

1 KODIAK/ALEUTIANS FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME I

7
8 Kodiak, Alaska
9 September 26, 2008
10 9:00 o'clock a.m.

11
12
13 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

14
15 Speridon Simeonoff, Sr., Chair
16 Alfred Cratty, Jr.
17 Richard Koso
18 Thomas Johnson, Jr.
19 John Parker, II
20 Thomas Schwantes
21
22
23 Regional Council Coordinator, Michelle Chivers

24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44 Recorded and transcribed by:

45
46 Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC
47 700 W. Second Avenue
48 Anchorage, AK 99501
49 907-243-0668
50 jpk@gci.net/sahile@gci.net

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Kodiak, Alaska - 9/26/2008)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Good morning.
Let's call the meeting to order. It's 9:05. We will
have roll call, please.

MS. CHIVERS: Thomas Schwantes.

MR. SCHWANTES: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Patrick Holmes. Mr.
Chair, Patrick is out of state right now visiting
family and he has already called to be excused. John
Parker.

MR. PARKER: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Sam Rohrer. Sam thought
he was going to be here, but he said if his hunt ran
through today he wasn't going to make it, so obviously
his hunt is still going. Al Cratty.

MR. CRATTY: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Jim Hamilton. He is also
out on a hunt, goat hunt, which extends through today.
Richard Koso.

MR. KOSO: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Speridon Simeonoff.

CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Thomas Johnson.

MR. JOHNSON: Here.

MS. CHIVERS: Mr. Chair, we have a
quorum. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you,
Michelle. Welcome to our Kodiak/Aleutians Regional
Advisory meeting. I'd like to start with a round of
introductions. I guess, John, we'll start with you.

1 MR. PARKER: John Parker, life-long
2 Kodiakan and real pro-advocate of subsistence on State,
3 private, Federal. I've been around, hunted all over
4 the island and that's about it.

5
6 MR. SCHWANTES: I've been in Alaska
7 since 1963, here on Kodiak since '79 and I'm an
8 outdoorsman and have a strong feeling about customary
9 subsistence uses.

10
11 MR. KOSO: I'm Rick Koso. I was born
12 in King Cove out in the Aleutians. I've been a
13 commercial fisherman and assistant guide. I'm
14 presently living in Adak, so I travel the Aleutians
15 quite a bit. I still do a little bit of commercial
16 fishing and still do a lot of subsistence hunting and
17 fishing also.

18
19 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: I'm Mitch
20 Simeonoff, born and raised in Akhiok, south end of
21 Kodiak Island.

22
23 MR. CRATTY: Al Cratty, Old Harbor,
24 sports charter operator, commercial fisherman,
25 subsistence user.

26
27 MR. JOHNSON: Tommy Johnson, Jr. I was
28 born and raised here in Kodiak, a commercial fisherman.
29 I'm a Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak council member and I'm
30 also on the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory
31 Council and a big subsistence user of fishing but not
32 so much hunting, but my family does a lot of hunting.

33
34 MS. CHIVERS: Michelle Chivers, Council
35 coordinator.

36
37 MR. PROBASCO: Good morning, Speridon.
38 I'm Pete Probasco. I'm the assistant regional director
39 for the Office of Subsistence Management and I consider
40 Kodiak my second home.

41
42 MR. WHEELER: Good morning. I'm Gary
43 Wheeler, refuge manager of the Kodiak National Wildlife
44 Refuge.

45
46 MR. PYLE: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
47 Council members. I'm Bill Pyle, supervisor/wildlife
48 biologist Kodiak Refuge.

49
50 MS. HENDRICKSON: I'm Nancy

1 Hendrickson, the chair of the Federal Subsistence
2 Liaison Team for the State.

3

4 MR. PAPPAS: George Pappas, Department
5 of Fish and Game. I represent the Fisheries Division
6 on our Liaison Team.

7

8 MS. SPANGLER: Good morning. I'm Beth
9 Spangler with the Office of Subsistence Management.
10 I'm in the Fisheries Division.

11

12 MR. SAITO: Good morning. Brandon
13 Saito for the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

14

15 MR. GRIMES: Good morning. John
16 Grimes, Department of Fish and Game, wildlife
17 biologist, Kodiak.

18

19 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thanks, and
20 welcome again. At this time we'll have review and
21 adoption of our agenda. You can see there was some
22 changes made.

23

24 MS. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
25 The changes we have made was under Item 9(C) there was
26 going to be a Big Creek update and Derek Hildreth did
27 call to say they will not be here to present, so he
28 asked that that item be removed. And under Item 9(D)
29 we have a second item, which is the Afognak Lake update
30 by Rob Baer. Those are the only changes that we have
31 to the agenda. Thank you.

32

33 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any additional
34 changes to our agenda, additions.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: If there are none,
39 then a motion to accept our agenda with changes would
40 be in order.

41

42 MR. SCHWANTES: Mr. Chair. I move that
43 we accept the agenda as amended.

44

45 MR. JOHNSON: Second.

46

47 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Moved and
48 seconded. Any discussion.

49

50 (No comments)

1 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Hearing no
2 discussion, are there any objections to the motion.

3
4 (No objections)

5
6 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Seeing no
7 objections, then the motion carries. The minutes of
8 our March 25th, 2008 meeting in Kodiak, you've had an
9 opportunity to read those minutes. A motion would be
10 in order to accept the minutes of March 25th.

11
12 MR. KOSO: I move to accept the
13 minutes.

14
15 MR. SCHWANTES: I second that.

16
17 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Moved and
18 seconded. Is there any discussion.

19
20 (No comments)

21
22 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Hearing no
23 discussion, is there any objection.

24
25 (No objections)

26
27 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Seeing no
28 objections, then the motion carries. Our Chair's
29 report. I'll refer that to Michelle.

30
31 MS. CHIVERS: Mr. Chair. Pat Holmes
32 did attend the Board meeting back in December when we
33 had our meeting and he thought he was going to prepare
34 a letter to the Council and something I could read out
35 loud and I haven't received anything from him. So what
36 I'll do is just go over the 805(c) letter, which is the
37 response from the Federal Subsistence Board as to
38 actions they took on each proposal.

39
40 So if I turn your attention to Page 17,
41 the letter is on Page 17, but the proposals start on
42 Page 18. There were a couple statewide proposals.
43 Proposal 01 was the request the close dates to the wolf
44 hunting and trapping season statewide be extended to
45 May 31st, that the harvest limit be increased to 10
46 wolves per day for the dates of April 1 through May
47 31st, and that any restrictions to disturbing or
48 destroying wolf dens be removed from regulations. That
49 was submitted by the Orutsaramiut Native Council. Each
50 of the 10 Councils did make a recommendation and the

1 Kodiak/Aleutians recommendation was to oppose the
2 proposal, which is what most of the regions did. What
3 the Board did is they rejected the proposal as
4 recommended by eight of the ten Regional Advisory
5 Councils.

6

7 Their justification was the Federal
8 Subsistence Board policy is not to promulgate
9 regulations specifically for predator control. Passage
10 of this proposal would be contrary to sound principals
11 of wildlife management because of the loss of wolf pups
12 and the removal of additional adult wolves. Due to
13 statewide scope of this proposal, it would be difficult
14 for Federal agencies to follow the Board's Predator
15 Control policy.

16

17 The Board encouraged an open discussion
18 with the Regional Advisory Council chairs about the
19 need for predator management on Federal public lands
20 with a focus on National Wildlife Refuges. The Board
21 directed OSM staff to work with the Solicitor s Office
22 to develop a scoping document of the Board s direction
23 on predator management for Board review.

24

25 I'm on Page 22. The next proposal was
26 a statewide proposal, which is Proposal 05. It
27 requests the removal of all unit-specific regulations
28 related to the statewide sale of
29 brown bear handicrafts made of skin, hide, pelt or fur
30 and that sale of brown bear handicrafts made of claws,
31 bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls should occur only
32 between Federally-qualified subsistence users. That
33 was submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and
34 Game.

35

36 Our Council recommended we support the
37 proposal with modification. What we added to the
38 modification is you could do the sale only if you were
39 a Federally-qualified subsistence user. The Federal
40 Subsistence Board deferred the proposal until the next
41 wildlife cycle to allow a working group to address the
42 tracking issue. Their justification was that the
43 current regulations will remain in effect and deferral
44 will allow a working group to address the tracking of
45 bear claw sales issue and options available to mark the
46 claws legally harvested under Federal regulations. The
47 Alaska Department of Fish and Game is willing to be the
48 lead on the working group and the working group will
49 include affected Council chairs.

50

1 Then our region had two region-specific
2 proposals. We had Proposal No. 25, which requested the
3 harvest limit for caribou on Unimak Island be reduced
4 from four to two caribou. That was submitted by the
5 Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.
6 Of course, we supported our proposal. The Board did
7 adopt that proposal.

8
9 The second proposal was Proposal No.
10 26, which requested that the Federal season for caribou
11 in Unit 9D be closed due to the decreased population
12 and low productivity of the local caribou herd. That
13 one was submitted by the Izembek National Wildlife
14 Refuge and the Board adopted that one as well.

15
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you,
19 Michelle. Before we get into our next item on the
20 agenda, I just wanted to mention if there's any members
21 of the public who wants to make any comments or address
22 any agenda item, there's forms on the table you can
23 fill out and just hand them to Michelle.

24
25 Moving on to the next item, it's
26 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Beth Spangler.

27
28 MS. SPANGLER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
29 My name is Beth Spangler and I'm a fisheries biologist
30 with Office of Subsistence Management, Fisheries
31 Division. This is my very first opportunity to be able
32 to present at a Regional Advisory Council meeting. I'm
33 a new fisheries biologist for the Bristol Bay,
34 Southcentral, Chignik, Kodiak area.

35
36 Today I'm going to be talking about the
37 Federal Subsistence Management's program, Fisheries
38 Resource Monitoring Program, as I'm sure many of you
39 are very familiar with. The Office of Subsistence
40 Management has two primary functions. We work on
41 regulatory issues, developing and changing hunting and
42 fishing subsistence regulations as needed and we also
43 oversee and provide funding for different research
44 opportunities, primarily fisheries research, that
45 provides information for subsistence fisheries
46 management throughout the state.

47
48 The two parts are important because I
49 think our primary goal for all of us is to have
50 healthy, sustainable fisheries. In order for this to

1 happen, we need effective management and regulations.
2 All of this is obviously dependant on sound science and
3 good information and that information most often comes
4 from the people that are in areas that are most reliant
5 on the subsistence fisheries.

6
7 The Fisheries Resource Monitoring
8 Program provides many of the funds that provide
9 projects to provide the information to the management
10 of subsistence fisheries. To determine what projects
11 need to be funded, we have issues and information needs
12 to more effectively manage fisheries around the state.
13 That is what I was going to address today. On Pages 25
14 through 30, there's a draft priority information needs
15 document and it is for fisheries projects that will be
16 beginning in 2010. The priority information needs for
17 the Southwest Region can be found on Pages 28 and 29.

18
19 We're looking for the Councils to let
20 us know if there are any other research needs that
21 aren't identified in these pages that should be
22 included in the request for proposals. I do believe
23 that this is the most important aspect of my job, is to
24 listen to the folks from this region and make sure that
25 those needs are identified.

26
27 This is not an action item that we want
28 you to vote on today. We're just looking for ideas and
29 suggestions on projects. The Monitoring Program does
30 fund two types of projects, both stock status and trend
31 projects and harvest monitoring and traditional
32 ecological knowledge projects.

33
34 The first type of project, stock status
35 and trends, focus on fish populations and stocks.
36 Examples of these types of projects most commonly are
37 weirs, also ASL projects and genetic studies. The
38 second type of project is harvest monitoring and
39 traditional ecological knowledge projects. These types
40 of projects provide information about subsistence fish
41 harvest, such as why fish are harvested at a certain
42 time and place and this information is used to show how
43 much of a community depends on fish, how much is needed
44 and to document observations about changes.

45
46 There is about \$6 million that is going
47 to be available for projects starting in 2010 and these
48 dollars are divided up by region around the state,
49 generally according to the amount of Federal public
50 lands in an area and also the management issues.

1 All proposals addressing subsistence
2 fisheries on Federal public lands will be considered.
3 The 2010 requests for proposals will go out to the
4 public in November of this year is what we're hoping
5 for and it will focus on high-priority information
6 needs developed either by strategic planning efforts or
7 from expert opinions from the councils, the Technical
8 Review Committee, Federal and State managers and from
9 the office of subsistence management, the Staff there.

10
11 For the Southwest Region we had a
12 strategic planning that I was very happy to be able to
13 participate in that plan and we actually resulted in
14 two plans, one for the Bristol Bay-Chignik non-salmon
15 area and for the Kodiak-Aleutians salmon, were the two
16 strategic plans that were developed.

17
18 The document in your Council book is a
19 summary of the priority information needs for all six
20 regions, but I was just going to focus on your region
21 today. Also included in the document that you might
22 want to take a look at is on Page 30. There's an
23 Inter-regional category that calls for projects
24 addressing climate change and its effects on
25 subsistence fisheries.

26
27 It is important to note that while the
28 monitoring program project selections will not be
29 limited to information needs identified in this
30 document, proposals addressing other information needs
31 must show why the project is needed to better manage
32 subsistence fisheries.

33
34 So going into your book on Page 28, the
35 bottom of 28 for the Southwest Region priority
36 information needs, the strategic plans are reviewed and
37 updated annually to ensure that the highest priority
38 information needs are identified for each request for
39 proposals. For the Southwest Region, the 2010 request
40 is, as I stated earlier, broken down into the Bristol
41 Bay/Chignik non-salmon. Document trends in whitefish
42 harvest and use from Lake Clark communities. And
43 specifically to here, the Kodiak/Aleutians salmon, to
44 obtain reliable estimates of spawning escapement over
45 time for Buskin River sockeye salmon and obtaining
46 reliable estimates of smolt and adult production over
47 time for Afognak Lake and Buskin River sockeye salmon.

48
49 On Page 30, for the Inter-regional
50 priority information needs, it's important to note that

1 these are projects that include two or more regions.
2 While the Office of Subsistence Management is asking
3 investigators submitting proposals for any single
4 region to consider examining or discussing climate
5 change effects, Office of Subsistence Management is
6 also interested in projects that focus on understanding
7 management implications of climate change on
8 subsistence resources, uses and fisheries. The Inter-
9 regional 2010 request for proposals is focused on one
10 priority information need; that is research that
11 documents effects of climate change on subsistence
12 resources and uses, and determine how subsistence
13 fishery management can be better adapted to deal with
14 these effects.

15
16 Today we are looking to you, once
17 again, not for a vote but for ideas and suggestions of
18 research that the Council feels would be of highest
19 priority to be included in this document and for the
20 call that will be going out later this year.

21
22 Mr. Chair, this concludes my
23 presentation and I'm happy to answer any questions that
24 you or the Council may have.

25
26 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Beth.
27 Al.

28
29 MR. CRATTY: Ma'am, I was wondering
30 what happened to the Old Harbor project. Was it just
31 put out because of the funding or whatever? I'd just
32 like to say on the record that there isn't that many
33 silvers down there this year. We've got a lot of
34 sports charter operators. They closed the inner bays
35 to any of the seiners, the commercial operators. Right
36 now I see maybe four years down the line there isn't
37 going to be very many fish there with the way the bears
38 are eating. We don't see that many new fish coming in.
39 There isn't any build-up in front of the town like in
40 the culvert where there usually is. Usually get 1,000
41 silvers going in there and they aren't there. Big
42 Creek looks real slim.

43
44 My concern when we put in that proposal
45 was to watch this trend because of what's going on with
46 the sport fishing down there. I feel four years from
47 now it's going to look pretty bleak. I just wanted to
48 put that in the record.

49
50 MS. SPANGLER: Yes, you're referring

1 to, for the record, Project 08-401, which was the
2 abundance and run timing of adult coho salmon in Big
3 Creek on Kodiak. I did speak with Derek Hildreth on
4 that project and it was not funded. It was funded
5 originally and went through the Councils, through the
6 Board, and then just due to budget shortfalls that
7 project was not funded. We would be happy to see that
8 project again in the 2010 call for proposals.

9
10 Derek Hildreth did suggest the need to
11 make sure that we address the subsistence harvest
12 concern, that we had some of the aerial survey data
13 with the State that was actually about 20 years of data
14 that they had. I think the last year of data was just
15 last year that I was able to get my hands on. It
16 suggested that there may not be a concern with the
17 stock, but I did follow up with the State on that and
18 discussed how their aerial surveys were done.

19
20 I think it is something that would be
21 good to put it back in 2010, which would be this year,
22 so that's something that I did speak to Derek about.
23 Once again, it was just budget shortfalls as to why
24 that project didn't continue.

25
26 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Go ahead, Pete.

27
28 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Pete
29 Probasco here. To add to Beth's comments to Mr.
30 Cratty, the key here is that she's presented a draft
31 and she's here seeking input and your knowledge as far
32 as which may also be considered for this call. So your
33 points, Al, are very appropriate and how we proceed
34 with them will be based on your input back to us and
35 where we go from there.

36
37 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
38 questions for Beth.

39
40 MR. KOSO: I've got one question. I'm
41 kind of new at this, but I've noticed everything is for
42 2010. Is there a reason for that being so far down the
43 road that you're requesting everything here?

44
45 MS. SPANGLER: Yes, that's a good
46 question. That's because our process -- it is only
47 2008 right now. We actually put out our call for
48 proposals usually in about November of each year and
49 that closing period for the investigators to write
50 their proposals is due back in our office in January of

1 each year, so it would be January of 2009. Then it
2 goes through a Technical Review Committee where it's a
3 group of folks that come together, both Federal and
4 State, that have expertise specifically in fisheries
5 research, and they go through that bulk of proposals
6 that are only about two, three pages long and then they
7 request for investigation plans, which are very time-
8 consuming, often very large documents specifically
9 describing how a project is going to be expedited and
10 that happens usually in March of each year.

11
12 Investigators usually only have until
13 May of 2009 to get those back to our office and then it
14 goes through a second round of reviews in usually July
15 of 2009. That gives us adequate time to then come back
16 to you next fall with those proposals that have been at
17 that point approved as far as the Technical Review
18 Committee for your recommendation on it and for your
19 input. Once it gets through the Regional Advisory
20 Councils in the fall, and that would be all the
21 Councils, it then gets prepared to go in front of the
22 Federal Subsistence Board in December/January of
23 2009/2010 in order for those projects to actually start
24 in 2010.

25
26 It's a pretty long process, but I do
27 believe it's a very unique process in that it does
28 bring in all the players that have concerns of the
29 subsistence fisheries. So, although quite long, I do
30 think it's a good system.

31
32 MS. KOSO: I guess just to clear my
33 mind up a little bit. On the process as far as the
34 funding thing goes, do you guys request funding from
35 the Federal government and then take that money and
36 give it to the ADF&G to actually do the fish part of
37 this deal or how does that work? Do you guys actually
38 meet with them? I know you don't do the actual
39 conservation stuff of the fish. The Board of Fish
40 usually does that type of stuff. So how do you
41 correlate what you're doing here with the ADF&G?

42
43 MS. SPANGLER: Well, when we put out
44 our call for proposals, it's to anyone. It's to the
45 State, to Feds, to Native organizations. I work a lot
46 with the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program that
47 actually works with many different Native organizations
48 around the state. It's to universities, to private
49 individuals, we've even received proposals from. So
50 anyone can submit a proposal. What we ask them to do

1 is to look at these issues and information needs that
2 are before you today and try to focus on those. Now
3 that's not saying you can't put in a proposal for
4 something different. You just need to have that clear
5 nexus with Federal public lands and how there's a
6 subsistence fisheries concern. So we accept proposals
7 from anyone that has our concerns as part of their
8 proposal.

9

10 MR. KOSO: Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
13 questions.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Beth.

18

19 MS. SPANGLER: Thank you.

20

21 MR. WHEELER: Gary Wheeler, refuge
22 manager of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. I had
23 a conversation the other day with Derek Hildreth about
24 the Big Creek Weir Project at Old Harbor and he told me
25 initially that the project was cut due to budget
26 concerns. However, he said apparently the staff took
27 another look at that project and their feeling was,
28 based upon the Fish and Game aerial surveys the number
29 of fish in the system and given the subsistence harvest
30 reports, that the percentage of fish being harvested
31 was not substantial enough to justify the weir project.
32 I just want to make you aware of that thinking in
33 Anchorage. If you have a different view on it, I think
34 that needs to be communicated to the Office of
35 Subsistence Management so they can reconsider that.

36

37 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. Mr. Wheeler.
38 My concern is that you've got eight charter boats down
39 there now and they got their limit of fish on board and
40 we've got subsistence users that have been doing this
41 for hundreds of years and right now this is a bleak
42 year for silvers this year. There's not very many down
43 there. For example, there was one school in between
44 Old Harbor and Barling Bay. You've got all six boats
45 working that school and that's the only fish. What's
46 going to be there for the subsistence user? I mean Big
47 Creek usually has a really great run. They come in
48 late, but all the fish we're getting is water-marked,
49 so you know there isn't any late fish.

50

1 My concern is the people. It doesn't
2 bother me when Fish and Game closes it down for the
3 commercial fishermen. I'm a commercial fisherman. I
4 can go elsewhere. But the sports charter operators got
5 to be limited to an extent also. I know we're going to
6 hurt the fishery. I mean I think this year you're
7 going to see there aren't going to be very many cohos.
8 We're seeing it now in the village because the bears
9 are coming out of Barling and Big Creek into the
10 village, you know, down into the lagoon where all the
11 chums are. We've got 10 bears down there now. We're
12 going to have bear problems this winter.

13
14 I haven't been up the creeks yet, but
15 the people I've talked to, there aren't that many
16 silvers in the system. You've got charter boats
17 working there the whole month of August and half of
18 September with five clients to each boat and they're
19 allowed, what, five fish a day. Then you've got people
20 down there, 200 people taking 50 to 100 fish per
21 household. You're dwindling stocks. Something is
22 going to come of it. I mean four years from now, I
23 don't know what silvers come back on, it's not going to
24 look good. I just want to put that in the record.

25
26 I think it would be very useful to put
27 that weir in just for the subsistence use to know what
28 is going on. I'm scared. I'd hate to see my people
29 not be able to get fish. That's my concern. Like I
30 say, I'm a commercial fisherman and I fish right out
31 there. I think ADF&G did a good job of managing it
32 there, but I think we also need to cut back on the
33 sports charter when we have these trends of no fish.
34 Something has to happen so there's fish for the people.
35 I think a lot of the people that are working with the
36 charter operators now are people from the village, but
37 they're looking at their back pocket more than they are
38 looking at the subsistence issue and that worries me.
39 Thank you.

40
41 MS. SPANGLER: Mr. Cratty. When I had
42 spoken with Derek, he was asking if there are
43 subsistence needs that aren't being met with coho and
44 he's very interested in hearing that from the Council.
45 Again, the aerial data that was in the river wasn't
46 showing a decline and the sport harvest is, to my
47 understanding, happening out in the bay, so what he
48 needed to know was that -- aerial survey data can be
49 questionable at times, as we all know, so what he
50 needed to know was that is there a subsistence harvest

1 concern that people aren't having their needs being met
2 for coho in this particular area.

3

4 MR. CRATTY: Yeah, I think further down
5 the line we're going to see there is going to be a
6 problem. I think four years from now there's going to
7 be hardly any cohos. If that's their cycle, four
8 years, we've hardly got any there and you've taken most
9 of them. I know talking to my uncles, they went up the
10 other day, they're letting the females go because
11 they're concerned. They're just taking the males for
12 smoking and freezing or whatever and letting the
13 females go. I know the fish come in until late
14 November, but we just hope they're going to be still
15 coming. Our chum run was really good. Our humpy run
16 wasn't that good. The silvers don't look very strong.
17 I'm just concerned. I've lived there all my life and
18 watched people subsist there all my life and one year
19 like this could really good things up. I just wanted
20 to voice my opinion.

21

22 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Bill.

23

24 MR. PYLE: Bill Pyle, Kodiak Refuge.
25 Question for Beth is, do you know in your communication
26 with Derek whether he indicated if Fish and Game has an
27 escapement goal for Big Creek? Thank you.

28

29 MS. SPANGLER: I'm not aware of what
30 their escapement goal is. I did speak with Jeff Wadle
31 at Alaska Department of Fish and Game, but that wasn't
32 specific to the aerial survey data and looking at the
33 numbers, but I do not know what the escapement goal is.

34

35 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
36 questions.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: If there are no
41 other questions, then thank you very much, Beth.
42 Annual reports, Michelle.

43

44 MS. CHIVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45 I'll give a little background on the annual reports.
46 ANILCA established the annual report as a way to bring
47 regional subsistence uses and needs to the Federal
48 Subsistence Board's attention. The Board is required
49 to address and reply to each issue in every annual
50 report and to take action when it's within the Board's

1 authority. The Board members have authority to
2 implement most of the actions which would affect the
3 changes recommended by the Councils. The Councils are
4 strongly encouraged to take advantage of this
5 opportunity, so, therefore, every fall we ask the
6 Councils if they have any annual report items that they
7 would like to bring forward to the Board and in the
8 spring meeting there would be a response from the
9 Federal Subsistence Board at that time. So we're just
10 checking to see if the Council has any items to bring
11 forward. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12
13 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any items from the
14 Board that you'd like to see at the Federal Subsistence
15 Board.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: None. Agency
20 reports. They're all written reports. Do you have
21 questions on any of those reports.

22
23 MR. PAPPAS: Mr. Chair. George Pappas,
24 Department of Fish and Game. I just spoke to Jeff
25 Wadle. He's on his way out to answer some questions if
26 you have questions for him about the escapement goals
27 and what have you, so we have two presentations from
28 Fish and Game. They're on their way, so they should be
29 here shortly.

30
31 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you.

32
33 MR. KOSO: Mr. Chair. On this Izembek
34 written report on the caribou status down there, I know
35 they were having trouble getting a survey it sounds
36 like this year. There is a lot of concern in the local
37 villages about the subsistence caribou hunts and
38 they're hoping to be able to get that through. Another
39 one is on the Emperor Goose. We were talking last year
40 a little bit about possibly getting a subsistence hunt
41 on that, but I see where the numbers dropped this year
42 from last year and that's a concern. My concern is do
43 they actually do a survey through the whole Aleutians
44 because I know in all the different islands out there
45 there's a tremendous amount of Emperor Geese. I don't
46 know where they do their surveys, but I'd sure like to
47 find out the reason for the drop in numbers.

48
49 MS. CHIVERS: Mr. Chair. I did hear
50 from Val Urban from the Izembek Refuge. Sandra

1 Siekaniec and he both apologize for not being able to
2 make it to the meeting, but the King Cove Road issue
3 has been a pretty hot item there. What he's asked me
4 to do is write down what the questions are and then I
5 can get the information from him and get it back to the
6 Council. Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you,
9 Michelle.

10

11 MR. KOSO: Mr. Chair. I had one more
12 person who contacted me in Cold Bay. They had a
13 question on the limits and your possession. A lot of
14 the local folks were concerned about the possession of
15 birds. Some of them their freezers were being checked
16 on and kind of like treated like criminals. There was
17 suggestions that possibly we can get rid of the
18 possession part of the ducks and just have your daily
19 limit. I think that would solve a lot of problems,
20 especially in the subsistence duck hunt part of it.

21

22 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: I would have liked
23 to have seen someone from Izembek come over. They
24 could have provided better answers than we could
25 speculate on. Maybe we could just submit a proposal to
26 that effect maybe. Any other questions or concerns on
27 the other written reports.

28

29 (No comments)

30

31 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: None. Do we want
32 to take a break until Fish and Game shows up. We'll
33 take a short break.

34

35 (Off record)

36

37 (On record)

38

39 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: We were waiting
40 for people from Fish and Game to come in. Michelle.
41 The Kodiak report. Yes, Mr. Wheeler.

42

43 MR. WHEELER: Before we get into the
44 Agency reports, I'm wondering if I could backtrack just
45 a little bit and speak to a fisheries issue that we
46 didn't get a chance to raise this morning having to do
47 with Beth's report and the strategic plan that she
48 works on. May I do that, Mr. Chairman?

49

50 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Yes, sir. Go

1 ahead.

2

3

MR. WHEELER: One concern that the
4 refuge has and I'm sure it's shared by the Department
5 of Fish and Game as well would be the status of chinook
6 salmon on the Karluk River and perhaps to a lesser
7 degree on the Ayakulik River as well. I believe this
8 is a subsistence concern due to the subsistence fishery
9 at Karluk and Larson Bay.

10

If you look at the last 10 years of
11 data for the weir counts on the Karluk River chinook
12 salmon, 10 years ago we were getting numbers in the 10-
13 13,000 fish. Five years ago maybe about 7,000 fish and
14 this year it was 750 fish returning, last year 1,700.
15 So we've seen a steady decline over the last 10 years
16 in chinook salmon on the Karluk.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Yes, Al.

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. WHEELER: I think we really need to
44 take a better look at the situation and try to figure
45 out where the problem is. I'm not sure we're at that
46 point right now.

CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Yes, Thomas.

MR. SCHWANTES: Could you give me those

1 numbers again for Ayakulik?

2

3 MR. WHEELER: Sure. These are numbers
4 from the Department of Fish and Game escapement through
5 their weir. On the Ayakulik chinook salmon, basically
6 10 years ago we were at 15-25,000 fish, four years ago
7 8,000, three years ago 3,000, two years ago 6,500, this
8 year 3,000.

9

10 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Pete.

11

12 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. The Karluk
13 and Ayakulik chinook salmon issue is an issue that on
14 the surface may seem a simple solution, like you were
15 saying, Mr. Cratty, we should look at the incidental
16 takes on the commercial fishery and the sport fishery.
17 I think what we need to look at is the Karluk and
18 Ayakulik both have extensive enumeration projects.
19 They're probably the longest tenured in Kodiak.

20

21 I think collectively what needs to
22 occur is the refuge and ADF&G to look at how a proposal
23 be developed and specifically address what needs to be
24 looked at. When it comes into OSM's hopper, as Beth
25 alluded to, it goes into competition with a lot of
26 other projects, so you have to have a nexus to
27 subsistence, like Mr. Wheeler mentioned, but it has to
28 be carefully articulated what are the goals and
29 objectives and what are we trying to deal with. We
30 need to get the people that are close on the grounds to
31 submit these type of proposals. I think the concern is
32 very valid. We received numerous calls and concerns on
33 particularly the Karluk this year.

34

35 I guess what I'm advocating for is Mr.
36 Wheeler and his Staff and Mr. Schwartz and Donn Tracy
37 and Mr. Wadle's Staff to get together and collectively
38 the agencies within ADF&G and the Federal side get
39 together and develop this. My Staff will assist in
40 that, but it's not just something we have this concern,
41 we need a project. It has to be carefully articulated
42 because it is a competitive process. Mr. Chair.

43

44 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Pete.

45

46 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. I think also
47 on this king salmon you need to really look at the
48 bycatch of the draggers. Living on Kodiak for as many
49 years as I have, I've heard a lot of stories of what
50 they've caught off of Sitkalidac and the rest of the

1 island on king salmon. I know they winter out there
2 all year. So that's another thing I wanted to throw in
3 there.

4
5 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
6 questions.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Kodiak's report.
11 Brandon.

12
13 MR. SAITO: Hello, Mr. Chair. Brandon
14 Saito. I'd like to present the Kodiak activity report.
15 Do you guys have copies of the report?

16
17 For a quick fisheries overview, as Gary
18 kind of mentioned already, the chinook escapement on
19 the Karluk and Ayakulik River didn't meet their lower
20 escapement goals this year, so a special action was
21 issued since this was the third year in a row, which
22 closed down the fishery.

23
24 Also the Ayakulik sockeye run was weak
25 and failed to meet its lower escapement goal despite no
26 commercial fisheries and the Karluk early sockeye run
27 also failed to meet its lower escapement goal. The Big
28 Creek weir, as was mentioned earlier, was
29 insufficiently funded.

30
31 I'll skip over to sea otters. If
32 anybody finds a sea otter, there's a phone number there
33 to contact Fish and Wildlife so we can do an necropsy
34 and find out if there's any diseases that are killing
35 them. The Sitka Black-Tailed deer or deer mortality
36 surveys were conducted in April. We surveyed three
37 areas, Chief Cove, North Sitkalidac Strait and West
38 Olga Bay. We had 50 deer that we counted, which the
39 mortality rate was 1.2 carcasses per kilometer, which
40 is similar to the last several years, 2004 through 2007
41 average of 1.16. As expected, Chief Cove had the
42 highest mortality rate and the lowest was at Olga Bay.
43 Assessment of the carcasses showed that 68 percent were
44 fawns and then looking at the bone marrow we were able
45 to tell they died by starvation.

46
47 The designated deer hunting program
48 last year we had 32 permits issued and 34 deer were
49 reported taken and the five-year average is 43 permits
50 issued with 56 deer reported. That's out of the 48

1 percent of the permits that are actually returned with
2 information on them.

3

4 Also the Alaska deer hunter survey that
5 Fish and Game send out to a sample of people who get
6 deer tags and the refuge is continuing to support the
7 program. In the 2008 season, an estimated 3,290 deer
8 were taken out of the Kodiak area. You can see in the
9 table below in 2006 and 2007 averaged almost 6,000
10 deer. The deer harvested on Federal land continues to
11 stay at 35 percent of that harvest.

12

13 Going on to brown bear, in May Fish and
14 Game and the refuge initiated a study of the bears for
15 Old Harbor and Karluk Basin to evaluate movements and
16 habitat use, reproductive fitness and to influence
17 management actions. This is the first project to use
18 GPS radio-telemetry collars to determine locations of
19 the bears.

20

21 The next one is subsistence bear
22 harvest. No bears were harvested this last season,
23 although four permits were issued. In past years, two
24 bears are normally harvested. Roosevelt elk. This
25 year we assisted Fish and Game with their partners,
26 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Afognak Native
27 Corporation and the wildlife troopers, in collaring 14
28 elk; 12 with BHF and two with GPS transmitters.

29

30 Migratory birds. Murrelets found on
31 the refuge. The refuge and USGS, Alaska Science
32 Center, initiated a joint study together about
33 Murrelets nesting ecology and habitat use and four
34 active nests were found, which represents nearly 10
35 percent of the total nests found for the species in the
36 last 100 years, so that was pretty neat.

37

38 Pelagic seabird studies. In July, the
39 refuge, in collaboration with Alaska Maritime Refuge,
40 surveyed seabird populations around Afognak and Shuyak,
41 over 800 miles in a small skiff and that data should be
42 available in the spring sometime.

43

44 The last section is Kodiak Summer
45 Science Camp. It finished its 13th year and it also
46 held a new camp program, the salmon adventure camp,
47 which targeted middle school youth, included a
48 two-night camping trip.

49

50 That's it. Do you have any questions.

1 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. I have one
2 question. How are the Harlequins doing? I know you
3 don't have any bird results right now, but I was
4 wondering. I know there was a decline on the west side
5 of Uyak Bay. I was just wondering how that was going.
6 My concern, is it affecting us over on the east side.
7

8 MR. SAITO: I don't believe there's any
9 effect to the east side, but we don't have an avian
10 biologist at this time, so we're not continuing that
11 survey right now.
12

13 MR. CRATTY: I wasn't here for the
14 spring meeting, but I know last fall or the spring
15 before they had brought up the decline was in the Uyak
16 area and I think it was generally caused by the sports
17 hunter. We use them as subsistence more than as a
18 sports hunt in Old Harbor and that was my concern.
19 Thank you.
20

21 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thomas.
22

23 MR. SCHWANTES: I have one question.
24 On your deer harvest, are your results all based on
25 survey returns? The next question is, can you give me
26 an idea what percentage of those surveys are actually
27 coming back to you?
28

29 MR. SAITO: The Fish and Game's harvest
30 survey for the hunters?
31

32 MR. SCHWANTES: Yes.
33

34 MR. SAITO: Yeah, it's based on a
35 sample of people that are chosen and they receive the
36 surveys back from those people. It's based on how many
37 people return the permits. I don't have the exact
38 numbers of how many were actually returned.
39

40 MR. SCHWANTES: So you don't have an
41 idea how many surveys were actually sent out and how
42 many were returned?
43

44 MR. SAITO: I can get that data for
45 you.
46

47 MR. SCHWANTES: Thank you.
48

49 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Rick, do you have
50 a question.

1 MR. KOSO: Yes, I've got a quick
2 question. This question keeps coming up from a lot of
3 different people. Maybe you can answer and maybe you
4 can't. It's on the geese, as far as having how many
5 birds in your possession, where does that possession
6 end and where does it start? We seem to have a
7 question we've been dealing around here. I can maybe
8 go to Cold Bay and get that answer, but maybe you could
9 tell me. When does the possession end, when it goes in
10 the refrigerator or freezer or how? I've never seen
11 that.

12
13 MR. SAITO: When I've talked to
14 officers before, yeah, possession is once it's packed
15 away and put in your freezer, I guess.

16
17 MR. KOSO: But when does possession
18 end? If they put it in the freezer, does that mean
19 it's not in your possession anymore? I've had guys in
20 Cold Bay come check freezers to check possessions of
21 birds. I've had that question thrown at me numerous
22 times and I can never answer it.

23
24 MR. PROBASCO: Let me take a stab at
25 it. It depends on where you're at. Richard, if you're
26 in Adak and you fly to Cold Bay to hunt in Izembek,
27 your possession limit is limited to your stay in
28 Izembek. In other words, the Federal interpretation is
29 if you go in there, it's a two-day possession limit,
30 that's what you leave Izembek with to go back home. If
31 you're in Adak and you hunt birds, once you take your
32 possession limit and put it in your home freezer, you
33 can go back out hunting again.

34
35 MR. KOSO: So that's not considered
36 possession after that.

37
38 MR. PROBASCO: That's correct.

39
40 MR. KOSO: Okay. Because I know local
41 people did have them check their freezers that were
42 living locally in Cold Bay and that seemed like a
43 controversial question for quite some time now.

44
45 MR. PROBASCO: I've actually myself,
46 personally, in Cold Bay have encountered that same
47 question as far as the Federal interpretation of
48 possession limit versus the State, so my role and my
49 job, I go with the Federal interpretation, whereas the
50 State's interpretation I'll let them speak to it, but

1 there interpretation is somewhat different.

2

3 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Tom.

4

5 MR. SCHWANTES: I've got to question
6 that one. I think what you're saying is, and correct
7 me if I'm wrong, if he's living in Adak and he goes to
8 Cold Bay and hunts, even if he goes out and hunts for
9 two days and he has a possession limit and he brings
10 that back into Cold Bay and processes it and puts it in
11 a freezer, it's still considered part of his possession
12 limit until he returns to Adak, is that what you're
13 saying?

14

15 MR. PROBASCO: Tom, you're getting into
16 the same dilemma that I personally encountered because
17 your interpretation, where you're going with this, is
18 how the State looks at it once it's been processed
19 versus a Federal interpretation as it pertains to
20 migratory birds versus where your home residence is.

21

22 MR. SCHWANTES: Okay. I just wanted to
23 get that clear.

24

25 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Does that take
26 care of the Kodiak report?

27

28 MR. SAITO: Yes.

29

30 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you,
31 Brandon. Have the people from ADF&G shown up? Donn
32 Tracy is here.

33

34 MR. TRACY: Good morning, Gentlemen.
35 Thanks for having me here today. I'm Donn Tracy from
36 the Department of Fish and Game here in Kodiak, Sport
37 Fish Division. This morning I wanted to give the
38 Council a brief update on the Buskin River Sockeye
39 Salmon Stock Assessment Project, which has been funded
40 by the Office of Subsistence Management for about the
41 last eight years.

42

43 Before I do that though, I'd like to
44 make a couple comments expanding on what Gary and Pete
45 discussed regarding Karluk and Ayakulik chinook salmon.
46 As Pete pointed out, it's a very complex issue and I
47 agree with his assessment, that any proposals coming to
48 the Federal Subsistence Board and the Office of
49 Subsistence Management for studies need to be carefully
50 thought out.

1 Last year, Kodiak National Wildlife
2 Refuge and the Department of Fish and Game actually
3 submitted a proposal for Karluk chinook under the
4 Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund Grant Program,
5 which is now called the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund.
6 That proposal was to conduct a king salmon smolt
7 assessment project on the Karluk. Unfortunately it was
8 rejected not based on technical merit but on a
9 technicality. The proposal didn't meet the established
10 format that was issued by the program, so it didn't go
11 through.

12
13 I will say if it had, one problem with
14 that idea is that, in a system like Karluk where you
15 have a huge sockeye run or typically a huge sockeye
16 run, if you're trying to look at chinook salmon smolt,
17 it can be like the proverbial needle in a haystack
18 because the out-migration of those smolt occurs
19 generally during the same time.

20
21 So if you're trying to look at the
22 abundance of king salmon smolt in a system like the
23 Karluk, you almost invariably have to deal with all the
24 sockeye smolt that are coming out as well, which vastly
25 outnumber the chinook. So there are some practical
26 considerations with a project of that nature, but that
27 certainly would be another piece of knowledge on the
28 status and productivity of that Karluk River chinook
29 stock that would be very helpful to gaining better
30 insight into the overall problem of why we've had
31 progressively declining abundance there in the last
32 several years.

33
34 I also wanted to respond to Mr.
35 Cratty's comments on the fisheries. Both the Karluk
36 and the Ayakulik sport and commercial fisheries have
37 been restricted in recent years in response to the
38 decline in abundance. Jeff Wadle, the area management
39 biologist here in Kodiak could correct me, but I
40 believe the commercial fishery in front of Karluk has
41 been under a chinook non-retention emergency order for
42 about the last four consecutive years, since 2004.

43
44 The Ayakulik, mostly because of the
45 situation with the sockeye, there hasn't been any
46 directed seine fishery in front of the Ayakulik during
47 the king salmon run I think since about 2001. If you
48 look at the fish ticket receipts for those two
49 statistical areas adjacent to those drainages, the
50 commercial harvests, as you would expect, have been

1 relatively low in recent years. The sport fishery has
2 also been restricted. We've now closed the Ayakulik
3 sport fishery twice in the last three years. I think
4 we've closed Karluk four or five times since 2001 this
5 year because of the expectation we were going to have
6 another poor run. Not as poor as it turned out to be,
7 but poor enough that there needed to be some preemptive
8 management active taken. The sport fishery started off
9 as catch and release this year. Anglers couldn't
10 retain king salmon at the Karluk at all this year.
11 Eventually, when the weir count showed that the run was
12 going to be as bad as it was, then the fishery closed.
13

14 The reason why I wanted to make those
15 points is because on the Ayakulik in particular the
16 weir -- the Department of Fish and Game has run a weir
17 on the Ayakulik River since 1970, so we've got 38 years
18 of weir counts now of Ayakulik king salmon and sockeye.
19 There was actually another period about 25 years ago
20 when the abundance of king salmon at the Ayakulik took
21 a dive. I think there's some weir counts in the early
22 '80s of less than 2,000 fish total for that system.
23 What makes that particularly interesting is at that
24 time the sport fishery hadn't yet developed, the
25 commercial fishery hadn't really developed to the
26 extent that there was a significant or measurable
27 bycatch of king salmon. So, at that time, we had this
28 apparent decline in abundance that clearly wasn't being
29 affected or driven by harvest rates in the directed and
30 incidental fisheries.

31
32 That kind of gets to what Pete was
33 saying, it's a very complex issue and any proposals to
34 the Federal Subsistence Board, I agree, need to be
35 carefully constructed so that we get a good product.
36 You know, hopefully get some insight and be able to
37 find out what exactly is happening with those stocks.
38 If this is just another natural cycle of abundance or
39 if there are, in fact, intercept fisheries or unusual
40 environmental conditions that have caused such a
41 decline in the numbers of those fish lately.
42

43 Anyway, I'd be happy to answer any
44 questions about Karluk and Ayakulik, but now I'll go on
45 to the sockeye project. As I mentioned, Buskin River
46 sockeye, the stock assessment study that Fish and Game
47 is currently conducting, has been funded by the Office
48 of Subsistence Management since 2000. It's been
49 continually supported by the Kodiak Regional Advisory
50 Council and we sincerely appreciate that support.

1 Buskin is another good example in the
2 context of talking about chinook where we've had really
3 productive returns of sockeye salmon at the Buskin for
4 many, many years. In fact, have been enumerating the
5 escapement at the Buskin since about 1985. Fish and
6 Game has had a weir on that river since that time to
7 count not only the sockeye run but also the silver
8 salmon run later on.

9
10 The current project continues the weir
11 so we can monitor the fishery or the run in season and
12 manage the subsistence fishery and also commercial and
13 sport, but there's also a second component to that
14 study and that is the stock assessment part, which has
15 the goal over time of evaluating the productivity of
16 the sockeye run at the Buskin and then using that
17 information to refine our escapement objectives so we
18 can over time maximize production of the run and
19 hopefully provide the maximum sustainable yield to the
20 subsistence fishery.

21
22 As I mentioned, for years and years the
23 Buskin run has been very stable, very productive.
24 There haven't been any restrictions on any of the
25 fisheries in past years; commercial, sport and
26 subsistence. In fact, we've actually liberalized the
27 sport fishery, increased bag limits in recent years to
28 avoid exceeding the upper end of our current escapement
29 goal at the Buskin, which is a range of 8-13,000 fish.

30
31 In 2008, we had a complete change with
32 the abundance of sockeye at the Buskin and did have to
33 take some restrictions. We ended up closing both the
34 State and Federal subsistence fisheries for the first
35 time in history in late June. Closed the sport
36 fishery. The commercial fishery never even opened.
37 Still ended up with the lowest weir count and
38 subsequent escapement on record for the Buskin.

39
40 I provided a handout for you that kind
41 of summarizes. The first page of the colored handout
42 kind of summarizes the study and the status of the
43 sockeye run on the Buskin. If you look at the upper
44 left-hand corner on that first page, it's got a table.
45 Unfortunately, I'm still in denial about carrying
46 reading glasses with me everywhere, so I'm having a
47 hard time reading this and I might not get the numbers
48 exactly right. If you look at the table, it shows some
49 recent year escapements for both the Buskin River and
50 also the Lake Louise tributary that has been monitored

1 only since 2002 as a result of funding from the Office
2 of Subsistence Management for this project.

3
4 So the Lake Louise column on the right-
5 hand side of the table, that's all the escapement
6 information we have because we didn't have the
7 resources to put in a second weir on the tributary
8 until we received funding from the Federal Subsistence
9 Program.

10
11 If you look at the Buskin on the left
12 column, you can see we've had some pretty high
13 escapements, 17-22,000 fish, and with some minor
14 variations the run has been pretty healthy and we've
15 had a high abundance during those recent years of
16 monitoring.

17
18 Then you go to the bottom of the table
19 and look at 2008, and this was as of September 15th,
20 and see that it hasn't increased much. We ended up
21 with about 6,000 sockeye this year into the Buskin Lake
22 portion of the drainage or what we call the Buskin
23 River escapement, which is the lowest weir count on
24 record for this run. If you look at the Lake Louise
25 column, during the years that we've had a weir in, we
26 also ended up with the lowest count this year.

27
28 Just for Karluk and Ayakulik, there are
29 a number of possible reasons why the abundance on the
30 Buskin declined so precipitously and I'll talk about
31 that in a little bit. If you look at that table, you
32 can see we had high escapements. Generally these fish
33 there's about a five to six year period from the parent
34 year to this year's run. So if you look at this year's
35 run of sockeye salmon, you have to go back five and six
36 years to find out what the parent escapements were that
37 produced the number of fish we counted this year. If
38 you look at that table, you can actually see that
39 during those parent years we had some of the higher
40 escapements on record for the Buskin.

41
42 One possibility, and it's a generally
43 accepted concept or idea with sockeye salmon, that you
44 can over-escape a system, you can lower productivity
45 resulting from higher numbers of fish to the extent
46 that you can have real severe declines in the overall
47 abundance. It's possible that happened on the Buskin.
48 It certainly coincides with the data, that we had the
49 highest escapements on those parent years.

50

1 We also had the lowest escapement at
2 Lake Louise, as I mentioned. We don't have anything
3 else to compare that to, but it certainly did coincide
4 with the low run at the Buskin.

5
6 If you look at the second handout I
7 gave you, it's just a black and white table out of a
8 management report, and that goes back further with the
9 Buskin River escapements. It's the column on the left-
10 hand side. I crossed out the other ones just so they
11 wouldn't be a distraction. You can see in earlier
12 years we've had escapements as low as 9,000 fish. In
13 fact, for a period of time, the Buskin sockeye
14 escapement was considerably lower than it has been
15 since 2002.

16
17 The point I'm trying to make is that
18 even though we only ended up with 6,000 fish this year,
19 if you look at it in the context of long-term
20 escapements, it probably wasn't a complete collapse of
21 the run. I think with 6,000 fish, even if we did have
22 an overescapement event on the Buskin with a 6,000 fish
23 escapement, there's a good prospect for some sizeable
24 production from that escapement. That gives me
25 encouragement that this may be just a short-term event.
26 It's possible this may not be a prolonged circumstance
27 like we're now seeing with the Afognak sockeye run and
28 then possibly with Karluk chinook.

29
30 Anyway, I will talk about that subject
31 a little bit more. I've got some information on the
32 second and third pages. I just want to quickly review
33 the other aspects of the project for the members of the
34 Advisory Council that may not be that familiar with it.
35 As they did mention, our current escapement goal is
36 8-13,000 fish. That one predominant goal of the study
37 is to periodically re-evaluate that goal, refine it and
38 make revisions to better reflect the production
39 potential of that run.

40
41 The current goal of 8-13,000 was most
42 recently reviewed by the Department and the Alaska
43 Board of Fisheries in January of this year. For the
44 time being, it's been determined we're going to keep
45 that goal. We'd like to collect some more years of
46 escapement, more age composition and run a population
47 model in another three years and see if we can refine
48 that goal a little more. So far we've done that using
49 the information we've obtained from this study and I
50 think the last time we did the analysis we came up with

1 a range of about 6-9,000 fish, which would fall within
2 the range of escapement we saw this year.

3

4 One of the concerns with that last
5 analysis is there was still a fairly high degree of
6 uncertainty in the estimated optimal escapement. So,
7 because of that factor, we decided the more prudent
8 approach would be to stick with the 8-13,000 fish goal
9 because it's been seemingly adequate for that stock and
10 then re-evaluate it again in another three years and
11 see if we get a different outcome with three years of
12 additional data.

13

14 The funding for this project, we're in
15 the second year of a three-year contract right now and
16 we'll receive funding again next year, but I believe
17 since the funding cycle for the Federal Subsistence
18 Program has changed and now gone to a two-year cycle,
19 if we're going to continue this project, we're going to
20 have to resubmit a proposal for funding this year so
21 that we can start up with that two-year cycle that's
22 now in effect.

23

24 If we don't submit a proposal this
25 year, we'll miss out on the opportunity and then have
26 to have at least a one-year gap before we're able to
27 continue. So even though this project is funded next
28 year under the current contract, we'll be submitting a
29 proposal this year for renewed funding so that we can
30 work into that two-year funding cycle that's been
31 recently adopted by the Federal Program.

32

33 Some of the other parts of the project
34 or elements of the project that the Council has
35 expressed interest in previously is our subsistence
36 interviews and our student intern program. One of the
37 information needs that the Council identified for the
38 Buskin River subsistence fishery was to identify and
39 document traditional patterns of usage in the fishery
40 by qualified participants. In response to that
41 identification of that need, in the last two years the
42 Department has gone out and interviewed subsistence
43 fishers on the fishing grounds and asked them to give
44 their residency, how many years they fished on the
45 Buskin, whether the Buskin is their primary subsistence
46 fishing destination and where else they also go if they
47 do frequent other areas.

48

49 This year those interviews were
50 truncated by the fact that the subsistence fishery was

1 closed in late June due to the poor run, but if you
2 look at the middle of the first page there's a table
3 there that summarizes the interviews that we've
4 conducted over the past few years, in 2007 and this
5 year, and you can see that even though we had a much
6 smaller sample size this year that the results are
7 pretty much the same. We found that just about
8 everybody fishing out there are Kodiak residents. As
9 you gentlemen know, under the State subsistence fishing
10 regulations you only need to be an Alaska resident to
11 fish. Because there are dual regulations in effect at
12 the Buskin, there's also opportunity under slightly
13 different fishing regulations for Alaska residents to
14 fish out there as well.

15
16 Based on our interviews, as you might
17 expect, it looks like the overwhelming number of folks
18 that do fish out there are locals, are Kodiak
19 residents. Most traditionally fish the Buskin. The
20 average length of time in years, last year the average
21 was 15, this year was 11. So the folks we see out
22 there have been long-time subsistence users of that
23 resource. Also there were a significant number, about
24 half both years, that also fish other locations. Some
25 of those locations include Pasagshak, Afognak Bay and
26 then Port Lions. Not a lot of information from these
27 interviews that you wouldn't expect if you live in the
28 community, but it is good to document the fact that the
29 fishery is being utilized by local residents and most
30 of those folks have a fairly long history there.

31
32 Our student intern program we
33 instituted in 2003 as a means of adding a capacity-
34 building component to the project. With funding from
35 this project we hire two high school student interns to
36 work at the weir and get involved in other elements of
37 the study throughout the summer. The process for
38 hiring those kids is a two-stage process. The Kodiak
39 School District first conducts a screening process
40 where they select applicants based on their academic
41 achievement and their career interest in resource
42 management, fisheries in particular, and then they
43 forward those applicants to the Department of Fish and
44 Game for job interviews.

45
46 We usually get about four to six
47 applicants each year from the school district and we
48 put them through the formal interview process to try to
49 give them some real life experience in that aspect of a
50 career pursuit. The program has been so successful

1 that we have had -- I think we've got seven former
2 interns that are working as Department employees,
3 seasonal technicians while they're going to college or
4 pursuing other things.

5
6 The intern program has been hugely
7 successful. It's been a real asset for the Department
8 of Fish and Game because we've got these student
9 interns who work while they're still in school and then
10 come back to apply for a technician position or maybe a
11 career position later on. At that point, they're
12 already a known quantity at the Department. All of our
13 interns have been outstanding, top-notch employees.

14
15 In 2009, our goals for the project are
16 to continue a tagging study that we started last year.
17 We did it this year, but we didn't have a lot of
18 sockeye come into the system after August 1st and we
19 consequently weren't able to tag a lot of fish. The
20 reason why that date is important is because on August
21 1st we move the weir on Buskin River from the lake down
22 to the lower site so we can continue to count sockeye,
23 but also count the incoming silver salmon. The lower
24 weir is just down the river here not even a quarter
25 mile. Once we move that weir, it's below the tributary
26 creek that flows into Lake Louise, they could either be
27 heading into Buskin Lake or heading into Lake Louise.

28
29 Last year we started tagging those fish
30 to try and estimate what percentage of the fish we
31 count after August 1st are headed to either part of the
32 drainage. Last year we got a lot of fish tagged. We
33 didn't see a lot of those fish at Lake Louise, which
34 was surprising. This year we just didn't see a lot of
35 fish after August 1st. So we're going to continuing
36 that tagging project in the future and hopefully get a
37 better result.

38
39 Along the same lines, we were able to
40 conduct a DNA analysis of those Lake Louise fish and
41 Buskin Lake fish and found that there's a very high
42 probability that instead of separate components of the
43 same run or the same population, they're actually
44 separate populations of fish; they're distinctly
45 different populations. That's very useful information
46 because, as I mentioned, we have -- our current
47 escapement goal of 8 to 13,000 only applies to Buskin
48 River because we don't have a long history of
49 escapement for Lake Louise. That part of the overall
50 run is not incorporated into our current escapement

1 objective. So if these are separate populations, then
2 by happenstance we have been doing the right thing in
3 that we would want to have separate goals for each of
4 those components or those populations. It looks like
5 based on that DNA analysis they are distinct
6 populations.

7
8 One thing that we're going to include
9 in our updated proposal for funding this year is a
10 request to conduct an additional analysis of the
11 subsistence harvest and see what proportion of those
12 fish are Buskin Lake bound and what portion are Lake
13 Louise fish. The reason why that's important is when
14 we do this escapement goal evaluation we need to
15 reconstruct the whole run. We have to take the weir
16 count and add to that the sport harvest, the
17 subsistence harvest, the commercial harvest if there is
18 any, and then use some of those numbers to estimate
19 what the total run was during that year. So we
20 definitely need to know, if the opportunity is
21 available, what percentage of this subsistence harvest
22 is headed to Buskin Lake and which percentage is going
23 to Lake Louise. So we will seek funding for that
24 purpose in our proposal for the next two years.

25
26 Lastly, as far as our plans, in
27 response to the current Kodiak/Aleutians Advisory
28 Council information needs, the Department will again
29 submit a proposal seeking subsistence funding to
30 conduct a similar stock assessment study for Buskin
31 River coho run as well. That project is currently
32 funded by the Department of Fish and Game. We
33 submitted a proposal last year for funding and it was
34 competitive and there were other considerations within
35 the region for coho stock assessment and escapement
36 monitoring and my understanding is the Buskin proposal
37 didn't go through because of the assumption that the
38 Department of Fish and Game would continue to fund the
39 project in the near term if funding wasn't available
40 from the Office of Subsistence Management. So we will
41 resubmit that proposal this year and see what happens.

42
43 I know I'm getting a little long-winded
44 here, but I just want to talk a little bit more about
45 this year's escapement. If you go to the second page
46 of the colored handout, it has a series of graphs and
47 the two on the left show the age composition of the
48 Buskin sockeye run during 2006 and 2007 and then on the
49 right-hand side, those line graphs show the
50 corresponding size distribution of the fish in each of

1 the run components depicted on the left. If you look
2 at these graphs, they're color coordinated, so the red
3 bar represents the same fish that are represented in
4 red on the line graph.

5
6 The reason it's 2006 and 2007 is to
7 show this information because in 2007 we had a real
8 change in the age structure of the Buskin run, which
9 now looks like it precipitated the poor escapement we
10 had this year. But if you look at the top left corner,
11 that bar graph shows that the age composition in 2006
12 of the subsistence harvest, the Buskin Lake assessment,
13 the fish we count through the weir at the lake, and
14 then also the Lake Louise or Katherine Lake Louise
15 escapement, the fish that go up Tributary Creek, and
16 the subsistence harvest is depicted by the red bar, the
17 Buskin Lake escapement by the green bar and the Lake
18 Louise escapement by the yellow bar.

19
20 If you look at that graph, you can see
21 in 2006 a large percentage of fish for all the run
22 components were age one/two, which means they spent one
23 year rearing and growing in fresh water and two years
24 of ocean rearing before returning as adults to spawn.
25 You can see that the Lake Louise component is much
26 larger, but still all three have a fairly sizeable
27 percentage of the fish in that year's run were of that
28 one/two age category and then the others were age
29 one/three and age two/three and to a smaller extent
30 there was some age two/two fish.

31
32 The reason why I put 2006 in there was
33 because that year was very typical of what we normally
34 see at the Buskin. If you took that graph and used it
35 for the 2005 run, the 2004 run, they'd look very
36 similar. Even though that just represents 2006, it's
37 actually a pretty good depiction of what the Buskin run
38 would look like in any other year besides 2007.

39
40 If you go to the right of that graph
41 and look at the length, the size of those fish, you can
42 see that the subsistence harvest has a fairly narrow
43 mode of large fish, the Buskin escapement does, and
44 then Lake Louise is kind of spread over the scale on
45 the graph. If you spend some time looking at it,
46 you'll see it kind of correlates to the ages. The Lake
47 Louise fish are generally younger than the Buskin Lake
48 fish in the subsistence harvest and they're smaller.

49
50 The subsistence fishery -- oh, I'm

1 sorry. I just realized, looking at this graph, that
2 the colors aren't coordinated. They were supposed to
3 be, but they aren't. Let me back up real quickly. I
4 was wondering why the graph didn't look correct. If
5 you look at the graph, the subsistence harvest is
6 actually portrayed in green and the green line has the
7 largest fish in it. The presumable reason for that is
8 because the subsistence nets select larger fish, so we
9 tend to see larger fish with the subsistence harvest
10 than from the Buskin and the Lake Louise.

11
12 On the line graph, the Lake Louise run
13 is depicted in red and you can see those, in fact, are
14 smaller fish. All the Lake Louise fish are to the left
15 on the scale of the other fish, the Buskin escapement
16 and the subsistence harvest. You'd expect to see that
17 looking at the age composition.

18
19 If you go down to 2007, you can see
20 that things were dramatically different. Remember I
21 said 2006 would look like any other year generally, but
22 in 2007 we did the same thing and, lo and behold,
23 almost all the fish we sampled were age one/three and
24 virtually no fish were in that age one/two category. A
25 small number were in the age two/three category. If
26 you look at the graph, you can kind of see why we
27 didn't have a very large run of fish this year because
28 normally, if you look at 2006, those fish that are age
29 one/two would be coming back as age one/three fish the
30 next year and they usually make up a very sizeable
31 portion of the run. If you look over to the age
32 two/two fish in 2006, in 2007 those fish would have
33 been coming back as age two/three fish.

34
35 So if you look at the 2007 graph,
36 there's no age one/two fish at all. What that should
37 tell you is that in 2008 you're not going to see a lot
38 of age one/three fish because the age one/two fish
39 weren't there in 2007. Similarly, with the age two/two
40 fish, in 2008 would show up as age two/three fish. If
41 you look at 2007, there's virtually no age two/two fish
42 in the run at all.

43
44 So looking at that graph, and we had a
45 pretty good idea last year that we were going to have a
46 poor run this year just based on that age composition.
47 I don't have the 2008 age data to show you, we have
48 looked at it, and fortunately it appears to look more
49 like the 2006 graph where you have ages distributed
50 over that broad range. We've got lots of age one/two

1 fish, we've got age two/two fish. So that's why I
2 mentioned earlier that it's possible this could be a
3 short-term event in terms of the poor run that we had
4 this year. The age composition now looks more like it
5 normally does for the Buskin, doesn't look like the
6 2007 did and, therefore, there's a good possibility
7 that next year we should see a better abundance of fish
8 at the Buskin.

9

10 My apologies for going so long on this
11 topic, but I'd be happy to answer any questions that
12 you have.

13

14 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Al.

15

16 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. I was
17 wondering if you guys did a study on the mortality rate
18 on the catch and release of chinooks.

19

20 MR. TRACY: We haven't specific, Al.
21 We use a hooking mortality percentage for management
22 purposes of 7 percent and that percentage is based on a
23 study that was done on the Kenai River about 10, 15
24 years ago. It looked at all the different gear
25 methods, bait versus no bait, single hook versus treble
26 hook. I'm not sure if they looked at barbless versus
27 barbed hooks, but they caught a bunch of fish, tagged
28 them. They actually marked them with visual tags and
29 also with radio transmitters and then tracked the
30 survival of those fish over time and came up with an
31 overall estimated mortality of about 7 percent.

32

33 There have been a lot of other studies
34 done. If you go on the internet and Google hooking
35 mortality, you'll get 10,000 hits. I mean obviously
36 it's a very important topic in all parts of the country
37 because of the large sport fisheries and the potential
38 conservation concern from that aspect of the fishery.

39

40 We use 7 percent primarily because it
41 was an Alaska study. It was done on Alaska king
42 salmon. It was a pretty good study. I looked at one
43 recently that was done in Oregon over a three-year
44 period that was really comprehensive. I mean they not
45 only looked at all the different potential gear types
46 and handling and release scenarios, they broke it down
47 into a myriad of different categories and came up with
48 a little higher percentage. I think their overall
49 percentage was like 9 percent.

50

1 In answer to your question, we haven't
2 done a specific study on the Karluk and Ayakulik, but
3 we use 7 percent as our estimated hooking mortality.

4

5 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Tom.

6

7 MR. SCHWANTES: Correct me if I'm
8 wrong, but what I gathered from what you just said was
9 that you're fairly optimistic that this run is going to
10 bounce back, but also I heard you say that you may be
11 looking at reducing your escapement goal numbers
12 because of a weaker run to 6-9,000 fish?

13

14 MR. TRACY: Well, we're not considering
15 that at this time, but based on the most recent
16 escapement goal evaluation that we did we came up with
17 a refined goal. Our current goal is 8-13,000. We
18 actually came up with a refined goal, I believe, of a
19 range of about 6-9,000. There was enough uncertainty
20 in that estimate that that revised goal, that we
21 decided to stay with the 8-13,000 goal for the time
22 being until we get more information that might take
23 away some of that uncertainty.

24

25 So we're not changing the current goal
26 from 8-13,000 just yet. If we did change it to a lower
27 number, it would actually be based on the expectation
28 that we would get better production from that number.
29 It now remains to be seen whether 6,000 fish is going
30 to produce a sizeable run in the future. For the time
31 being, we're not changing the current goal. We're
32 leaving it at 8-13,000. My professional opinion based
33 on the data we're collecting, I am not convinced yet
34 that this is going to be a long-term problem for the
35 Buskin run. It looks like it might very well pass
36 within a couple years.

37

38 MR. SCHWANTES: Okay. I guess my next
39 question would be then, considering the fact that 61
40 percent of the subsistence harvest comes from the
41 Buskin River, if we get to a point where we do have to
42 downsize and considering the fact that this year was an
43 escapement of almost 6,000, we totally shut off the
44 subsistence for the Buskin, has there been any
45 consideration of what would happen to the subsistence
46 fishery if you do have to downsize those projections?
47 I mean are you looking at closing any subsistence
48 closures like you did this year?

49

50 MR. TRACY: Well, I'm not -- I'm with

1 the Sport Fish Division and it doesn't have
2 responsibility for management of the subsistence
3 fishery. You know all this, but the Commercial
4 Fisheries manages the State subsistence fishery and the
5 Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Federal fishery.
6 I haven't had discussions yet with Jeff Wadle, the area
7 manager, and other management staff on what his plans
8 may be for the future of the subsistence fishery.
9 Whatever those plans are, they'll be in coordination
10 with the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge staff. I'll
11 let Jeff answer your question.

12
13 MR. WADLE: Mr. Chair. Currently the
14 way we manage is escapement based. Regardless of the
15 escapement goal, I mean we're going to look at the
16 numbers going through the weir and that's how we're
17 going to manage the subsistence. You kind of asked if
18 we lower the escapement goal. Is that what you're
19 getting at, would we also have to lower the
20 subsistence?

21
22 MR. SCHWANTES: No. Obviously, if the
23 run is poor, you're going to do something there. I
24 guess my concern is that 61 percent of the subsistence
25 harvest for Kodiak area comes out of the Buskin River.
26 If, in fact, we get to a point where that run isn't as
27 strong as it has been, my concern is the effect that's
28 going to have on the subsistence users.

29
30 MR. WADLE: Mr. Chair. Yes, it
31 certainly could have an effect if the run keeps coming
32 back as we had this year. There's no doubt about it.
33 I will work directly with Fish and Wildlife Service to
34 make those decisions. Obviously those decisions don't
35 come lightly. It is a big effect when we have to close
36 a subsistence area.

37
38 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
39 questions.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: No questions.
44 Thank you very much, Donn. Afognak Lake.

45
46 MR. BAER: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
47 Members of the Board. Thank you for your time. I
48 believe you each have a copy of the summary report and
49 if anybody in the audience doesn't, I believe there's
50 enough on the table.

1 Sorry, I don't have a nice color copy
2 of it that Donn does. Again, thank you for your time.
3 I'm Rob Baer with Fish and Game and I'd like to give
4 you a brief summary and address any questions you might
5 have for the Afognak system.

6
7 As you're aware, the Afognak Lake study
8 continues the investigations which began in 2003 after
9 a decline in the runs in 2001. The project objectives
10 and goals continue to evaluate the sockeye salmon's
11 freshwater rearing environment and overall health of
12 out-migrating salmon.

13
14 In an effort to study the out-migrating
15 smolt, we employed same means and methods that we have
16 in past years, which include the use of an inclined
17 plan smolt trap. The photograph on Page 2 depicts some
18 of the issues we've had this year with our high water
19 events and flooding. It's difficult to see with the
20 black and white, but what that is is Thomas Kinsley
21 laying out on top of that smolt trap cutting it loose
22 with serious flooding. That's the most flooding that
23 we've seen since starting this project. As a result,
24 it did not fish for the peak of the out-migration.

25
26 As you'll see from the next page there,
27 the graph on Page 3, shows the typical out-migration
28 series from 2003 to 2007. That's a basic out-migration
29 average timing. Unfortunately, we were right smack dab
30 in the middle of that with a time frame that did not
31 enable us to catch those out-migrating smolt.

32
33 We, of course, continued to sample
34 smolt on each side of that, which allows us to get AWL,
35 age/weight/length, data on the smolt, but during that
36 middle time frame we weren't able to get those samples,
37 which certainly does complicate and compromise
38 estimates for population and age estimates on the out-
39 migration.

40
41 We feel we've had very high confidence
42 in prior years. This year was the first in which the
43 trap was removed for such a large portion of the out-
44 migration during that peak. As Donn had touched on,
45 it's certainly a difficult thing to try and catch smolt
46 in a system and Afognak is a smaller one that I feel
47 we've done a pretty good job on getting out-migration
48 catch estimates. But, as said, this was a unique year
49 with some incredibly high water and right there in the
50 peak.

1 So a total of 333 smolt were sampled on
2 each side of that bell. The average condition factor,
3 which is a relationship of smolt weight and length and
4 is also a general indicator of health was below .8 for
5 the second year in a row. If you go to Page 4 there,
6 you'll see the bar graphs. One is depicting age one
7 and the age two condition factors from 2003 all the way
8 to this year. Like I say, the condition factor has been
9 below .8 in 2007 and 2008. Typically speaking of
10 robust, salmon smolt does have a condition factor
11 greater of .8 and we've dropped below that for ones and
12 twos in 2007 and 2008.

13
14 If you flip over to Page 5, the
15 interesting parallel here is just the age one smolt.
16 We're discussing at this point just the age one.
17 Typically most smolt migrating out are age one at
18 Afognak. What we're seeing here is a pretty parallel
19 relationship with the zooplankton biomass in the
20 system. For example, 2006 had a pretty decent biomass
21 or an improving biomass. As it shows, the condition
22 factor of those smolt reflect that. 2007, it dropped
23 back down and 2008 was about the same as last year.
24 That condition factor did, in fact, drop.

25
26 I feel even more interesting are the
27 environmental factors that are playing on that, the
28 overall average temperature. What we did is took a 15-
29 month average temperature, which is theoretically the
30 time frame that fish are residing in the lake. So, for
31 a 15-month average temperature, which is the next graph
32 down, 2003 to 2008 shows the parallel relationship of
33 condition factor with temperature. It's almost
34 identical with what the condition factor and temp is
35 doing. Of course, that can be related to the growth of
36 the phytoplankton and then in turn the zooplankton,
37 which is what they're foraging on.

38
39 So we have been collecting zooplankton.
40 The 2008 is complete. We just did that this week.
41 That was our final limnology sampling period that was
42 done this week and just ran that data. We still have
43 more compiling to do, but this is sort of a preliminary
44 assessment at this time.

45
46 In addition to the objectives that are
47 set and we're looking for the freshwater component
48 that, of course, is funded by OSM, we continued to
49 evaluate and conduct harvest and escapement data on the
50 Litnik system and ran the weir for the duration of the

1 season. The weir did stay in. It didn't blow out on
2 us like the smolt trap did and we did reach our
3 escapement goal. We had 26,874 fish escape into the
4 system. Not very many, 1,000 or so, were jacks. We do
5 not have the subsistence or sport fish harvest data
6 available yet. That will come in later on in the
7 winter here and there was no commercial harvest in
8 Afognak Bay.

9

10 I don't have much else for you other
11 than I'd be more than happy to address any questions or
12 concerns on Afognak.

13

14 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: One question out
15 of curiosity. How do you measure the zooplankton and
16 how often?

17

18 MR. BAER: Mr. Chairman. What we're
19 doing is flying out approximately once every four to
20 five weeks throughout the summer. As soon as we can
21 get out there right after ice breakup we'll fly out and
22 do vertical zooplankton and draw water from close to
23 the bottom, draw it all the way up with a conical net
24 and that water sample comes back to town and the
25 individuals are separated by different species and
26 counted and measured and that gives us a volume and
27 biomass. We had five sampling dates this year. I
28 believe we've had five every year since 2001, I
29 believe.

30

31 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Do you do that
32 periodically to all salmon spawning systems or just the
33 ones that are in trouble?

34

35 MR. BAER: No, we're evaluating
36 specifically systems that are either enhanced or
37 stocked and Afognak, of course, through the funding of
38 the OSM.

39

40 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
41 questions.

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 MR. BAER: Thank you very much.

46

47 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Bob.
48 We'll take a short break. Five minutes.

49

50 (Off record)

1 (On record)

2

3 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Do we have any
4 other Agency reports that we need to go over?

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: If we don't have
9 any other Agency reports, I guess Pete Probasco got a
10 hold of Izembek.

11

12 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Based on
13 questions Richard and Tom asked, and knowing we have
14 subsistence migratory bird laws, I said to myself I
15 better get some further clarification. So I got a hold
16 of Val, the deputy refuge manager at Izembek and first
17 he apologizes for not being here. He has media there,
18 the New York Post, dealing with a non-controversial
19 issue, the road, but he apologizes and wished he could
20 be here to answer the questions.

21

22 The more we discuss possession limit as
23 it pertains to migratory birds when you overlay
24 subsistence, many of you qualify, your communities
25 qualify for subsistence waterfowl hunting, Val and I
26 thought it would be best to draft a response back to
27 you, Mr. Chair, on the RAC, capturing all elements so
28 that we get it correct.

29

30 Mr. Schwantes is correct, there is
31 different interpretations from a State possession limit
32 versus the migratory possession limits. So give us the
33 opportunity and we'll draft a response back to you that
34 clarifies that so it's clear and Richard clearly
35 understands what he can and can't do in Izembek.

36

37 The other issue deals with caribou that
38 you asked, Richard. The survey that ADF&G will be
39 conducting will soon occur. Depending upon weather,
40 they hope to have it completed within two weeks. Based
41 on that survey will determine if the subsistence hunt
42 would reopen. However, Val qualified that based on the
43 condition of the population he's not too hopeful that
44 hunt would reopen. As everybody knows, that caribou
45 herd is not in very good shape. Fish and Game is
46 waiting for the appropriate weather and they'll do
47 their surveys hopefully within the next two weeks. Mr.
48 Chair.

49

50 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Pete.

1 MR. KOSO: One question, Mr. Chair.
2 Maybe you could clarify a little further too. Where
3 does that end and begin as far as Federal and State
4 goes? If I was to shoot it on Federal land, take it
5 and put it in my freezer on State land, then is there a
6 discrepancy between the two? I mean people do that in
7 Cold Bay.

8
9 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Richard.
10 Very good question. As far as the Federal
11 interpretation, I'll let either George or Nancy speak
12 to that. Hunting under Federal regulations as a rural
13 resident qualifying for Federal hunts, if you harvest
14 that animal on Federal land, you can take that animal
15 anywhere. But it has to be harvested on Federal land
16 and you have to be a Federally-qualified user for that
17 area to harvest that animal.

18
19 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Any other
20 questions.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Thank you, Pete.
25 We don't have any other new business. The time and
26 date of our next meeting. Do we have calendar?

27
28 MS. CHIVERS: Mr. Chair. If you would
29 turn to Page 47 in your book. We have the winter 2009
30 calendar shown in there. At our last meeting we
31 selected March 31st and April 1st for our meeting here
32 in Kodiak and we just need to verify that we still want
33 to meet on that date. After that we can look at the
34 fall 2009.

35
36 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: I don't have a
37 problem with March 31st and 1st. Tom.

38
39 MR. SCHWANTES: That date would
40 certainly work for me.

41
42 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. Being in
43 Kodiak, I'd sure like to see us have a meeting in
44 either Anchorage or Cold Bay or something. We've got
45 to get back to them people and hear their -- Rick does
46 a good job, but I think there would be more people if
47 they know -- I mean this is Kodiak/Aleutians Regional
48 Advisory Council. I don't think the Aleutians are
49 getting its share of their say on what's going on here.
50 That's just something I wanted to say.

1 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Michelle.

2

3 MS. CHIVERS: Mr. Chair. Al. Because
4 of our budget we've been asked to meet in the hub,
5 which is Kodiak. If there's a pressing issue out in an
6 area and we want to meet with the subsistence users out
7 there, then we can write a justification and actually
8 go to that meeting location, but at this time we've
9 been asked to remain in Kodiak. Thank you.

10

11 MR. KOSO: Well, I guess where does the
12 qualifications come in as far as an emergency meeting?
13 Like in Cold Bay, I think it's kind of in dire straits
14 down there right now with the caribou situation and the
15 questions they have on the subsistence goose hunt and
16 also the regular goose hunt. So I don't know where we
17 would come to the part of necessary for here or there
18 determination. It's just going to be on economics, I
19 guess. Then sometimes we defeat our purpose.

20

21 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Pete.

22

23 MR. PROBASCO: Mr. Chair. Richard.
24 Indeed, it is a difficult decision that I made
25 determining where our meetings will be located, but
26 Michelle categorized it very well. We do have a
27 significantly reduced budget. I have reduced my Staff
28 from 53 to 42. I've had to cut corners. I've reduced
29 funding to the Fisheries Monitoring Program. Since the
30 inception of the Federal Subsistence Program, the
31 funding level has remained flat until recent years.
32 We've actually taken a decline. Hopefully in 2009,
33 we're not going to get any more money, but we're not
34 going to get a reduction either.

35

36 So we're forced to uphold the priority
37 of our program, which is working with the Regional
38 Advisory Council members and the decisions they make
39 and to allow for those type of meetings, but going to
40 these further remote areas like we've done in the past
41 is very expensive. In some areas of the state we go
42 there to try to get the public to come to the meetings
43 and, unfortunately, we don't get that type of response.
44 So, for the next fiscal year, unless things improve,
45 we'll have to continue in the hub areas.

46

47 As far as what would rise to a level of
48 going outside of Kodiak, granted the subsistence
49 caribou issue is very important, but then we'd have to
50 look at where to go, to Cold Bay or King Cove, what

1 facilities are available, what type of logistics do we
2 have to encounter and what public would we get at the
3 meeting. To date, as you know Richard, the public
4 attendance in Cold Bay has not been very good. Those
5 are what weighed into my decision. Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: So March 31st to
9 April 1st here in Kodiak. The fall.

10

11 MS. CHIVERS: If you would turn to Page
12 48, the other side. The calendar currently shows that
13 North Slope is meeting on August 25th and I just got
14 news yesterday that Southeast will be meeting October
15 6, 7th and 8th. So any of those other weeks are
16 available to the Council. Thank you.

17

18 MR. CRATTY: Mr. Chair. I'd like to
19 see when our other two Board members are available
20 before we make a decision, Jim Hamilton and Sam Rohrer,
21 so they could be at the meeting, if we could do that.
22 I know they're busy guys and everything, but out of
23 respect for them I'd like to see them in these
24 meetings. That's what they're there for.

25

26 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Michelle.

27

28 MS. CHIVERS: Can I make a suggestion?
29 Maybe we go ahead and select maybe two dates and what I
30 could do is poll all the Council members to make sure
31 we get the best quorum, including the guides that are
32 unavailable at this time.

33

34 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Tom.

35

36 MR. SCHWANTES: Just for your
37 information, I will not be available next fall from
38 probably the 22nd of September through about the 6th of
39 October. Any other time frame around that would be
40 fine with me. I would suggest maybe we look at the
41 week of September 7th, maybe later in the week, like
42 the 10th or 11th.

43

44 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: September 10th and
45 11th, that's the first choice. An alternate date,
46 maybe the week after that, Thursday and Friday, 17th
47 and 18th.

48

49 MR. SCHWANTES: That will work for me,
50 Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: Okay. If there's
2 no other business, may I hear a motion to adjourn.

3

4 MR. SCHWANTES: Move we adjourn.

5

6 MR. KOSO: Second.

7

8 CHAIRMAN SIMEONOFF: We're adjourned.
9 It's 11:50. Thank you very much everyone.

10

11 (Off record)

12

13 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

