcription and pick out pieces of information that
20 we may not have thought at time, it was kind of like,
21 well, this might seem off track, but I think just the
22 discussion about sea otters this morning is an
23 illustration of how sometimes we have these discussions
24 that may not bear to the point at hand, but over the
25 long term they'll be really valuable. So I just wanted
26 to make sure you knew that.

27

28 We have five awards here, and they are
29 for -- did you want to -- I'll turn it over to Donald.

30

31 But anyway, suffice it to say thank you
32 very much for the work that you do. We really
33 appreciate it.

34

35 MR. MIKE: And I'm going to ditto Ms.
36 Polly Wheeler's comments to the Council.

37

38 But anyway we have five certificates of
39 appreciation. Actually we have six since Mr. Doug
40 Blossom isn't able to be present here with us. But a
41 certificate of appreciation and recognition goes to Mr.
42 Greg Encelewski for serving from 2003 to 2008. And Mr.
43 James Showalter for serving 2003 to 2008. Mr. Fred
44 Elvsaas from 1999 to 2004 -- or 2008. Mrs. Gloria
45 Stickwan, serving from 2003 to 2008. And Mr. Thomas
46 Carpenter, serving on the Council from 2003 to 2008.

47

48 But quickly I'll just say what the
49 certificate says just for the public's benefit.

50

1 This certificate states that in
2 recognition of his or her years of service to the
3 Federal Subsistence Management Program as a member of
4 the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Council.

5
6 And that's the certificate presented to
7 each individual that I mentioned. Thank you for your
8 service.

9
10 DR. WHEELER: Signed by the Federal
11 Board Chair.

12
13 MR. MIKE: Signed by the Federal Board
14 Chair, Mike Fleagle. And Greg Encelewski.

15
16 (Applause)

17
18 MR. ENCELEWSKI: Thank you.

19
20 MR. MIKE: James Showalter.

21
22 MR. SHOWALTER: Thank you.

23
24 MR. MIKE: Fred Elvsaas.

25
26 MR. ELVSAAS: Thank you.

27
28 MR. MIKE: Gloria Stickwan. And Mr.
29 Tom Carpenter.

30
31 Thank you all for your service, and we
32 appreciate it. And I feel like I've left out
33 something. I need to look at my boss. Have I left out
34 something? I knew I forgot something, Mr. Chair. But
35 I'll have Ms. Wilkinson talk about it.

36
37 MS. WILKINSON: We also had gifts to
38 bring for you, and they were not brought, so we'll do
39 it next time, or send them to you.

40
41 DR. WHEELER: It's a bribe to bring you
42 to the next meeting.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 DR. WHEELER: Something really good.

47
48 MR. MIKE: I apologize for our
49 recipients, but there's a lot of details into setting
50 up this meeting, but you will get your gifts.

1 Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Thank you, Donald.
4 And it was kind of an eye-opener some of the things
5 that you told me that went into just renting and
6 getting this room set up for this meeting. I didn't
7 realize it was anywhere near that much of a hassle. I
8 really appreciate the work that you've done for us.

9

10 And I really do appreciate the support
11 the OSM has given to the subsistence community. We
12 haven't always agreed with everything, but in general I
13 really feel like they're worked pretty hard. They've
14 worked real hard, and I think we still have a lot of
15 work to do, and I think we're going into a time period
16 when it's going to become even more important.

17

18 So with that, I'd like to thank you
19 guys.

20

21 And I will call for adjournment.

22

23 MR. KOMPKOFF: So move.

24

25 CHAIRMAN LOHSE: Moved to adjourn. The
26 meeting is adjourned.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
)ss.
STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

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DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 20th day of March 2009.

Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/16/10