

**SOUTHCENTRAL FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
PUBLIC MEETING**

October 8, 1997
Barratt Inn
Anchorage, Alaska

VOLUME II

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Roy S. Ewan, Chairman
Mr. Gilbert Dementi
Mr. Donald Kompkoff, Sr.
Mr. Benjamin E. Romig
Mr. Fred John, Jr.
Mr. Ralph Lohse

Regional Council Coordinator:

Ms. Helga Eakon

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: We'll call the meeting to order. We'll
4 start off with this announcement that Helga was speaking about.

5
6 MS. EAKON: Okay. The hotel staff informed us that
7 periodically you might here some fire bells go off. It's just a
8 drill. It's just a State mandated drill, so don't be alarmed,
9 okay.

10
11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do we have to leave the building?

12
13 MS. EAKON: No, just ignore it.

14
15 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Yesterday we left off at the
16 public testimony. So do we have anybody this morning to
17 testify. Can you hear me okay -- you can, okay, good. Do we
18 have anybody from the public that wishes to testify this
19 morning? Okay, hearing or seeing nobody, we'll move on to Item
20 -- which one is it Helga?

21
22 MS. EAKON: Agenda Item 9K, Federal and State agency
23 reports. That's Tab R as in Ruth.

24
25 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. The next item is Item 9K -- Item
26 2, right?

27
28 MS. MASON: Item 1.

29
30 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Item 1, okay. This is a U.S. Fish and
31 Wildlife Service subsistence management report of Board
32 actions, April 7 through 10. I don't have anything right now,
33 but can you refresh my memory -- can you do that for me Helga?

34
35 MS. EAKON: Yes. Under Tab R, the very first document
36 there is dated June 5, 1997, it's a letter from the Federal
37 Subsistence Board Chair, Mitch Demientieff, informing the
38 Regional Council of what the Federal Subsistence Board did with
39 the Regional Council recommendations on the proposals, and it's
40 pretty short and to the point, and I don't think there's a need
41 to go over the document unless any of you have any questions.

42
43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, are there any questions about the
44 Federal Board action? If not, we'll move on to the next item
45 then.

46
47 MS. EAKON: Yes, Mr. Chair, Mark Chase of the Kenai
48 National Wildlife Refuge left yesterday afternoon. You do have
49 a copy of his report there dated September 9, '97. It's right

50 after Mitch Demientieff's letter. Wolf translocation issue, I

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1 guess is the main topic of his report. I'm kind of feeling bad
2 that he left because I did have a question about this wolf
3 translocation.

4

5 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, then we already had the other
6 reports?

7

8 MS. EAKON: Next will be the Fish and Wildlife Service,
9 Regional Office report and that is by Sue Detwiler.

10

11 MS. DETWILER: The only item that I have is that the
12 Federal Subsistence Board has two meetings in the near future.
13 The first one is next Friday beginning at 1:00, it's a public
14 meeting, and they'll be dealing with actually a couple of
15 things that effect your region. One is to make decisions on
16 deferred Proposals 15 and 19 which deal with 6(A) moose. I'm
17 sorry, I said, October the 10th, I meant October the 17th
18 starting at 1:00. The other issue effecting this region will
19 be dealing with a special action concerning the Nelchina
20 caribou herd season. And the other issue that they'll be
21 dealing with will effect Region 3, Kodiak/Aleutian region Unit
22 9(D) caribou.

23

24 The Federal Board will also be meeting in November,
25 although the date is not set yet and they have a number of
26 issues to deal with there as well. I could list those, I don't
27 think any of them directly effect your region.

28

29 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do you have a question, Ralph?

30

31 MR. LOHSE: On the Nelchina caribou herd special
32 action, have we gotten -- I haven't come across anything on it,
33 did I miss it somehow or another? Is it one of these extra
34 papers?

35

36 MS. DETWILER: It's later on your agenda.

37

38 MR. LOHSE: It's later on our agenda, okay.

39

40 MS. DETWILER: Um-hum.

41

42 MR. LOHSE: So that's under -- okay, down here where we
43 wrote it on, my fault, sorry.

44

45 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, is that or do you have more?

46

47 MS. DETWILER: That's it, thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, thank you very much. We didn't
50 discuss the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge letter, maybe Ralph,

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1 did you want to comment on this, something about the wolves?

2

3 MR. LOHSE: I was just wondering if Gary wanted to
4 comment on it. Basically it looks to me like, you know, at the
5 same time that we've talked about subsistence users and lack of
6 animals to go around, it looks like they're planning on putting
7 60 wolves on the Kenai Peninsula in the next three years. And
8 I just wondered what kind of impact that would have and if Gary
9 or Robert wanted to make some comments on that.

10

11 MR. WILLIS: I'll just make a comment or two. The
12 subsistence office really hasn't been involved with that. I
13 asked Mark yesterday if someone else could come over from
14 Refuge today to finish giving his report for the Refuge since
15 he said he wasn't going to be here, and he thought maybe Tony
16 Booth from our refuge division in the regional office might
17 come over today. So we might get something on that later on,
18 Tony's not here right now. But we might get something on that
19 later on. I know the State is holding a meeting, I think,
20 yesterday or today or sometime this week on that issue and we
21 have some ADF&G personnel here, they might have more
22 information on it than I have.

23

24 MR. LOHSE: Is this a Federal transplant or an ADF&G
25 transplant?

26

27 MR. WILLIS: It's a joint effort, but it's between the
28 Refuges and ADF&G and doesn't involve the subsistence division,
29 that's why I don't have any firsthand information on it.

30

31 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yes, did you want to comment on this?

32

33 MR. McDONALD: My name is Mike McDonald and I'm the
34 assistant management coordinator for Region 2 for wildlife
35 conservation. Part of the Fortymile Plan is to -- part of the
36 plan is to translocate wolves away from the calving area on the
37 Fortymile and the -- one of the areas that they've thought
38 about transplanting them is to the Kenai. Right now on the
39 Kenai, there are in the neighborhood of about 200 wolves. As
40 far as the number of -- these animals will all be radio
41 collared and followed pretty much on a -- probably every three
42 or four days for the initial month that they're there.

43

44 As far as the effect of the animals on the Peninsula
45 and the prey base, we believe that the effect will be minimal
46 because of all of the other mortality that already occurs
47 there. And that the displacement that these animals may cause

48 the other wolves, and in fact, the number of wolves probably on
49 the Kenai is not going to change much. It's probably near to
50 carrying capacity as far as the wolves are concerned right now

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1 as far as territory size. One of the hopes and this is
2 something that we're not going to see for many years. But one
3 of the hopes that we have by transplanting these wolves there
4 is that we believe the Kenai wolves, which are subject to the
5 louse infestation are genetically inferior, in other words,
6 that these louse effect their high quality a bit. And by
7 putting these wolves from the Interior into the environment
8 down there, that we may introduce a genetic diversity that down
9 the road may help us prevent that hair loss on the wolves
10 there.

11
12 MR. LOHSE: The only thing that I was wondering there
13 is dealing from a fish standpoint, we're so careful to try to
14 not bring in genetic diversity that we figure that fish have,
15 you know, adapted to a certain area that you don't want to
16 bring fish from another area in and now in game, we go just the
17 opposite. That, you know, it.....

18
19 MR. McDONALD: Yeah, one of the reasons for it is that
20 the Kenai was basically the result of two animals that were
21 down -- that were put down there and I don't remember how many
22 years ago it is, but basically wolves were eliminated from the
23 Peninsula in the early part of the century. And that the stock
24 -- the native stock that they came from was not very diverse at
25 all. And so we're thinking that maybe this might help us. We
26 can't guarantee that at all, that's subjective.

27
28 As far as the impact on, you know, the environment down
29 there, we believe it's not going to impact it.

30
31 MR. LOHSE: Did you say that wolves are pretty well
32 eradicated on the Kenai Peninsula around the turn of the
33 century?

34
35 MR. McDONALD: Yes.

36
37 MR. LOHSE: That could explain why moose populations
38 are so high down there in the early 1900s to the 1950s, that
39 and the fires and stuff like that.

40
41 MR. McDONALD: I think the fires are the bigger
42 explanation.

43
44 MR. ROMIG: Do they have any other, you know, other
45 places they've introduced -- they've had this same problems
46 with the wolves and they've introduced another gene, had any
47 significant studies on this gene pool theory?

48

49 MR. McDONALD: No. As I say, it's a possibility. We
50 have no idea whether down the road -- you know, 20 years down

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1 the road that we'll really see an effect in the hunt.

2

3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: What about the number, is there any
4 significant number you're trying to find?

5

6 MR. McDONALD: The number is -- what they want to take
7 out of the Fortymile and it is up to and, in fact, when these
8 are all going to be primarily yearling animals. And, you know,
9 we may not get 20, we may only get 10 or even less, but it's --
10 you know that's the limit, we're not going to go over 20.

11

12 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any other questions?

13

14 MS. EAKON: Do you have a copy of the draft
15 environmental assessment?

16

17 MR. McDONALD: I don't have it with me. I can bring it
18 later on this afternoon if you like.

19

20 MS. EAKON: I think we're going to adjourn before
21 lunch. However, if you can mail it to my address, ask Michelle
22 over there, I'd appreciate it.

23

24 MR. McDONALD: Sure.

25

26 MS. EAKON: Thank you.

27

28 MR. LOHSE: And I think Gary would probably be pretty
29 interested in that because, you know, the problem on -- you
30 know, it's easy to say that they'll have no significant impact
31 on the prey species. But you've already got a sufficient
32 predator race on the prey species on the Kenai Peninsula that
33 walks on two legs that -- that there are no surplus moose down
34 there from everything that I've been talking to Gary about. So
35 it's hard to -- it's hard to think that you could put 60 other
36 predators that eat moose down there and not impact a species
37 that's already fully utilized without, one way or another,
38 effecting somebody else, you know.

39

40 MR. McDONALD: One of the thoughts is though is that
41 the total number of wolves on the Kenai, overall, is not going
42 to change. In other words, it's going to -- in the course of a
43 year, it's going to stabilize back to where it's been. It's
44 been at around 200 for -- in the neighborhood of about 20 years
45 now.

46

47 MR. LOHSE: So these wolves will either die or some

48 other wolves will die?

49

50 MR. McDONALD: Or disperse.

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1 MR. LOHSE: Or disperse.

2

3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Robert.

4

5 MR. WILLIS: I might also add that another possible
6 effect if this is successful down the road and the genetic
7 quality of that group of wolves improves and their pelt quality
8 improves, you may see a decrease in the number of wolves
9 because there will be more interest in trapping and hunting
10 those wolves. Right now, the pelts are not worth very much and
11 they aren't pursued very hard. So if successful, it could
12 result in a decrease. You never know exactly how these things
13 are going to turn out.

14

15 MR. McDONALD: And the other point I'd like to make is
16 that we're doing this operation with the Fortymile Plan and
17 that plan is to increase the Fortymile caribou herd. And the
18 increases that we'll need to realize there could very much
19 outweigh any effect the wolves would have on the Kenai.

20

21 MR. LOHSE: Mr. Chair, I've got one question on that
22 though, that if taking 60 wolves from the Fortymile and adding
23 to the Kenai doesn't increase the wolf population on the Kenai
24 because it's at carrying capacity, how come taking 60 wolves
25 out of the Fortymile won't make the carrying capacity of wolves
26 stay the same there? I mean it just means that the Fortymile
27 wolves will have more pups and.....

28

29 MR. McDONALD: The Fortymile Plan is a relatively
30 complex plan. But part of this, the removing the wolves, we'll
31 be taking basically all the pups from a pack and leaving the
32 alpha male and the female there and those animals will be
33 sterilized. And the theory there is that they will maintain
34 their territory, in other words, exclude other wolves from
35 coming in, but they won't be producing pups. So you know, in
36 the long run, we could eliminate basically the majority of a
37 pack and they're still going to have the same territory. So
38 instead of having eight or 10 wolves running around, we'll have
39 two maintaining the territory.

40

41 MR. LOHSE: It will be interesting to see how that
42 works because it's -- well, it will be interesting.

43

44 MR. ROMIG: Yeah, I think what I've noticed and
45 especially back, you know, where you hear wolves and stuff and
46 stuff is that you usually don't see a moose with a calf or
47 anything. You know, they're getting hit pretty hard now by the

48 black bears, brown bears, wolves. And now you're bringing in a
49 stronger gene basically and I'm not so sure that, you know,
50 it's got to have some effect. I mean they got that somewhere.

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1 MR. McDONALD: Well, the stronger gene is -- I mean it
2 doesn't make the wolf a stronger animal. It's a different
3 gene, and will hopefully prevent the hair loss the louse is
4 causing. On the Kenai, the animals, because of the hair loss,
5 don't seem to be anymore susceptible to death because of the
6 relatively mild climate on the Kenai. If that louse had an
7 effect on wolves up in the Interior, you may see an entirely
8 different thing happening there because the winters are so much
9 more harsh.

10

11 MR. LOHSE: It's just hard for me because, you know,
12 we're having that problem down in the Cordova area right now.
13 We didn't have wolves down there when the moose first started,
14 and we've had wolves move into the area basically decimated the
15 goats on the Don Miller Hills and Goat Mountain and all that
16 area there. And now this last year, the whole Marten River
17 Valley, between the wolves and the bears, we didn't have any
18 calf survival, and so we didn't have a moose season down there
19 in that area this year. So it's -- recognizing that wolf is a
20 normal predator on the animals and everything else and that
21 they are part of the ecosystem, they also are in competition
22 with other predators, including us. And it just -- it's just
23 hard to think of taking an area that has sufficient
24 exploitation of the prey population and sticking another
25 predator or increasing the viability of the predator or
26 whatever you want to call it.

27

28 MR. McDONALD: Yes, one of the things, as I say, all of
29 these animals are going to be collared and I could just about
30 guarantee you that if there was some major effect that they
31 were causing to the prey base that it wouldn't happen again.

32

33 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

34

35 MR. ROMIG: And Mike, I guess, what I'd like to add,
36 too, is that they've had such good success with the caribou,
37 you know, with the new herds, the Kaliakh River herd and the
38 Kenai Mountain herd doing so well. I understand that if they
39 find the wolves around these, that they're going to remove
40 them, treat them for lice and remove them, I was just
41 wondering, where are they going to take them after they've been
42 introduced in an area where they might have picked up some kind
43 of a louse or whatever? I guess they can get that anywhere.
44 Where are they going to take them if they do have a problem?

45

46 MR. McDONALD: I guess I don't know the answer to that.
47 But the louse that is on the Kenai is not just on the Kenai,

48 it's been seen in other animals, including wolves in the
49 Interior and that. They just don't show the same hair loss
50 that the Kenai wolves do. But as far as where they would move

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1 them, I don't recall where they would move them after that.

2

3 MR. LOHSE: Mike, we're not trying to grill you and
4 we're not picking on you over this.

5

6 MR. McDONALD: Oh, I'm not.....

7

8 MR. LOHSE: But it, you know, it is a concern when
9 you're dealing with something that we're sitting here trying to
10 balance different user groups that want to use the same prey
11 species and when you start looking at something like this where
12 you increase the predator base on them. And when I moved into
13 the Chitina Valley which was not too long after the Fish and
14 Wildlife Service days prior to Statehood, at that time
15 Berkholder and a few of the Fish and Wildlife agents, Harley
16 King and that, basically bombed wolves up in our country with
17 poison bait. There was very few wolves when we moved there.
18 And in one flight, from our place to Mt. Drumm, I counted 227
19 bull moose. I didn't bother to count cows. I didn't bother to
20 count calves. Today you can make that same flight, same time
21 of the year and you'd be lucky to see four moose.

22

23 And I don't blame it all on wolves, because when they
24 were taking care of the wolves, it also effected the bear
25 population severely and so you had a high calf survival. You
26 don't have a high calf survival in our country right now. And
27 we're starting to see the same problem in Cordova. And that's
28 basically a predator caused lack of calf survival.

29

30 So I'd appreciate if you'd at least get it to Gary
31 because he's down there on the Kenai and he could.....

32

33 MR. McDONALD: Yeah, they had a meeting in Homer last
34 night and they're having a meeting in Kenai tonight.

35

36 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

37

38 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. If there are no further
39 questions, thank you.

40

41 MR. McDONALD: Thank you.

42

43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Now, we're going to get into the agency
44 reports. National Park Service.

45

46 MR. GERHARD: My name's Bob Gerhard. I'm with the
47 National Park Service, Regional Director's Office here in

48 Anchorage. And I guess our National Park Service report is in
49 three parts and I'm going to do the first part so I'll try to
50 be brief.

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1 This is informational for you. The document that
2 you're being passed is a document that we've worked on for, at
3 least, three years. It started as an attempt, just an internal
4 review of our law -- of the law and our regulations and how we
5 were managing subsistence. And I believe this has been brought
6 to the attention of your Commission or Council and all the
7 other Councils in the State. At least twice before we've
8 notified you that there were draft versions of this document.
9 And this is what we're calling the final document, although
10 it's not really final. What we've done is taken the document
11 that we had out in draft format, the latest draft, we made some
12 changes to that. But in the document we tried to also include
13 a summary of all the comments we received and our response to
14 those comments.

15
16 So it may be a little bit confusing to look at, but
17 when you read through the document there's -- I believe eight
18 different sections. If you read through the section there's
19 markers for footnotes and in this case and notes. So it refers
20 you back to the end of that section and there'll be a note of a
21 summary of the comments and our response. Sometimes a response
22 is longer than the original statement in the document.

23
24 This process has been very valuable for us and we did
25 get some good comment. And I think that the document has
26 changed quite a bit from what we first originally intended it
27 to be. And what we found in some cases is that it's simply
28 shown us that there's still questions that we have to deal with
29 that we haven't. The major issue that's identified right at
30 the front of the document, our whole system of eligibility for
31 National Park Service which is basically resident zone
32 communities and individual permits. We think we need to review
33 that whole process and that's going to be an extensive review.
34 We assume it will take at least a couple of years. But there's
35 inconsistencies between our eligibility and customary and
36 traditional use determinations, either made by the State in the
37 1980s or by the Federal Board since. And we found that it's
38 just plain confusing. So we haven't made any changes, but we
39 have identified in this document that there is a need to do
40 further review and try to make a better system of determining
41 eligibility and one that's more understandable to people.

42
43 So we've distributed this thing -- we released it at
44 the end of August. We've sent, almost 200 -- no almost 300
45 copies around the State. We distributed it from the individual
46 parks and then also a few copies from our regional office, so
47 it's gotten wide distribution. And as I said, it's not a final

48 document because this is simply a summary of issues and a
49 discussion of those issues and we know that those things will
50 change. So while there's not a period now that we're asking

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1 for comment, if we receive comment -- if people have
2 suggestions, we'll be glad to incorporate them into this
3 document. And as new issues arise or emphasis change, we may
4 need to make revisions to it, so we're calling it a living
5 document. It's simply kind of a discussion of issues. And you
6 know, certainly if you have any questions or want to look at
7 it, if you want to have a work session we'd be glad to meet
8 with you at some other time. However you -- you know, it's up
9 to you. I don't think I want to read it today, it's 27 pages,
10 but if you want to look at it at your leisure and have any
11 questions, give us a call or set something up. And that's
12 about it.

13

14 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph.

15

16 MR. LOHSE: Did you identify any other major issues
17 other than eligibility that you see needs to be addressed or
18 can you just give us kind of a synopsis of what kind of major
19 issues you've identified from this?

20

21 MR. GERHARD: The only other major issue, I think, I'd
22 say is access. The use of ATVs, that's an issue that's
23 unresolved in quite a few park areas.

24

25 MR. LOHSE: Quite a few areas of the State.

26

27 MR. GERHARD: Yes. I don't think there's anything else
28 that I would characterize as major. But what this goes through
29 is, let me see, access -- no, those are the major issues. The
30 other things you see on the second page, the topics are just,
31 Subsistence Resource Commission, Cabins, Trapping, and
32 Customary Trade. And I'm sure there are some things that will
33 need to happen. We have a regulation on customary trade, which
34 may need to be modified based on the language that Senator
35 Stevens has just introduced as ANILCA amendments. That may
36 effect our definition of customary trade because ours is fairly
37 restrictive.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: On Page 5, on the general subsistence
40 issues. I don't quite understand what they say where it says,
41 four commentators also recommend NPS Park permit decision making
42 for parks at the superintendent level and so on, what does that
43 mean?

44

45 MR. GERHARD: Where are you, I'm sorry?

46

47 CHAIRMAN EWAN: About the middle of the third paragraph

48 there on Page 5.

49

50 MR. GERHARD: Four commentors also recommended that the

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1 NPS permit decision making for parks at the superintendent's
2 level in order to allow for regional diversity and NPS policy
3 and regulations.....

4

5 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I just didn't understand that, what
6 does it mean?

7

8 MR. GERHARD: I think those people were talking about
9 one issue that's been a continuing problem is that our
10 Subsistence Resource Commission's make recommendations directly
11 to the Secretary of the Interior and responses from the
12 Secretary have been very slow at times -- very, very slow
13 sometimes. And I think these commentors were requesting that
14 those recommendations of the Subsistence Resource Commissions
15 could be addressed and answered at the superintendent's level.
16 And also, I know there was, at least, a fear among some people
17 that the Park Service regulations and policies were going to
18 have to be identical throughout the State and there is some
19 need for regional diversity. That's, I think, why Congress
20 established Regional Councils and Subsistence Resource
21 Commissions separately for each Park and Monument. So I think
22 those commentors were also hoping that there could be some
23 diversity as needed between regions.

24

25 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Any other questions or comments?
26 If not, thank you.

27

28 MR. GERHARD: Thank you. I think there will be a
29 couple more folks coming up.

30

31 CHAIRMAN EWAN: All right. Denali National Park.

32

33 MR. TWITCHELL: Good morning, I'm Hollis Twitchell with
34 Denali National Park. In Section R, it looks like at Page --
35 about the sixth page in within Section R you'll see a letter to
36 the Chair and to the Commission -- to the Council from Denali
37 Subsistence Resource Commission. And in there there is a
38 letter supporting Vern Carlson's reappointment to Denali's SRC.
39 His term expired March 2nd, 1997 and Vern has continued to
40 serve in full capacity. I just bring that before you again for
41 your consideration. So that's the only action that I'm
42 requesting of the Council today. The rest of what I present
43 will be just informational.

44

45 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do you want us to deal with that before
46 you go ahead with your -- you have other report, right?

47

48 MR. TWITCHELL: Yes. I have just a few other items.

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I guess we can address that issue right

0145

1 now. Ralph.

2

3 MR. LOHSE: I think we just need a motion on the table
4 to support the reappointment of Vern Carlson.

5

6 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do you want to make a motion to.....

7

8 MR. LOHSE: I'll make a motion to that effect.

9

10 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. There's a motion, is there a
11 second?

12

13 MR. DEMENTI: Second.

14

15 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Motion and second. Any further
16 discussion on the motion? The motion is to, I guess we -- I
17 don't know, what is -- we have the authority to appoint here or
18 what?

19

20 MS. EAKON: Yes, you have an appointing authority to
21 reappoint Vern Carlson to the Denali Subsistence Resource
22 Commission.

23

24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. The motion then is to appoint
25 Vern Carlson to the Denali Subsistence Resource Commission --
26 reappoint rather. Any further discussion on the motion?

27

28 MR. JOHN: Question.

29

30 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Question is called for, all in favor
31 say aye.

32

33 IN UNISON: Aye.

34

35 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Opposed by the same sign.

36

37 (No opposing responses)

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Motion is carried. Thank you.

40

41 MR. TWITCHELL: On the back side of that letter from
42 the Commission is a briefing statement put down six items just
43 to mention to you -- I'll go through those very quickly and if
44 you have any questions I'd be happy to try to answer those.

45

46 Just letting you know that there was a meeting held on
47 the 29th of August, was primarily an informational meeting, and

48 a variety of topics were presented there such as research
49 studies, reports on wolves and caribou and bears.
50

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1 We brought up a topic of beginning work on a draft
2 Denali Subsistence Management Plan. The Commission didn't
3 formally address that plan in any way, just received
4 information as to background. Documentation of what the
5 Commission has done in the past and what the Park Service has
6 done in the past in Denali.

7
8 We also talked about the NPS subsistence issue paper
9 that Bob just briefed you on, and about an individual request
10 from Dan O'Connor for a review of the C&T determination for his
11 use of moose and caribou in park areas, Denali Park areas,
12 which would be Unit 13(E) and 20(C).

13
14 The Commission decided not to comment on the State's
15 subsistence proposal until their next meeting which will be
16 held in February, so they'll come forward with a position
17 regarding those proposals.

18
19 There'll be one proposal in this hunting regulation
20 cycle regarding the use of grizzly bears in Unit 13(E). One
21 member of the Commission will be submitting a proposal asking
22 that the no subsistence determination for grizzly bears in Unit
23 13(E) be reviewed. So that will be showing up in your proposal
24 booklets for this February cycle. The Commission did not
25 deliberate on it. They're waiting for the analysis and plan to
26 hold the meeting prior to the Council's February cycle and
27 they'll take a position at that time.

28
29 There was a 15 day closure of a small area in the
30 Kantishna area, which is a highly developed area out towards
31 the end of the Park road. This has been a topic of discussion
32 for the Commission for a number of years, and they're aware of
33 this closure and are in support of it. The moose season which
34 happens to fall for the first -- for this September 1st through
35 the 30th. Subsistence users can move beyond this about 10
36 square mile closure area and continue to hunt in the rest of
37 the Kantishna Hills for the second half of the hunting season.
38 From the 15th to the 30th this closure does not apply since the
39 lodges are closed and visitors are not a concern in this
40 developmental zone.

41
42 And a final item I wanted to mention to you that's not
43 on your list is that late this year we learned that we would
44 receive some funding to do an ethnographic study at Denali.
45 It's called an Ethnographic Overview & Assessment. This will
46 have two focuses. One will be to do and review and analyze the
47 information that's out there regarding the different Native

48 Athabascan groups associated with Denali. And Denali being
49 right in the Alaska Range as it is is bordered by five
50 different Athabascan groups that have utilized the area. That

0147

1 being the Ahtna, the Koyukon, the Lower Tanana, the Dena'ina,
2 the Upper Kuskokwim groups.

3
4 We want to -- the purpose of the overview and
5 assessment, there's about five focuses, first of all, to
6 familiarize Park staff with the historic and contemporary
7 Athabascan groups associated with Denali; to educate Park staff
8 about the interrelationships, the associations and interactions
9 of these different groups associated with Denali. Also to
10 provide community histories for the different villages of
11 interest, and particularly that would be the Native communities
12 of Cantwell, Nikolai, Telida, and also Lake Minchumina. Those
13 are our four resident zone communities associated with Denali.

14
15 And the final purpose of this is to identify and
16 develop a process that improves and stimulates our consultation
17 between the National Park Service and the Alaska Native groups,
18 the Native Village councils that are functioning in the
19 communities around us. So that would be a primary purpose.

20
21 Of significance to this Council would be Cantwell. We
22 have approached the Cantwell Native Council and informed them
23 of our desire to do this work, and our intentions are to
24 approach these Native councils and ask if they would be
25 interested in developing their own histories rather than have
26 an agency staff hired to come in and to work with them and to
27 write their histories. Rather, if they would like and they
28 have the interest and expertise to identify someone within
29 their own group or someone of their own choosing to be hired to
30 write the history. And so we will be meeting with the various
31 Native councils in these communities to discuss this with them
32 in the next several months.

33
34 This will be a two year study and will be going on in
35 the cooperation of the State Subsistence Division. We'll be
36 working with them on this project. I believe Jim Fall
37 is here from the State and we'll be working closely with Jim
38 and his staff in moving forward with this. Do you have any
39 questions? I'll try to answer them.

40
41 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any questions or comments? I do have
42 one about the proposer of 10 square mile around the Kantishna
43 area.

44
45 MR. TWITCHELL: Uh-hum.

46
47 CHAIRMAN EWAN: People in a large area (ph) understand

48 why this is being done, but I don't know. I think there should
49 be a lot of public comment about this. I have concern about
50 how it would affect other communities in and around national

0148

1 parks. I'm thinking about the Copper River area, they don't do
2 that. I don't know of any other area that have closure because
3 of tourist and all that kind of stuff.

4

5 MR. TWITCHELL: This was a proposal that was submitted
6 several years ago and went through the Regional Council system
7 and ultimately to the Board. The Board chose to table the
8 proposal and took no action on it, but included language
9 recommending that we -- that the National Park Service consider
10 administratively dealing with the concerns in the Kantishna
11 area through our own regulatory process.

12

13 What we've done is after that decision by the Board we
14 went back to the Subsistence Commission and asked them how they
15 would like us to proceed. And in the subsequent meetings it
16 was recognized there was a need in this limited area because of
17 the high density of lodges and visitors and activities that go
18 on in there. They, in turn, recommended that we shorten the
19 closure period to only when the lodges are open and functional
20 and there's a high density of visitors present. And so the
21 dates were changed and modified, and the closure was limited to
22 just one mile on either side of the primary access road into
23 the Kantishna community. So it was done with consultation with
24 the different advisory groups and working very closely with the
25 Denali Subsistence Resource Commission.

26

27 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph?

28

29 MR. LOHSE: Hollis, if I understand right then what
30 this is, is a one mile strip on each side of the road for five
31 miles basically?

32

33 MR. TWITCHELL: That's correct.

34

35 MR. LOHSE: So five miles of the road is closed right
36 in the area that you have the.....

37

38 MR. TWITCHELL: That's correct.

39

40 MR. LOHSE:hotels.

41

42 MR. TWITCHELL: And people that go out and hunt that
43 area travel out on the old mining roads beyond that corridor
44 and have been very cooperative and dropping in on their choice
45 and contacting the different lodges, letting them know where
46 they're intending to go so that different groups of people are
47 inadvertently taken up and stumble into a hunting situation or

48 a carcass or that sort of thing, so there seems to be good
49 cooperation going on.
50

0149

1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: My concern is just what possibly could
2 happen if this -- if you know, they start to happen all over
3 the state and there'll be a lot of closures to subsistence
4 hunting. You'd have a 10 mile strip here and there all over
5 the state of Alaska near the parks. That was my concern is
6 about, yeah.

7
8 MR. TWITCHELL: That was a concern of the Commission as
9 well. And they made a point of saying that this was a unique
10 situation and because of the unique situation that's occurred
11 in this area that they were willing to make this
12 recommendation. But they did not want to be precedent setting
13 for other areas. It has to be looked at specifically on its
14 own merit.

15
16 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph?

17
18 MR. LOHSE: One other question, Hollis. This is right
19 inside the park. This is not on the edge of the park or
20 anything, is it?

21
22 MR. TWITCHELL: This is just along the boundary from
23 the old Mount McKinley Park area and it's in the new Denali
24 National Park area.

25
26 MR. LOHSE: So it's actually inside national park.
27 It's not in national park reserve or anything like that?

28
29 MR. TWITCHELL: No. It's in the National Park.

30
31 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

32
33 MR. TWITCHELL: Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Thank you, Hollis.
36 Before we go onto the next page it's our understanding that
37 Tony Booth is here from the Kenai Wildlife Refuge to answer any
38 question about the wolf translocation.

39
40 MR. BOOTH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry I'm a
41 little late this morning. One little correction. I'm not with
42 the Kenai Refuge. I'm with the Division of Refuges here in
43 Anchorage. And I -- but we get -- we all look alike, so I
44 don't mind.

45
46 I didn't know if you wanted a full report or you
47 already -- you have the report in your attachment R, did you

48 want kind of a summary of what -- do you want any more detail
49 than what's in here I can give you a little bit more background
50 here.....

0150

1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yes.

2

3 MR. BOOTH:on what this is about if you'd like.
4 Okay. And there are copies of the Environmental Assessment
5 floating around here as I understand. Is that right, Helga?

6

7 MS. EAKON: No.

8

9 MR. BOOTH: Okay. I dropped a pile in there, but
10 anyway I can still get a pile of those if there are not. I
11 have some back at the office. I thought they were already
12 delivered over here. I'm sorry. We'll make sure you get them
13 anyway.

14

15 Recently there was an draft Environmental Assessment
16 put out by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game for this. And
17 what this is, is part of the -- I think you're probably all
18 aware of the Fortymile Caribou Management Plan. They're going
19 to attempt a new and different type or it's kind of
20 experimental predator control program up there. It's non-
21 lethal control because there's such extreme public opposition
22 and political opposition to the traditional way of doing it,
23 just going out and eradicating wolves. They're going to try a
24 non-lethal method where they will capture the alpha or the
25 dominant breeding pairs in each of the packs in that area and
26 sterilize them so they can't produce. They take all the
27 subordinates non-breeding members of the packs and relocate
28 them somewhere else in the state. Just take them out of there.
29 So in theory what you do is you is you maintain the -- each of
30 the breeding pair would maintain the pack territory, but they
31 wouldn't be able to reproduce and all the others would be moved
32 somewhere else.

33

34 And the Alaska Department of Fish & Game identified as
35 a potential relocation site the Kenai Refuge. And there's some
36 certain reasons for it down there. One of the secondary
37 considerations of that was the fact that there's been some --
38 at least in theory, a theoretical concern down there with the
39 genetic vitality or potential inbreeding of that Kenai wolf
40 population. You may know that wolves were eradicated from the
41 Kenai Peninsula, were gone for an almost 50 year period, and
42 they think that the current population pretty much came from a
43 very few animals that managed to wander back on to the Kenai
44 back in, I guess, maybe the '60s or so. And so there's been
45 some concern about it. The fact that the wolves down there
46 seem to be very susceptible to allergic reactions to life
47 infestations much more than other wolf populations. There's

48 been, at least in theory, some possibility that that may be due
49 to the fact that they may be a little bit inbred. They may not
50 be as healthy or have the genetic vigor of others.

0151

1 One of the ideas of putting them down there is there
2 may be enough survival or, you know, breeding from the animals
3 that are transplanted to get some new genetic material into
4 that stock and it may help it in the long run. There's not any
5 expectation it's going to have any significant long term effect
6 on the wolf population size, but we may have some healthier
7 population from it.

8
9 I think there's some Alaska Department of Fish & Game
10 personnel here if -- and they may have some more details if you
11 want to ask them later just to give you a background. But
12 basically what it is, is we're involved on this from the
13 standpoint that they want to relocate wolves to lands on the
14 Kenai which might include Fish & Wildlife Service Refuge lands
15 down there. And they're proposing to relocate as many as up to
16 20 wolves per year from the Fortymile country over a three year
17 period. They would collar those wolves, monitor their
18 movements. And under certain conditions they've identified in
19 the Environmental Assessment that they would recapture them and
20 take them out if there's any problems that they establish in
21 the presence or in the vicinity of the caribou herds down there
22 we're trying to manage, and if they became a problem preying on
23 people's pets or anything. And I think there's another -- I
24 can't remember the third certain conditions. But, anyway,
25 basically it's just a proposal to put wolves on the Kenai.

26
27 The Environmental Assessment is currently out for
28 public review. There're public meetings being held in -- one
29 has been held in Anchorage. There are meetings being held down
30 on the Kenai Peninsula, I think in Homer, Soldotna and Seward.
31 And from there I'll just open up, if you guys have any
32 questions.....

33
34 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yeah. We had a discussion on that a
35 little earlier.

36
37 MR. BOOTH: Oh, I'm sorry.

38
39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I did have a question about the, I
40 didn't hear any mention of the sex of the wolf, what female,
41 male, whether -- that are being transported. Are they mixed?

42
43 MR. BOOTH: They'd be mixed.

44
45 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Just even mix or.....

46
47 MR. BOOTH: They'll be all -- any member of the pack

48 that's not the breeding alpha.....

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: You're not looking for half and half or

0152

1 anything like that?

2

3 MR. BOOTH: Not that I know of. And if I'm wrong they
4 can correct me. Just whatever's there.

5

6 MR. McDONALD: Just as they occur.

7

8 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph?

9

10 MR. LOHSE: I guess mostly what we wanted to do is, I
11 think, express concern about introducing additional predators
12 in a system that we're already having problems managing for
13 sufficient moose for the predators that are there. And then
14 like Ben brought up with the caribou herds that are growing
15 there, the additional pressure on the growing caribou herds.

16

17 And, I guess I've got a biological question. And
18 that's, you know, if the breeding alpha pairs up in the
19 Fortymile can hold their territory after all the rest of their
20 pack is taken out and they can hold their territory to keep
21 other wolves from breeding, how are taking the sub-alpha,
22 immature, non-pack member wolves and dropping them on the
23 Kenai, how are they going to be getting any breeding in on the
24 Kenai to improve the genetic -- you know, I mean, basically one
25 theory says if we only leave the alpha males and females there,
26 even if they're sterile they'll prevent other wolves from
27 breeding in the area. And then the other half of it says that
28 if we take these non-breeding -- they can't even breed in their
29 home territory, and we take and we drop them into a new
30 environment and where they're not even pack members and they're
31 going to genetically influence the wolves on the Kenai. And,
32 you know, it just -- the two are -- they're non sequiturs.
33 They just don't follow.

34

35 MR. BOOTH: Well, this is experimental and we're going
36 to see what happens. But, basically what you're relocating are
37 the younger, generally going to be the younger ones.

38

39 MR. LOHSE: Right.

40

41 MR. BOOTH: I think what we're hoping for is there may
42 be enough of them will survive. Most of them won't. They're
43 either going to disperse or they won't survive, but hoping
44 throughout there, you know, you release enough of them, enough
45 of them will survive to stay in the pack, to become
46 incorporated into a pack, and survive long enough to actually -
47 - as they become older they may in time become one of the

48 dominant pairs 'cause there's natural mortality and there's
49 turnover. We don't know. We don't expect the majority of them
50 to survive and influence. And there may be just enough.

0153

1 Basically it's one of those things that even if it
2 doesn't work and doesn't help we don't think it's going to be -
3 - it's going to hurt anything. We don't think, you know, I
4 guess there's no prediction that it's going to have any major
5 or any significant long term effect on the population size down
6 there.

7
8 MS. EAKON: I apologize, Tony. You gave me copies of
9 that document, did you not?

10
11 MR. BOOTH: Yeah, but you weren't present and I just
12 put them on your chair and that may have been a mistake.

13
14 MS. EAKON: I think we did mail them out and we may
15 have received a copy without the envelope. But anyway, I
16 apologize, you did.....

17
18 MR. BOOTH: I'm sorry, too, 'cause I thought -- I came
19 in here assuming that you guys already had a copy of it, and
20 I.....

21
22 MS. EAKON: I did mail them out.

23
24 MR. BOOTH: But I can run back to the office and I
25 still have quite a few and get some back over here real quick.
26 I still have quite a few of them sitting around. And I'm sure
27 the Alaska Department of Fish & Game has got a lot of them
28 still around, too, so.....

29
30 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I do have another question. When will
31 this occur if it does occur, you know, when do they propose it
32 to happen?

33
34 MR. BOOTH: I believe the State would like to begin it
35 this year. And what they would -- this would occur in the
36 spring, March or April. They propose to do these relocations
37 in the spring. By then, at least, the pups and the newer
38 members are larger and more apt to survive, and the hard time
39 of the winter is over. There's a better chance for the wolves
40 to survive.

41
42 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do we know anything about the present
43 population? I know I heard -- we talked about that before, but
44 I kind of forgot what the population is in the Kenai area
45 you're talking about.

46
47 MR. BOOTH: Okay. I'm terrible with numbers and I

48 can't --.....

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Off the top of your head. I just want

0154

1 an idea.

2

3 MR. BOOTH:I can't put my -- I can't remember
4 what the Kenai -- perhaps they can fill in there, but I just
5 know the -- I think the total population on the Kenai is --
6 well,.....

7

8 MR. McDONALD: About 200. About 200.

9

10 MR. BOOTH: I'm glad he said that. I was going to say
11 100 to 150. Okay. About 200, I guess then. And.....

12

13 CHAIRMAN EWAN: And they're on a decline, is that my
14 understanding?

15

16 MR. BOOTH: I don't think we can say for sure. What I
17 get from the Refuge is they feel they're probably pretty
18 stable. There is a little bit of concern in Unit 15(A) I
19 guess, and Refuge staff has indicated a kind of concern with
20 there may be a little bit of a population decline in 15(A). I
21 can't speak about much about 15(B) and 15(C), but the concern,
22 they're saying they don't see a lot of pup recruitment and pack
23 sizes are kind of, they feel, smaller. But there's not been a
24 lot of surveys done on wolves.

25

26 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. No further -- oh, other -- you
27 have some more? Okay. Thank you very much. We'll move on
28 then to the next agency report from the Wrangell team, St.
29 Elias National Park.

30

31 MR. WELLS: Here's six. If you'd spread those around,
32 I'll get more.

33

34 My name is Jay Wells. I'm the chief ranger at
35 Wrangell/St. Elias National Park and Preserve. And,
36 fortunately, we don't all look alike in parks. And I had
37 basically three things I just wanted to update you on from
38 things that are going on in the park. And they are the
39 subsistence plan for the park which I just gave you a draft
40 copy, we've been working on that very closely with the
41 Subsistence Resource Commission.

42

43 The second thing I wanted to update you on is the
44 resident zone rule making that would add four communities to
45 the resident zone for the park. And then just give a brief
46 update on the Mentasta caribou herd, which the Council's dealt
47 with off and on for the past three years or so.

48
49 And the first thing is the plan. And we've been
50 working for about a year very closely with the Subsistence

0155

1 Resource Commission, and Fred and Roy are members of that
2 commission. And the impetus for this plan came from our
3 general management plan in the mid '80s, but what we wanted to
4 do is produce kind of a guide for the workings of the
5 commission, a plan that would track the various issues that
6 have been raised by the resource commission and the park
7 service, and also be kind of a document for the public that, at
8 least, those top sheets, the yellow sheets could be basically
9 torn out or put into a different format to give to the public
10 that would give the public some basic information about what
11 you can do and can't do in the park in terms of subsistence
12 uses. And also as a guide really, and it's functioning that
13 way as a guide already for running each of the Subsistence
14 Resource Commission meetings. And so far it's worked pretty
15 well.

16
17 Now, it's still in very much of a draft form. We want
18 to run it by the SRC at the next meeting, which is November 3rd
19 and 4th, and involve the SRC as the primary advisory body in
20 that. And then we're also -- we very much want the Councils,
21 not only Southcentral, but Eastern Interior and Southeast to be
22 involved in the development of this as well as the State of
23 Alaska. Now, after the SRC meeting, if we get endorsement from
24 our SRC then we'll -- it'll be out to the Councils and the
25 State. And then we'll go out with a 60 day public comment
26 period once we've had a chance for involvement for the Councils
27 and the State. And we'll go through, at least, two Council
28 meeting cycles. So this is just heads up for you. And we've
29 very much interested in getting any comments you might have on
30 the plan. And we'll go through two more cycles so that any
31 ideas you have can be incorporated into it. And we're looking
32 at maybe going out for a 60 day public comment probably right
33 after -- probably early December, probably through January and
34 February, but we'll, at least, go through your spring cycle of
35 the Council before we make it final.

36
37 Now, when we make it final it's not really final. This
38 thing will be updated every year before the SRC meetings, and
39 it'll track the various issues, so there's developments on a
40 particular issue like the resident zone additions, every year
41 we will -- or every time we have that meeting we'll update the
42 plan and it'll help the Commission members track those various
43 issues.

44
45 The second thing I wanted to talk about was the
46 resident zone rule making. And just a little background, the
47 Subsistence Resource Commission over probably 10 years ago

48 talked about adding Northway as a resident zone community to
49 the park. Right now there are 18 resident zone communities.
50 And through the years that proposal has expanded. And last

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1 year the Park Service committed to adding at least two
2 communities and now it's four. And we've produced a draft
3 Environmental Assessment and a draft Rule Making that would add
4 the communities of Northway, Tetlin, Tanacross and Dot Lake.
5 We met this last summer in almost all those communities except
6 for Tetlin, and the trip there yesterday was canceled because
7 of weather. But the rule making, at least the draft is
8 completed. And we want to run that by the Commission at the
9 November meeting. And if they approve of that, then we will --
10 in the EA and the 810, then we will issue a proposed rule that
11 will go out for public comment and, at least, another two
12 meeting cycles of the Council. And we would like the Council
13 to comment on that. In the past they've supported -- your
14 Council supported the addition of those communities. And this
15 mainly probably an Eastern Interior issue, but we'll certainly
16 run it by Southcentral as well.

17

18 And right now the time table, we're on track for the
19 time table. It depends how it goes, but our time table calls
20 for a final rule being completed and signed, hopefully, by
21 March of '99, I believe it's going to take that long. Anyway,
22 that'll be a topic on the agenda for the November 3rd and 4th
23 meeting of the SRC.

24

25 The other thing I wanted to update you on is Mentasta
26 caribou hunt. And as you know, two years ago there was -- the
27 Federal Board authorized an 810 -- or an 804 hunt, which is a
28 subsistence priority hunt for Mentasta caribou. We opened a
29 hunt that had been closed in the past. And they allowed a
30 registration hunt for 15 permits that would go to elders from
31 the seven traditional Ahtna villages. That went on, a hunt in
32 '96, '97, and we're into another hunt this year. In '96, '97
33 only two animals were harvested. This year one has been
34 harvested and we've only issued, I think, 14 permits. We have
35 one elder that still hasn't gotten his permit yet. But that
36 hunt goes to March 31st.

37

38 And in talking with our chief of resources, Russell
39 Galapo yesterday, some of the data is just in from the fall
40 counts and it looks like that caribou population is still way
41 down, and they're still analyzing that data, but it's likely
42 that we may be putting a proposal together, perhaps, to close
43 that hunt or recommend a closure for the next year because of
44 the population parameters are well below what -- at least,
45 appear to be at this point well below what the cooperative
46 management plan calls for. So two years ago we were sort of
47 right on the edge of authorizing a hunt and did through the

48 Federal Board, but it's not looking like that population is
49 turning around at this point. So we'll have a proposal on the
50 table by October 24th on that. And I can't tell you exactly

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1 what it's going to be 'cause they haven't completed the
2 analysis yet.

3
4 The other thing, we'd mentioned the elder hunt for
5 sheep. And we'll be meeting tomorrow with Robert Marshall to
6 generate a proposal with Robert, particularly if we can do
7 that, that age requirement legally there will definitely be a
8 proposal from Robert. We'll help him draft that proposal and
9 work with it, hopefully, with the State on that to get
10 something we can all live with. And that will be in by the
11 24th.

12
13 And the last thing, you know, in my years here going
14 around the various communities the thing that's very obvious to
15 me is that the subsistence regulations are very confusing and
16 complicated, and people have a hard time understanding them.
17 And we spent a lot of time explaining to people what they can
18 do and how to go about being able to hunt. The thing that's
19 evident to me is that the regs are so confusing that people
20 either just ignore them, which can be a problem, or they don't
21 hunt at all which is equally as much a problem. So one of the
22 things we've tried to do with our regional offices, kind of
23 graphically display some of the information in the coloring
24 book here. And I think I'll pass these around. These happen
25 to be maps of Unit 12. If any of you have hunted moose in Unit
26 12 you know that the seasons and the areas where they can hunt
27 are very confusing. And I deal with this stuff virtually every
28 day, but whenever I look at those it takes me about a half an
29 hour to figure out where you can hunt and the bag limit and the
30 season. So I think this is a good step. These are maps we've
31 produced for each village that show the C&T hunting area and
32 the season and bag limit that we can post in the village
33 offices. And I think this is what we're going to be trying to
34 do the next couple of years for all of our areas and,
35 hopefully, that will help out and eliminate some confusion and
36 make it a little bit easier for people to understand this
37 stuff.

38
39 And that was it for my update. If you have any
40 questions?

41
42 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do we have a count on the caribou.....

43
44 MR. WELLS: We do, Roy, but you know, Russell's been
45 dealing with that and I couldn't get that information from him.
46 They're still being analyzing that but it was down -- the
47 population was down, and I want to say around 600 animals. it

48 was down probably 150 from last year, but don't hold me to that
49 'cause I can't remember those exact numbers, but Russell will
50 be working that up in the next week or so.

0158

1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yeah.

2

3 MR. LOHSE: Okay. Maybe I'm not a visual person, but I
4 guess if I put my glasses on it would work better. But I.....

5

6 MR. WELLS: Still confused?

7

8 MR. LOHSE: I'm still confused, you know, I'm just
9 trying to -- again, this is only for Unit 12 right here even if
10 Unit 11 is showing on it, it's not completed on Unit.....

11

12 MR. WELLS: No, that's just for -- if you look up at
13 the top those are for the communities of Northway and, and
14 those will be different for each community.

15

16 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

17

18 MR. WELLS: So those will be posted right in the
19 community.

20

21 MR. LOHSE: Okay. Now, everything bordered with that
22 checkered red line is.....

23

24 MR. WELLS: You know, if you look at the blue book
25 they're basically three areas that they divided up into Unit 12
26 that.....

27

28 MR. LOHSE: Uh-hum.

29

30 MR. WELLS:sort of function as subunits but they
31 haven't been designated as subunits. And for each of those
32 three areas, which is hard enough to figure out from the
33 written description, we've at least mapped it out. For each of
34 those three areas there's a different season and bag limit. In
35 some cases the bag limit changes throughout the season, so
36 there may be -- I think in one of those subunits there are
37 actually three different seasons with a different bag limit for
38 each. It's very confusing to the public.

39

40 And, granted, that map is still rather confusing, but
41 it's a far step above just trying to decipher the information
42 out of the blue book here.

43

44 MR. LOHSE: I was just trying to figure out if I was
45 from Northway or Tanacross where I would actually be -- okay.
46 The fact that they're bordered by the checkered red line
47 doesn't mean they're open for hunting. It just basically

48 separates the area. And then depending on what's written
49 inside the area.....
50

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1 MR. WELLS: Yeah. Within each of those three areas
2 there's the season and bag limit listed for each of the
3 separate areas right in that boundary.

4

5 MR. LOHSE: Okay. So like where it says no federal open
6 season, no federal open season, and then winter season, one
7 bull caribou.....

8

9 MR. WELLS: Right.

10

11 MR. LOHSE:that would basically be their three
12 areas in Unit 12.

13

14 MR. WELLS: Yeah.

15

16 MR. LOHSE: And two of them are closed and one of them
17 is open?

18

19 MR. WELLS: Uh-hum.

20

21 MR. LOHSE: Okay. And then you've done this for each
22 community basically?

23

24 MR. WELLS: Well, we just started that in Northway and
25 some of those Upper Tanana communities because when we were in
26 those communities it was very clear that the people were so
27 confused by this thing. And I don't know any way to make it
28 simpler. It is confusing. And we were trying to help them
29 understand the regulations so that people weren't
30 disenfranchised just because they couldn't sort it out. That's
31 what we're trying to do. We're hoping that our subsistence
32 plan will help do that and, you know, clarify eligibility rules
33 and access and everything else, so trying to make it a little
34 more user friendly.

35

36 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Back to the caribou. Just for the
37 record I want to say that I am very concerned about that area
38 because I do hunt over in Unit 11, as you know. I've hunted
39 there for many years. I've said this time and time again. I
40 know one of the causes and that is the wolf is increasing over
41 there and it's killing the caribou off. I know that. I was
42 over there this fall. I didn't see caribou but I saw wolf.
43 Two or three times over there I saw wolf. I don't know. I
44 know that you don't want to do anything about the wolves, but
45 that is the problem. That's why it keeps decreasing, the
46 caribou population keeps decreasing, I know that. That is one
47 of the causes. There's a large pack right there where I hunt

48 that we know of. We saw a pack of 10 right there nearby about
49 two years ago, probably a larger pack there now.
50

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1 MR. WELLS: Yeah. And, Roy, some of the work we've
2 done on the caribou mortality there's no doubt that wolves play
3 a high role in the mortality of caribou calves and moose there
4 as well, but as you know, we've discussed before the park
5 service policies on predator control prohibit any kind of
6 predator control action.....

7
8 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Just understand. But what I'm really
9 concerned about is closer to subsistence hunting. This really
10 concerns me. We don't get very many and now we're going to
11 close. Okay, Ralph?

12
13 MR. LOHSE: I guess I could go along with Roy on that
14 in an area where you have lots of predators a subsistence hunt
15 that takes one caribou a year doesn't seem like a very big
16 impact. I mean there's been 14, 15 permits a year but from
17 what I understand there's one caribou taking in '96 and one
18 in.....

19
20 MR. WELLS: Two.

21
22 MR. LOHSE: Two basically. And I guess that's why we
23 express the concern we had about importing wolf into an area
24 like the Kenai where you already have a fully utilized species
25 and problems with subsistence hunting there. It's kind of hard
26 to give up one hunt because of wolves when you import wolves
27 into another hunt and, you know, say well, they won't have any
28 impact.

29
30 MR. WELLS: I understand.

31
32 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any other questions or comments?

33
34 MR. KOMPKOFF: Mr. Chairman?

35
36 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yes.

37
38 MR. KOMPKOFF: On these, I just talked with some people
39 in Valdez that got elected to the Board of Fisheries down there
40 and Game, and they were concerned that the size of the vehicles
41 that are being used in Unit 13, and they asked me to bring up
42 the subject about having it limited to snow mobiles, four
43 wheelers and motor boats.

44
45 MR. WELLS: So you're talking about offroad vehicles in
46 13?

47

48 MR. KOMPKOFF: Uh-hum.

49

50 MR. WELLS: In Wrangell/St. Elias we used to have a

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1 very, very small piece of Unit 13, and you might want to
2 address that comment to Mike Coffeen. I think he might be next
3 with BLM. Most of the federal areas in 13 are on BLM land.
4 Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Jay, before you leave I understand
7 you're leaving the state. We want to really thank you for all
8 the help you've given us over the last, I don't know how long
9 you've been helping us, a couple of years.

10

11 MR. WELLS: Ten years.

12

13 CHAIRMAN EWAN: This is I first I heard that you're
14 leaving. I hope you wherever you're going we wish you well.

15

16 MR. WELLS: Thank you. Well, I appreciate it. It's
17 been great working with all of you. Thanks.

18

19 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. The next agency would be Forest
20 Service, Chugach National Forest. Is Steve Zemke.....

21

22 MS. EAKON: Steve Zemke was here yesterday, but I do
23 not see him so.....

24

25 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Then we'll just skip over that and
26 then.....

27

28 MS. EAKON: Yes.

29

30 CHAIRMAN EWAN:go on to the next one?

31

32 MS. EAKON: Uh-hum.

33

34 CHAIRMAN EWAN: The next one will be BLM from the
35 District Office, Mike.

36

37 MR. COFFEEN: I'm Mike Coffeen with the Bureau of Land
38 Management in Glenallen. I can be fairly brief. We don't have
39 a lot of hot items. We've issued about 446 moose permits so
40 far this year in Glenallen and the hunt ended on September
41 20th. We've also issued about 1,317 moose permits -- or excuse
42 me, caribou permits. The season out there ended on September
43 20th. And also we've submitted a special action request that
44 you have on your new business agenda a little later.

45

46 The caribou out there have done the typical thing and
47 surprised us or kept us guessing. The herd stayed dispersed

48 throughout the summer range, late in to the fall, and there
49 wasn't a strong movement eastward across the Richardson
50 Highway, which is the main access point for the subsistence

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1 hunters out in my area. And so the hunt was pretty slow.

2

3 And you have a copy of this two page document somewhere
4 in your piles there. And typically we harvest around 250 to
5 300 caribou throughout the entire season out there. And last
6 year that was only about 5 percent of the total take that
7 occurred on the Nelchina. So our impact is pretty small. And
8 I would keep that in mind as we have further discussions on
9 this.

10

11 Are there any questions? Ralph?

12

13 MR. LOHSE: You're just talking about the subsistence
14 moose permits and subsistence caribou permits, Federal?

15

16 MR. COFFEEN: Yes.

17

18 MR. LOHSE: This does not have anything to do with the
19 State caribou.....

20

21 MR. COFFEEN: Oh, no. I want to stay away from that.

22

23 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

24

25 MR. COFFEEN: That's a separate program.

26

27 MR. LOHSE: Okay. Do you have any idea what the moose
28 take this year subsistence-wise?

29

30 MR. COFFEEN: I haven't received any documentation, but
31 from the comments that I talked to and interviews it seemed to
32 be a better hunt. And we saw more animals coming out, young,
33 of course, but we did see more moose coming out.

34

35 There was a question about offroad vehicles. And we've
36 had a lot of questions in my BLM office about that, and some
37 people came in gunning for me and it was not a BLM proposal to
38 change offroad vehicle use out there. They're throwing it open
39 is my understanding, but they can talk about that I'm sure, but
40 they are -- our comment to the public was that that's being
41 considered by the State.

42

43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Don, maybe you can restate what your
44 concern is to Mike here.

45

46 MR. KOMPKOFF: I was talking to one of the Valdez
47 elected board members down there and he said they were

48 concerned about the size of the vehicles being used in the
49 hunting areas. And he wanted it limited to snow mobiles, four
50 wheelers and motor boats. Not these big trucks and stuff. The

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1 Nodwells.....

2

3 MR. COFFEEN: Yes.

4

5 MR. KOMPKOFF: Yeah.

6

7 MR. COFFEEN: Well, my personal observations on that
8 just in the four years I've been out there this is the fifth
9 winter coming up, I've seen an increase in the number of those
10 units in our area. And there's on question that we get
11 complaints from people what's happening, these things are now
12 in my area that I flew into. And there's no question that
13 they're getting further and further. And when we fly over the
14 area or when I do over doing work that I do I see tracks going
15 further and further. And some of our trails like Sweet Lake
16 Trail down to the Gulkana has just really been ripped up the
17 last couple of years because that's been the main access into
18 the Alphabets. The herd's been on the west end -- excuse me,
19 east end of the Alphabets. And it's been the main corridor and
20 it has really torn up that area. And it's the big -- well,
21 it's the volume of the vehicles going through that area.

22

23 MR. LOHSE: Mike, I don't know how to ask this, but do
24 those large Nodwells and stuff like that get in farther than
25 the people on four wheelers or.....

26

27 MR. COFFEEN: They usually break the first trails and
28 then the smaller vehicles follow on those tracks. Things are -
29 - when the vegetation is knocked down, they see a track and
30 that's what they go on.

31

32 MR. LOHSE: So they do two things. They go in farther
33 and they increase the traffic for other vehicles?

34

35 MR. COFFEEN: That's my impression, yes. I don't have
36 data on that.

37

38 MR. LOHSE: Thank you.

39

40 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Fred?

41

42 MR. JOHN: I just got a question. Yesterday we had a
43 report, the Task Force report about State moratorium (sic) and
44 agreement. I still don't understand what that means, but I
45 think the State wants to work with the Federal.

46

47 I was thinking in our area, Mentasta area, we've got

48 one road that goes over Indian Country. And every year we have
49 this big, huge vehicle that goes back and forth, you know. And
50 they go up the Slana River, and the Slana River is flat. And

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1 from there they go -- there's no road really. There is a place
2 where you could go, but they're all over the place. I mean for
3 erosions and all that stuff, you know, for fish spawning and
4 everything else, I think that's a big problem. And I think if
5 the State want to have a moratorium (sic), an agreement or
6 something I think we should bring the problem up to them on
7 village -- from our village point of view, over Indian land and
8 State land because it is a big problem. And what I didn't
9 understand this State moratorium and agreement but I think we
10 should bring it up to them.

11
12 MR. COFFEEN: I hope a lot of people come to that
13 meeting because there's some very strong feelings out there
14 about -- and some very good comments from people that they're
15 concerned about the volume, you know, and the increases in the
16 vehicles out there, and how far is it going to go. And that's
17 what we have to decide whether it's going to be increasing the
18 size of the closed areas that are already out there, or other
19 restrictions that needs to be looked at closely because I've
20 had people tell me that they feel one of the reasons that we
21 haven't had the movement across the Richardson Highway is
22 because there's this phalanx of vehicles that meets the herd,
23 and that's why the last two years it's turned around and gone
24 back into the Alphabets and scattered out through the range and
25 waited until the rut to come and cross the highway. I don't
26 know if that's -- I don't have good data to prove that, but
27 there's definitely concerns about it.

28
29 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do we have a question or comment from
30 somebody knowledged or.....

31
32 MS. WILKENSON: I'm Ann Wilkenson, I'm the region
33 coordinator for the Boards of Fisheries and Game here in
34 Southcentral. And I could speak to this for a moment if you'd
35 like. Excuse me.

36
37 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay.

38
39 MS. WILKENSON: The Board of Game has been hearing
40 complaints about offroad vehicles for some years. And they --
41 it has grown, you know, the usage has grown not just in GMU 13
42 but in various places around the state. And as they listen to
43 that over the years they decided that they needed to address
44 it. It's difficult for them to address because they can only
45 address issues having to do with hunting, you know, and
46 fishing, and that's it, but they thought there might be some
47 way that they can look at it. So a couple of years ago, I

48 believe, they asked the Department of Fish & Game to make a
49 report, you know, do a study and write a report on Game
50 Management 13's use, you know. And then they decided at their

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1 March meeting to open this up for the public to make comment.
2 They had a call for proposals. People were allowed to submit
3 proposals about offroad vehicle use in GMU 13. Then they
4 published what they received in a book. And now they're going
5 to have their meeting the 14th through the 17th here in
6 Anchorage. And the Valdez Fish & Game Advisory Committee will
7 be meeting and commenting, I'm sure, but that's when the public
8 can make their comment about it. And we don't know exactly
9 what the upshot is. The proposal book has both extremes of
10 suggestions and everything in the middle, so I'm not sure what
11 the Board will do, but they have been seeking a way to address
12 this for some years and this is the time that they plan to make
13 a decision. So I just wanted to let you know that.

14

15 MR. LOHSE: Would it be worthwhile for us as a Regional
16 Subsistence Council to make a written comment to the Board on
17 our feelings on these offroad vehicles and their impact on
18 subsistence?

19

20 MR. WILKINSON: Yes, I would think so. Yes.

21

22 MR. LOHSE: So that's one thing.....

23

24 MR. WILKINSON: They appreciate getting as much
25 information as possible when they have to make these decisions.
26 And as another advisory type of board they would appreciate
27 what you have to say and especially that your people come from
28 that area.

29

30 MR. LOHSE: Now, when would our comment have -- if
31 they're going to meet on March 14th through 17th.....

32

33 MS. WILKINSON: Uh-hum.

34

35 MR. LOHSE:if we have our meeting at
36 approximately that same time next spring is what it looks
37 like.....

38

39 MS. WILKINSON: Uh-hum.

40

41 MR. LOHSE:do our comments have to be in quite
42 far in advance or could we by that time come up with something
43 and then send something -- you know, 'cause we could get public
44 notice that we're going to comment on it, too. possibly.

45

46 MS. WILKINSON: I'm sorry. If I said March 14th I was
47 wrong. It's November they're going to.....

48
49
50

MR. LOHSE: Oh, this November?

0166

1 MS. WILKENSON: This November, uh-huh.

2

3 MR. LOHSE: Oh.

4

5 MS. WILKENSON: And if you're going to do any -- make
6 any comment you can submit any written comment right up to the
7 moment they start deliberation.

8

9 CHAIRMAN EWAN: You did comment about you can only deal
10 with hunting with vehicles. There are vehicles that are out
11 there that are not hunters, right?

12

13 MS. WILKENSON: Right. They're purely recreational,
14 and that's the ones they wouldn't be able to restrict.

15

16 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I don't understand what you're saying
17 then. You can only control the hunters.....

18

19 MS. WILKENSON: Right.

20

21 CHAIRMAN EWAN:but there's another problem that
22 we have to deal with then.

23

24 MS. WILKENSON: Right. But the idea was that if they
25 got something started and then worked with other agencies that
26 have jurisdiction in the areas, that they might be able to come
27 with a more comprehensive plan.

28

29 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Aren't there designated trails for
30 vehicles, especially in 13, or is it wide open to use anywhere?

31

32 MR. LOHSE: No.

33

34 MS. WILKENSON: I think it's pretty wide open. From
35 what I've seen it looks wide open, so you know, and even if
36 there are designated trails, it's hard to hold somebody to
37 those.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph.

40

41 MR. LOHSE: Basically, if I understand you and what
42 you're saying is the Fish and Game -- the Board of Fish -- or
43 the Board of Game, rather, can make regulations regulating off-
44 road vehicles for hunting and for the transportation of game?

45

46 MS. WILKENSON: Right.

47

48 MR. LOHSE: I mean they basically could say that you
49 couldn't -- you can't shoot off of an off-road vehicle, you
50 can't transport game off of an off-road vehicle, things like

0167

1 that.

2

3 MS. WILKENSON: Right.

4

5 MR. LOHSE: They can't say that you can't go in there
6 to take pictures and stuff like that?

7

8 MS. WILKENSON: Right.

9

10 MR. LOHSE: But that, in itself, has an impact on the
11 majority of the use of off-road vehicles.

12

13 MS. WILKENSON: Right. And there is some thought, too,
14 about habitat impact. They're looking at that more closely,
15 too. But for their regulatory purposes it looks now that most
16 clearly they can make regulations only having to do with
17 hunting and fishing.

18

19 CHAIRMAN EWAN: And the use is increasing, right?

20

21 MS. WILKENSON: Right.

22

23 CHAIRMAN EWAN: It seems to me like -- I know I've been
24 watching the Eureka area for many years and there seems like
25 there's more vehicles there than ever before.

26

27 MS. WILKENSON: Right, um-hum.

28

29 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I think it's a concern to a lot of
30 people. I stay away from areas like that where there's a lot
31 of use of vehicles. I never hunt in that area.

32

33 MS. WILKENSON: If you do have comments like that, I
34 would suggest, please write them and send them in to the Board.
35 You can either send them to me -- you know, like give them to
36 Helga and she could give it to me, is the most direct method.
37 Okay.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, thank you. If there's no other
40 questions, I do have a question for Mike, though. Mike, you
41 mentioned that the State is kind of regulating this, but you
42 have, as BLM, you have authority over Federal lands, right?

43

44 MR. COFFEEN: Yes, we do.

45

46 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I'm trying to figure out what you're
47 saying here.

48

49

MR. COFFEEN: That would probably end up in an EIS
50 because it would be a significant action if we started to try

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1 to control all RVs. There are some designated trails within
2 Unit 13, and those are within the Tangle Lakes Archeological
3 Districts and that's one of our main emphasis in the summer and
4 fall for our law enforcement people, is to try to keep the
5 recreational vehicles on those designated trails and keep the
6 signs up on them which usually disappear about a week after we
7 put them up. But that's the only area that we have designated
8 trails on. We are constantly getting pressure to clear more
9 areas and more old trails. Yes, we could, but the State --
10 most of the traffic occurs during the hunts, most of the damage
11 occurs during the hunts.

12

13 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. I'm just trying to formulate in
14 my mind what kind of remedies there are out there.

15

16 MR. COFFEEN: There are options. Like there are
17 existing closed areas, those areas could be expanded or shrunk
18 down, depending on what the need would be. There is corridors
19 that the animals move through. When I see a swarm of vehicles
20 greet the caribou herd two years ago that got to 13 Mile where
21 you can look off of the Denali Highway and about 10,000 animals
22 were coming across this very large area, and there was just
23 this swarm of vehicles that met them. And this went on for two
24 days and they ended up -- that was two years ago when they
25 headed back into the Alphabets and didn't come through again
26 until later in the winter. Then you wonder if there is a
27 problem.

28

29 CHAIRMAN EWAN: The trail you mentioned, some kind of
30 a.....

31

32 MR. COFFEEN: Sweet Lake trail.

33

34 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Sweet Lake, is that the one that cuts
35 off to Alphabet that you're talking about?

36

37 MR. COFFEEN: Yes. That's at about 17 Mile.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yes, I know where that is.

40

41 MR. COFFEEN: Okay.

42

43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any other questions or comments. Thank
44 you, Mike. Okay, the next -- go ahead, Ralph.

45

46 MR. LOHSE: Mr. Chair, like Ann said, if we, as a
47 Council, feel that we should make comment on this, we need to

48 find some time to make comment and maybe direct a letter to the
49 Fish and Game, you know, if Council members feel that this is
50 an issue that we need to address. We should probably find time

0169

1 later today to do that. If it's not an issue with anybody,
2 then we can just, you know, let it go. But if Fish and Game's
3 going to be making a decision on it November 14th through 17th,
4 this is the only opportunity to have, as a Council, to address
5 the issue.

6
7 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I believe there is concern on Don's
8 part. Like I said earlier, I don't go to areas where there's a
9 lot of vehicles going off the road, I just stay away from
10 there. So I'm not, personally, impacted. I know that I have
11 concern about the number of vehicles out there and the impact
12 on the terrain, and on the moose and caribou population and so
13 forth.

14
15 Yes, I believe we'll bring it up again a little later
16 if somebody wants to bring it up.

17
18 MS. EAKON: I just thought maybe Ralph could draft a
19 letter during a break and then I could go back and put it on
20 official letterhead and have Roy sign it and we could send it
21 off.

22
23 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I guess basically what we're going to
24 say is more general.....

25
26 MR. LOHSE: More general, both that we have a concern
27 for the impact on the subsistence and the movement of the
28 caribou herds and on the impact on the environment.

29
30 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Right, um-hum.

31
32 MR. LOHSE: And just make it real general. Just
33 express the fact that we do have a concern with the liberation
34 of larger off-road vehicles.

35
36 MR. JOHN: And a concern that they don't have any.....

37
38 MR. LOHSE: Respect for property.

39
40 MR. JOHN:no the State doesn't have any.....

41
42 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Control?

43
44 MR. JOHN:control over.....

45
46 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

47

48 MR. JOHN:what vehicles are out there or, you
49 know, where they go. Over Native land, State land, they're all
50 over, no respect for the lands.

0170

1 MR. LOHSE: Um-hum.

2

3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: It's going to get worse, not better,
4 you know. Let's take about a five minute break.

5

6 (Off record)

7

(On record)

8

9 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Call the meeting back to order. We're
10 done with BLM and we'll go to BIA. Ida Hildebrand.

11

12 MS. HILDEBRAND: Hi, I'm Ida Hildebrand, BIA Staff
13 Committee member to the Federal Subsistence Board. And I'm not
14 giving an agency report on the BIA, only to say that Niles
15 Caesar is the BIA area director, therefore, the Federal Board
16 member. And my comment was in regards to a question Mr. Lohse
17 had yesterday on fisheries management. And the response to
18 what would happen with the current Appropriations Bill and
19 continuing resolution and the moratorium on the Federal
20 program.

21

22 I attended a meeting yesterday on behalf of Mr. Caesar
23 who is traveling with Debra Williams and other Federal agencies
24 who addressed what's going to happen, and the Appropriations
25 Bill has been sent to the President, if he signs it it's law,
26 if he doesn't, of course, we're back to square one. But under
27 the Appropriations Bill and the language on the continuing
28 resolution, the Federal program is to proceed with the proposed
29 rule, conduct public hearings and do all they can in that light
30 without publishing. They may not publish the final rule. And
31 the Appropriations Bill language and moratorium language is
32 that the State of Alaska has until December 1, 1998 to bring
33 their laws in alignment with however ANILCA is then amended.
34 And if they fail to do so at that time, then the Federal
35 program would continue.

36

37 Of course, like I said, that's still up in the air.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any questions or comments.

40

41 MR. LOHSE: Thank you. Just thank you for that.

42

43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, thank you. The next item on our
44 agenda is State of Alaska, if anyone from State of Alaska is
45 here.

46

47 MR. FALL: Mr. Chair, we have nothing else at this time

48 unless you have questions.

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any comments or questions from the

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1 Council. Yes, Ralph.

2

3 MR. LOHSE: Could you make sure and send all the
4 Council members a copy of the proposed regulations that are in
5 front of the Board of Game for this ATV thing, jus so all the
6 Council members have an individual copy that they could, if
7 they wanted to as individuals, comment on?

8

9 MR. FALL: (Nods affirmatively in response)

10

11 MR. LOHSE: Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Did you have comments?

14

15 MR. KOMPKOFF: No.

16

17 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I do have a comment while we're waiting
18 about that, the offroad vehicle. I do have concern about State
19 and Federal lands. But I also know that there's a lot of
20 private lands out there. We don't have any say on the private
21 land, so I don't know. Fred mentioned something about his
22 concern about offroad vehicle use on Native lands out there. I
23 hope that they understand what you're saying, Fred, about that.
24 You know, private land is private land. If we want to have
25 vehicles we'll have vehicles, if we don't, we don't want them
26 we can try to keep them off. So did you want the State and
27 Federal to also try to control the private lands, is that what
28 you want them to do?

29

30 MR. JOHN: No, what I want -- what my concern is -- I'm
31 from Mentasta, so I usually talk about Mentasta. We put up no
32 trespassing sign, you know, Joe Hicks and them from the Ahtna,
33 there's a whole bunch of no trespassing signs and it's been
34 torn down every year and there's no regard or no respect for
35 Native land in our area. I mean it's being run over and we
36 don't have the law enforcement and we couldn't deputize anybody
37 to enforce our law. And we call the State Troopers and they
38 won't do nothing. So I mean, you know, what do you do, you
39 just sit there and let them run over your land, I guess. And
40 the waterways up there, it's just one -- the Silany River, it
41 goes into the Copper River and the people just come there and
42 they use everything. You go back hunting and they're all over
43 the -- all over the Indian land, private land, which is no
44 trespassing, it says, Ahtna, no trespassing on. And another
45 thing is they built three cabins on Indian land up there. I
46 don't know if we got it back or not, but there's -- I mean it's
47 just -- it's just -- they keep using -- that's really my

48 concern to the State, you know.

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ida, did you have a comment or.....

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1 MS. HILDEBRAND: I'm Ida Hildebrand from the Staff
2 Committee, BIA member. In response to Fred's comments of
3 concern of Native lands and trespass and use and abuse of those
4 lands. Under the current regulations, the State of Alaska laws
5 apply -- hunting and fishing laws apply to private -- those
6 private lands as well. So I believe that's what he was
7 addressing his concern to. If the State of Alaska is saying
8 that they have the right or they have the authority to regulate
9 hunting and fishing on the Native Corporation lands, then they
10 need to consider that in their regulations -- or to address
11 that.

12
13 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Right. I think I understand that. The
14 thing is a little broader than that. You know, there's a --
15 you can use a vehicle and say you're not hunting out there, you
16 know, that's the problem. You could have a rifle there in your
17 vehicle and still say you're not hunting, you're just driving
18 out on your land, that's private land. I can do whatever I
19 want to out here. I'm just trying to get clear what we want to
20 do here.

21
22 MS. HILDEBRAND: Right.

23
24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do we want to control Native lands and
25 throw it into the pot and say we want to control vehicles on
26 all these lands is what I was getting at when I asked for.....

27
28 MS. HILDEBRAND: Right. And the comment directly
29 toward Fred as a Native land owner is the responsibility of the
30 corporations themselves to come up with their plan or their
31 recommendations to the State regarding who's regulating their
32 land or their involvement in that regulation, which also
33 includes, as a private land owner, the right to bring suit
34 against those people who are trespassing on their lands and
35 destroying their lands. And there is court remedy for someone
36 who damages your land without your permission or trespasses on
37 your land without your permission. That's another
38 consideration that the Native Corporation land owners may wish
39 to pursue.

40
41 MR. KOMPKOFF: Mr. Chairman.

42
43 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Yes, go ahead.

44
45 MR. KOMPKOFF: Yeah, we have the same problem down in
46 Chenega. We have people coming from -- bringing charter boats
47 out and hunting on -- right on the land that we're not trying

48 to hunt on, you know, trying to save some fish and the game on
49 Evans Island. And these charter boats are coming in and
50 bringing hunters in and people are picking berries and it's

0173

1 kind of dangerous for them guys coming in.

2

3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Jay, did you have comment.

4

5 MR. WELLS: Yeah, I just wanted to say that with
6 respect to ATV use and offroad vehicle use. We've been dealing
7 with that for years within the Park. And with respect to
8 recreational use of RVs, that would be sport hunting or any
9 other recreational use on Federal lands, there are regulations
10 currently in place in 43 CFR, Code of Federal Regulations,
11 Title 36, which basically prohibit offroad vehicle use anywhere
12 on Federal lands, except under two circumstances. One, is if
13 the route is designated as an offroad vehicle route by that
14 particular Federal agency. And it's my understanding that that
15 applies, not only in Park Service, but Fish and Wildlife
16 Service lands and BLM lands. That's one, if it's a designated
17 route. At the designated route, the agency has to comply with
18 two executive orders, one of them's 11644, I can't remember the
19 other one. But it basically looks at impacts and doesn't allow
20 an agency to designate a route unless there's no adverse
21 environmental impact and that's something we deal with a lot
22 with RVs.

23

24 The other way to authorize a route for recreational use
25 or use for recreational uses, is through a permit issued by the
26 agency. And currently that's how we allow RV use on 13 trails,
27 established trails. We issue permits for those for
28 recreational use. Now, this doesn't apply to subsistence, but
29 for recreational use, we'll issue a permit with protective
30 stipulations. Requires recreational users stay on the
31 established trail and we monitor those routes to make sure that
32 those impacts don't exceed some sort of base line. Now, that's
33 been problematic and we've done a number of impacts related to
34 offroad vehicle use.

35

36 But there are avenues right now on Federal lands that
37 managers, agencies can use to restrict recreational RV use to
38 protect Park resources or Federal lands and resources, whether
39 it's park or preserve, refuge or BLM land. The other thing
40 that, I think might be worth considering is RVs as a methods
41 and means for subsistence and sport hunting. And I think it's
42 well within the purview of the Federal Board and certainly the
43 Regional Council to look at restrictions on methods and means
44 as a means of protecting a subsistence priority. And that's my
45 personal opinion. And that comes from -- I've heard a lot of
46 concern from our users, local users that -- subsistence users,
47 that they can't get adequate access or opportunity to harvest

48 because they're in competition with all the sport users.
49 Because the sport users use RVs to cross Park lands to get to
50 the Preserve where they can sport hunt and in the process --

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1 particularly off the Nabesna Road, scare away a lot of the game
2 that the subsistence user would normally have an opportunity to
3 harvest. And in that way, it's a conflict and you know, it
4 might be an opportunity to look at either a recommendation on
5 methods and means to the Board of Game or through the Federal
6 Subsistence Board.

7
8 CHAIRMAN EWAN: On Park lands, Jay, I think it was last
9 year that I reported to the National Park Service that there
10 was a vehicle that was damaging the terrain over there in
11 Wrangell-St. Elias and nobody seemed to care. It was a large
12 track vehicle and it went across -- how I found out is it went
13 right by the cabin where I hunt and they tore down the trees
14 and everything else around there and the tracks are still
15 there, visible from the air.

16
17 MR. WELLS: Yeah, now, that was.....

18
19 CHAIRMAN EWAN: What is the penalty for doing something
20 like that?

21
22 MR. WELLS: Well, we did investigate that and that
23 happens to be a local rural resident who is a subsistence user.
24 And I mentioned that those recreational rules don't apply to
25 subsistence users in the Park and Preserve. If RV's were used,
26 traditionally employed for subsistence purposes they can be
27 allowed. And right now, we're only allowing those in areas and
28 routes where they were traditionally employed. And that area
29 that you're talking about is an area where people have used,
30 including yourself, RV's for subsistence over the years so we
31 allow that. But you can't allow subsistence RV use to impact -
32 - adversely impact Park resources. But it becomes problematic
33 from an enforcement perspective. I mean we're not concerned
34 about -- realistically about some trees knocked over, although
35 we talked to those people. There are repeated impacts and ruts
36 and erosion caused by that use. It would be our -- well, it
37 would be our responsibility I guess to close it, and/or
38 restrict that use, and we haven't done that at this point.
39 That's a pretty sensitive issue, particular as it relates to
40 subsistence uses.

41
42 In terms of recreational use we've been -- in fact, we
43 closed -- did a temporary restriction on RV use this fall
44 because of all the impacts associated with the flooding off the
45 Nabesna Road. We closed or restricted use on several of the
46 trails for both, subsistence and recreational use and opened
47 those up as things dried out. But because the impacts on those

48 saturated soils would be too great, in our view. Most of those
49 have been lifted now, but it's problematic, when they start
50 knocking over trees and causing ruts, then it's up to the

0175

1 agency to take a closure action to protect those resources.

2

3 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Well, this guy here ran across private
4 lands and everything else knocking down trees and came from the
5 middle of nowhere. I don't know where it came from, from the
6 south there. There's no trail down that way. I know there's
7 trails going east and west there and kind of up there where
8 there's no trees now, I guess in the Park.

9

10 MR. WELLS: Yeah, that's a tough one.

11

12 CHAIRMAN EWAN: What I'm getting at is, if you're going
13 to allow that, I mean we're going to have the same problem that
14 everybody else is having everywhere else, you know.

15

16 MR. WELLS: Yeah. Well, with respect to private lands,
17 which a lot of that is there, it's Ahtna Corporation lands, we
18 put in our permits basically in admonishment that you need to
19 have a permission to cross private lands. Once they get on
20 private land, we have no jurisdiction. All we can do is warn
21 people ahead of time, if you're going to -- this permit doesn't
22 give you authority to cross private lands, you need to talk to
23 the land owner. At one point we basically made that a
24 violation of a permit condition and somebody took us to task on
25 it, so we had to change that condition to merely an
26 admonishment, a warning basically.

27

28 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay.

29

30 MR. LOHSE: Can I ask Jay a question?

31

32 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Go ahead.

33

34 MR. LOHSE: If I understood you right, ATVs are limited
35 on all Federal land to either permit access or designated
36 trails?

37

38 MR. WELLS: That would be recreational use and it
39 applies to conservation system units. And it would depend on
40 whether or not, like all of the new Park areas are in
41 conservation system units, and some BLM land and some refuge
42 land. And I'm not familiar with the BLM land.

43

44 MR. LOHSE: But not Forest Service lands?

45

46 MR. WELLS: And some Forest Service lands, I think, are
47 technically included as CSU's, I don't know. I just don't know

48 that, but I know they apply in some areas.

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Sandy.

0176

1 MR. RABINOWITCH: If I could just add, I think the
2 beginning point on this in terms of regulation is a Federal
3 executive order that Jay mentioned. And I believe that -- and
4 actually I've got a copy of it in my office because I looked at
5 it fairly recently. But it was issued in 1972 by President
6 Nixon and I believe it dealt with all Federal land, military
7 bases and it -- my recollection is that it was very, very
8 sweeping. But if you wanted a copy of that, it's easy to get
9 one.

10
11 MR. LOHSE: I'd like a copy of that, I'd appreciate
12 that.

13
14 MR. RABINOWITCH: I'll get it to Helga and she can get
15 it to you.

16
17 MR. LOHSE: Yeah. Because that's an issue that's going
18 on down in our area, too.

19
20 MR. RABINOWITCH: Okay.

21
22 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. We are down to the next to the
23 last item here, I guess.

24
25 MS. EAKON: You had wanted to revisit the 1997 annual
26 report after listening to the agency reports in case you had
27 any issues that you wanted to put in your annual report for
28 consideration by the Board.

29
30 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. That will be added to the end
31 there.

32
33 MS. EAKON: Well, we're done now unless.....

34
35 CHAIRMAN EWAN: What about the Nelchina caribou, that
36 was already done?

37
38 MR. LOHSE: No.

39
40 MS. EAKON: Yeah, that's new business.

41
42 MR. LOHSE: It comes after this.

43
44 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, you want to take up the annual
45 report at this point then?

46
47 MS. EAKON: (Nods affirmatively)

48
49
50

CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. What did we say yesterday?

0177

1 MS. EAKON: After listening to your agency reports, do
2 you have any concerns that you would like to articulate in your
3 '97 annual report?

4
5 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Well, the vehicle thing we're going to
6 address here by letter and maybe we ought to put it in our
7 annual report, too.

8
9 MS. EAKON: Okay.

10
11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do you want to put the wolves in there
12 again?

13
14 MS. EAKON: It's up to you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Those are -- I guess that's the only
17 item then. Anybody have anything else? I do have a concern
18 about, you know, about the closure at Kantishna, the method.

19
20 MS. EAKON: Okay.

21
22 CHAIRMAN EWAN: What it might do to other areas, you
23 know, set a precedent, too.

24
25 MR. LOHSE: Set a precedent. That it be viewed as a
26 single incident.

27
28 CHAIRMAN EWAN: That's about it.

29
30 MR. LOHSE: I'd like to personally -- or I don't know
31 if you want to do it as a Council, but I would like to express,
32 I don't know if you want to say thanks or whatever you want to
33 call it for the improvement that's being done on communication
34 on subsistence plans in the Parks and on Federal land. I mean
35 I think -- just the little glance that I had on this document
36 right here was very worthwhile, very enlightening. And I think
37 more of that kind of communication and that attitude of working
38 with the local residents, I think it's gone a long way from the
39 confrontation that we saw, you know, the feeling of
40 confrontation that we saw 10 or 12 years ago, you know.

41
42 I know you can't make everybody happy and everything
43 else, but there's good information in the two that we were
44 presented today. So I think it's.....

45
46 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I don't think any Council member here
47 disagrees with what you're saying. We all see a lot of

48 improvement, it's true, in the documents we're being given.
49 All the information is very valuable to us. A lot of us do
50 read that stuff. I guess that's it on the annual report,

0178

1 right?

2

3 MS. EAKON: Yes.

4

5 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Then we'll go down to the new business
6 then. Item 1 is Nelchina caribou, special action. Mike.

7

8 MR. COFFEEN: Mike Coffeen again with the Bureau of
9 Land Management, Glenallen. You have in your pile of documents
10 there this two-page one with the letter that the BLM has
11 written and then the Staff analysis by the Fish and Wildlife
12 Service that's attached to it. This is for your consideration.
13 It's a special action being proposed. This is the third year
14 that we requested this season extension for the Nelchina
15 Federal caribou hunt. This will add a season from October 21st
16 to January 4th, which will match the State season. It's the
17 same as we've done previously.

18

19 It hasn't, I don't think, been formally brought before
20 the Council because it didn't hit one of your meetings. I
21 think a telephone poll or something was done in the past though
22 and your opinion was solicited on it. That's essentially
23 what's going to happen. There's a few numbers that have been
24 added on the second page there on the number of permits. I
25 would 1996/97 and the number of State permits, which I must
26 admit, I was a little surprised when I finally added up all the
27 numbers for the total number of permits issued. But of course,
28 on the Tier I, State permit, that's any resident can apply for
29 that.

30

31 And our -- as I mentioned earlier, we're hitting about
32 the same numbers on our Federal caribou permits that we issue
33 out in Glenallen. We probably issued between 1,600 and 1,700
34 again.

35

36 MR. LOHSE: This is the whole period from October 21st
37 to January 4, I mean is it.....

38

39 MR. COFFEEN: That adds that time period and that then
40 matches the regular season which is then January 5th through
41 March 31st.

42

43 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

44

45 MR. COFFEEN: Both the State and the Federal hunt end
46 on the same day, March 31st.

47

48 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

49

50 MR. COFFEEN: Most of the hunting doesn't occur until

0179

1 March in that late winter hunt because it's just too nasty up
2 there. And again, like last year, there were hardly any
3 animals in the area. I mean it's been four years since there
4 were significant numbers of caribou up there in the winter.
5 It's all dependent on when they decide to come back from
6 Canada. Yes.

7

8 MR. LOHSE: Have you -- I was talking to a couple of
9 the people that hunted right to the last day of the Federal
10 subsistence season while I was up in the Kinney Lake area.
11 And.....

12

13 MR. COFFEEN: This fall?

14

15 MR. LOHSE: This fall. And basically they said that
16 the caribou hadn't moved through or out of there at that point
17 in time. Have the caribou started moving or will they possibly
18 be moving after the October 21st date so they'll have an access
19 to them this fall yet?

20

21 MR. COFFEEN: The last I heard, and I'm a week or so
22 out of date was that there had not been significant movements
23 across the Richardson Highway, so the caribou are very likely
24 going to be up there this early winter and late winter.

25

26 MR. LOHSE: So possibly some of the hunting will take
27 place in October instead of March?

28

29 MR. COFFEEN: Right.

30

31 MR. LOHSE: Do we need action on this?

32

33 MR. WILLIS: Yes, it's an action item.

34

35 MR. COFFEEN: Another thing to look at it is this is
36 the third year for this, and very likely as Bill mentioned to
37 me -- Knauer, mentioned, this really ought to become a rule
38 change someday. But that's not -- I don't propose that, the
39 users need to propose that.

40

41 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Um-hum.

42

43 MR. COFFEEN: Or the Council to start that into cycle.

44

45 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Do you want to.....

46

47 MR. LOHSE: I'll make a motion.

48
49
50

CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, there's a motion to.....

0180

1 MR. WILLIS: Mr. Chair, excuse me from
2 interrupting.....

3
4 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Um-hum.

5
6 MR. WILLIS:but we do have some State ADF&G
7 personnel here who have up to the minute information to provide
8 on the Nelchina herd. And also possibly some concerns -- we
9 put this analysis together rather quickly, the one that you
10 have attached there, a couple weeks ago, and I haven't had a
11 chance to revisit it. I, for one, would like to hear what
12 these gentlemen have to say. I think the Council would
13 probably also benefit from it. If you would indulge them to
14 make some comments before you take action.

15
16 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Do we have a State person here
17 that wants to make comment?

18
19 MR. SELENGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm Jeff
20 Selenger, I'm the assistant area biologist out of the Glenallen
21 Office for the Department of Fish and Game. Quite honestly, I
22 didn't come prepared for Nelchina caribou information. I can
23 do quite a bit off the cuff here, if you'd like. The first
24 thing I would like to do is I don't want to attack, you know,
25 the Staff analysis that you have in front of you, but since
26 that's what I have to work with, I'd like to go through that
27 and maybe point out a couple of items real quickly.

28
29 I'm just going to kind of go down right through it, you
30 know, where it talks about the issues. And you'll notice that
31 currently the Federal season does extend to September 30th and
32 the State season does end September 20th and it closes on
33 September 20th for the rut. And as we go down through, I got
34 the feeling and it could be just me misreading or potentially
35 reading too much between the lines, I got the feeling that it
36 showed -- it was giving the indication that the Nelchina
37 caribou herd is probably pretty high right now. Our spring
38 census show that the numbers have come down. That was
39 indicative of the area where we censused and that's where we've
40 traditionally censused in the past -- you know, for the past 10
41 to 20 years. Whether or not the exact reasons for the low
42 count this spring are not known, there are several factors that
43 could be involved, including, you know, we've had harvest of
44 cows last year and that was the first substantial harvest of
45 cows that we've seen in recent years. There could have been
46 increased winter mortality. The caribou last year wintered up
47 north of Tok in the Ladue River area and there's known to be

48 quite a few wolves there, as indicated by the Fortymile plan.
49 Movement patterns could have been a little bit different. We
50 had low calf production in '97 and that's probably an artifact

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1 of a drought on the summer range of 1996. The cows couldn't
2 get in good enough condition to bring off a good calf crop.

3
4 A little additional information, we did our composition
5 work this fall. We started out -- I'll backup, I'm sorry.
6 That's what happens with little preparation here. When I say
7 the calf production was done in '97, to give you some idea of
8 figures. Our comp count in 1996 was 55 -- in June of 1996 was
9 55 calves per 100 cows. This year it was down to 39 per 100
10 cows. This fall, that number even dropped farther and we were
11 down to about 26 calves per 100 cows. That, in itself, brings
12 down your population estimate as you can imagine. The good
13 news is that the four month old calves were heavier this year.
14 On average, the last year, the four month old calves weighed
15 106 pounds, this year they were up to 122 pounds, and we were
16 seeing indications of fat reserves on some of the calves that
17 we haven't seen in recent years.

18
19 So with all that in mind, some of the figures Mike gave
20 out with the 1,300 permits, a few concerns are; this year the
21 caribou have tended to stay in Unit 13 itself. We didn't see a
22 real high harvest this fall because, like Mike had mentioned,
23 they were in inaccessible areas. Last week when we did our
24 composition work, animals were still spread out all the way
25 over to the Chistochina. The main concentrations of the
26 animals were between on the Little Nelchina, in that general
27 area and up in Otona (ph) Creek. There's two main groups, but
28 they were a loose aggregation of breeding pods.

29
30 Our concern would be that if the caribou hold off and
31 move en masse again across the Richardson Highway, right where
32 that Federal corridor is, that's their main migration route.
33 And we could have a shoot out situation right on the highway
34 there. I'm not suggesting that we don't open the Federal
35 subsistence, I'm just trying to point some of the issues out
36 here to be concerned about. If that does happen and, like
37 there is a State season at that time, and that's a concern for
38 us, you know, if that situation does happen. We have it
39 stipulated on the permits that we can close a road corridor if
40 necessary to prevent a shoot out from occurring right along the
41 highway.

42
43 Another action that the State is in the process of
44 taking, all my indications right now, you know, don't hold me
45 to this that this is actually going to happen, but all my
46 indications are that we're going to close the Tier I portion of
47 our State hunt before the October 21st opening. But the Tier

48 II will remain open.

49

50 One or two other -- and going back to this handout that

0182

1 you got for the Staff analysis, oh, okay, the other thing with
2 the Federal hunt, I'd just like to point out and I'm sure most
3 people are aware of it, that's for two caribou of either sex.
4 The Tier II portion of the State hunt, that will remain open
5 only for an antlered bull. So that would also limit the
6 animals that would be harvested under the Tier II. Granted
7 there are a lot of Tier II permits out there.

8

9 Sorry for the unprepared method in which this was
10 presented, but hopefully I can answer questions.

11

12 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Ralph.

13

14 MR. LOHSE: Just a question, and again, this probably
15 shows my ignorance. But you say the main corridor is across
16 Federal land?

17

18 MR. SELENGER: Yes. The main place where they tend to
19 cross and -- well, this goes back.....

20

21 MR. LOHSE: Historically.

22

23 MR. SELENGER: Yeah, historically since they have been
24 moving east -- well, I can put it that way. Historically
25 caribou used to winter in 13 and we haven't seen that since the
26 population increased and they started their eastern movements
27 in the winter. The main corridor that they cross is between
28 Sourdough and say Meyers Lake to Paxson, the Federal strip
29 right there runs just north of -- starts just north of
30 Sourdough and runs up just north on Meyers Lake.

31

32 MR. LOHSE: Is that available then for Tier II hunters?

33

34 MR. SELENGER: Yes, it is.

35

36 MR. LOHSE: Okay. So Tier II hunters can hunt on that
37 along with subsistence hunters?

38

39 MR. SELENGER: Yeah. And on the Tier II portion, they
40 would be limited to the one antlered bull.

41

42 MR. LOHSE: One antlered bull.

43

44 MR. SELENGER: Yes. Unless they have Federal permits,
45 and then they'd have two of either sex. But the -- if they do
46 have a Federal permit and they take an animal, even if it's on
47 that -- off of the Federal permit, their State permit is null

48 and void. It's one -- the State bag limit is one caribou.

49

50 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

0183

1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: So what you're saying is there's no
2 possibility of control here on the Federal -- the government
3 controls the number of animals taken? I mean if they see too
4 many being taken, they can always close it, can't they? Is
5 that a possibility?

6
7 MR. SELENGER: I'm not familiar -- the Federal system,
8 as far as I know, is on a permit and not a registration basis
9 so that if one of the -- if Mike or somebody would field this -
10 - my understanding is is once you have a Federal permit it's
11 good as long as the season is going unless they close it by
12 emergency order and I'm not familiar with their processes for
13 that.

14
15 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Well, an emergency closure is a
16 possibility there. So myself, I'm going to support the Federal
17 subsistence hunt proposal. The reason is, what I've heard, the
18 urban hunters that go out there under this State hunt kind of
19 cutoff the caribou and don't let them come to our area.
20 Traditionally, our people in the Copper River Basin hunt along
21 the highway, they don't compete with the people that are going
22 offroad in those vehicles that we're concerned about. And
23 those are the people that are getting all the animals, pretty
24 much you can see this. And as for myself, I've never -- I have
25 not gotten a State permit in the last two or three or four
26 years now. I've applied every year, I'm being left out. I can
27 go to BLM there and get a permit, it's a lot easier.

28
29 Yes, Ralph.

30
31 MR. LOHSE: I just want to clarify something between
32 Robert and you. Basically there are -- both the Federal and
33 the State has the ability to close these hunts by emergency
34 order if there's a problem?

35
36 MR. WILLIS: That's correct.

37
38 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

39
40 MR. WILLIS: Yeah, Mr. Chair, my main reason for
41 wanting Jeff to bring you up to date on this is that we
42 received this request for a special action very late. It was
43 the middle of September, just prior to the onset of our fall
44 meetings. I had to put together an analysis very hurriedly and
45 I had to do it based on last year's data because obviously data
46 from this year is not available to us yet. And I wanted to be
47 sure that the Council got the latest information.

48
49 Last year we had more animals. We had the support of
50 the local people. You were contacted by telephone and the

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1 Copper River Native Association was contacted, Alaska
2 Department of Fish and Game was contacted. And everyone agreed
3 that, yes, let's open the Federal hunt at the same time as the
4 State hunt and make them the same. This year, I'd hoped the
5 same situation would be true and put together the analysis with
6 that in mind. We were unable to get comment from the State
7 prior to my having to leave the office to begin the round of
8 Council meetings, and so still we do not have an official
9 recommendation from the State of Alaska on this proposal. I
10 did want to make sure that since we had the people available
11 who have this up to date information, to get it in front of you
12 and let you make your decision based on that.

13
14 MR. LOHSE: I have one more question. What percentage
15 -- how close are you to the figure is the herd estimated at
16 now? What percentage from last year?

17
18 MR. SELENGER: Are you asking for the.....

19
20 MR. LOHSE: The Nelchina caribou herd.

21
22 MR. SELENGER: The herd.

23
24 MR. LOHSE: I know there goal was to bring it down to
25 40,000 animals?

26
27 MR. SELENGER: 35 to 40,000 was the State.

28
29 MR. LOHSE: 35 to 40,000 animals. How close is the
30 estimate to that figure at this point in time and what kind of
31 percentage drop is that -- or what drop is that from last year?

32
33 MR. SELENGER: You'll have to forgive me if I don't
34 have the exact figures.

35
36 MR. LOHSE: You don't need to be exact.

37
38 MR. SELENGER: The spring census this year, we came up
39 with 35,000 animals. It was a combination of a photo census
40 and our standard aerial count where we send out half a dozen
41 super cubs with observers in the back. And this year we added
42 a photo plane to photograph the larger congregations of
43 caribou. Nelchina herd is a little bit hard to do population
44 estimates on a lot of times because, unlike, say like the
45 Fortymile or the Delta caribou herd where these animals
46 basically congregate in one area in the summer, the Nelchina
47 herd doesn't always do that. This year they did it, but it was

48 after we did our census, unknown to us they were going to do
49 it. It was 35,000 this year and last spring, I believe it was
50 up around 46,000. It was a substantial drop. Our fall

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1 estimate last year was in the 44,000 range, and our fall
2 estimate this year, we're still looking at it, it's looking
3 like we're between -- somewhere between -- around 30,000 and
4 don't hold me to that number, but that's an estimate without
5 having all the figures in front of me. So it looks like we're
6 down fairly low.

7

8 MR. LOHSE: And how much of that impact do you
9 attribute to the hunting season, the liberal hunting seasons
10 from last year?

11

12 MR. SELENGER: It's difficult to say. Undoubtedly the
13 harvest of cows last year had an impact. I'd like to also
14 mention, we should remember that was our objective, to reduce
15 the herd. The cow base, you can really alter a caribou herd's
16 numbers by messing with -- by doing different things with the
17 cows. A bull harvest only does not effect -- it generally
18 doesn't effect a population near as much. It can if you get
19 the bull numbers too low so there aren't enough bulls for
20 breeding.

21

22 An extra influx of all the hunters out there, what
23 happened last year is we had drought conditions, too. You
24 know, that coupled -- the lower number of cows to start with,
25 coupled with the drought condition, which cows couldn't get
26 into as good a condition, you had fewer calves being produced.
27 You throw those factors in there. If you add slightly
28 different movements which this herd has been doing the last
29 several years. They don't necessarily follow the same pattern
30 every year. You could have had animals scattered slightly
31 more. Our collars didn't tell us that, but all our collars are
32 on adult -- cows. And it's skewed towards young cows right now
33 with the new program we instituted.

34

35 That, with the -- we don't know what the winter -- we
36 don't have information on winter mortality. Winter mortality
37 rates could have been higher last year. Again, our collars
38 didn't show that, but it could happen. The bottom line is, we
39 don't know exactly why it happened. We think all these things
40 contributed to lowering the herd.

41

42 MR. LOHSE: But basically what you feel is the herd is
43 down around the target number right now?

44

45 MR. SELENGER: Yes.

46

47 MR. LOHSE: I mean that's basically.....

48
49
50

MR. SELENGER: Yes.

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1 MR. LOHSE: That's basically what was intended is where
2 you're at?

3
4 MR. SELENGER: I don't want to get myself in trouble.

5
6 MR. LOHSE: No, I know. But I mean that.....

7
8 MR. SELENGER: Yeah. Yeah, essentially.....

9
10 MR. LOHSE:in a rough.....

11
12 MR. SELENGER:the herd has been reduced from what
13 it was.

14
15 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

16
17 MR. SELENGER: And we're down near to where we'd like
18 to try to manage the herd.

19
20 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I just got to comment that I disagree
21 with you about the, you know, do we open it up and the caribou
22 will come across the road, that there'll be a slaughter of too
23 many caribou and all that. I've lived up there all my life. I
24 don't think people take too many caribou in that area. I've
25 seen maybe a couple thousand taken around there if you had it
26 open for a long time, but the caribou pass within a week's
27 time. They pass through and there's hardly any caribou
28 anymore.

29
30 I feel the local people have more opportunity along the
31 road. I'm talking for the Copper River Basin people. I've
32 lived there, like I say, all of my life, and I think we ought
33 to allow that hunt to happen. Maybe cut down the State hunt in
34 the future, thinking along those lines, just expand the
35 opportunity for subsistence hunters is what my concern is
36 about. I know a lot of people that are older and cannot get
37 off the road, can drive along the road and hunt, have stated
38 to me that they would like to see that road hunt extended --
39 not road hunt, I mean just the Federal hunt.

40
41 MR. SELENGER: Yes, Mr. Chair. I'm sorry if I gave
42 that impression. I was just trying to -- you know, obviously
43 you have a lot more experience with that area than I do, you
44 know, I've only been there a short time. I'm sorry if I gave
45 that impression that I think this is going to happen. What I
46 was trying to address is, you know, that's a potential source
47 that could happen. You know, heck we got the State hunt going

48 on, that's one of our concerns is that we'd get a mass crossing
49 when that opens. In the past several years, when we've had
50 extra hunters -- or more hunters on the State permits out

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1 there, the caribou have just acted in a way where they're not
2 doing those mass crossings. Talking with Bob Toby, the area
3 biologist up there, he is -- he told me -- he just gives me
4 examples of what happened in years past where caribou are
5 readily available next to a road system, where a harvest can be
6 increased dramatically very quickly. You can have a high
7 harvest very quickly. And that's all I was trying to point out
8 is there is a potential for that to happen. I'm not indicating
9 that or we were thinking that we think it's going to happen.

10

11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. I see that happening so many
12 times here, like the Kenai Peninsula, we talked about all those
13 concerns about taking too many moose, but it never happens. It
14 just -- just based on that, I would support this proposal. I'd
15 like to see local people have an opportunity later on to get a
16 caribou. Like I say, the problem with the State permit system
17 is that a lot of local people don't get one. Like I said, I've
18 applied for about four years now and I've never received one
19 for caribou or moose. I don't think I got one for moose
20 either, you know.

21

22 MR. SELENGER: You know, I'd like to.....

23

24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: You know, I sit there and I can't hunt.
25 With Federal I have more opportunity. All I have to do is go
26 to BLM and get a permit from them. Any other comments or
27 questions?

28

29 MR. LOHSE: I'll make the motion that we -- or could we
30 have a motion on the table to support this?

31

32 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay.

33

34 MR. LOHSE: I think as long as -- and I'll make a
35 comment on it, I think as long as the State season is opened
36 and there's the ability to close both hunts, I don't see any
37 way we can't support it.

38

39 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Are you going to make that a motion?

40

41 MR. LOHSE: I make the motion that we support this
42 special season.

43

44 MR. JOHN: And I second that motion.

45

46 CHAIRMAN EWAN: There's a motion and second. Further
47 discussion on the motion.

48
49
50

MR. ROMIG: Well, I.....

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1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Go ahead.

2

3 MR. ROMIG: I guess my only concern, Mr. Chairman, was
4 that I'd like to see -- I'd like to support this, too. I guess
5 my only concern would be that under the Federal thing, I
6 understand it's just two caribou, and under the State, it would
7 be an antlered bull, so I -- you know, if there was a problem
8 with the population, I think that, you know, next time we could
9 address -- instead of shutting it down, maybe we could address
10 the cow -- making it a bull if there is a problem.

11

12 MR. LOHSE: Um-hum.

13

14 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Did everybody hear that? Are we
15 ready to vote on the motion? Okay, all in favor of the motion
16 say aye.

17

18 IN UNISON: Aye.

19

20 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Opposed by the same sign.

21

22 (No opposing responses)

23

24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Motion is carried.

25

26 MR. WILLIS: Mr. Chairman, excuse me. As a follow-up
27 item on this issue, I'd like to point out that the reason we're
28 dealing with this again this year is that it was initially
29 dealt with as a special action and the season was open last
30 year -- or increased by emergency order, which is good for only
31 one year. We need a proposal, if we're going to make this
32 permanent so we don't have to go through this procedure every
33 fall. We need a proposal submitted in the regular cycle to be
34 dealt with at the winter meeting and by the Board next spring
35 to make this same change that we're recommending -- that you've
36 just recommended making.

37

38 Agency Staff -- all the Federal agencies have been
39 instructed to, depending on the Councils and the public, to
40 submit proposals and not submit proposals ourselves. So if you
41 are interested in making this a permanent change, then I would
42 recommend you submit a proposal to that effect for the winter
43 cycle. Thank you.

44

45 CHAIRMAN EWAN: You're asking us to -- I don't quite
46 follow you.

47

48 MR. LOHSE: He's saying that -- he's just instructing
49 that if we want to put a proposal in, we need to put it in for
50 the winter cycle, otherwise we'll have to address this as an

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1 issue again next year. That's basically if I understand
2 Robert.

3

4 CHAIRMAN EWAN: We'll put it into a form of our
5 proposal then?

6

7 MR. WILLIS: Right. If it's dealt with as a proposal
8 during the normal cycle this winter, then it will become part
9 of the regulations for next year and it will stay that way
10 until it's changed. If it's done as a special action of the
11 Board, it's good for only one year and it will have to be
12 addressed again next fall before -- otherwise, next fall.....

13

14 CHAIRMAN EWAN: So in the future, we'll have it in a
15 proposal.

16

17 MR. WILLIS: Exactly.

18

19 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I follow you now. So I guess what,
20 we're asking for a special action here, right?

21

22 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

23

24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: For.....

25

26 MR. LOHSE: A special action.

27

28 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. We'll move on then. Item 10.

29

30 MS. EAKON: Yes.

31

32 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I guess we're on Item 10.

33

34 MS. EAKON: Time and place of next meeting. You have
35 two calendars before you. What would be the current schedule
36 with the window being from January 25 through February 28 of
37 1998. And your alternate window, February 15 through March 31
38 of '98. Keeping into consideration that you should not pick a
39 date already held -- already picked out by Kodiak/Aleutians or
40 the Southeast Regional Councils because Robert Willis and
41 Rachel Mason serve as Staff to those Regional Councils as well.

42

43 MR. LOHSE: So do you have those dates for us -- oh,
44 I'm looking at the ones in the book.

45

46 MS. EAKON: And also because your Regional Council
47 historically is a productive Regional Council, you're

48 encouraged to pick dates toward the end of the windows.

49

50 CHAIRMAN EWAN: So we have alternative one and

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1 alternative two, right?

2

3 MS. EAKON: That is correct.

4

5 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I thought we dealt with this yesterday.
6 We recommended -- didn't we recommend something yesterday?

7

8 MS. EAKON: That is true. But until a decision is
9 made, just to be safe, in case.....

10

11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: So we should set a date?

12

13 MS. EAKON: Yes, under both calendars, okay.

14

15 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. Do you have suggested dates
16 then?

17

18 MR. LOHSE: Are we looking at three days?

19

20 CHAIRMAN EWAN: No, two dates, I guess.

21

22 MS. EAKON: Two days.

23

24 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Alternative one and alternative two.

25

26 MR. WILLIS: Two dates, but three days; is that what
27 you said?

28

29 MR. LOHSE: Yeah. Three days or two days?

30

31 MS. EAKON: Three days, okay. Two dates of three days.

32

33 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. You want to make a motion,
34 Ralph.

35

36 MR. LOHSE: Well, taking into consideration what Helga
37 said and taking into consideration what's already on the
38 calendar, for the second alternative if we want it towards the
39 end of the cycle, that would leave us somewhere in the week of
40 March 16th through March 20th. It's the only place we could
41 get three days towards the end of the calendar. And I don't
42 know what the rest of the Council's preference is on Mondays,
43 Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursday, Fridays or Tuesday, Wednesdays
44 or Thursdays or what -- that week is okay for me is all I could
45 say.

46

47 And if we look on the first one, we can't have it

48 towards the end of the cycle because there are no three day
49 blocks available towards the end of the cycle.
50

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1 MS. EAKON: The only two Councils you want to worry
2 about are Kodiak/Aleutians, February 12, 13 or Southeast
3 February 23 through February 25, okay.

4

5 MR. LOHSE: Okay. So we could pick the second last
6 week in February then?

7

8 MS. EAKON: That is correct.

9

10 MR. LOHSE: And that would again be the 16th through
11 the 20th, either February or March. And I have no preference
12 as to days in those dates.

13

14 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Good.

15

16 MR. JOHN: What about the 18th and 19th or 19th and
17 20th?

18

19 MR. LOHSE: We need three days.

20

21 MS. EAKON: February 18th through February 20?

22

23 MR. LOHSE: Okay.

24

25 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Does anyone have an objection to those
26 dates, 18th, 19th and 20th of February?

27

28 MS. EAKON: For your current window. And then the same
29 17th through 19th.

30

31 MR. LOHSE: 17th through 19th or 18th through 20th for
32 the next one. Would you prefer to end on a Friday?

33

34 MR. ROMIG: Yeah.

35

36 MR. LOHSE: Yeah, I kind of would prefer to end on a
37 Friday.

38

39 MS. EAKON: Okay, 18 through 20 under the alternate
40 schedule. And then where?

41

42 MR. JOHN: Anchorage.

43

44 MR. ROMIG: Anchorage is fine.

45

46 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

47

48 MS. EAKON: Anchorage.

49

50 MR. LOHSE: That time of the year, I appreciate it.

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1 MR. JOHN: It's a good time of year to be in Anchorage.

2

3 MS. EAKON: Okay, Anchorage. That concludes the agenda
4 items, Mr. Chair.

5

6 MR. LOHSE: Unless you all prefer to come to Cordova
7 again.

8

9 MR. JOHN: Not that time of the year.

10

11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay. If we don't have any more items
12 to take care of, no public -- anybody from the public, by the
13 way? We should have gave them another opportunity, if anybody
14 had -- we missed anybody this morning that wanted to testify? I
15 guess there isn't.

16

17 MR. LOHSE: Do we want to deal with that letter to the
18 Alaska Board of Game?

19

20 MS. EAKON: It will be nice to have it on record if you
21 read it.

22

23 MR. LOHSE: Okay. I can read.....

24

25 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Let me ask if there's any objection.
26 Is there any objection to hearing a portion of Ralph's draft
27 letter?

28

29 MR. JOHN: No.

30

31 CHAIRMAN EWAN: No objection. Go ahead.

32

33 MR. LOHSE: Well, what I tried to do is I tried to take
34 into consideration all of the concerns that I heard here. This
35 isn't supposed to be my letter, and as a Council, if we want to
36 submit it we can or if you want to amend it, you're not going
37 to hurt my feelings if you change anything in it. I just tried
38 to listen to what I was hearing.

39

40 What I wrote is, we, as the Southcentral Regional
41 Subsistence Council, would like to express our concern on the
42 increasing proliferation of ATVs in Game Management Units 12
43 and 13. Especially those of the larger type which are capable
44 of going so far back in and breaking new trails that allow
45 increasing numbers of smaller ATVs to access new country. We
46 are concerned with the lack of current control or oversight.
47 We feel that these ATVs have an adverse impact on the

48 environment and exhibit an attitude of disrespect for public
49 and private property and increased trespass on Native land. Of
50 increasing concern to us as those who are to address issues

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1 affecting subsistence users, is the possible tampering and long
2 term disruption of traditional patterns of caribou and moose
3 migration through areas accessible to local subsistence hunters
4 who are unable to afford the expense of ATVs. This competition
5 with ATVs limits the ability of subsistence users to maintain a
6 priority use of game. For these reasons, we are supportive of
7 regulations that decrease this threat to subsistence users,
8 whether it's through area closures or restrictions on the use
9 of ATVs for hunting purposes.

10

11 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Any comments?

12

13 MR. LOHSE: Did I cover everybody's fairly good?

14

15 CHAIRMAN EWAN: I think that pretty much covers it.

16

17 MR. LOHSE: Yeah.

18

19 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Okay, thank you, Ralph. You did a good
20 job.

21

22 MR. LOHSE: And then we need a motion probably to
23 submit this with Council endorsement to the Alaska Board of
24 Game.

25

26 MR. JOHN: So moved.

27

28 CHAIRMAN EWAN: There's a motion to submit this letter
29 to Alaska Board of Game.

30

31 MR. KOMPKOFF: Second.

32

33 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Second. Further discussion on the
34 motion. If not, all in favor say aye.

35

36 IN UNISON: Aye.

37

38 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Opposed by the same sign.

39

40 (No opposing responses)

41

42 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Motion is carried. Okay, I'll
43 entertain a motion for adjournment.

44

45 MR. ROMIG: So moved to adjourn.

46

47 CHAIRMAN EWAN: There's a motion to adjourn our

48 meeting. Is there a second to that?

49

50 MR. JOHN: You don't need a second. Second.

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1 CHAIRMAN EWAN: Meeting adjourned.

2

3 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

4

5

* * * * *

C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

) ss.

STATE OF ALASKA)

I, Rebecca Nelms, Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska and Reporter for R & R Court Reporters, Inc., do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 194 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the SOUTHCENTRAL FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL meeting taken electronically by Salena Hile on the 7th and 8th day of October, 1997, beginning at the hour of 9:00 o'clock a.m. at the Barratte Inn, Anchorage, Alaska;

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

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 15th day of October, 1997.

Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 10/10/98