

1 WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME I

7
8 Larson Charlie Community Hall
9 Galena, Alaska
10 February 18, 2009
11 9:00 o'clock a.m.
12
13

14 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

15
16 Jack Reakoff, Chairman
17 Ray Collins
18 Timothy Gervais
19 Carl Morgan
20 Mickey Stickman
21 Robert Walker
22 Eleanor Yatlin

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26 Regional Council Coordinator, Vince Mathews
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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Galena, Alaska - 2/18/2009)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Good morning. We're going to bring this meeting to order. On my watch I've got 9:18. I'm Jack Reakoff. This is the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence Board spring meeting. I welcome all of the Agency and Staff members here and the Council. We have two new Council members appointed this winter at their first meeting here. Introductions will be here in a second after the roll call.

We'll have an invocation by Roger Huntington. If you'd like to say something before the meeting, Roger, I'd appreciate that. The Council will stand for that.

MR. HUNTINGTON: First of all, believe it or not, I'm on the Council and I welcome you all here. I hope you're having a pleasant stay. I know that tough times are coming and this community trusts in your work and a lot of the Native community and all who live here really appreciate your work. On behalf of the Council and the city, I welcome you and I pray that you have a real good meeting.

(Invocation)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll have roll call. Do you want to give the roll call, Vince.

MR. MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Chair. James Walker could not make it due to a conflict with a doctor's appointment, so he's absent. Jenny Pelkola, we'll get an update on her son. You'll be hearing that throughout the meeting, but her son was in a serious accident, so she had to leave town to be with him. Carl Morgan.

MR. MORGAN: Here.

MR. MATHEWS: Timothy Gervais.

MR. GERVAIS: Here.

MR. MATHEWS: Eleanor Yatlin.

1 MS. YATLIN: Here.
2
3 MR. MATHEWS: Mickey Stickman.
4
5 MR. STICKMAN: Here.
6
7 MR. MATHEWS: Robert Walker.
8
9 MR. WALKER: Here.
10
11 MR. MATHEWS: Donald Honea had just
12 acquired new employment, so he couldn't get away. He
13 hadn't earned enough time off to make it to the
14 meeting, so Donald Honea is not present. Ray Collins.
15
16 MR. COLLINS: Here.
17
18 MR. MATHEWS: Jack Reakoff.
19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Here.
21
22 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. You have
23 seven of your 10 members, so you do have a quorum.
24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well, things
26 happen. We'll go through the introduction of the
27 Agency Staff and guests that we have here. Maybe we'll
28 go around the room and people can start out. Roger, do
29 you want to state your name.
30
31 MR. HUNTINGTON: Roger Huntington.
32
33 PHIL KOONTZ: Phil Koontz.
34
35 MS. WILLIAMS: Liz Williams,
36 anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management.
37
38 MR. BERG: Jerry Berg with Fish and
39 Wildlife Service out of Anchorage.
40
41 MR. SLOAN: My name is Bob Sloan. I'm
42 the new manager for Innoko National Wildlife Refuge.
43 I'm really glad to be here and I'm sure there's a lot
44 to be learned.
45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Welcome.
47
48 MR. GERKEN: Jon Gerken, Fish and
49 Wildlife Service in Fairbanks.
50

1 MR. BUSER: Good morning. I'm Bill
2 Buser with ADF&G out of Fairbanks.

3
4 MR. HALE: Howdy, I'm Jason Hale with
5 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association.

6
7 MR. BUKLIS: Good morning. My name is
8 Larry Buklis and I'm with the Office of Subsistence
9 Management.

10
11 MR. EASTLAND: Good morning. I'm
12 Warren Eastland, wildlife biologist for BIA.

13
14 MR. HUNTINGTON: Fred Huntington.

15
16 MR. CHASE: Ken Chase here from GASH.

17
18 MS. MINERVA: Good morning. Jetta
19 Minerva, Kenai Refuge.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Welcome to all of
22 our Staff members and guests. Our Council meetings
23 welcome local participation by people from this
24 community, so when people come through and if they'd
25 like to say something before the Council, we can try
26 and work them into our comments because we would like
27 to get as much comment as we can here.

28
29 So we're down to the Chair's report. I
30 didn't attend the January -- go ahead, Vince.

31
32 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. Before we
33 get into that and Ray did attend the meeting, so he'll
34 have some things to share, I want to go through some
35 logistics with you.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

38
39 MR. MATHEWS: For the Staff and public
40 present, when you do come up to the mike, you've just
41 got to press this button to work. When it's red, it's
42 on. That way we can record it and everybody can hear.
43 Jack will probably ask you to repeat your name just so
44 we get it for the record. He doesn't have a memory
45 lapse, it's just because of the record.

46
47 Each of the Council members, and I do
48 have for the various Staff, have a blue folder like
49 this. Western Interior is famous for being a magnet on
50 ideas and issues, so when the agenda is made and the

1 book is put together, all these things start coming in.
2 So they have a series of materials, which I'll walk you
3 through right now and hopefully it will stay in the
4 same order as we go along.

5
6 Your first item in your packet is
7 basically what Ray is going to somewhat talk about is
8 what's called the .805(c) letter. For the two new
9 members, we talked about this yesterday in training.
10 The Board gives a written response as to why they did
11 not pass your recommendations. The Board gives a
12 written response as to why they did not pass your
13 recommendations. The program has expanded that to give
14 you a full report of what the Board did on all
15 proposals. Ray can talk a little bit about that, but
16 basically your region had no proposals. The Board
17 decided earlier to defer those.

18
19 I don't know if Fish and Game have
20 brought extra copies, but your next thing is the Yukon
21 River salmon season 2009 outlook. There's extra copies
22 there. Yes?

23
24 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
25 Jason, will you be able to answer questions when it
26 comes down to Yukon salmon fisheries season?

27
28 MR. HALE: Yes.

29
30 MR. MATHEWS: For the new members, your
31 working record has been to get everybody up to the
32 table when you get into these issues. That way you
33 don't have people going back and forth.

34
35 Your next item is your development of a
36 strategic plan for research on whitefish. That's
37 basically an informational item, but if you have
38 questions we'll try to answer those.

39
40 The next one I'm not going to touch.
41 It was requested you get copies of it. It's quite
42 lengthy. It says here reducing chinook salmon bycatch,
43 legacy, program and rolling hot spots. There's three
44 documents in there. It was requested by our Staff that
45 attend the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council
46 to get you up to speed. My understanding of these
47 documents, these are the North Pacific Fisheries
48 Management Council's kind of working reports on an
49 incentive program to deal with bycatch.

50

1 The reason I won't touch it is
2 basically it's way above my head. The second report in
3 there is an economist and it's very thorough, but it's
4 available for your information and maybe others in the
5 room have some information on it. You will be talking
6 about the bycatch later today and maybe it will become
7 clearer how that fits in for those that don't
8 understand that.

9
10 The mustard color, that's kind of a
11 summary of what customary trade is. That will be an
12 issue you'll be talking about in light of the 2009
13 salmon season. This was recently put together to help
14 you understand what is allowable and what is not
15 allowable. We have staff here to talk about that.

16
17 The issues in 21E continue to develop
18 and they do relate to 1982. In there is an adaptive
19 plan for intensive management of moose in Game
20 Management Unit 21E. I wasn't able to get a hold of
21 Jack to get concurrence on it, so I don't know what
22 your Chair felt on this, but my understanding is that
23 this is a step down from your Yukon Innoko Moose
24 Management Plan and the Board of Game will be taking
25 this up later this month and they're looking for
26 comments on this to see what people think. So it's up
27 to you to decide if you want to look at the plan. In
28 addition to the plan are the proposals that are related
29 before Board of Game. I believe Randy Rogers will be
30 here. I'm not sure he's worked on this adaptive plan,
31 but I'm sure he's close enough to it to provide some
32 information on it.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince, Randy Rogers
35 emailed me and said he was going to be coming late
36 Wednesday for tomorrow's meeting and he talked about
37 going over this and the wood bison introduction issues.

38
39 MR. MATHEWS: All right. Then the next
40 one just came in last week. I was working with the
41 four chiefs of the GASH area, Holy Cross, Grayling,
42 Anvik and Shageluk, and we ended up with this. The
43 other three villages, Grayling, Anvik and Shageluk, did
44 want an additional season. They didn't have time or I
45 didn't get to their message yet, if they concurred with
46 the language here. But Eugene Paul, Chief of Holy
47 Cross, agreed to this. So this is your special action.
48 Refuge Staff is here and we'll talk about this special
49 action.

50

1 The next thing is Jack has been working
2 with the manager of Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.
3 This is a sample proposal and we'll leave it at that.
4 It gives you an idea. I'm sure Jack will be talking
5 about this. It's a new way of looking at the winter
6 seasons.

7
8 The next thing is a memorandum from
9 Chairman Fleagle. This is explaining the current
10 situation of the Chistochina decision. If you have
11 more questions on that, I'm sure Larry and Liz would be
12 better to answer questions on it.

13
14 The next one says Council draft across
15 it. That's your annual report that's later on the
16 agenda. For the new members, we talked about that a
17 little bit. The .805(c), which is your kind of
18 founding section in ANILCA. The Councils can write an
19 annual report to the Federal Board on issues and topics
20 and this is your 2008.

21
22 The next thing you're going to go over
23 later is your charter. We did talk about that at
24 training. Most of your groups when they're formed in
25 government you form a charter organization or what
26 explains what you do. It's up for you to look at and
27 endorse at this time. It's more of an administrative
28 task.

29
30 Finally, Geoff Beyersdorf and Tim Craig
31 will not make this meeting. Those are your two
32 biologists for BLM. This is the first meeting Tim has
33 not made in probably seven years and this is the first
34 meeting Geoff hasn't made in nine years. They do share
35 their apology they can't make it. This is a major
36 point in their planning process for wildlife studies.

37
38 Geoff is going forward to try to get
39 funding for a newsletter for the GASH area. He would
40 like to share an example of a newsletter for the
41 Unalakleet moose area for comments. I don't know if
42 you want to take it up on your agenda or not.

43
44 That's all the handouts. For the
45 public there's extra copies of a majority of these
46 things back there. If not, get a hold of me and we'll
47 try to get copies to you today. During a break, if we
48 can, your travel advances are right here and we did
49 talk to the store owner, Agnes, and she said they can
50 be cashed at the store.

1 Lunch. Basically at 11:00 o'clock
2 we'll have to kind of pass this around and put together
3 an order if you want to eat lunch and we'll call in to
4 Archie's and have sandwiches delivered. The other
5 meals, tonight is going to be a fundraiser from the
6 school to help them with one of their projects.
7 Tomorrow you'll have breakfast at your place you're
8 staying. Lunch again will be through Archie's and then
9 tomorrow night will be a community covered dish. On
10 that I talked to Agnes because she's been coordinating
11 this since Jenny had to leave on an emergency.

12
13 Our tradition here, for new people, is
14 we put out a coffee can and that goes to help the
15 community out. Agnes suggested that should go to Jenny
16 because of her son's condition. If that's concurrent
17 with the Council, that money will be collected and
18 given to Agnes to give to Jenny to cover the medical
19 expenses for her son.

20
21 I think that's it. If you have any
22 housing problems, get a hold of myself or Agnes. Any
23 other safety problems, try to find a refuge manager or
24 get a hold of one of the policemen or officers here. I
25 don't think we'll have any problem, but we always have
26 to consider safety.

27
28 Oh, I know what I forgot. For the
29 Staff and others, it really helps to sign in back
30 there. It's a challenge to spell some of your names or
31 maybe it's our challenge. It's good for the record and
32 it's back in the corner. That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Vince, for
35 the supplementary information. Back to the agenda.
36 The Chair's report, number 4, I didn't attend the
37 Federal Subsistence Board meeting in January primarily
38 because it's a real hardship to travel in January in
39 the interior of Alaska. I burn wood at home and
40 usually have to have someone watching the house and if
41 I'm gone for an extended period of time, it's a rough
42 deal.

43
44 I would like a letter transmitted from
45 the Council to the Federal Subsistence Board.
46 Basically, as we went into a new two-year cycle, it
47 sort of gravitated towards the Federal Board having
48 January meetings for some reason.

49
50 I would prefer, at least from the

1 Western Interior perspective, the Council leadership
2 perspective, whoever has to attend those meetings, that
3 the fisheries meeting be held in early December.
4 That's a lot easier to travel in early December than
5 January. I would like to see the game meeting be held
6 as it usually was in April sometime. There's really no
7 reason because of the way the regulatory cycles are for
8 the Federal Board not to meet at a time frame when the
9 Interior Councils and even the North Slope and other
10 regions in northern Alaska is more conducive to travel.

11
12 I had Ray attend the Federal Board
13 meeting because it's a one stop hop out of McGrath, so
14 it's a little more temperate down there. Fairbanks
15 gets socked in and you have to go through Fairbanks.
16 I've been stuck there for several days waiting to get
17 out of there when they won't fly in that ice fog. It's
18 not so bad going out of McGrath.

19
20 I'll have you do an overview of how
21 that meeting went, Ray.

22
23 MR. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
24 Ray Collins from McGrath, the vice-chair. I did attend
25 the meeting. As was mentioned by Vince, you have a
26 handout in your papers there and you see there wasn't a
27 lot of action that took place and we didn't have any
28 proposals before them on fisheries issues, but there
29 were two of them that did impact us. That was the ones
30 from Eastern Interior where they were asking there be a
31 reduction to the 7.5-inch mesh size on the river and
32 then that all gillnets greater than 6 be restricted to
33 no more than 35 meshes in depth. They were trying to
34 change the use of nets on the Yukon River.

35
36 The Board ended up deferring those
37 issues, so these will be coming up the next fisheries
38 meeting. I didn't have a lot to say since we hadn't
39 taken positions on those. I just talked briefly about
40 hoping that they would make a decision and not keep
41 delaying these things. Obviously the fishery on the
42 Yukon is in trouble and to just keep postponing action
43 is not going to solve the problem. That was basically
44 my testimony, I said there were no proposals directly
45 from us.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Ray. For the
50 Council members' knowledge, when the leadership of a

1 Council attends those Federal Board meetings, the
2 Councils sit at a table with the Federal Subsistence
3 Board and we can make comments on other regions' issues
4 if they're pertinent, especially adjoining regions. So
5 having attendance at a Federal Subsistence Board
6 meeting is always profitable for the Council even if
7 you don't have proposals on the table. This net size
8 proposal that Eastern Interior submitted and it's
9 deferral, it's a strategy to allow more information to
10 come in from the selectivity study on the lower Yukon,
11 plus let the State Board of Fish address the issue
12 before the Federal Subsistence Board would in April.
13 The Federal Board has positioned themselves behind the
14 State Board of Fish to come up with a decision on that.
15 That's an ongoing issue. The Eastern Interior keeps
16 submitting that proposal and we have a size decline and
17 there's a lot of reasons why they're wanting that. So
18 that's sort of a synopsis of the Chair's report.

19

20 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

23

24 MR. COLLINS: I did have one comment in
25 regard to what you were saying there. It is a good
26 meeting for us to attend because of us sitting at the
27 Board and being able to speak on other issues.

28

29 You have to be careful what you propose
30 because they were hung up on an issue down in the
31 Aleutian Chain where they had allowed the use of hook
32 and line for subsistence fisheries there with no limits
33 on it and they were concerned they were catching too
34 many fish closer to spawning instead of catching them
35 down to the mouth or by net where again there are no
36 limits on subsistence there.

37

38 At one point I made a suggestion that
39 since what they want to do is when they're out there
40 hunting being able to take some fish to eat in the fall
41 by hook and line. I said you could just set a limit
42 then using that method, no more than five fish at a
43 time or something like that. That's what they ended up
44 adopting.

45

46 (Laughter)

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, as you can see,
49 other Councils can have input to the Federal Board. A
50 lot of times I make comment to the Federal Board on

1 other regional issues. The Federal Board can be moving
2 in a direction that can be detrimental to your region
3 in the long run if they set precedents on how they make
4 rulings. So I feel that Councils input is very
5 important at the Federal Board. I see regions that
6 don't send anybody to attend the meetings and I think
7 that they don't quite realize how detrimental to their
8 region that really is. That's why I would like to see
9 the structure of the meetings that are held to
10 accommodate the Interior regions for Federal Board
11 meetings and fisheries meetings in early December and
12 game meetings held in April.

13

14 How would the Council feel about
15 transmittal of a letter to the Federal Subsistence
16 Board to that effect. Is that agreeable to the
17 Council?

18

19 (Nods affirmatively)

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll transmit a
22 letter to the Federal Board to that effect because I do
23 feel that it's very important and it's hard to attend
24 January meetings.

25

26 At this point we're going to go around
27 the table and talk about from the Council members'
28 perspective what their concerns are for this meeting
29 and just general concerns. We'll start with Robert
30 down here on the left, Robert Walker.

31

32 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
33 Concerns are government lands we have in our
34 area/subsistence. That would be an issue here that was
35 discussed in our teleconference with the four villages,
36 the chiefs. The second one would be a mission
37 statement we have in our folder here. That would be a
38 concern. The third one was a biologist for our area.
39 Why do they not have the power to open and close
40 Federal lands. That was a concern.

41

42 These were the three issues that were
43 really discussed a lot plus another opening here with
44 Eugene Paul's proposal. The four chiefs agreed on it
45 or the four Councils agreed on it. We didn't want to
46 declare a disaster like the lower Yukon because we
47 don't have a commercial fishery. That's one of the
48 reasons they declared an emergency down in Unit 18.

49

50 I think these issues should be

1 discussed here and letters should be sent to the four
2 chiefs for Unit 21E, Holy Cross, the GASH area, where
3 we can maybe make some kind of statements on that.

4

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes. When we get to
8 that portion of our meeting where we're talking about
9 game proposals. These comments and letters from the
10 Council are going to be a very important part of our
11 business for this meeting. I appreciate those
12 concerns.

13

14 Tim, you'll want to introduce yourself
15 and give a little background of who you are and stuff
16 because you're new to the Council. We want to meet you
17 and get an understanding.

18

19 Vince.

20

21 MR. MATHEWS: Sorry, Tim. Robert, my
22 understanding, so I can prepare Staff on it, your
23 request on the mission statement was a mission
24 statement for the whole Federal Subsistence program,
25 correct? I can respond to that, but there's others
26 that can kind of give you insight on that if that's
27 what your request remains.

28

29 MR. WALKER: Vince, it is right here.
30 The question brought up was what kind of mission
31 statement does it have regarding Region 6 and Eastern,
32 the lower Yukon. Subsistence would be an issue here.
33 We're over-priority over a lot of things. How does it
34 work with the State. Since the Federal took over from
35 the State, the State wasn't doing their job, and this
36 was a concern here for the people that call me and talk
37 to me.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Vince.

42

43 MR. MATHEWS: On your other one, I'd
44 encourage you during a break to discuss your concern.
45 You mentioned why doesn't the Federal biologist have
46 power to close the lands. We may need to talk further
47 what you were indicating there. Again, we're going to
48 be hobbling a little bit because BLM is not here and
49 some of the areas that are important to you are BLM
50 lands. I think we have enough Staff here we can give

1 you an understanding of that situation as far as
2 authority to close.

3

4 MR. WALKER: I don't want to make a
5 short issue longer. You can see the State biologist
6 has the power to open and close certain units and
7 Federal wildlife biologist doesn't have that power to
8 open and close that the State has.

9

10 MR. MATHEWS: I think it's a topic we
11 want to bring up later on the agenda and it will give
12 Staff a chance to respond, especially from the Innoko
13 Refuge, since that does affect part of the area in
14 question.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So your mission
17 statement you're referring to is you would like to
18 strengthen our charter?

19

20 MR. WALKER: Yeah.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So when this
23 charter comes before the Council we can look at what
24 you'd like to see inserted. Go ahead, Tim.

25

26 MR. GERVAIS: Good morning. My name is
27 Timothy Gervais. I live 12 miles upstream from Ruby on
28 the north bank of the Yukon. I've been a member of
29 that community for a little over 12 years now. I'm not
30 related to anybody in that area, but I'm well accepted
31 as a member of the community and as a subsistence
32 harvester. I'm not a 100 percent subsistence user. I
33 spend four, four and a half, sometimes five months a
34 year as a commercial fisherman. I do drift gillnet
35 fishing in Bristol Bay. Also I do winter fisheries
36 either cod or crab out of Kodiak, sometimes in the
37 Bering Sea.

38

39 I'm also a hunting guide. Not a high
40 volume guide. Usually I'll guide one or two hunters
41 per year, sometimes none. It's more of a secondary
42 income source for me. So although I'm sitting on this
43 board as a commercial user seat, my main emphasis and
44 concerns are with providing for good habitat and good
45 fish and game populations and focusing on what we can
46 do to keep a healthy subsistence harvest going.

47

48 The commercial aspects, my experience
49 anyway, will be used more for being able to bring in
50 some other opinions or factors that are affecting

1 Council decisions and factors affecting the way the
2 State and Federal government looks at our request for
3 subsistence action.

4

5 The biggest issue in our community
6 right now in the short term is the dismal forecast for
7 king salmon in 2009. It's such a short-term item
8 that's been going on for quite a while and there is a
9 -- other than the immediate concern of not being able
10 to catch much fish or any fish this summer, there's the
11 general feeling, kind of several aspects to it,
12 desperation, some anger and kind of a feeling that even
13 though it's fairly obvious what kind of steps need to
14 be taken regarding conservation that the agencies that
15 will be able to regulate it, like the North Pacific
16 Fishery Management Council, it's unlikely in my opinion
17 that they will take the necessary steps with the
18 bycatch hard cap, so I think in this session we should
19 evaluate some other avenues to help preserve the stock.

20

21 We are happy to see the strategic plan
22 for research for the whitefish. I think as the salmon
23 harvest continues to decline, the whitefish is going
24 to be a higher percentage of our subsistence take.
25 Also, on a commercial aspect of that, I had seen an
26 article this fall where Kwik'pak Fisheries in the Yukon
27 Delta was experimenting with a commercial market for
28 one of the cisco species. I think there's a
29 possibility in the future there could be some
30 commercial demands for that whitefish resource also.

31

32 So far with my interaction with these
33 other Council members I'm very pleased with their
34 commitment, their level of experience and just always
35 feel thankful to gain from other people's knowledge and
36 the way things happen in rural Alaska and glad to be a
37 part of it.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate that
40 about your background and so forth. Welcome to the
41 Council. We've had other hunting guides and so forth
42 on our Council, so you're welcome to have your inputs
43 about various things. Everybody who lives in rural
44 Alaska has to make some kind of cash income to buy fuel
45 and so forth, so a lot of people have commercial
46 fished, so don't feel bad about that. That's a
47 component of living. Mickey.

48

49 MR. STICKMAN: Thanks, Jack. The main
50 issue for probably me this year is the king salmon

1 outlook for 2009 and then just looking at the
2 proposals, the one from the Eastern Interior folks,
3 they want to eliminate the driftnet. For the most
4 part, people in Y4A and some of 4B get all their fish
5 from driftnetting and to see proposals to eliminate
6 driftnetting is a concern for me. But the biggest
7 concern is the lack of fish and what's going to happen
8 this summer as far as fishing.

9
10 As far as moose, I'm sure the local
11 communities in this area anyway work pretty well with
12 Kenton, the refuge manager. Of course, we always have
13 a few problems in every management area I guess with
14 people getting caught hunting out of season. I guess
15 that happens all over. For the most part, last fall
16 the moose harvest was pretty good for this area. You
17 always have people saying there's a need for more. It
18 happens all over. Everywhere you go, in every village,
19 there's always going to be some people who weren't
20 successful. Everybody who is a village person here,
21 they know in a village of our size we always share with
22 the people who really have a need.

23
24 The moose count in the Kaiyuh Flats was
25 a concern because it seemed like even though we've had
26 a no cow hunt for years now, the population did dip
27 again within the last year and that's a concern for me,
28 but the biggest concern is the fishing.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have those same
31 concerns on meeting winter subsistence moose needs
32 myself. Ray, go ahead.

33
34 MR. COLLINS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 Only two issues that I'll mention. One is already
36 there. I think we need to come up with some proposals
37 or suggested actions to deal with the fisheries on the
38 Yukon. That's always a concern for all of us. That
39 comes not from my living on the Yukon, but I think
40 that's one of the key issues before this board.

41
42 The other one would be to continue to
43 keep an eye on building in more flexibility. I
44 mentioned at the fall meeting too that many communities
45 didn't get the moose they needed for various reasons
46 and there needs to be more flexibility in that system.
47 When obviously the resource is there, it wasn't because
48 of lack of resource. It was because of getting access
49 to that resource. Like Allakaket and a lot of
50 communities, it was low. Traditionally for subsistence

1 hunters you go when the condition are right.

2

3 If you don't get one in the fall, you
4 go in the winter or whatever and they could still do
5 that by just ignoring all the regulations, but it would
6 be better to have something built in where managers had
7 the flexibility of opening or extending a season when
8 condition warrants when the resource is there and it
9 was underharvested. So just continue to look for ways
10 of getting more flexibility in the system.

11

12 I noticed in a recent article in Field
13 and Stream that they're starting to talk Outside about
14 how the weather is affecting hunting out there too. It
15 isn't just Alaska. They're seeing changes in wildlife
16 populations and other things too. So in this changing
17 time, if our system is too rigid, it's not going to
18 respond in a timely manner. The Federal system,
19 especially where it has to be published in the
20 registers to get regular seasons in, it's pretty slow
21 response in general unless there's flexibility built in
22 with a local manager to make some decisions.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Ray. Good
25 points. Eleanor. Most people know Eleanor, but you
26 can give a little background and where you come from
27 and all of that, Eleanor.

28

29 MS. YATLIN: My name is Eleanor Yatlin.
30 I live in Huslia. Prior to that Al and I lived in
31 Bettles all through the '90s. When we moved back to
32 Huslia we pretty much lived down in our camp from
33 break-up to fall. One year we stayed down there until
34 October 2nd, so we saw a lot of changes. In Bettles I
35 saw the decline of the moose. There was like three
36 outfitters out of Bettles and we saw how they pretty
37 much wiped out the country up there for the moose.
38 That's why Allakaket has such a hard time, so they come
39 down to Huslia, a lot of the hunters come down by boat
40 in the fall time.

41

42 My main concern right now -- I talked
43 to a lot of people in Huslia last month or so about
44 winter moose hunt. The people I talked to, they all
45 were for the winter moose hunt because some of them
46 didn't -- you know, you have to have luck to go out
47 there and shoot the moose and a lot didn't have luck.
48 I know we haven't had a cow hunt for a number of years
49 and that's what they were pretty much after.

50

1 I could see the statistics. Like they
2 had the moose count last fall. They didn't bring that
3 to the people up there, the State or Feds. They said
4 it's lower, but talking to some of the people I believe
5 a lot of those cows may be down in Three Day area or
6 Dulbi area and probably why they missed. This is what
7 I'm getting from the people of Huslia.

8
9 My other concern was the fish. I go on
10 that call with YRDFA, so I kind of keep updated on
11 that. The Koyukuk River, from when we first moved to
12 camp, we caught every fish from the pikes to sheefish
13 and whitefish. Every fish that we get we cut them and
14 that's what we have for dry fish right now or we freeze
15 them. That's what we make our Indian ice cream out of,
16 the pike. That's what they originally made their
17 Indian ice cream out.

18
19 So I can see the concern for king
20 salmon next summer, but mainly I believe our concern
21 right now in Huslia anyway is the winter moose hunt.
22 That was what I wanted to see addressed.

23
24 Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, Eleanor. This
27 Council met in Huslia back several years ago and we
28 heard lots of people talking about the need for winter
29 moose hunts. Those winter hunts in the Koyukuk are
30 very important. When you get further away from where
31 the main salmon runs are, those winter moose hunts
32 become more and more important to people, so we are
33 going to be talking about that winter hunt. Go ahead,
34 Eleanor.

35
36 MS. YATLIN: Another thing I was going
37 to bring up was I believe most of us in Huslia and the
38 surrounding areas, the villages up there, we don't --
39 they do like box chicken and stuff like that at the
40 store, but they're really expensive, so we do not buy
41 meat and we are supplementing with caribou and we get
42 our geese and fish, but mainly the moose.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, moose is the
45 mainstay for Wiseman down, up in the Anaktuvuk Pass,
46 which is in Unit 24. They rely mostly on caribou, but
47 the mainstay is for moose and fish in the lower part of
48 the river. Carl.

49
50 MR. MORGAN: Good morning. I'm Carl

1 Morgan from Aniak. I will be very interested in the
2 '09 chinook run in the Yukon. I'm also concerned about
3 the Kuskokwim because the Kuskokwim chinook feed in the
4 same area as the Yukon, so basically all the AYK.

5
6 Another thing that kind of bugs me a
7 little bit is they're getting an economic boost down on
8 the coast. They're bringing them food, they're helping
9 them any way they can. See the thing is this thing is
10 riverwide, regionwide. Whatever happens down in the
11 coast happens up in the upper part of the river. This
12 thing started, as the Governor was aware, she started
13 it and then some legislators jumped on board. I think
14 it would be a good idea for most of the people that
15 live in District 6 to try to get a hold of your
16 legislator and your senator or their staff and say
17 we're in the same boat. How many years ago did we have
18 this economic disaster in the salmon and stuff and most
19 of the money went to the coast again. We got the
20 leftovers. That's something I'd like to plug in
21 because how much of that is going to be in the stimulus
22 package that's going to come down from the Feds. I
23 think we need it up here as much as they need it down
24 there. We need the help in the in-river system as much
25 as they need it on the coast.

26
27 My other concerns, I'm always
28 interested and always will in 19A. We've got a 20-day
29 hunt and it's a very limited hunt. It's only a Tier
30 II. But a lot of people don't realize that hunt is on
31 a quota. If X amount of moose are taken theoretically,
32 that moose hunt can be over in five days, 10 days.
33 There's other residents from the state of Alaska that
34 qualify for Tier II. We have to compete with other
35 residents. So it is a very intense hunt because people
36 are keeping a mental count of how many moose are being
37 caught because they know after that certain amount of
38 moose is caught that hunt is done. We're done for the
39 season. So far, since that Tier II started, we haven't
40 made that quota, both State and Federal.

41
42 The price of fuel is still going up.
43 We've never seen it go down in Bush Alaska. I think
44 fuel is subsistence. Without fuel or gas we can't
45 subsist.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Carl. We
50 don't want to get too focused on the Yukon River. I

1 mean it is a very important issue, but the Kuskokwim is
2 also very important to the Western Interior Region on
3 salmon usage.

4

5 Go ahead, Mickey.

6

7 MR. STICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
8 just wanted to agree with Carl there and I'm glad he
9 brought it up. The price of fuel, especially out here,
10 that's a real hardship for a lot of people in the
11 villages, actually getting enough money together to
12 actually go fishing. Even in the fall hunt, if they're
13 not successful their first go round, I know people in
14 this area that spend more than \$1,000 in fuel to go get
15 a moose. So I was just glad Carl brought it up because
16 the amount of money to buy oil and gas around here is a
17 big issue. As far as whether you're going to eat fresh
18 fish or you're going to eat moose meat, it is a big
19 issue.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Any
22 other comments.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My comments or
27 concerns are very similar. The winter moose hunts are
28 more economical because the sno-goes you get more
29 mileage per gallon to hunt and you can go overland. My
30 concern is the winter hunts are not as easily
31 administered especially since the state has tried to
32 preclude most of the winter hunts in violation of
33 subsistence priority and even some of our management
34 plans on the Koyukuk River.

35

36 Under the Koyukuk Management Plan we
37 never precluded the winter hunt. The State did. The
38 State thought that winter hunts meant closing down cow
39 hunts. Winter hunts up at Allakaket, before the
40 closure of the winter hunts by the State, people
41 harvested 30 to 40 moose per winter or per year. In
42 the last few years when they've only had fall hunting
43 as a primary, they've only harvested between 8 to 20
44 moose, so they're only attaining less than half of
45 their needs and we've been working with the Kanuti
46 Wildlife Refuge and they've been trying to provide very
47 short windowed five-day hunts and we've had cold
48 weather and various issues, so we need to craft
49 flexibility like Ray is talking about into these winter
50 hunts because are in real hardship.

1 The lower Yukon has got the big
2 spotlight on them on CNN and everything. Rural Alaska,
3 especially in the Interior villages, are under much
4 greater hardship. I know lots of people that have
5 \$8,600 household incomes and qualify for \$5 licenses
6 that can't afford very expensive gas. We have to make
7 these hunting opportunities for people much more cost
8 efficient. The eight criteria, the economy of time,
9 effort and expense.

10
11 And this proposal that I worked with
12 Kanuti this winter on
13 because the refuge manager has been trying to provide
14 for some kind of winter hunt, I've worked with his
15 staff and I gave them various ideas and so we've come
16 up with a proposal, which is right here in our little
17 packet, that I'd like to see this Council submit to the
18 Federal Subsistence Board under our name.

19
20 This would give a longer window of
21 opportunity, a one-month window of opportunity, from
22 March 15th to March 30th, give a quota, so people have
23 opportunity when conditions are correct to get out and
24 get a moose and get a bull. We're not going to get a
25 cow hunt there, we won't be able to get a cow, but at
26 least a one bull hunt opportunity. So the winter moose
27 hunts are a big issue and getting to be more amplified
28 as these costs go up.

29
30 The chinook run on the Yukon, I'm very
31 concerned about the chinook run and the continuing
32 decline of productivity of the Yukon and escaping
33 smaller -- basically escapement has been very small.
34 We've had ichthyophones, environmental conditions and
35 I'm very concerned that Emmonak has not positioned
36 themselves by petitioning the governor for commercial
37 fishery, that they will get a commercial fishery, a
38 directed chum fishery, but the problem is that last
39 year they harvested 4,650 chinook as bycatch. I'm very
40 concerned about that. Those are some of my concerns
41 that we're going to keep under-escaping the Yukon River
42 and will continue into further decline of that
43 population.

44
45 Those would be my concerns at this
46 point at the beginning of this meeting. Any other
47 Council member concerns at this time.

48
49 (No comments)
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll continue on
2 with the agenda. Review and adoption of the agenda.
3 Vince.

4
5 MR. MATHEWS: I have a list of items.
6 In the past you've had kind of a flexible agenda, but
7 as I get older my memory doesn't flex as much. There's
8 some ideas that have come up and you may want to plug
9 them in and I'll start pointing out Council members
10 that have brought up issues.

11
12 Robert, do you still want to talk about
13 a fall moose season change? We can plug that into the
14 agenda. You wanted to shift five days later in the
15 season? Is that still viable?

16
17 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
18 Yes. The four villages would like to add five days to
19 the end of the hunt here in September, a Federal. Take
20 five days off of August if possible and add from 25th
21 to 30th of September.

22
23 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair. We would put
24 that under wildlife issues under the call for proposals
25 and we can discuss it in more detail then and that
26 gives Staff a chance to get a better understanding.

27
28 That would be under number 9, wildlife
29 issues, under D(1). That's the time, for the new
30 members, where ideas can be brought up on different
31 proposals. It doesn't mean you have to adopt them, but
32 it gives a chance to look at ideas for proposals and
33 the Council can submit them, the public may have some
34 ideas and maybe sharing some. Obviously these are
35 under the Federal side.

36
37 The next thing is under your Council
38 business we need to add in the charter review. It's
39 not on the agenda, so that's under number 13. You
40 probably want to put it before election of officers.

41
42 If you do want to discuss the
43 Chistochina court case summary, that will be covered
44 under number 10. It's not something you have to take
45 up. Just if you have questions. So probably under
46 10(C).

47
48 When this agenda was developed, Geoff
49 Beyersdorf, biologist with BLM, asked that there be a
50 discussion about the Lime Village moose management

1 situation there. He's requested to remove that. He's
2 been in dialogue with the Fish and Game area biologist
3 and they first wanted to talk and meet in Lime Village
4 to talk about the situation there. That is under
5 number 9(B).

6

7 For those members that don't know Mr.
8 Beyersdorf, don't worry. That topic will be before
9 you. It won't get lost in the shuffle when you remove
10 it from the list. He and Roger Seavoy of Fish and Game
11 are very cognizant of that situation.

12

13 I don't know who the person will be.
14 There's been a change of Staff in Fish and Game. Your
15 Council has played a very important role or oversight
16 on the Mulchatna Caribou Herd. Geoff was coordinating
17 that, but that fell through now because of conflict of
18 Staff, but I was informed there would be someone from
19 Fish and Game that will give you an update on the
20 Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

21

22 For the new members, Eleanor and
23 Timothy, that herd is important to Carl Morgan's area
24 and others. When it was a more robust herd, that was a
25 source of meat. That herd is now reduced in numbers
26 and your Chair will update you on the concerns on that.
27 That explains why this Council is talking about
28 something where people kind of view that as Bristol
29 Bay. It's a herd that covers wider than Bristol Bay.

30

31 We have another issue that is out
32 there. Your Chair has been consulted about it. It
33 will be discussing the handicrafts made from brown bear
34 claws. We'll note it on the agenda under wildlife, but
35 the cultural sensitivity you've made very clear over
36 your past records about discussing bears, so we'll look
37 for your lead on how you want to discuss that whole
38 issue.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Where did you want
41 to put that, Vince?

42

43 MR. MATHEWS: It would be under
44 updates, number 9(B)(6). We do have a handout on it
45 and please let us know if we cross some cultural
46 boundaries there, we'll be respectful of that from your
47 direction.

48

49 That's all the notes I have. If any
50 other Staff have any other items that may have come up,

1 they can bring those up. Your agenda is always
2 flexible. This is just to make sure we don't lose
3 these.

4

5 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are good
8 things to include. Does any other Council members have
9 changes or insertions into the agenda?

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think Vince has
14 gone over where the insertions should take place. Any
15 other discussion on the agenda.

16

17 MR. COLLINS: I move to approve as
18 amended.

19

20 MR. STICKMAN: Second.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved to approve.
23 Mickey seconded. Those in favor of the agenda as
24 modified, signify by saying aye.

25

26 IN UNISON: Aye.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed.

29

30 (No opposed votes)

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The agenda is still
33 flexible as we move through the meeting. The next
34 agenda item is to approve the minutes from our McGrath
35 meeting. Has everybody read those minutes?

36

37 Go ahead, Mickey.

38

39 MR. STICKMAN: I'll make a motion to
40 adopt the minutes.

41

42 MR. WALKER: Second.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: A second by Robert.
45 Everybody has looked these over. These are transmitted
46 to me and I reviewed them. I just caught a couple
47 typos, which I commented on earlier. Does anybody have
48 any inclusions to the minutes.

49

50 MR. STICKMAN: I don't have any

1 inclusions, but I was just wondering if there was
2 anything from the last meeting that we had to deal with
3 at this meeting.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Some of these items
6 that we discussed at the last meeting will also be
7 reviewed at this meeting and the Yukon River fisheries
8 issues will also be. Any other discussion on the
9 minutes.

10

11 (No comments)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those in favor of
14 the minutes signify by saying aye.

15

16 IN UNISON: Aye.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed.

19

20 (No opposing votes)

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The minutes were
23 approved for our McGrath meeting. We're moving into
24 the fisheries issues 1(a), summary of YRDFA's winter
25 teleconference. Are you going to be making that
26 presentation, Jason? Go ahead, Vince.

27

28 MR. MATHEWS: We may want to take a
29 break so we can crank up the heat if we could.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We can take a break
32 and turn the heater on.

33

34 (Off record)

35

36 (On record)

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We're coming
39 back on the record here after a little break. We'll
40 let the managers give sort of an overview of what the
41 projection is for the Yukon River and then we'll go
42 into this YRDFA teleconference thing. Management put
43 everybody's minds together on the issue and seeing what
44 people's feelings are about how this fishery is going
45 to be managed this coming summer. Go ahead, Jon.

46

47 MR. GERKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My
48 name is Jon Gerken. I work for the Fish and Wildlife
49 Service in Fairbanks and I'm representing Russ Holder.

50

1 MR. BUSHER: Mr. Chairman. My name is
2 Bill Busher with ADF&G in Fairbanks, commercial
3 fisheries. I'm here representing the comm fish, Steve
4 Hayes and Fred Bue.

5
6 MR. GERKEN: We handed out a 2009
7 outlook sheet that looks like this. I'm not going to
8 read all of it into the record. I just want to hit the
9 high points and that will kind of set the stage for
10 what Jason and YRDFA is going to talk about specific to
11 some of the management strategies that folks on the
12 river have come up with or suggested in the last few
13 weeks of teleconferences

14
15 I'll start with chinook salmon and then
16 kind of go through all species and I'll try to keep it
17 as short as possible here. The 2007 and 2008 chinook
18 salmon runs were below pre-season run projections. In
19 light of the poor production in those two years,
20 managers believe that 2009 Yukon River chinook salmon
21 run will likely be below average to poor based on the
22 anticipated low production. So it is therefore prudent
23 to enter the 2009 season with the expectation that
24 subsistence conservation measures beyond what we used
25 in 2008 will likely be required.

26
27 In an effort to share the available
28 subsistence harvest and meet escapement goals, it is
29 unlikely there will be a directed chinook salmon
30 commercial fishery in 2009 on the mainstem river.
31 There may be opportunity on the Tanana River for a
32 small commercial harvest.

33
34 We believe the subsistence fishing will
35 need to be reduced at the beginning of the season and
36 managers are trying to develop a preseason subsistence
37 approach, which will be used until in-season
38 information could be used. Likely that's near the
39 halfway point of the chinook salmon run.

40
41 Specific to summer chum, managers are
42 anticipating an average run for 2009 which should
43 provide for escapements, a normal subsistence fishery
44 and provide for commercial harvest.

45
46 Specific to fall chum salmon, the 2009
47 fall chum salmon run size is expected to be near
48 average with a preliminary projection of approximately
49 one million fish. Coho salmon in 2009 are anticipated
50 to be near average based on the parent year escapement

1 in 2005 and most of the coho return as age 4.

2

3 That's all I've got for just kind of
4 the quick highlights for the outlook.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. And the
7 projected chinook shortfall will be again in this 65-
8 75,000 below what would be considered a normal run?

9

10 MR. GERKEN: Yeah. I think when you're
11 comparing it directly to the Eagle Sonar counts, those
12 numbers are specific to the border passage. So the
13 2007 run was approximately 75,000 less than
14 anticipated. The 2008 run was approximately 65,000
15 less. So we are expected somewhere in that range.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So '09, the parent
18 years would be approximately the same type of returns
19 you were expecting for '07 and '08? The '09 return.
20 What I'm saying is if the parent years for '09 were
21 good escapements, then they should have had better
22 returns than we're looking at because of the
23 performance we're looking at, this shortfall.

24

25 MR. GERKEN: Right. Right.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I don't see any
28 reason why it wouldn't be below what it's been because
29 of bycatch and various other issues. Any questions on
30 the projected performance by the Council.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll go into the
35 YRDFA teleconferencing. Go ahead, Jason.

36

37 MR. HALE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jason
38 Hale with YRDFA. Happy to be here. Looking forward to
39 getting your input as we work through this process.
40 Before I get started, just so everyone knows, I put out
41 a bunch of handouts. They're on the bench over there.
42 I'll be referencing some of them as I speak and ramble.

43

44 As Jon just mentioned, there is a poor
45 projection for the king run. We've heard quite a bit
46 about that. As such, we began discussions with the
47 Yukon River Panel about how to inform fishermen and
48 involve them in the management of the run and how to
49 handle another poor return. They graciously funded the
50 effort we came up with, which was a series of

1 teleconferences and a meeting. Our idea was that
2 fishermen need to know what's going on out there first
3 off so they can plan for it and be aware of it as far
4 in advance as we can do this. Then we need to figure
5 out a way to let as many of them as possible get in on
6 talking about ways to handle it to be sure the run
7 stays healthy but they don't suffer too much.

8
9 So what we came up with was hold a
10 bunch of teleconferences, a series in January
11 regionally; lower, middle and upper river. The idea
12 being that would let more people talk. A
13 teleconference with the entire river, that can be a
14 whole lot of people, especially on such a big issue.
15 Also regions tend to have similar issues and similar
16 problems, similar gear types and we thought it would be
17 more efficient to do it regionally. Each call did end
18 up lasting about two hours, so we're feeling pretty
19 good about that approach. I hope other people thought
20 it was okay.

21
22 So we did some calls in January and
23 then another set of calls last week in February for
24 lower, middle and upper river. Last, we're going to be
25 bringing people together from all over the river to
26 talk about what came out of those calls and what we
27 should do based on those recommendations and how those
28 can be woven together into an actual management plan.
29 More about that in a minute.

30
31 Let me give you a rundown on what's
32 happened during these calls. The first calls in
33 January, the lower river call, there were nine villages
34 on and seven other organizations. Those might be
35 agencies, might be processors, tribal consortiums. The
36 middle river, we had 12 villages and six organizations.
37 In the upper river, we had four villages and three
38 organizations on the call, so a little less attended.
39 These are people who actually participated. It doesn't
40 necessarily reflect who is listening in. Our
41 experience with summer teleconference is for each one
42 person who participates, there are two others who are
43 sitting silent, generally speaking, but we haven't had
44 a chance to talk to GCI about the numbers to find out
45 if that was the case.

46
47 What came out of that first call,
48 there's a little chart on your handout, but the main
49 recommendations some you saw across regions, some you
50 didn't, but a lot of discussion about voluntary catch

1 reductions or voluntary closures of the fishery.
2 Discussion of the pros and cons of eliminating fishing
3 time, of reducing mesh size or depth, of more sonars or
4 more attention to assessment projects, a lot of talk
5 about preparing for the worst by having community
6 meetings and trying to figure out what to do community
7 by community. People like to talk about reducing
8 sport, personal use and the ever popular bycatch.
9 Customary trade was brought up on each call. Also no
10 sale of chinook in a chum fishery should a directed
11 chum fishery occur.

12
13 That was kind of what gave us the
14 starting point for the second calls and these are the
15 things we discussed during the calls. I have handed
16 out draft summaries of the calls. They're a bit more
17 complete than what I'm going to go through now. I
18 tried to sum up the summary, but those calls were just
19 last week, so it might be a little long-winded. I
20 apologize. The handout I gave out says draft because
21 the managers haven't seen it yet and I haven't had a
22 chance to review it thoroughly because the call just
23 ended Friday, so I apologize for that.

24
25 On the second call, participation was
26 again pretty good. On the lower river last Monday we
27 had eight villages and five organizations on. The
28 middle river we had nine villages and four
29 organizations. The upper river we had seven villages
30 and five organizations, which was a noted improvement
31 from the first call. It was a noted improvement from
32 the first call and they did respond.

33
34 The recommendations that came out, and
35 I did put these in order of how much they were stressed
36 and how much discussion on each call was about the
37 topic. First on the lower river they said address
38 customary trade first. There was a lot of agreement on
39 that. Then establish mandatory measures with clear
40 enforcement strategies as opposed to voluntary
41 measures. They didn't think voluntary would cut it.
42 They wanted something you could really sink your teeth
43 in.

44
45 There was a lot of talk about
46 establishing time limits for fishing, windows that
47 followed the run upriver. There was a debate over how
48 this would look. Some people thought you should close
49 the first pulse entirely because there's discussion
50 that is front-loaded with Canadian fish. Other people

1 thought that was not a good idea. The people who
2 wanted to lay off that first pulse wanted to make sure
3 we met escapement goals or came closer than we have in
4 the past couple years.

5
6 The other side of the coin, people
7 wanted to fish evenly. Some were worried that if they
8 didn't fish on the first pulse in the lower river, the
9 rainy season would come and they couldn't dry their
10 fish properly, so there'd be spoilage and waste.
11 Others were worried that if we hit the second and third
12 pulses harder, there would be an overharvesting on the
13 Alaska portion of the run and the Alaska stocks would
14 weaken. While the Canadian stocks would get a little
15 healthier, the Alaska stocks would weaken, so you would
16 have no real net gain and in the end it would hurt the
17 Alaska stocks quite a bit.

18
19 Those were the main concerns. It was
20 stressed the timing of windows should take into account
21 whitefish harvest, which often happened just before the
22 king run. Yes?

23
24 MR. GERVAIS: Do you find that's
25 accurate, that the second and third pulse is the
26 Alaskan fish? Is that an accurate concern?

27
28 MR. GERKEN: I think the Canadian
29 component is actually spread out through the entire
30 run. However, the first pulse typically has a larger
31 percentage of Canadian in it. Although there are
32 Canadian stocks spread throughout, it is a little more
33 front loaded on that first pulse.

34
35 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you.

36
37 MR. HALE: Thanks for the question.
38 The last primary idea from the second lower river call
39 that was discussed was to install more sonars or give
40 additional attention to assessment projects to be sure
41 that fish are not illegally harvested. The idea behind
42 this was if the fishers down there do not fish on a
43 particular pulse and the intent is to get those fish
44 upriver. They don't want to give up fishing and then
45 have somebody go out and illegally harvest a ton of the
46 fish that they didn't put on their own tables. So that
47 was the idea behind that.

48
49 Moving on to the middle river, which
50 the call occurred last Wednesday, there was a great

1 deal of discussion about establishing voluntary
2 reductions and holding community meetings to decide
3 what each village can and should do. The village of
4 Koyukuk led off with their resolution to not fish on
5 the first pulse and to fish lightly on the second and
6 third pulses, perhaps only one or two days per week,
7 and to go without just to make sure everybody could get
8 a few kings on the table and let the rest go by. A lot
9 of people in other villages seemed heartened by that
10 idea. Thought it was a good starting point. They
11 didn't necessarily agree with that particular strategy,
12 but they did think it was a good approach to decide
13 what you could do in your community.

14
15 Also the point was made repeatedly that
16 managers should not rely on limiting fishing time or
17 fishing windows, that that approach alone does not
18 work. Without fisher buy-in, people can go out and
19 fish really hard during a small window and can get more
20 fish than the window intended. So regardless of the
21 size of the window, they pointed out that you need to
22 get fishers to understand what you're trying to do with
23 the window and to buy into it being important to let
24 more fish go or else they could very well just get as
25 many fish as they would have otherwise. They just work
26 harder to do so.

27
28 They also indicated look at customary
29 trade.
30 The remark was made you need to look at everything and
31 customary trade is part of everything, but they really
32 did stress to remember the rural to rural customary
33 trade is very important to subsist in many villages, so
34 they wanted that to be on the record.

35
36 The idea was brought up to establish
37 harvest quotas based on a past percentage of harvest.
38 TCC is doing a lot of work on this, looking at past
39 percentages per region and seeing how that might be
40 implemented based on pre-season projections and they're
41 going to be talking a lot about that at a meeting in
42 April.

43
44 Lastly, there was a good deal of
45 discussion about considering limiting gear size and
46 there were pros and cons brought up. Mainly people
47 asked that managers remember in the middle river some
48 people don't have smaller gear. Also there's concern
49 for harvesting poor quality chum. Also there was a
50 great deal of concern that large kings would drop out

1 of the small gear and the mortality rate would be
2 really high and you'd end up worse off than you would
3 have if you stuck with the larger gear. So it wasn't a
4 recommendation to have small mesh gear. It was just to
5 consider it and look at the pros and cons and figure
6 out what to do. Ideas on both sides of the fence
7 there.

8

9 Then moving on to the upper river,
10 which was Friday -- yes, sir?

11

12 MR. WALKER: You didn't mention Sidney
13 Huntington's letter he read when we had our
14 teleconference.

15

16 MR. HALE: Yeah, that's true. That is
17 the don't fish at all or leave the run alone. Is that
18 what you're referring to?

19

20 MR. WALKER: Yes.

21

22 MR. HALE: That's true. I probably
23 should have put that in. I cranked this out yesterday
24 morning. Since it's still in draft, I'll be sure to
25 include that. I appreciate the suggestion.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes, there was
28 Sidney and I think Koyukuk passed resolutions about
29 moratorium language. That is one line of thinking, is
30 a moratorium on the chinook harvest. Continue.

31

32 MR. HALE: Thank you very much. And on
33 the upper river call there was a lot of discussion
34 about establishing community-based management plan as
35 opposed to fishing district based management plans.
36 The idea being that some of the districts are pretty
37 long and trying to manage specific pulses of fish
38 through some of the longer districts is near
39 impossible. And hand in hand with that was holding
40 community meetings to decide what each village can or
41 should do.

42

43 People, again, thought that
44 establishing mandatory measures with clear enforcement
45 strategies as opposed to voluntary measures was the
46 better way to go. They talked about closing the the
47 first pulse of the king run or perhaps closing the
48 entire run. It was stressed that if you close part of
49 the run you need to be careful about the part of the
50 run that comes before and after the closure because

1 people might go and fish really hard on that to be sure
2 they get some food on the table and it could have a
3 crippling effect on that portion of the run, so be
4 careful how you manage that rest of it. Several people
5 wanted that on the record.

6
7 The fishers from Eagle indicated that
8 in the first pulse they only get small males in their
9 wheels when they're fishing and they asked can we just
10 fish only on the first pulse, just get the small males
11 since we're not getting large females, and then don't
12 fish the rest of the season, so that was something put
13 on the table.

14
15 The upper river asked that we not focus
16 on customary trade. That was a comment made by many
17 people. There was also a comment by a few to establish
18 true windows that do not get interrupted for anything,
19 including commercial harvest. You fish during the
20 window and that's it. Do not allow the sale of
21 commercially caught chinook salmon.

22
23 Lastly, again, establish harvest quotas
24 based on past percentage of harvest. So that's what
25 came out of those teleconferences. Once we finish
26 digesting all of it and talking to managers about it,
27 their plan is to come up with a draft plan based on
28 these recommendations and we'll be looking at working
29 with TCC, who is having a meeting the first week in
30 April, and we'll be having a meeting probably at the
31 end of their meeting. I imagine a lot of the
32 participants will be overlapping, which is good, so
33 they'll see what everybody is talking about. We'll try
34 and hash out a river-wide strategy. I don't know that
35 we'll get consensus, but at least we'll get everybody's
36 input and try and factor that into what the managers
37 put into the plan. That's the idea, to bring in the
38 fishers to clarify and to approve and understand the
39 other sides and ask questions.

40
41 Before I move on, I've got a couple
42 other things I'd like to mention, but I don't want to
43 get off topic, so if there are questions on this, I'd
44 like to stop .

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My question is on
47 the face to face meeting, what's the make up of that?
48 What's the selection? Are those YRDFA membership or
49 who is selected to attend that meeting?
50

1 MR. HALE: That is the question of the
2 day and a good one. We actually need to talk to TCC in
3 detail to find out who's coming to their meeting first.
4 The idea is we want to get as much river representation
5 as possible. The general party line we've been putting
6 out that we want to follow is we want tribal
7 representation, we want representation from cities and
8 we also are going to be looking to the RACs, looking to
9 people who are very actively involved in the fishery.
10 That's oftentimes YRDFA board members, sometimes it's
11 just other people who are participating in all the
12 fisheries meetings and also looking at the processors.
13 So a fair range of folks because we want representation
14 of everybody who depends on the resource. How is that
15 going to look in the end? Well, it's going to depend
16 on what we work out with TCC for who's coming to theirs
17 and making sure we have representation from everywhere
18 else.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Another point. I
21 was on the first teleconference and spoke on various
22 issues and one of those was the sale of the bycatch,
23 which was not reflected in the middle Yukon. I'm very
24 concerned about the sale of bycatch of chinook during
25 the directed chum fishery and the incentive to harvest
26 chinook in that fishery. And so that's one of my very
27 big concerns, is having a directed chum fishery in Y1
28 and Y2, and then catching last year 4,650 chinook. And
29 an unknown is how many fall out of that small gear and
30 are dead. The Department feels it's between 2 to 8
31 percent, but there's virtually no data on drop loss.

32
33 With that small a gear, the mortality
34 rate is much higher on large fish like that caught in
35 small mesh gear. So 4,600 harvested and then the high
36 mortality, those are figures beyond what is tolerable
37 in these low return years. Those are my big concerns.
38 I'm positive I referred to that sale of bycatch and I
39 was calling from the middle Yukon.

40
41 Any other discussion about the
42 presentation so far.

43
44 (No comments)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Jason.

47
48 MR. HALE: I'll be available throughout
49 the day if anybody comes up with any questions or
50 input. I'd like to get as much as possible on these

1 ideas or others so that when we get into that in-person
2 meeting if you're not there, we can be sure that your
3 comments are heard.

4

5 Just a couple other brief things. I
6 wanted to mention the salmon bycatch and some of the
7 YRDFA efforts. Becca Robbins-Gisclair, who is our
8 bycatch guru has asked that I ask everyone to please
9 send letters by March 25th to the North Pacific Fishery
10 Management Council requesting a hard cap of 32,500 or
11 below. That's the most important thing. If you're so
12 inclined, also sending letters by February 23rd to the
13 National Marine Fisheries Service regarding the Draft
14 Environmental Impact Statement. I have included a
15 green action alert and it has a sample letter you could
16 copy and sign. It also gives instructions on how to
17 send a letter to the Council. So feel free to use as a
18 guide.

19

20 I also wanted to make you aware that in
21 late January YRDFA sent a letter to the Council and to
22 NOAA fisheries Alaska region urging them to do the
23 following four things; to adopt hard cap of no more
24 than 32,500 immediately, to establish a stair-step
25 approach which further reduces that hard cap over time,
26 to develop and secure funding for research about
27 western Alaska salmon throughout their life cycles, and
28 to reject the industry incentive program proposals.

29

30 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

33

34 MR. COLLINS: It's important on that
35 hard cap that -- just the hard cap alone isn't enough
36 because one of the things they talked about. They
37 didn't want to turn that into an entitlement. One of
38 the proposals by the other is that, okay, if you didn't
39 come up to the cap, some other part of the fishery
40 could use that up until it reached that amount and that
41 shouldn't happen. So it's not only a hard cap, but
42 that there be no transferring between portions of the
43 fisheries. Like if they didn't get it in the earlier
44 one, could it go to the later, because then it becomes
45 an entitlement that they're allowed that many fish.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, that's a good
48 point. Robert.

49

50 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1 Jason, did you ask for any kind of better monitoring?
2 You know, they have people on board there. Aren't you
3 going to have somebody from YRDFA to be there?

4
5 My second question is windows, fishing
6 days. How many days do they fish? Now that they're
7 fishing longer due to the smaller catches each time
8 they do it, has that been discussed?

9
10 MR. HALE: I really wish I could give
11 you good answers for these, but since this was
12 basically language given to me by Becca, I don't want
13 to give you an answer that's not fully right. I could
14 get back to you or I could give you Becca's contact
15 information and you guys can hash it out, but I'm
16 afraid I can't tell you that. That's something she's
17 working on. I'm sorry.

18
19 MR. WALKER: Mr. Chair. Since you
20 already mailed a letter out already, this would have
21 been something to think about also. Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you have a
24 comment Tim?

25
26 MR. GERVAIS: Yes, Mr. Chair. I wanted
27 to comment to Jason that in talks I've had with three
28 observers that have worked on midwater trawl vessels
29 and speaking with probably four or five crew members
30 that have worked on deck there that their general
31 consensus is that they're actual bycatch is probably 20
32 to 40 percent over what comes down as reported bycatch.
33 For various reasons, which I can talk about at a
34 different time or now, but I just wanted to point out
35 that the reported bycatch is probably significantly
36 less than what's actually occurring.

37
38 Also, in your communication up to this
39 time with North Pacific Council, are they indicating
40 that they are willing to take some of these steps or is
41 there a lot of resistance to these hard caps in the
42 lower 28-32,000 range?

43
44 MR. HALE: I'm going to go off the cuff
45 here since, again, I'm not the bycatch guy. I talk to
46 Becca about it when she's around and in town. She's
47 indicated they are going to be considering all options.
48 They have to consider the industry or us, so they might
49 lean toward a number closer to 45, which makes it all
50 the more important to send letters in stressing the

1 importance of the resource and the need for a lower
2 cap. I guess, in the end, in theory, they're
3 considering any cap between 22 and what's the upper,
4 67. In practice, they'll probably gravitate toward the
5 middle, but the more input they have from users ideally
6 and hopefully that will sway. I can't say
7 definitively, but they're supposed to be looking at
8 everything. Please write letters to better the chances
9 of that lower number, which is what we would really
10 like to see.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince.

13

14 MR. MATHEWS: Two things. Why did
15 Becca pick the date of March 25th for a due date?
16 Council starts on March 30th and I know she works very
17 close with them, but do you have any knowledge why she
18 picked that date versus an earlier date because that's
19 only a couple days before the Management Council meets.

20

21

22 The other question is maybe you want to
23 explain if the Council so desire -- generally these
24 Councils, Eastern Interior, Western Interior, tend to
25 align with YRDFA, but the two Councils went with 29,323
26 and then YRDFA came out with 32,500 and I'm lost as to
27 why you went with 32,500. It might help as we dialogue
28 with this issue up to the April meeting to have an
29 explanation why YRDFA went with 32,500.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Jason.

32

33 MR. HALE: Again, I can't speak
34 definitely. Unless I'm mistaken, the Yukon River Panel
35 might have gone with 32,500 and Becca is on a bycatch
36 working group of a lot of users and I suspect they
37 backed that number. That's speculation on my part.
38 I'm kind of wavering out on thin ice and hoping it's
39 going to hold me. To confirm it before writing the
40 letter and figuring out what you're going to do, the
41 best thing would be for us to get you in contact with
42 her who has the definitive answers on these things.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Western Interior
45 Council's meeting in McGrath, YRDFA was telling us
46 29,323 or whatever it was and then we got word that
47 their number had changed to 32,500. Our Council is
48 transmitting a letter to the North Pacific Fisheries
49 Management Council. I suspected that's what had
50 occurred, the Panel had agreed upon that as a minimum

1 threshold, but I've yet to hear why YRDFA changed their
2 hard cap number. It's very important to keep that
3 down.

4
5 I, too, have talked to people that have
6 worked on deck and in the processing lines and the per
7 set or per haul is only a few fish, but they add up
8 because they're setting gear continuously 24 hours a
9 day and if they can throw 10 fish away, they've got
10 grinders this big around, 12 of them on board those
11 motherships, they grind bycatch like crazy. A few fish
12 going down the chute can reduce the bycatch
13 tremendously. I was of the opinion there was a common
14 practice to toss that bycatch over. You see a king or
15 any kind of salmon, you get rid of it as quickly as you
16 can. Those observers have to go to sleep and stuff.
17 Of course that's happening. That's just the way it's
18 going to be. This is a multi-billion-dollar fishery,
19 but we can't document that. This is all just hearsay,
20 just anecdotal people watching what's going on, working
21 on the ships.

22
23 So it's even more imperative to pare
24 this number to the absolute minimum because we're going
25 to have this chronic -- they call it fudge factor when
26 people harvest illegal moose and stuff. The fudge
27 factor for moose in the Koyukuk Region is 40 percent
28 over what's reported harvest. Well, that's just about
29 what the bycatch fudge factor is. So we have to go for
30 the lowest number. This Council has written a letter.
31 Do we also have one going to NMFS, the same letter
32 basically?

33
34 MR. MATHEWS: Two things. The letters
35 you guys wrote before were in response to the EIS and
36 then obviously those will be transferred to this as
37 written unless you guys add to it and I'm anticipating
38 that. So that's why I was asking on the comments
39 because North Pacific is like Board of Fish; they get
40 flooded with stuff. There is a power to bringing in
41 stuff later, closer to the meeting. I'll talk to Becca
42 on that, when to time that best. Dr. Stram attended
43 your meeting as well as Nicole Kimball. They just get a
44 flood of stuff, so you want to time it.

45
46 You'll have to decide at some point on
47 your agenda to reaffirm who is going to that April
48 meeting. I don't have dates. I've talked to our Staff
49 person who attends that and someone else. The road
50 map, they don't use that term with the Management

1 Council, but they do have kind of an order that's not
2 been determined.

3

4 I'm getting input from others that the
5 meeting was supposed to have multiple topics, but that
6 the salmon bycatch is going to dominate that meeting.
7 For those that may be going to that meeting, you may be
8 spending more than a day or two there on it. We'll
9 work out that situation.

10

11 I've not received anything from Y-K
12 Region. They did suggest a letter. I've not been able
13 to get a copy of that, so hopefully we get that so all
14 three Councils are communicating on the bycatch at
15 least where they stand so that when representatives go
16 to the Management Council they know where each other is
17 standing.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you for your
22 input. Do you have another comment, Tim.

23

24 MR. GERVAIS: Yes. I don't know if you
25 folks discussed this in McGrath last fall or maybe the
26 Panel would know the numbers. It seems as though the
27 pollock seasons have been extending in time over the
28 last decade in order to catch their quota. I was
29 wondering if that is correct that the amount of tow
30 days is increased by significant amounts and, if so, is
31 one tact we can take to tie these bycatch limits to
32 specific hours or days, that the seasons are lasting.
33 Like if the seasons are getting drawn out because of
34 sparse catches that the bycatch restrictions tighten up
35 or something like that because now the pollock fleet is
36 out there dragging their nets around for an extended
37 period of time, which is well above their historic
38 average.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This Council has
41 written letters in regards to the endurance of the
42 fishery, so that's part of the issue, is the longer
43 they're under their quotas and the more they tow, the
44 more bycatch they incur, so we've written letters
45 previously about that. We could include that issue
46 again into this letter that we're going to be sending
47 for reduction in the amount of fishing time and a
48 reduction in the quota also. I have concern for the
49 pollock itself. They're declining in size and age
50 class.

1 Did you have a comment, Ray.

2

3 MR. COLLINS: Yes, I have a couple
4 comments. One of them is a back up on your comment of
5 no sale of the bycatch. I think that's an important
6 one because if they couldn't sell that, it would go
7 into the subsistence fishery and that would reduce the
8 subsistence need.

9

10 The other one is that the reason for
11 eliminating it is my son, a number of years ago, was
12 working for one of the buyers down there and he said
13 one boat particularly would come in with a large number
14 of kings. Some of those fishermen have learned to fish
15 in a way that they can target kings down there because
16 he consistently brought in more than the others. So
17 eliminating that, there would be no incentive for doing
18 that, trying to target kings.

19

20 The other one would be, I'm wondering
21 if when you go to these meetings you're bringing any
22 facts or findings in, like on the windows. I'm on the
23 working group on the Kuskokwim and we were using
24 windows as a way of getting surges of fish up there
25 early. What we thought would happen would be that it
26 would spread the subsistence catch out over the season.
27 They tracked that for two years and somebody did a
28 study on that and it didn't. They found out that they
29 fished harder during those open periods, so it didn't
30 change the subsistence catch at all in terms of the
31 timing. The incentive was too much because of weather
32 to get them while it was warm, so they just fished
33 harder during that period. That information could be
34 put in when they're having these discussions. So we
35 finally eliminated them last year and took them out of
36 the subsistence fishery entirely. There is a study on
37 that. I can't remember the fellow who was reporting on
38 that, but there is a biologist that was -- yeah.

39

40 MR. BUSHER: Mr. Chairman. I believe
41 it was Bromaghin. He's a biometrician with the
42 Department and he looked at calendar data and
43 subsistence harvest information since 2001 when the
44 window schedule was put in place in the lower Yukon. I
45 think he may have looked at that too on the Kuskokwim.
46 There is information there and I don't have it and I
47 can't really address the findings, but I can get it to
48 you or the Council.

49

50 MR. COLLINS: I was thinking of getting

1 it to the ones that are doing the discussions on there
2 so that's brought into the conversation as they discuss
3 some of those options.

4
5 The other is, one of the reasons we did
6 away with it, is it was working a hardship on some of
7 the elders because some of them were still using
8 setnets and for them to have to sit and pull their nets
9 was a hardship on them as opposed to being able to
10 leave them in until they got the fish they wanted.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're talking two
13 different kinds of bycatch. We're talking in-river
14 bycatch and the directed chum fishery and we're talking
15 about the Bering Sea trawl bycatch. So we are going to
16 transmit a letter from this Council to the North
17 Pacific Fisheries Management Council and a reduction of
18 the endurance of the fishery should be an insertion
19 into that or stressed in our letter.

20
21 Any other comments on the YRDFA
22 teleconferencing and then this bycatch issue. Mickey,
23 go ahead.

24
25 MR. STICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
26 didn't have nothing on the YRDFA teleconferences, but I
27 did have something on the 2009 outlook.

28
29 Anybody that depends on fish knows that
30 if you're going to be catching less kings to put away
31 for your family for the winter, the one thing you're
32 going to do is fish harder for fall chum because if you
33 don't meet your need on kings for the winter, you're
34 going to look somewhere else. A typical fisherman on
35 the Yukon is going to be looking at fall chum for
36 making salmon strips and eating fish and they're going
37 to use that specific salmon for making up for what they
38 don't get in the king fishery. That's just been a
39 traditional practice for as long as I can remember. If
40 you don't get enough kings, you fish a lot harder for
41 silvers.

42
43 My point is it's not going to be a
44 normal subsistence catch because if we don't get enough
45 kings that we need for the winter, we're going to be
46 targeting the silvers more. That's a point that as
47 managers you should know.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's an excellent
50 point. If you're going to deflect the subsistence

1 harvest away from the chinook, then there could be a
2 significant increase in fall chum and coho harvest.

3

4 Any other questions or comments on this
5 YRDFA. Go ahead, Tim.

6

7 MR. GERVAIS: I was wondering through
8 the teleconference or other communications people are
9 concerned about fish size. Is there any
10 recommendations that are coming out to deal with that
11 issue, strategies?

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

14

15 MR. HALE: I can throw out what's been
16 discussed. A lot of people are talking about this
17 Bromaghin mesh size study, which would seem to indicate
18 that going to smaller mesh size is going to help the
19 size of the salmon, but then you look at the other side
20 of the coin and a lot of this was discussed on the
21 middle river call. Actually Jack brought up quite a
22 few of the points about concern of drop out and the
23 lack of studies on drop out from going to smaller mesh
24 gear. So, I guess, yes, with a large but would be the
25 answer.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The mesh size issue
28 goes from one extreme to the other. We go to over mesh
29 size, basically taking off the larger fish leaving
30 smaller fish to go through the nets or we go, as some
31 upriver Eastern Interior people say, down to 6-inch
32 gear and the perception is that the big fish bounce off
33 the nets and swim away and we take all the smaller
34 jacks out of the population. Well, that's not the way
35 it works. You kill a lot of the big fish and they fall
36 out of the net and they sink.

37

38 If you're losing 20 percent of the
39 kings that drop out of the net, those aren't doing
40 anybody any good. So it goes from one extreme to the
41 other. What the selectivity study is supposed to do is
42 come out with a gear size type that catches the most
43 fish that are present so people meet their subsistence
44 needs with the least amount of effort. So those are
45 two different issues and one affects the size of the
46 fish and one affects how many fish are actually --
47 you're going to induce a lot of mortality without any
48 return for it.

49

50 Any other comments.

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have some real
4 concerns that I voiced in the first conference call and
5 I'll voice to the Council here. My concerns are the
6 lower river has asked for assistance and their
7 highlighting their economic downturn, so everybody in
8 the whole rural Alaska has the same issue, so they've
9 petitioned the governor for a commercial fishery and
10 the sentiment is for that. So they're going to have a
11 directed chum fishery. If they have enough summer
12 chum, they will have a directed chum fishery. My
13 concern is the bycatch is going to be an incentive
14 because they're selling them for \$4.50 a pound. So I
15 would strongly recommend no sale of chinook salmon
16 caught in the directed chum fishery.

17

18 My concern is that the directed chum
19 fishery is going to occur too soon in the summer chum
20 run when there's still a lot of chinook present and
21 there will be high mortality incidental harvest either
22 taken or outright harvested or that they're falling out
23 of the gear. I would stress pushing the opening dates
24 back to where there will be the least likelihood to
25 impact the passage of the chinook run in concurrence
26 with the directed chum fishery for summer chum. I'd
27 look at those dates and look at when those chinook were
28 harvested. Push those periods back further. Push them
29 away from when there's a lot of chinook present. I
30 know you're going to have that chum fishery. It's
31 going to happen.

32

33 And I'm very concerned that when the
34 Department tries to come up with data to tell us how
35 many fish fall out of undersized gear with a directed
36 fishery, they cannot come up with data, red lights
37 should be lighting up all over everybody's panel. I
38 used to fish in Bristol Bay. You go down on the Igigik
39 north marker line or the Johnson Hill line, there are
40 hundreds of thousands of fish that fall out of nets and
41 are washed up on the beach in wind rows that deep
42 rotting for miles on the beach. Drop out is a huge,
43 huge issue. When you amplify it to that kind of level
44 and you smell the results of what's happening,
45 undersize gear is a big issue. The Department and the
46 Federal managers have to start
47 enumerating this issue.

48

49 The managers have to come up with a
50 quantifiable amount so that they can manage with the

1 knowledge that this amount of fish is going to fall out
2 of gear with these size nets. That should have been
3 done long ago. I think it has, but these things get
4 forgotten. They get filed away in the barn out there
5 in Cramer's Field or somewhere and things get lost. So
6 the reality is there's a huge need for this drop loss
7 data.

8

9 Those are my concerns for this year.
10 Any other concerns the Council would have about the
11 coming fishery on the Yukon River.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I would like to
16 see a letter from this Council with our concerns sent
17 to that face-to-face meeting with YRDFA with those
18 types of concerns I've just enumerated. Would the
19 Council be in favor of transmitting a letter to that
20 YRDFA working group.

21

22 MR. STICKMAN: I guess I'll just make a
23 motion and see if we get a second and have a vote on
24 it.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay.

27

28 MR. WALKER: I'll second that motion.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've got a motion
31 and a second to transmit that letter to enumerate
32 concerns for the coming Yukon River chinook. Some of
33 those concerns would be what I just enumerated, having
34 a directed chum fishery too early in the chinook
35 passage and having incidental high mortality.

36

37 Does the Council want to address any
38 kind of moratorium on the first half of the chinook
39 passage or anything like that in that letter? Robert.

40

41 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
42 As YRDFA knows, a lot of times when the chinook salmon
43 come into the Yukon they are mixed with summer chums
44 and the fall chum in the fall time, so it is going to
45 be hard to determine how it is going to be done.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

48

49 MR. GERVAIS: I think one issue I would
50 like to see addressed in the letter, I don't know if

1 it's within our authority.....

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's just a
4 recommendation.

5

6 MR. GERVAIS: To not allow the
7 incidental king bycatch sold on the chum openings.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The letter should be
10 the incidental bycatch sale in the directed chum
11 fishery not allowed. The point of initiation of the
12 summer chum, when that occurs, should be delayed and
13 the need for data on this drop loss and that these
14 incidental harvested chinook should go into the
15 subsistence use of the lower river.

16

17 Does the Council want to discuss this
18 moratorium that Sidney has proposed? Would the Council
19 feel comfortable with a moratorium on the first pulse?
20 If not, we won't include it.

21

22 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
23 would support it for our region, but I'd certainly like
24 to hear the other members comment how it affects their
25 villages.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. The fishers
28 here on the Yukon to allow Canadian passage, if
29 everybody got together and said we're not going to fish
30 the first pulse, would that be tolerable or is that
31 intolerable?

32

33 MR. STICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 One thing for sure in this area and also Y4A, Sidney
35 has a lot of respect from the people, not only from his
36 20 years of experience on the Game Board, but he was
37 the one person that brought commercial chum fishing to
38 the area a lot of years ago. Sidney created an
39 industry that brought millions of dollars into the area
40 for 20 years and then we lost the returns, so the
41 commercial industry was closed for chums. During the
42 10-year time period that people didn't fish
43 commercially here the market shifted. So even though
44 there's a large number of commercial fishermen in Y4A
45 that have their licenses, the market is not there.

46

47 But I would go along with his
48 recommendation, personally. I think a lot of people in
49 Nulato would support him.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I heard Sidney on
2 the teleconference and he was basically asking for a
3 moratorium on chinook harvest. I was wondering what
4 the Council would think about an outright moratorium on
5 chinook harvest.

6
7 Vince, do you have a comment.

8
9 MR. MATHEWS: To make it clear for all
10 the Council members, Sidney asked for a five to six
11 year moratorium, one life cycle. For those that didn't
12 listen to the teleconference it just wasn't for some
13 coming season, it was for a full life cycle.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. That's a
16 fairly large pill to swallow, a complete closure for
17 six years. You'll have to search deep in your soul on
18 that one. I would be uncomfortable with that myself.

19
20 MR. STICKMAN: Yes, me too. The way I
21 understood it was a moratorium on the first pulse. A
22 six-year moratorium, I wouldn't agree with something
23 like that unless it was really totally absolutely
24 necessary.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That would be my
27 position. I would be more inclined because we've
28 under-escaped Canada. It would not hurt to have a
29 moratorium on the first pulse to allow the fish to go
30 to Canada and then we fish on the second and third
31 pulse. I would feel much more comfortable with that as
32 being a management objective for this year.

33
34 You've got a comment, Fred. Come up to
35 the microphone and speak.

36
37 MR. HUNTINGTON: My name is Fred
38 Huntington and I was on the teleconference. What
39 Sidney was talking about was not only on the river for
40 the chinook salmon. He was talking about the Bering
41 Sea also. If you close it on river and the fish spawn
42 and make it back out to sea, if it's not stopped out in
43 the Bering Sea, the fish are not coming back. So he
44 was talking about the whole system of chinook salmon,
45 to stop fishing wherever there's chinook salmon until
46 they come back. He didn't mean only on the Yukon.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, you might have
49 misunderstood that. That would be nice if everybody
50 agreed to do that in the Bering Sea, but that's not

1 going to happen either. We can't rely on that. How
2 would this Council feel about consciencously going for
3 a moratorium of no harvest on the first pulse of
4 chinook this year? Would the Council agree to that?
5 Robert.

6

7

MR. WALKER: Sure.

8

9

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If the Council is in
10 agreement on a moratorium on harvest on the first
11 pulse, which is predominately Canadian bound chinook
12 salmon, that could be inserted into the letter to be
13 transmitted to the working groups who are working on
14 this management.

15

16

Go ahead, Ray.

17

18

MR. COLLINS: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. If
19 they try a moratorium like on the first pulse, I think
20 it's going to have to be combined with something else
21 or you're going to end up with over-fishing no those
22 other two pulses in order to get what people need. I
23 think you would have to have the elimination of the
24 customary trade or some way to reduce the number that's
25 going to be taken out of the second. You may help the
26 Canadian run, but you may be doing more damage to the
27 run. So if there was some combination for a year to
28 see what the impact would be, to see if that allowed
29 the escapement into Canada or not, one year would tell
30 you whether closing that first pulse would increase it
31 enough up there. At the same time, I don't think you'd
32 want to leave the other two wide open or without doing
33 some other steps too.

34

35

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm not going for
36 like seven days a week after that. We're going back to
37 the regular windows and other cautionaries that the
38 managers would use to fish appropriately on the second
39 and third pulse. What I'm talking about is just going
40 for a moratorium to let one full pulse through to where
41 it can try to meet the these escapement needs into
42 Canada. We have to start meeting this obligation over
43 there. Also, 50 percent of the fish that are harvested
44 for chinook on the Yukon are coming from the Canadian
45 component, so we're just killing the goose that lays
46 the golden egg. We have to start taking care of that.

47

48

Go ahead, Robert.

49

50

MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 The biologists have to come up with a calendar saying
2 Y1, Y2 and Y3 are not going to start fishing until
3 probably the 10th of June when the window is open for
4 them. Go up to Y4, they're going to have to have
5 different windows again because as the fish move along,
6 it's going to be closed and after the first pulse goes
7 by, then someone is going to have to say the window
8 will start like the 15th of June.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

11

12 MR. WALKER: The further upriver you
13 go, it's going to start the 20th, 25th, as it goes
14 along. So there has to be some kind of regulation
15 here.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: They put telemetry
18 on the fish and they know pretty much how fast they
19 swim up the river, so when the pulse goes through and
20 they're by Pilot Station, then there's going to have to
21 be a triggering of the windows after that. There will
22 basically be a closure for chinook until that pulse
23 goes through and then these windows will be triggering,
24 just like you said, going all the way up the river.
25 That's a good point, excellent point.

26

27 Any other discussion on this letter to
28 be transmitted to the working group.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think that covers
33 the main concerns of the Council. There's basically
34 four points; the moratorium on the first pulse, the
35 drop out data, the no sale of incidental harvested
36 chinook in the directed chum fishery and pushing the
37 opening of the directed chum fishery back to have the
38 least adverse impact to the passage of the trailing end
39 of the chinook run. That would be the four points.

40

41 Do you have a point there, Vince.

42

43 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. You would
44 also want this letter probably to go to the Trans-
45 Boundary.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

48

49 MR. MATHEWS: I'm not going to get the
50 whole title, but the Trans-Boundary and Yukon River

1 salmon status. The other thing, and Jason brought it
2 up earlier and I was waiting until later, but I think
3 the time is now. I have to ask Jason a question. The
4 makeup of this group in April, my understanding is the
5 funding for members going to that would be covered
6 through this Yukon Panel funding?

7
8 MR. HALE: That's correct. We budgeted
9 to bring 24 people from the river to this meeting and
10 now with TCC bringing in a slew of people as well, that
11 broadens our ability a bit because we can hopefully
12 entice some of the TCC meeting people to come to ours
13 and vice versa. The short answer is, yes, we do have
14 money for travel.

15
16 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. What I'm
17 bringing up here, is this Council interested in sending
18 a representative and in that did you want it to be if
19 YRDFA can't cover it, then we petition the Federal
20 program to do it or whatever. It's obvious to me that
21 that meeting is going to be important to cover these
22 points. Jack already knows this. A lot of these points
23 you brought up are quite controversial on the river.
24 In order for them to get a good hearing, someone is
25 going to have to be there. I can't put it any other
26 way. These are not going to go over well with other
27 components of the river.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. It would be
30 to the Council's advantage, to the resource and the
31 users of the Western Interior's advantage to have
32 representation. If one of our Council members wasn't
33 there under another hat, then I would like to see
34 someone from this Council attend that meeting.

35
36 MR. STICKMAN: I think it should be the
37 Chair.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I could do that if
40 the Council feels comfortable with that. Another point
41 I would like to see in this letter is that we do not go
42 to a smaller gear size change. When we go to the
43 fishing for chinook in the second and third pulse, that
44 we should use the same gear size. There's a lot of
45 pressure to go to 6-inch gear. People either don't
46 have the 6-inch gear or if we directed a chinook
47 fishery for subsistence with chum gear that would be a
48 fairly catastrophic event. If there's a gear change on
49 the Yukon, it has to have an implementation period, a
50 phase-in period. That should be part of our letter.

1 Point 5 be that we fish the second and third pulse with
2 the appropriate gear types that's customarily used to
3 this point.

4

5 Do you have a comment? Go ahead,
6 Eleanor.

7

8 MS. YATLIN: Mr. Chairman. I just
9 wanted to make a comment because we don't -- like I
10 stated earlier, myself and my husband stay in camp and
11 we harvest all the fish we get. I guess this is known
12 They talk about customary trade here and this is known
13 that a majority of the people in Huslia they end up the
14 Koyukuk River, they buy the fish. The last couple
15 years we haven't been buying -- when we buy the salt
16 strips, we never buy the king, you know, chum salmon
17 anymore. It's the silvers. It's a fact we've been
18 buying silvers, salt strips.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's actually an
21 excellent point to bring up, Eleanor. There's
22 discussion of customary trade, which I feel occur
23 within rural to rural, so it's how those subsistence
24 fish are disseminated throughout the populace within
25 the region.

26

27 Point 6 should be that we do not
28 preclude customary trade rural to rural. How does the
29 Council feel about that?

30

31 MR. STICKMAN: Well, I'm glad Eleanor
32 brought it up because that's one of the things I do
33 personally. When I bring salmon strips to Huslia, when
34 I'm going back home I'm bringing smoked dry meet. I do
35 a direct exchange for fish for dry meat when I go to
36 Huslia.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That would fall
39 under barter, which is a slightly different category.
40 Customary trade would be somebody puts up some fish and
41 sells a few strips for gas money to other people.
42 Rural to rural is a very important aspect of customary
43 trade at least within the Western Interior region.

44

45 Any other comments. Tim.

46

47 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
48 think in the Ruby area customary trade exists. It's at
49 a fairly mild level. However, I'm looking at this
50 lower river recommendations and it's the first on the

1 list that they'd like to address. Perhaps in other
2 parts of the drainage the amount of customary trade is
3 much more significant. Jason, can you maybe share some
4 of those comments and what kind of volumes that
5 customary trade is going on down there.

6

7 MR. GERKEN: I don't think there's any
8 numbers out there that say customary trade for this
9 region or anywhere on the river actually.

10

11 MR. HALE: Russ did mention in the last
12 call, and I don't know his source, but you asked for
13 what comments had been out there and I can share that
14 on one of the calls he did give the number at 20,000
15 kings on average for the Yukon River. I don't know
16 where the number came from.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Mickey.

19

20 MR. STICKMAN: When it comes to
21 customary trade, one of the things that needs to be
22 stressed, for some people that do customary trade
23 that's their only income. That's how they survive, pay
24 the electricity bills, water bills or food they buy at
25 the store. It affords them the ability to live out
26 here.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Vince.

29

30 MR. MATHEWS: Well, on the customary
31 trade thing, I think it would be a good after lunch
32 discussion, so we can brief you on what that all
33 involves. We won't get into numbers. We're not going
34 there. It's just an understanding what is legal under
35 Federal.

36

37 The other thing is, and I'm doing this
38 for strategy, is -- Robert, you attended the Trans-
39 Boundary tribal meeting. Is it your understanding that
40 you would go again to that meeting? Those are going to
41 be back to back. That's the other thing I would like
42 Jason to explain, the possible dates of this. Also,
43 you may have other Council members that are going in a
44 different capacity.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Go ahead,
47 Jason.

48

49 MR. HALE: As for the dates, the TCC
50 meeting has been, to my understanding, set in stone for

1 the 8th and 9th of April, which is directly after the
2 North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting, which
3 ends on the 7th. As such, it's likely we would have
4 our meeting on Friday or our portion of the combined
5 meeting if it comes out that way.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're coming down on
8 lunch. This letter would go to the Trans-Boundary and
9 the managers and YRDFA. Any other discussion on the
10 letter.

11

12 MR. STICKMAN: Maybe we should just
13 make it an action item, like a motion and a second to
14 go on record.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There is a motion
17 and a second. The points we discussed, are those
18 adequate for the letter?

19

20 MR. STICKMAN: I'll call for the
21 question then, Mr. Chair.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question has
24 been called. All in favor on the letter to be
25 transmitted to YRDFA, the Trans-Boundary working group
26 and ADF&G, US Fish and Wildlife managers, signify by
27 saying aye.

28

29 IN UNISON: Aye.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those not in favor.

32

33 (No opposing votes)

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Unanimously voted
36 and passed by the Western Interior Council. What time
37 is lunch, Vince?

38

39 MR. MATHEWS: I don't know where lunch
40 is. I just know that customary trade opens up a whole
41 other discussion point and I just thought it would be
42 best if you wanted to discuss customary trade after
43 lunch.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Tim.

46

47 MR. GERVAIS: I had a comment maybe for
48 Vince or anybody that might know the answer. I don't
49 think the North Pacific Council is going to be very
50 receptive to granting our hard cap recommendation due

1 to political and lobby pressure. I was wondering if
2 there's a different avenue we could take to provide
3 some protection for the king salmon. Is there anything
4 regarding habitat? By noting that the Bering Sea is
5 habitat for these fish, that we can bring that into the
6 discussion and ask for protection of the habitat for
7 the species.

8

9 MR. MATHEWS: I don't have a clear
10 answer on that, but I know in other correspondence you
11 guys have talked about the Bering Sea, overharvesting
12 the resource that provides for those fish. I'm not
13 familiar with what authority NMFS has on habitat. I
14 know what you're striving for, but I don't know what
15 triggers are in there on habitat. There may be someone
16 else on the open sea. What factors they use to
17 determine seasons, quotas, et cetera. I'm oblivious to
18 that. That relates to habitat.

19

20 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

23

24 MR. COLLINS: At the Kodiak meeting
25 when they were talking about that, they were talking
26 about hot spots. If they found too many king salmon
27 there, they would move it to another one. One of the
28 problems in trying to do that is it seems the king
29 salmon and the other may be targeting the same food
30 source. One of the reasons it creates the hot spots is
31 they're eating crill or something, so you can't really
32 eliminate part of the habitat for king salmon and
33 figure the pollock are going to be somewhere else
34 because they're targeting the same thing. It's all
35 tied together in that sense.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. The marine
38 system would be beyond the purview of this Council.
39 That's basically NMFS territory. All we can do is
40 lobby for the returning fish within this area and have
41 input on proper management to assure that those fish
42 remain healthy and return back to their natal streams
43 of origin. We can't really tell NMFS how to manage the
44 ocean. We can in a way, but not in reality. We'll get
45 that letter typed up. When should that letter be
46 received by YRDFA, Jason?

47

48 MR. HALE: I would love to see it by
49 the end of the first week in March. The reason being
50 if the managers are going to be using information from

1 all the teleconferences to come up with a draft plan,
2 I'd like to see the information in the letter included
3 in those considerations.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Okay.
6 Vince.

7

8 MR. MATHEWS: You're saying the first
9 week of March?

10

11 MR. HALE: Did I say May?

12

13 MR. MATHEWS: You said March.

14

15 MR. HALE: Oh, good. Yes. That's
16 exactly what I meant. Is that too tight? If not, then
17 as soon as possible.

18

19 MR. MATHEWS: I'm not getting you to
20 change your dates. I'm saying what is the most
21 advantageous and then we can negotiate from there.
22 Your meeting is on the 10th of April. So it would
23 still be the first week of March?

24

25 MR. HALE: Yes, because I don't know
26 when the fisheries managers are going to be starting to
27 work on their drafts. I want to make sure they have
28 that letter in their hand before they do. I figure the
29 sooner the better, but I don't think they'll be working
30 on it before then.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince, our letter
33 that we have formulated to the North Pacific Fisheries
34 Management Council is going to be address to this
35 address also on the back of this green sheet here.
36 We're going to be sending it to this Robert Mecum also?

37

38 MR. STICKMAN: He's talking about the
39 draft Environmental Impact Statement.

40

41 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I know that. I went
42 back and forth with Dr. Stram on this. Yes, if that's
43 what YRDFA has discovered, then the comment letter to
44 the management council will go there. Comment letters
45 already went to him under the EIS. Don't get confused
46 here.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So it is
49 hitting all the right points.

50

1 MR. MATHEWS: It hit the right point,
2 one point so far. We have to hit the other point.
3 That is the letter you've already written. We'll get
4 it to Dr. Mecum.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.
7

8 MR. MATHEWS: Diana and Nicole are
9 tracking this, so it's really important and I know Jack
10 has been in dialogue with them. They are behind the
11 scenes making this work too, but we need to get it to
12 them. We've already met on the back of the page how to
13 comment, comment ideas. That's already done. That's
14 in the works. That was sent to Robert.

15
16 For the comments to the Council, which
17 would be resubmitting your letters that were sent to
18 Mecum, will be sent to the address on the bottom. Is
19 everybody clear? The reason that is is you have an EIS
20 process that has its own mechanism going and you have a
21 board process that has written comments. We've already
22 met the EIS. We're done. Now we're going to take those
23 same letters and any other correspondence and meet this
24 other one for written comments.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see. Okay.
27

28 MR. MATHEWS: Even though it may be the
29 same Staff, they have to track these in different ways.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Appreciate
32 that clarification, Vince. I see Sidney Huntington has
33 come in. I want to recognize Sidney. Do you have
34 something to say about Yukon River fishery. Fred,
35 maybe he can come up to the mike if he wants to say
36 something. When Sidney shows up, we've got to yield
37 the floor.

38
39 (Laughter)
40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Welcome to the
42 meeting, Sidney. Glad to see you.

43
44 MR. HUNTINGTON: I would like to hear
45 what you fellows are saying, but what he writes down
46 I'll be able to understand. I have a very deep concern
47 for the Yukon king salmon at this point in time. I'd
48 like to mention other things, subsistence category plus
49 what's been happening here in the past.

50

1 I want you to understand that I never
2 was in favor of the subsistence law period. When I was
3 on the Board of Game for 19 and a half years, I told
4 the Board 20 years from now there will be a bunch of
5 lives ones on the board underneath me that will
6
7 leave the subsistence law unsolved. That's where we
8 are today.

9
10 To start with subsistence law was fine
11 when they invented it the first time and then they
12 started contradicting it and what not. These were
13 subsistence users that lived in the Bush at that point
14 in time. We had 10, 15 people come up from Southeast
15 up the Koyukuk River, subsistence hunters born and
16 raised in Alaska. White men, coming up hunting on the
17 Koyukuk River. Leaving with a lousy one year bull
18 moose. That's the subsistence law. That's why I was
19 not in favor of that.

20
21 Six years ago you probably know I wrote
22 a letter to the Fish and Game, the Board of Game
23 concerning the king salmon. I want you to know that I
24 do know a little bit about that stuff. I started the
25 fisheries up here. I involved the fishers along the
26 Yukon. We had to quite because the streams could not
27 support commercial fishing at the rate we were going.
28 I said 2 million pounds of fish in one summer, chum
29 salmon. Very few people fished kings. Very few people
30 had the equipment to fish kings. I went out of
31 business in that respect. I had employed Native
32 people. The day come when I sold out. I didn't want
33 to have nothing to do with it. They wanted to buy low
34 and nothing to do with the fish. That's when I sold
35 mine to the Japanese.

36
37 Then I decided, well, maybe we can make
38 something out of smoked salmon. I spent \$139,000
39 building a camp to meet the environment mandate. They
40 didn't know one damn thing about smoked Yukon salmon.
41 They were making the laws when I was making the camp. I
42 had to fight them tooth and nail. Finally the
43 subsistence bycatch of king salmon was putting me out
44 of business. I could not compete with them.

45
46 I had to sell wholesale. When the fall
47 run come, I did good because people were not after the
48 fall chum. I put up and sold up to 6,000 pounds of
49 salmon and mostly all Yukon fall chum. Right now, this
50 past summer, three men on the lower Yukon, and you

1 probably know but nobody says nothing. They caught
2 about 4,500 king salmon and put them on the market in
3 Anchorage. Because they were subsistence users they
4 were able to subsistence and get cash money for
5 subsistence caught fish. For me it was illegal. I
6 went out of business. They broke me and I had to quit.
7 My fish camp sits up there today with my money stuck
8 into it.

9

10 We'll never have fish if we keep doing
11 what we're doing. Catching king salmon and putting it
12 in the freezer, all going to the market in Anchorage
13 and whatnot. I had one man come to me this summer,
14 this winter, and I asked him how is the fishing up
15 there in a village somewhere. He said, well, good, but
16 they're really lousy fish, but I sold them. He said I
17 had four pounds that's all when I went to Fairbanks and
18 found \$25 a pound. A fellow jumped up and said, no, I
19 want some too. He took a \$100 bill out. That's what
20 he paid for it. That's your subsistence catch.

21

22 If we're going to save the king salmon,
23 we can't mess around with how many hours we're going to
24 fish today, what day we're going to fish or what the
25 hell we're going to do. It don't work now. You have
26 the Fish and Wildlife, Fish and Game monitoring the
27 catch on the river. They don't know their butt from a
28 hole in the ground for the simple reason they cannot
29 buck the subsistence law. It's mandated by the Federal
30 government. It is the wrong law and they won't protect
31 the resource one damn bit. If you want a good
32 subsistence law, you have to make it for the people.

33

34 Look at how long they've been trying to
35 do damage control on the Koyukuk. 1974. You know what
36 to do, but I'm afraid this won't work. We've got to
37 hang onto that stuff. If we want fish 20 years from
38 now for our grandchildren and whatnot, this is what
39 we're going to have to do. We have to close it. Close
40 the salmon completely for so many years. I'd love one
41 life span on the Yukon. Close it for that period of
42 time so we can catch fish later on for our
43 grandchildren and preserve our wildlife resources. If
44 it wasn't for our wildlife resources, I wouldn't be
45 here talking today because that's the backbone of this
46 country and the people that live there. We've got to
47 preserve it. The only way to preserve it is to close
48 it down for about five to eight years.

49

50 Everybody gets help, get a new house.

1 If a woman has four kids, that's not enough, have
2 another kid, then they give them another check so they
3 can play bingo. Everybody gets a hand for free. I
4 never got two bits from anybody in my life. I worked
5 for it. I raised 20-some kids. There's no difference
6 than other people because we're the same damn thing.

7
8 I say we close the salmon. We're not
9 going to stop. We've got a damn good fall run of fish
10 that's equal or better than the king salmon is today
11 for the simple reason we're setting big, deep nets, how
12 many feet, 30 feet some of them. We're catching the
13 mother lode out of the bottom of the river with our
14 driftnets. We've already done the damage. The only
15 way to bring it back is to close it. When we close the
16 Yukon king salmon, we've got to close those greedy guy
17 from Washington and whatnot that come up here catching
18 our bycatch.

19
20 Years ago on the Koyukuk River alone
21 there was famine after famine. People moved over there
22 to the rich Yukon salmon to survive because those days
23 we had very cold weather and they'd go right down to
24 the bottom of the river where the spawning grounds
25 were. 1932 I fished in Nulato. Caught 800 dog salmon.
26 That's all there was. For the simple reason nature
27 took care of it and didn't bring them back. We don't
28 have that today because of the warmer climate and
29 whatnot, but we had the bycatch and illegally selling
30 bycatch and the Federal government says it's all right.
31 Do you think somebody is going to stop at \$5,000 when
32 you can make 20? They don't and that's all true.

33
34 I know a lot of people don't like the
35 way I talk, but that's the way it's got to be if the
36 Yukon fish is going to survive. Other than that, like
37 I say, I was on the Board of Game for 20 years almost.
38 I argued. That's why Jim Reardon wrote that book on
39 me, because I was worried about the Native people and
40 we're making the wrong laws. We changed a lot of that
41 and a lot of good came out of that. We've got to make
42 more things stick if we want to maintain the resource.

43
44 Thank you everybody. That's about it.
45 Too bad I can't answer your questions.

46
47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate your
48 words, Sidney.

49
50 (Applause)

1 MR. HUNTINGTON: I really feel serious
2 about what's going on today with the fish. It won't be
3 long and we won't have any fish.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's right. We're
6 with you on a lot of the points. Jason has another
7 point there to make. Go right ahead.

8
9 MR. HALE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
10 a really fast, light small point. YRDFA has recently
11 published a book, an atlas, entitled the Middle Koyukuk
12 River of Alaska, an Atlas of Fishing Places and
13 Traditional Place Names. Koyukuk River residents asked
14 YRDFA to document changes in salmon spawning grounds
15 before their elders passed on and the knowledge passed
16 on with them. They were worried that the youth wasn't
17 learning everything and they wanted to make sure it was
18 documented. So YRDFA created this atlas as an
19 attractive and practical way to preserve some of that
20 important knowledge for all to share. It does have
21 some detailed maps. I brought a stack of them.

22
23 That was my happy, fun note. Thank you
24 for your time.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate your
27 presentation and we always appreciate Sidney's words.
28 He builds a fire under the Council and pushes us in the
29 right way a lot of times.

30
31 At what point are we here, Vince?

32
33 MR. MATHEWS: I don't know what's
34 happening with lunch, but I think it's a good break and
35 we'll see where that's at.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Should we go to a
38 break then?

39
40 MR. MATHEWS: I think it would be good
41 for a break.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. We'll break
44 for lunch and hopefully it will show up any minute.

45
46 (Off record)

47
48 (On record)

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Vince.

1 MR. MATHEWS: When we left off, we were
2 encouraging you to possibly discuss a little bit more
3 about customary trade. I think that might be a good
4 thing to bring up. I'm coining it as an educational
5 opportunity so people understand what is allowable
6 under customary trade. We do have Staff here that is
7 willing to do that and you have that mustard colored
8 question and answer sheet that might help you. That
9 might be a good start.

10
11 Finally, for a housekeeping item, if
12 you overpaid, she's got the money there to do that. We
13 appreciate your patience on that. I will have to
14 reconnect the phone. Larry Buklis and I believe other
15 Staff would be available to kind of give you an
16 understanding of customary trade.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. That sounds
19 like a good position to start at. Larry, if you want
20 to give an overview for the Council on what is
21 considered customary trade so the new Council members
22 especially will understand what the differences are,
23 what is considered customary trade. Go ahead, Vince,
24 on the phone thing.

25
26 Larry.

27
28 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
29 Larry Buklis, Office of Subsistence Management. As
30 Vince mentioned, you've got this mustard-colored
31 handout sheet. Mr. Chairman, there's a few things I'll
32 cover here. Maybe first I'll start with this
33 informational handout and point out a few key points
34 and maybe take questions and then move on from there.

35
36 I think a main point to make is that
37 the definition of subsistence in ANILCA does include
38 customary trade as one of the aspects, so it's provided
39 for in the definition of subsistence. About halfway
40 down on the first page there's this long section under
41 customary trade that gets at the regulations that the
42 Board has developed to provide for customary trade. I
43 think the main point I'd make here is that the Federal
44 regulations allow customary trade transactions between
45 rural residents and they provide for that to continue,
46 but they do limit the transactions between rural
47 residents and non-rural residents. The fish sold in
48 that way need to be used for personal and family
49 consumption by the person who receives it.

50

1 So rural to rural is provided for.
2 Rural to non-rural is provided for in the regulations,
3 but the non-rural person receiving such fish are to be
4 using it for their personal and family consumption.
5 These transactions are not meant to be of a commercial
6 enterprise nature. A significant commercial
7 enterprise. Now I know that's a phrase that's open to
8 interpretation.

9
10 A couple more points on this handout.
11 The regulations only apply to fish harvested on Federal
12 public lands because these are the Federal ANILCA
13 subsistence regulations. Then in bold at the end of
14 that middle part of the first page is a statement.
15 Maybe I'll just read it. These customary trade
16 regulations don't circumvent health restrictions and
17 they're not meant to work around the health
18 restrictions. So it says customary trade regulations
19 do not exempt the seller from state food safety
20 regulations. In practical terms, the only type of
21 customary trade allowable for those who do not process
22 their fish in accordance with state food safety
23 regulations is the sale of fresh, uncut, unprocessed
24 fish.

25
26 Mr. Chairman, strictly speaking, these
27 Federal regulations are speaking to fish caught in
28 Federal jurisdiction and if not processed under the
29 proper permitting rules, then it's the movement of
30 fresh fish, not even cut. So you know more than I
31 about the practices on the river, but what portion of
32 the fish that is is probably very, very small. So this
33 isn't meant to work around those health rules.

34
35 The handout in your folder goes on with
36 some questions and answers and other points and I think
37 I'll just stop there with the overview.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Larry.
40 That gives a fairly concise overview of what the
41 Federal Subsistence Board has allowed. The
42 practicality of customary trade has been that -- it's
43 just like previous to the renegotiation of migratory
44 waterfowl. There's been a non-enforcement of customary
45 trade with locally-processed salmon strips and cut
46 fish, dry fish. The Council is well aware of all that.
47 The Council should also be aware that the reality is
48 there is no provision for sale of processed fish under
49 the Federal regulations. It's sort of a gray area at
50 this point.

1 Customary trade, and this Council has
2 had many hours of testimony on when this issue came up
3 before it several years ago about the importance of
4 those customary trade in the subsistence economy. The
5 mixed cash/subsistence economy. It allows the
6 dissemination of a process. Allows it to be preserved
7 so that it can be disseminated throughout the region,
8 so it's beneficial for the Western Interior.

9
10 I will say as Chair that it's
11 beneficial for this region for customary trade as it
12 always has occurred of processing and preserving fish
13 to disseminate throughout the region has always been a
14 practice and is a customary and traditional practice of
15 these people here.

16
17 When we get into how the fishery is
18 going to be managed this summer, I can detect sort of a
19 tightening of the gray areas of this. The Council
20 should also be aware there's going to be a lot of
21 people in the lower river that are going to be
22 concerned about sale to non-rural. That's going to be
23 a big, big issue this year.

24
25 Do other Council members have comments
26 on the customary trade or questions about the customary
27 trade issue paper, especially new Council members.
28 Tim.

29
30 MR. GERVAIS: No.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eleanor.

33
34 MS. YATLIN: No.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments
37 on this issue.

38
39 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray.

42
43 MR. COLLINS: You'll notice down at the
44 bottom of the page there's two other terms that often
45 come up. One of them is sharing and bartering. Those
46 are also defined down there if you need a definition.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

49
50 MR. COLLINS: Sharing refers to

1 distributing without receiving something in return.
2 Barter is the exchange for goods other than cash. So
3 if you're just swapping some kind of goods, then that's
4 bartering.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

7

8 MR. COLLINS: And sharing is another
9 way of distributing.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So trading strips
12 for dried moose or whatever is bartering.

13

14 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

15

16 MS. YATLIN: Mr. Chairman.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eleanor.

19

20 MS. YATLIN: I just had a question.
21 I'm kind of confused. It says Federal lands and State
22 don't recognize this customary trade.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The State
25 regulations don't even recognize this threshold of
26 unprocessed fish. They don't consider -- you can't
27 sell any kind of subsistence-caught fish. That's a
28 State interpretation.

29

30 MS. YATLIN: So when they do it at AFN,
31 that's.....

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The sale of strips
34 at AFN, there's no legal standing for that. That's
35 just a gray area. That's been a non-enforcement area.
36 The Federal waters are the only places where the
37 Federal subsistence fisheries regulations apply. The
38 Federal regulations provide for sale of unprocessed
39 fish. Somebody from Galena can catch a king and sell
40 it for whatever under these regulations. The processed
41 fish gets into more of a gray area.

42

43 All of the Federal regulations that
44 this Council deals with, hunting and fishing
45 regulations, are on Federal lands or Federal designated
46 waters and there's certain boundaries where those
47 apply.

48

49 Tim, you had another comment.

50

1 MR. GERVAIS: Yeah. I remember back
2 around '98 or '99 I thought I read the customary trade
3 threshold was \$5,000 or \$6,500 and then those were
4 revised. Now it's showing up in Copper River district
5 and Bristol Bay district. Do you know an amount for
6 the Yukon River that's allowed to be sold?

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Larry.

9
10 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
11 When the Federal customary trade regulations were
12 developed, I think it was around 2003, it was general
13 in nature across the State, but the Federal Board
14 recognized that in various regions the Councils and
15 other interested parties might want to regionalize the
16 regulations and tailor them more to the practices or
17 concerns in those regions. So two regions have done
18 so. Copper River, as you noticed, and as you noticed
19 in Bristol Bay, have put in some further stipulations.
20 The Yukon, the Kuskokwim and other regions have not at
21 this point. It is an area where proposals can be made.

22
23 That brings me to another set of points
24 I was going to make when you're ready about the
25 regulatory process.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any other
28 questions at this point. Come up to the mike, please.

29
30 MR. NELSON: My name is Martin Nelson.
31 I'm from Galena. I just have something on your
32 customary trade. You guys said that whole fish can
33 legally be sold, is that correct?

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If taken on Federal
36 waters, whole fish can be sold under customary trade
37 regulations as Larry pointed out. Do you have a yellow
38 sheet here? It's not to a commercial buyer or
39 anything.

40
41 MR. NELSON: So I can legally sell
42 whole fish to my employer, who is also a resident, but
43 is not from.....

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: As long as he's
46 going to eat the fish, yes.

47
48 MR. NELSON: Okay. That's all I wanted
49 to know. Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's legal. And
2 it has to be taken on Federal waters. That would be
3 like from below Galena, going down. They will give you
4 a map around here where those waters would be. There's
5 4B and 4C. There's certain State water jurisdictions
6 and there's certain Federal water jurisdiction and
7 Koyukuk/Nowitna can give you a map of where those
8 Federal waters would lie around here.

9

10 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So you had some
17 other points, Larry.

18

19 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
20 think that brings us to some points about the
21 regulatory process. With the interest in customary
22 trade regulations, we wanted to remind you that there's
23 the regular cycle for proposals and the fisheries
24 regulations would be up next. A year from now the
25 January to April time period next year would be the
26 regular fisheries call, just like this is the wildlife
27 call right now. If you or any interested party wanted
28 to submit a proposal on customary trade in the Yukon or
29 Kuskokwim or anywhere else, the regular call would be a
30 year from now.

31

32 If there's an interest in special
33 action, and we've heard there is, and I believe we've
34 received one at this point on customary trade in the
35 Yukon. This would be a temporary special action
36 because it would go for more than 60 days. The first
37 step would be for the Federal Board to determine
38 whether the request received meets the criteria for
39 special action. This would be an unusual special
40 action request. It's not your typical lengthening of a
41 moose season or some kind of fish regulation. This
42 would get at the customary trade use. So it's not
43 completely clear whether it's actionable under special
44 action. So we are going to provide the request we
45 received to the Federal Board and ask them to determine
46 for us, give us direction on whether it is or isn't
47 subject to special action. If it is, if they vote that
48 it is, then we will analyze it and the Board will
49 decide how to proceed on that request.

50

1 So it's two step. First, is it
2 actionable under special action regulations. Does it
3 meet the criteria for special action. If it does, then
4 analysis and decision by the Board. Since it's a
5 temporary special action request, if it meets that
6 criteria, we'd be looking for comment from the relevant
7 Councils.

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for the
9 clarification on that. Does the Council have any
10 comments on the regulatory procedure for customary
11 trade? Previous to this point, and this Council has
12 been comfortable that customary trade does not
13 constitute significant commercial enterprise. So to
14 this point we've not wanted to set any specific amounts
15 or anything like that. Basically the Board has allowed
16 Bristol Bay or whoever to come up with certain amounts
17 that they deem significant commercial enterprise. This
18 Council and this region does not set those thresholds
19 in statute.

20
21 Any other comments on customary trade
22 and whether the Council would like any proposals to be
23 submitted about customary trade? I have none myself.

24
25 MR. STICKMAN: I don't have any.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That probably
28 concludes our discussion on this issue, Larry. Oh, you
29 have one more point?

30
31 MR. BUKLIS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. A
32 question came up before your lunch break about amounts
33 for customary trade. I just wanted to note that we at
34 OSM we did fund a study on the Yukon to YRDFA to look
35 at customary trade of salmon on the Yukon, but it
36 wasn't to get at the amounts involved. It was looking
37 more at the patterns of customary trade in the
38 subregions of the Yukon and one village was examined in
39 the lower Yukon, one in the middle Yukon and one in the
40 upper Yukon. Again, it was patterns of the practice
41 and not amounts.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

44
45 MR. BUKLIS: And then I wanted to say
46 kind of for the record that a number was put out there
47 this morning about customary trade on the Yukon for
48 chinook, but I wanted to emphasize we don't have an
49 estimate of the amounts for customary trade on the
50 Yukon.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I questioned the
2 accuracy of that 20,000. I would not know where that
3 number could come from.

4
5 MR. BUKLIS: My understanding, I'm a
6 couple people removed from that number being put out
7 there on the YRDFA conference, but my understanding is
8 it was a qualitative look at the run assessment in '08
9 for chinook and looking at some of the numbers and how
10 they were laid out and a sort of gap in the numbers was
11 perceived and that was linked to maybe those fish went
12 into customary trade. Then to take that number and
13 then apply it as sort of a rule of thumb on customary
14 trade takes it further yet.

15
16 I don't want to get into a debate over
17 it with others, but just to clear the record there
18 isn't an estimate and I don't stand by that number that
19 was thrown out there this morning or on the YRDFA
20 conference and I think we need to be careful with all
21 the concerns and justifiable anxiety about the run
22 that's coming that we don't let that push us into using
23 numbers in ways that we later regret.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's just an
26 assumption that they went into customary trade. It's
27 not actually a documented event. It could have been
28 sharing or bartering or some other dissemination, which
29 is very common. I was concerned about that number
30 myself. So I appreciate that comment.

31
32 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
33 Again, I wasn't party to the construction of the
34 assessment, but as you know all the estimates in a run
35 assessment have their own variation. If you really
36 want to get at the run assessment and how different
37 readings of the run compare, you'd have to look at the
38 variability of each input. It's not even clear that
39 we're off by that many fish in a way we can't explain.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

42
43 MR. COLLINS: Is there a report
44 available on those three villages you looked at? I'm
45 just trying to get some background information of what
46 has gone on. I would like to see that if there's a copy
47 of that report somewhere to see what you found in that.

48
49 MR. BUKLIS: Mr. Chairman. I don't
50 have that report with me, but I can look into the

1 status of the project and its report and I can get it
2 to Mr. Collins or the Council at large, whichever you'd
3 prefer.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are posted
6 online at the OSM?

7
8 MR. BUKLIS: Most of them are, but I
9 can check into that.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I can access that
12 online.

13
14 MR. BUKLIS: I've just been informed
15 that that report is online. For those who want a copy
16 directly, we can provide that. I'll be here until
17 Friday and you want a copy of that report and you'd
18 rather not go online, let me know and I'll get you one.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Did you
21 have a comment? Go ahead.

22
23 MR. NELSON: Martin Nelson again. I
24 would recommend you'd have to look at the whole river
25 instead of just certain villages because I do travel
26 like 280 miles and I'll do that five or six times in a
27 summer. I mean you would have to look at more than
28 just three villages.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Thanks.
31 Eleanor.

32
33 MS. YATLIN: Mr. Chairman. I just
34 wanted to comment that earlier when we had the report
35 from YRDFA when they had the teleconferences, and these
36 are coming from the villages, it was the upper Yukon,
37 middle Yukon and lower Yukon, it was a concern on each
38 and I hear you saying that the proposals come out a
39 year from now if we wanted to comment on it. But I
40 just wanted to bring out the fact that it was commented
41 on by the whole Yukon, so it must be a concern.

42
43 That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's quite a bit
46 of discussion on customary trade up and down the down
47 river. There's various areas along the river that are
48 concerned about volumes of customary trade basically
49 entering into significant commercial territory. That's
50 what the main discussion of that would be about. We

1 also are recognizing that customary trade is a very
2 important part of rural life. That's going to be at
3 this meeting in April, the Trans-Boundary symposium and
4 the YRDFA. That's going to be a big issue, customary
5 trade.

6

7

Go ahead, Mickey.

8

9

MR. STICKMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 On our very first YRDFA teleconference I did bring it
11 up because if we're going to look at fish conservation,
12 we have to look at every component in the fishery.

13

14

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Any further
15 discussion.

16

17

(No comments)

18

19

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think we covered
20 that very well.

21

22

Thank you, Larry. Vince.

23

24

MR. MATHEWS: I gather the weather has
25 kind of changed outside. Basically I have a handout.
26 Brandy Berkbigler was going to present it and part of
27 her presentation would be a summary of the first annual
28 Trans-Boundary Tribal Symposium on the status of Yukon
29 River salmon. I'll pass that out. I have not reviewed
30 it. Robert attended that meeting. That brings us to
31 the management plans, which I think you've already
32 discussed.

The key point to point out is that Trans-Boundary one
34 did have representatives of the First Nations of the
35 Yukon Territory.

36

37

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you have a feel
38 for that meeting, Robert, whether it was productive?

39

40

MR. WALKER: It was kind of an
41 interesting meeting compared to ours. Mike Smith
42 coordinated it. He just went from one person to the
43 next and said what do you have to say to this, what is
44 your comment. I'm going to throw out a question, what
45 is your answer. We sat there and it was formulating a
46 plan before it got to you. When it got to you, it was
47 a whole new thing again. But it was interesting. They
48 came up with this resolution to do here, to present it
49 to them. One of the things I asked they do is to ask
50 about the 20,000 pounds of salmon. If they could give

1 it back to the First Nation or to the Tanana Chiefs or
2 whatever, the bycatch. I think they're going to have a
3 follow up here in April. There is room for everybody
4 if they want to go.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you go to that
7 meeting, Mickey?

8
9 MR. STICKMAN: Yeah, I went to the last
10 two days. I was already there in Fairbanks. Actually
11 Robyn George, our natural resource director for the
12 tribe, was the Nulato rep at the Trans-Boundary
13 meeting. They did come up with a resolution that's
14 here in our papers.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The resolution is
17 basically regarding the pollock bycatch. I thought a
18 component of that meeting was supposed to be about the
19 current management shortfalls on the Yukon. Was there
20 any discussion on that at all? Sort of like what YRDFA
21 is doing. They didn't discuss any kind of the short
22 chinook run, no in-river management discussion?

23
24 MR. STICKMAN: Not while I was there.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: For some reason I
27 thought they were going to be talking about in-river
28 management also.

29
30 Jason, do you have something to day.

31
32 MR. HALE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just
33 briefly. I was at the meeting too and they did on the
34 afternoon of the last day give everybody a chance to
35 mention ideas, so they basically passed the microphone
36 around. Everybody threw out some ideas. Mike threw
37 out some ideas from TCC. They just closed the meeting
38 with that. I think it was a good hour, hour and a half
39 comment period and at the end Mike commented, hey, this
40 is a big issue, we can't solve it all in a short time,
41 but hopefully you got enough information to be thinking
42 about it. So it was sort of a starting the process
43 meeting if you will. This was my take on it from being
44 there, but they did kick around some ideas and Mike is
45 running with one of them, the percentage idea that we
46 had talked about.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Percentage?

49
50 MR. HALE: Percentage harvest. Based

1 on historical harvest percentages. Vince probably
2 knows as much about it as I do.

3

4 MR. MATHEWS: That's the full sentence
5 that I know of. The outcome of this next meeting would
6 be where their position is. Again, it's one of the
7 first meetings with the First Nations in Canada, so
8 there's a lot of groundwork that needs to be laid out.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks. Robert, go
11 ahead.

12

13 MR. WALKER: Our recorder here has all
14 this on recording also. She was there.

15

16 MR. STICKMAN: Can you do a summary?

17

18 RECORDER: There's full transcripts of
19 that meeting.

20

21 MR. MATHEWS: You don't want to
22 compromise her position and her role. Basically she
23 could provide you a copy of the transcript and look at
24 it. Asking for her interpretation would not be
25 appropriate.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Well, that's
28 kind of an update on the Trans-Boundary Working Group
29 meeting they had in December. So at what point are we
30 at, Vince?

31

32 MR. MATHEWS: You guys already covered
33 the next point. This would have been the time when you
34 talk about the management plan, but you already, if I
35 understood correctly, laid that out kind of in the
36 letter you're going to be directing. Unless there's
37 some other issue, this is Yukon, on the management plan
38 you want to bring up that you discovered or thought
39 about during lunch, this would be the time.

40

41 Then, of course, you go into Kuskokwim.
42 I don't know if there's Staff prepared for an overview
43 of the Kuskokwim. The magnitude of the issue on the
44 Yukon has really consumed a lot of attention, but there
45 may be Staff here that's going to present something on
46 the Kuskokwim. I leave that up to Fish and Game to
47 determine that.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have a
50 comment, Mickey.

1 MR. STICKMAN: I just have one last
2 comment on the Trans-Boundary meeting. When I saw the
3 notice go out, I called up Vince and I told him that I
4 thought OSM should be able to send a representative
5 from the Western Interior RAC because we are talking
6 about it today in our Council meeting and I told him it
7 was an issue that was going to come up, but they didn't
8 have no follow through or money or something.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Robert.

11

12 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
13 That's the same thing I asked Vince about too. Again,
14 our tribal chief called up Mike Smith and said, hey
15 we've got people down here that are interested in going
16 and submitted my name. While we were at the meeting
17 one thing that really caught my attention was the lower
18 Yukon people were also attending there, but they didn't
19 sign the resolution. They kind of stayed away. All
20 the years of fighting with them and trying to get them
21 to agree with us and we agree with them, we finally got
22 resolved to sit down and we could talk with them now,
23 now we have the First Nation jumping on us, criticizing
24 us, which I thought was not very polite. They just
25 calmly criticized the Yukon people for overfishing,
26 something we were used to all our lives, because they
27 didn't have any fish. Now we have another wrench
28 thrown into us from them. So we're going to have to
29 work with them.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So there is
32 delegates from Emmonak and some of the lower river
33 villages and they made basically derogatory
34 statements.....

35

36 MR. WALKER: No, they didn't make any
37 statement. They just went along with the middle Yukon.
38 I'm saying that the First Nation is throwing the wrench
39 into this now.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see. Okay.
42 We're still on the Yukon. Does the State or Federal
43 managers have any further input at this point. I would
44 question the State are you hardening up on certain
45 management structures for this coming season? Are you
46 taking into account these various inputs that are being
47 brought forth?

48

49 MR. BUSHER: No, there is no hard and
50 fast management plan yet. They are taking seriously all

1 options and weighing all the ideas from up and down the
2 river.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So they'll formulate
5 sort of a strategy by the end of all this discussion?

6

7 MR. BUSHER: There will be an option or
8 a draft plan to be ready for the meetings in April as
9 far as I know.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Anything else there,
12 Vince.

13

14 MR. MATHEWS: The only thing you left
15 out was did you want to send a representative to that
16 meeting.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to see
19 a representative from the Council attend that face-to-
20 face meeting of YRDFA and pressing our points in the
21 letter. One suggestion was that the Chair, myself,
22 would attend that meeting and I said I would do it, but
23 I would like to see the Council come to a consensus on
24 who would represent the Council at that meeting.
25 Mickey.

26

27 MR. STICKMAN: I make a motion we send
28 the Chair from the Western Interior Regional Advisory
29 Council.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've got a motion.

32

33 MR. GERVAIS: I would second that.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any further
36 discussion.

37

38 MR. STICKMAN: Question.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question has
41 been called. All those in favor of sending the Chair
42 of the Western Interior Council to the YRDFA meeting in
43 April signify by saying aye.

44

45 IN UNISON: Aye.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed.

48

49 (No opposing votes)

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I'll be attending
2 that, I guess.

3
4 MR. STICKMAN: No guessing.

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're down to the
7 Kuskokwim River. Do we have a preseason outlook? Go
8 ahead there, Tim.

9
10 MR. GERVAIS: Sorry to keep dragging
11 out the Yukon River, but one thing I forgot to bring up
12 this morning was this year there's a recertification
13 going on for that Bering Sea pollock fishery that's
14 being performed by the Marine Stewardship Council, a
15 non-profit group out of England that certifies State
16 ability on fisheries around the world. Depending on
17 the results that occur at regarding the North Pacific
18 Council in April, I'd like this Council to make a
19 comment. They accept comments from various individuals
20 and groups regarding different impacts the fishery has
21 and I think if we feel the North Pacific Council is not
22 taking firm enough action regarding direction of the
23 bycatch, we make comments to the Marine Stewardship
24 Council with our concerns.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm not familiar
27 with that Marine Stewardship Council. Do they have any
28 regulatory powers that would trump the North Pacific
29 Fisheries Management Council?

30
31 MR. GERVAIS: They're not a regulatory
32 agency. They're just a non-profit organization that's
33 recognized around the world. After they study various
34 fisheries -- for example the fisheries in Alaska that
35 are MSC certified are Alaska halibut, Alaska salmon,
36 Alaska pollock fishery and I believe the cod fish
37 fishery also has that certification. It's a
38 certification that these various fisheries seek. It
39 takes a lot of money and effort to do the proper
40 studies to verify the sustainability of it, but it's
41 something that is using the marketing of these
42 products. As it goes out to the consumers, they can
43 say this fish product is from a certified sustainable
44 fishery.

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see.

47
48 MR. GERVAIS: I can provide this
49 Council with more information about what they do. They
50 have a website that explains quite a bit about

1 themselves also.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll see what the
4 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council promulgates
5 and whether this Council would feel compelled to
6 petition for additional measures. Maybe for our next
7 fisheries meeting we'll probably know something by then
8 and a better platform. Thanks for bringing that to our
9 attention. I wasn't aware of that Stewardship Council.

10

11 Any more discussion on the Yukon?

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We should move on to
16 the Kuskokwim. I have questions about what the
17 Kuskokwim's run outlook is going to be for chinook and
18 chum. Do we have anybody here that can provide
19 information on the Kuskokwim at all?

20

21 MR. MATHEWS: No.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I guess I would
24 suspect that the Kuskokwim could be looking at some
25 shortfalls because of the bycatch apportionment would
26 fall to the Yukon and the Kuskokwim drainage in AYK
27 from the Bering Sea. You had a comment, Ray.

28

29 MR. COLLINS: They're meeting mid
30 March. There's a preseason one that will be presented
31 to us in Anchorage.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Who is presenting to
34 who then?

35

36 MR. COLLINS: To the working group and
37 then there's going to be a working group meeting
38 following that. All of the people are doing projects
39 on the river.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So they
42 haven't come up with a project yet.

43

44 MR. COLLINS: I haven't seen it yet,
45 no.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would hope there's
48 a planning for caution with the Kuskokwim chinook
49 component also. What's this management plan for summer
50 of '09. There is no plan to date from the Kuskokwim.

1 MR. MATHEWS: That will be worked
2 through the working group, as he mentioned. It will be
3 the second meeting, right, Ray?

4
5 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

6
7 MR. MATHEWS: The first meeting is a
8 preseason review of projects and outlook. I haven't
9 been approached on that on getting your travel and
10 usually there's one from the -- is it Bob Aloysius from
11 YK Region that goes also?

12
13 MR. COLLINS: Yes, Bob has been the
14 representative from YK.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We just have one rep
17 from our RAC?

18
19 MR. COLLINS: Right. And then Carl is
20 a backup to me.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm surprised that
23 the Kuskokwim is that far behind on the planning
24 process of the Yukon, but it's long before the season.
25 I'll still be tracking all of this stuff after it's
26 finalized.

27
28 We're down to the Bering Sea chinook
29 salmon bycatch update. We kind of covered that
30 loosely, but this is an OSM update.

31
32 Go ahead, Larry.

33
34 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
35 Yes, you did cover this quite well in the course of
36 your morning session. There's an update or briefing on
37 page 23 of your Council books. I think I'll just bring
38 out a couple of points. The first point I'd make is
39 that the Federal Subsistence Board will be sending a
40 letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
41 regarding that draft Environmental Impact Statement you
42 talked about this morning. The Board's letter will
43 recommend a hard cap in terms of chinook bycatch of
44 29,300. That's noted on the bottom of Page 23. So the
45 Board's letter is in development. I've seen a draft.
46 It hasn't been signed and sent yet, but it's in
47 process.

48
49 You asked about the number of 32,000 or
50 so that's floating out there. I'm not sure, but I

1 think it is from the panel and I think other groups are
2 picking up on that. I don't have the panel letter with
3 me, but that's what I recall as well.

4

5 Then the second point I would emphasize
6 from this briefing in terms of an action item for your
7 Council, this Council and other affected Councils are
8 being invited to send their chairman or a designee to
9 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council meeting
10 that's being held in Anchorage the week of March 30th
11 to April 3rd. So if the Council wants to name someone
12 now or work with your coordinator in coming weeks to
13 name someone, we will be funding travel for someone.
14 YK and Eastern Interior will also be invited and
15 Bristol Bay and I think Seward Peninsula. We will have
16 OSM Staff there as well.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We discussed that
19 RAC representation at that April meeting in McGrath and
20 we decided that Mickey was the primary. I think you
21 were the second.

22

23 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, I went to Kodiak.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I think we
26 selected Ray as the second and then I was an alternate.
27 The Council can revisit that at this point. Is the
28 Council still comfortable -- are you still comfortable
29 going to that meeting, Mickey?

30

31 MR. STICKMAN: (Nods head
32 affirmatively)

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And is the Council
35 still comfortable with the alternates?

36

37 MR. WALKER: No problem.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No problem. That
40 would be the tier from this Council of who would
41 represent the Western Interior.

42

43 One question. On the Federal
44 Subsistence Board's hard cap of 29,300, they looked at
45 the numbers and disagreed with the panel on this
46 32,500?

47

48 MR. BUKLIS: Mr. Chairman. I don't
49 know if it's a disagreement. The numbers are very
50 close, but I think the 29,300 is the average in the

1 years prior to the Yukon River Agreement and, strictly
2 speaking, even that number isn't fully consistent
3 because I think the agreement speaks to working to
4 reduce the bycatch and to put in place a cap that's
5 equal to the average before the agreement comes closest
6 to meeting the spirit of the agreement. But the
7 agreement talks about reducing them. I think that was
8 our basis. I'm not sure of the basis for the 32,000.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You had a comment
11 there, Jon.

12

13 MR. GERKEN: Mr. Chair. The Yukon
14 River Panel letter does not state that number, so I'm
15 not sure where that comes. They have four key points
16 in their letter both to the Pacific Fisheries
17 Management Council and to NOAA. The points are a
18 regulatory cap is necessary, but the number they have
19 in there is 68,393, which I think is the number now,
20 and they're saying that's too high. The second is 100
21 percent observer coverage and any incentive program
22 needs to be working immediately. The incentive program
23 must include funding at a meaningful level to support
24 research relevant to the salmon bycatch reduction.
25 Those are the four points they have in their letter,
26 but it's not clear where the 29,300 number is coming
27 from.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. I'm still
30 confused where YRDFA came up with 32,500. I'm happy to
31 see the Federal Board is going for the lower figure. I
32 was led to believe there was some kind of consensus by
33 the panel and other groups.

34

35 Any other discussion on this bycatch
36 issue.

37

38 (No comments)

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. Thank you. Do
41 we have any other fisheries reports?

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. So now we're
46 down to the Yukon and northern area proposals. Do you
47 have any comments, Vince.

48

49 MR. MATHEWS: No. Ray already pointed
50 that out in the letter, your .805(c) letter, what

1 happened with Proposal 12 and 13, the net size and net
2 depth proposals, the deferral. This was just a place-
3 keeper to make sure you were informed of that. Larry
4 has more on that.

5

6

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Larry.

7

8

MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 I wanted to clarify on the report of that process
10 earlier. It was mentioned it was deferred to the next
11 fishery cycle. Actually, what the Board did, these
12 proposals had been deferred to be taken up at a special
13 meeting this coming April to allow for more information
14 to be gathered and the studies to be assessed. Then we
15 received a letter from the State asking that we
16 consider further deferring so that the State Board
17 could meet in January 2010 and deal with the issue
18 first and the Federal Board then follow. The Federal
19 Board took up the question, as Mr. Collins noted, at
20 their recent meeting in January and they did decide to
21 further defer it. But their further deferral is not to
22 be any later than April 2010. So it would be a year
23 from now.

24

25

So the State Board is going to meet in
26 their regular cycle January 2010 and our Board decided
27 to defer not later than April after that, but not to
28 the next fisheries Board meeting, which would be eight
29 months later. It would be a special track concluding
30 next year in the spring.

31

32

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. It's a little
33 confusing, but I guess they wanted to start the
34 implementation period at this early as possible date
35 after the State Board of Fish meeting.

36

37

MR. BUKLIS: Mr. Chairman. It was an
38 attempt to allow for a coordinated approach of the two
39 boards dealing with the issue in a coordinated way and
40 yet not wait a whole year for the Federal Board to
41 follow. To follow in a special cycle.

42

43

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Thanks for
44 that clarification. I have a question for Vince. You
45 coordinate the Eastern Interior. When I was listening
46 in a discussion with some Eastern Interior members,
47 they seem to be somewhat backing up on those proposals.
48 They're starting to question whether the 7.5-inch gear
49 size is the correct proposal. What's your feel from
50 the Eastern side? Are they going to withdraw that?

1 I'm getting some mixed signals from that side of the
2 fence over there.

3

4 MR. MATHEWS: I didn't get those
5 signals, so I can't really say. The intensity of the
6 2009 season is occupying them quite a bit. I had no
7 discussions with them on looking at modifying or
8 withdrawing those proposals. The Chair had some family
9 issues that occupied her.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What they're telling
12 me is they're thinking of going even further reduction
13 in size. We'll see what happens. That's just personal
14 discussion with some members over there. This Council
15 has not addressed those proposals.

16

17 Any further discussion on these
18 fisheries proposals. Is there any Council members that
19 would like to submit fisheries proposals for the next
20 cycle, any regulatory changes that Council members
21 would like to see within our region?

22

23 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. Do we want
24 to make a statement on customary trade? As was
25 mentioned before when the task force dealt with it,
26 they left it up to the regions. If we want to try that
27 approach, we might want to put in a holding one on
28 there so there will at least be discussion of that.
29 You were talking about eliminating it entirely, but
30 another way would be to put some kind of a cap on how
31 much of that was allowed or something to get a holding
32 in there.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

35

36 MR. COLLINS: But I don't know what
37 your feelings are.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My personal feeling
40 is that this Council has set no cap and we don't really
41 have an issue right now with what's considered a
42 significant commercial enterprise. I don't know that
43 this Council would like to change that position. I
44 wouldn't want to change my position on that.

45

46 Vince, do you have a comment.

47

48 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. You fell in the
49 same trap we do on Staff. What you're looking at here
50 is the call for proposals for Alaska Board of

1 Fisheries, not the Federal Board.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh. Why did I do
4 that?

5

6 MR. MATHEWS: So I mean we could put
7 one in a file to remind later.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. I'm looking at
10 Yukon northern area proposals update on Federal -- oh,
11 I see what I did. For some reason I thought I was
12 looking at Federal proposals. These are Board of Fish
13 proposals. Sorry.

14

15 Again, does this Council have any
16 proposals, freshwater fish proposals or salmon
17 proposals, for the Board of Fish. I don't have any
18 myself. Mickey.

19

20 MR. STICKMAN: I just wanted to make
21 sure that we, as a Council, go on record not supporting
22 any proposals eliminating driftnet fishing. I've seen
23 a proposal out there for that. That would have a
24 dramatic effect on subsistence fishing in Y4A.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

27

28 MR. STICKMAN: And just Y4A but the
29 Federal waters that it took us years to get. I mean
30 even though there's still a smaller number of permits
31 that are gotten for that new waters opened up, but it
32 took us years to get that. For them to eliminate
33 driftnetting just don't make sense for me.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Drift
36 gillnet for salmon is an important way of harvesting
37 salmon on the Yukon River and this Council fought hard
38 to provide a drift gillnet in Federal public waters,
39 which would be basically below Galena down to the Y4A
40 line and it took us years to get through. People are
41 just going out and catching fish to use, so it's never
42 been a big deal. It's my opinion that type of gear use
43 should be provided for the whole river, all the way to
44 the Canadian border. They should have the options of
45 using a wheel, drift setnet or driftnet, as long as
46 they're not going to be overharvesting.

47

48 So the bottom line is the Council could
49 submit a proposal for gillnet to the Board of Fish in
50 4B and 4C, but with this kind of salmon return problem,

1 that proposal probably will go nowhere, so I wouldn't
2 want to even attempt to fight that proposal. When the
3 returns come back, I still would like to see fishers of
4 this middle Yukon having the ability in 4B and 4C to
5 harvest with drift gillnet. What's good for the goose
6 downriver is good for the gander up here.

7
8 Nobody has proposals for the Board of
9 Fish. That meeting will be held in January of 2010.

10
11 Sorry on my mistake. We're to
12 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. Liz is going to
13 give us an update on that.

14
15 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
16 Members of the Council. This will be a brief update.
17 Caroline Brown and Brandy Berkbigler aren't going to be
18 here and I'm not sure if there was anybody from KNA's
19 partner program coming.

20
21 I was going to give you a quick update
22 on the development of the strategic plan for whitefish
23 research in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River drainages.
24 Caroline Brown and Randy Brown led a meeting in
25 November and Stanley Ned of Allakaket and Jenny Pelkola
26 from this Council were there and it was a very
27 productive two-day meeting. There were managers,
28 harvesters and different groups, stakeholders who have
29 some stakehold in whitefish there.

30
31 The main themes of the meeting were
32 beaver activity, changes in water levels and the
33 effects of commercial fisheries and potential
34 commercial fisheries for whitefish. That was very
35 upsetting to a lot of members at the meeting, so that
36 took up a big portion of the meeting. The plan really
37 was not supposed to be about commercial fishery. It
38 was supposed to be about what are the data gaps in
39 whitefish research and they're huge.

40
41 I think we kind of have this salmon
42 paradigm in fisheries research and just based on what
43 little biologists know about whitefish it's almost like
44 chaos theory. Some are anadromous, some aren't,
45 they're here, they're there. A lot of the local
46 knowledge or TEK projects that have been done have shed
47 some light, but still again maybe only three or four
48 spawning areas are known of just some of the species.

49
50 They have a lot of information to

1 distill from that meeting and that is what they're in
2 the process of right now. The follow up meeting to
3 that first meeting is also in April in Fairbanks, which
4 sounds like a whole month of fisheries meetings. It
5 will be a two-day meeting and it's toward the end of
6 April. They will come up with a way for us to focus
7 both the biological and subsistence ethnographic
8 research to give a better picture just on how people
9 are using whitefish throughout the state, what their
10 concerns are and a lot of environmental changes that
11 they're looking at. That's all we have for that.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does anybody have
14 any questions for Liz. Do you have a comment, Vince.
15

16 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. You're a
17 representative to that whitefish strategy group with
18 Jenny. I'm hopeful that her family situation will
19 improve by then, but, if not, maybe the Council wants
20 to look at an alternate. I don't want to push her out,
21 but we don't want to burden her with this follow-up
22 thing when she's dealing with a family situation.
23 Maybe there's someone here that would like to be an
24 alternate if Jenny can't go to this whitefish.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The end of April I
27 have a conflict with that, so I can't attend that
28 myself. Didn't we discuss you as an alternate for
29 that, Ray, because you're familiar with the upper
30 Kuskokwim? I think we did.

31
32 MR. STICKMAN: I think we already have
33 an alternate.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Are you agreeable to
36 still being the alternate for that?

37
38 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That was my
41 recollection from the McGrath meeting. Vince, do you
42 have something else there.

43
44 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. The weather has
45 changed outside and Brandy did drop off some stuff and
46 is headed back out on the plane. So there is a summary
47 of the Partners. I didn't cover this very well with the
48 new members. These are the Partners biologists who's
49 toward the end of the training session. It's quite
50 important what they do and it's capacity building as

1 well as additional information. This is her summary.

2

3 Brandy has always been faithful in
4 coming to these meetings, so I don't want to put her in
5 a bad light. That is where that is at. I got that at
6 lunch. We can convey any questions you have based on
7 that to her.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We can look this
10 over and maybe we'll go to a break. None of these are
11 action items for our Council I don't think. These are
12 just an update on various projects that TCC is working
13 through. The Henshaw Weir Project is for the upper
14 river portion of the Koyukuk is a very important
15 enumeration project. They use that in conjunction with
16 a science camp for Allakaket and it has various side
17 benefits to it.

18

19 Quick comment, Tim.

20

21 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
22 wanted to ask Liz from the meetings you've had so far
23 could you talk a bit about what potential commercial
24 fisheries might be developing with the whitefish.

25

26 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. Mr. Chair and
27 Council Member Gervais. There is just one right now at
28 the mouth of the Yukon. I think it's for Bering cisco
29 and it has a 10,000 pound cap. One of the things that
30 upset a lot of the members at the meeting was because
31 there's so little known on whitefish there wasn't
32 really sustainability types of studies that get done
33 before or that you'd think would get done before
34 commercial fisheries getting done. There was a few
35 biologists there who seemed to be interested in
36 creating more commercial fisheries. None were planned.
37 That was not the purpose of the meeting at all.
38 Clearly there is some interest. I'm sure with
39 declining salmon runs commercial fisheries for
40 whitefish might be cropping up in some people's minds.

41

42 One of the biologists there though,
43 when she learned about the different stocks and just
44 how little is known of the stocks, a State biologist
45 said so theoretically with these 10,000 pounds of
46 harvest we could potentially be knocking out one whole
47 stock. So there was a give and take of information of
48 that nature. People were very concerned but there were
49 no plans for specific commercial fisheries.

50

1 MR. GERVAIS: When this fishery
2 occurred this past summer, are there any potential
3 openings for that reoccurring in '09?

4
5 MS. WILLIAMS: I don't think it was a
6 one-time-only thing. I'm not well versed. There might
7 be someone here who knows better than me. I think it's
8 happened a couple of times and it could happen again.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Bill is going to
11 comment here from Comm Fish.

12
13 MR. BUSER: I don't have the numbers
14 in front of me, but I believe this is the third or
15 fourth year of the whitefish fishery. And the harvest
16 limit is 10,000 pounds and it's a limited harvest that
17 takes place in the lower Yukon.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Uh-huh.

20
21 MR. BUSER: We talked with, I think it
22 was Randy Brown, about the migratory patterns of the
23 whitefish. It's a short fishery. The first year had a
24 time limit. I think end of September, early October.
25 It's a low-volume fishery in that area and limited
26 fishermen are participating.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any more questions
29 about that, Tim.

30
31 MR. GERVAIS: No. Thank you for your
32 comments.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks. Liz.

35
36 MS. WILLIAMS: There was an article too
37 in the paper recently. Sort of a niche market with
38 certain species of cisco. The other thing I wanted to
39 add too is your representative is not the only person
40 that input is sought from. If any of you have insights
41 or concerns, you're welcome to contact the researchers
42 directly or send your concerns to Vince so that he can
43 get them to the researchers. Once the plan is in a
44 draft, you'll have an opportunity to review it and
45 critique it, add or subtract and edit. It's definitely
46 a process, but we would certainly welcome all input,
47 not just from your representative.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eleanor.

50

1 MS. YATLIN: Mr. Chairman. I don't
2 know if it's a comment or question. This is the first
3 time I'm seeing all this. I think you would get a lot
4 more information if you ask the elders as to use the
5 Native names. They'll know the trends. They know
6 where they come from, where they spawn and all that.
7 If you come to them and say whitefish or Bering cisco,
8 they wouldn't understand that, so I would go that way.
9 Just a recommendation. I was wondering if Caroline
10 Brown was doing that. I know in each region they would
11 have different names with the different dialects. It's
12 all written. All the fish have Native names. They
13 know how long they existed. The Native language has
14 been there for tens of thousands of years, so they
15 should know.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 MS. WILLIAMS: I think that's a really
20 excellent point, Eleanor. The taxonomies of whitefish
21 and a lot of the Native languages are much more
22 extensive than the biological taxonomies. So a lot of
23 what biologists have learned just in a few places are
24 incredibly extensive taxonomies that are not from
25 Western science. So the more of those that could be
26 done the better.

27
28 Thank you for that suggestion.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This is a very
31 important strategic plan for these whitefish because
32 they are so important to people in our region. I
33 personally am very concerned about initializing
34 commercial harvest of whitefish when we know virtually
35 nothing about them. They are so important to up river.
36 They're basically an anadromous fish. They go down to
37 the ocean and then come back up. We have lots of
38 people highly reliant on whitefish up there because
39 there are so few salmon.

40
41 Some of those studies I think they were
42 using the traditional names when they were talking with
43 elders and I think Stanley Ned was helping with some of
44 those identifications up there. I would be surprised
45 if Caroline wasn't using those.

46
47 MS. YATLIN: That's the only way I know
48 the fish different species when the elders talk to me.
49 Another comment about the whitefish is there is no lake
50 fish hardly no more. When we were growing up in our

1 camp in the springtime, at the first high water we go
2 fishing and that's the one we get first is the
3 whitefish from the lakes. There's a lot of opinion as
4 to why could be beaver dams. You know, they dry up and
5 they block those lakes so the fish can't go out.

6
7 Where our camp is right now, that lake
8 was full of lake fish. You can't describe the taste.
9 It tastes way better for me than from the river or
10 where they go out to the ocean and come back. So I
11 believe a lot of those no longer exist or there's few.
12 I know the elders are saying they don't catch them
13 anymore.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Ray.

16
17 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, that's the broad
18 whitefish I think that they locally refer to as a lake.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're having all
21 kinds of comments on whitefish.

22
23 MR. CHASE: I feel I must say something
24 on whitefish because I had a call from Arnold Hamilton
25 not too long ago from Shageluk and they depend heavily
26 on whitefish every year. There was talk many times
27 about commercializing the fish and he asked me about
28 that and what effect would it have on subsistence.
29 They still do that fencing of the river for fall fish
30 and they had a good year this past year. I think
31 Shageluk kind of gets forgotten once in a while. They
32 harvest king salmon too that some years come up the
33 lower Innoko by Holy Cross and they traverse through
34 Shageluk. So when it's high water, they sometimes
35 harvest those same fish that we do. They just go a
36 different route and don't get counted. There's a lot
37 of unknowns in those fisheries.

38
39 The other point I'd like to bring out
40 is that for two years now we've had commercial sale on
41 lamprey down in the lower river and now we're starting
42 to talk about the subsistence use of that fish because
43 that was strictly subsistence fish prior to three, four
44 years ago when there was a lot of dog teams and stuff
45 around. I think probably down the road this Council
46 will be involved in that. The State is looking at
47 managing it. I just got a letter from them not too
48 long ago wanting to know how many pounds was taken and
49 who is buying them. I think we in Grayling area got
50 about 20,000 pounds this year we sold. I know Marshall

1 and St. Mary's sold a bunch of pounds. So it's kind of
2 a little boost in the local fisheries there.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. Wherever we
5 go in this region, when we start talking whitefish,
6 it's a sleeper. Everybody becomes very passionate
7 about these whitefish. They're like the complete back
8 up. Some years you get salmon and some you don't. You
9 can get whitefish practically every year in a lot of
10 places, so they're very important. When these State
11 proposals come up for review, the fisheries proposals
12 for additional commercial fishery opportunity and so
13 forth for whitefish, this Council will probably weigh
14 in real heavily on those.

15

16 Any other comments on the whitefish.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This council
21 endorses the strategic plan and has been tracking this.
22 It's an excellent planning process to be able to retain
23 our subsistence use of whitefish. Any other discussion
24 on that? It's probably time for a break. Go off
25 record.

26

27 (Off record)

28

29 (On record)

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're going to
32 continue the meeting. We've covered the organizational
33 reports. Now we're down on our agenda into the
34 wildlife issues. There are these special actions that
35 are requested or pending before the Federal Subsistence
36 Board and these special action requests. The first one
37 is status report on the Kuskokwim Native Association's
38 special action for a positive customary and traditional
39 use determination for moose in Unit 21E for some Unit
40 19A communities.

41

42 Do you have an update on that, Larry.

43

44 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair. I just need
45 to confirm who is online for the record.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Go right
48 ahead.

49

50 MR. MATHEWS: Who is online?

1 MR. DEMATTEO: Pete DeMatteo from
2 Anchorage.

3
4 MR. MATHEWS: Okay. Thanks, Pete.
5 We're just going onto agenda item wildlife topics. I
6 think it's number 9. Larry is going to cover the first
7 topic there and then we're going to go into special
8 action discussions.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead,
13 Larry.

14
15 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
16 Yes, this first item is a special action request. As
17 you said, Kuskokwim Native Association had submitted a
18 special action request to look at the February moose
19 hunt in Unit 21E and they had asked for a special
20 action to expand the eligibility to include some
21 additional Unit 19A communities through the C&T
22 process. We had not handled C&T through special action
23 before. This would be a temporary special action.

24
25 We submitted it to the Federal Board,
26 raising the question of whether this was subject to
27 special action consideration and the Board considered
28 that and through a polling the Board decision was that
29 it was subject to it. The regulations are a little
30 unclear on this point. There's a clause in the
31 regulations that says generally and then it goes on to
32 describe what special actions do deal with. By saying
33 generally it leaves open the possibility for this. The
34 Board decided that given that ambiguity it's eligible.

35
36 So we did the analysis, but in the end
37 the Board voted to reject the special action request
38 and wrote back to KNA asking that they or anyone
39 consider submitting it in the regular cycle and not
40 take it up through special action process. That would
41 allow for a broader input. As you know, once you set a
42 customary and traditional use determination, it would
43 be a little odd to do that through special action than
44 try to deal with it in the regular cycle after that. I
45 think your coordinator may be prompting KNA to not
46 forget that opportunity because there is a window no
47 submissions.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Have they contacted
50 you on resubmittal?

1 MR. MATHEWS: No. What we're signaling
2 here is that we don't get special actions on customary
3 and traditional use determinations, so it's a new world
4 and it's a new world for them, so we don't want to have
5 them thinking something different. So I'm just going
6 to follow up with a call, confirm they got the letter
7 and explain if they want to go through the process, the
8 normal process is submit a proposal. That's all we're
9 going to do. My guess is they will want to because
10 it's of concern to them.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have any
13 comment on that, Carl.

14
15 MR. MORGAN: No.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Carl was the
18 dissenting vote. The Council's position was to not
19 allow the special action request but to submit a
20 separate proposal with more of a delineation of what
21 portion of Unit 21E they would like to have.

22
23 Any further comment on that from the
24 Council.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Larry.

29
30 MR. BUKLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
31 During the break I did call in and follow up a bit on
32 that bycatch question. If you don't mind, I know
33 that's going back a bit.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

36
37 MR. BUKLIS: You raised a question
38 about the morning testimony and my own speculation that
39 the 32,500 number from YRDFA may have been linked to
40 the panel process in the Yukon and I speculated that it
41 seemed like it was correct and I don't like to
42 speculate like that and I'm sorry I was wrong. So I
43 followed up and our person in our office who is closest
44 to this issue said that he believes the 32,500 number
45 is the 10-year average bycatch amount of chinook in
46 that Bering Sea fishery prior to the Yukon River
47 Agreement panel process in 2002. Our board used a
48 five-year average. I know that's correct. We get an
49 average of 29,300. And it isn't the panel process
50 letter, it's the years leading up to the agreement and

1 the panel process, just different base years.

2

3 More importantly, the YRDFA letter we
4 believe or position goes on to say that that number
5 should step down over time so that's an important
6 feature. I don't believe our board letter will talk
7 about a step-down process, but simply points to a
8 level. I hope that helps follow up.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That clarifies that
11 dramatically. Thank you. Any comments on where that
12 32,500 came from.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're at number 2
17 here on wildlife issues, potential special actions and
18 emergency orders, refuges ADF&G and others. Where are
19 we going with that one, Vince? That would be the 24B
20 special action request.

21

22 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I believe that would
23 be one of them. At the same time the seasons were
24 evolving for the Koyukuk/Nowitna, but the special
25 action would be for 24B.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Mike Spindler is
28 here, so I'll have him come up and we'll go over that
29 particular special action request.

30

31 MR. SPINDLER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 Fellow Council members. For the record, my name is
33 Mike Spindler, refuge manager, Kanuti Refuge.

34

35 A little bit of background on this
36 special action request. In regulation in the last two
37 years, March '07, March '08, a March 1 to 5 Federal to
38 be announced bull only season. Decision made by the
39 refuge manager of Kanuti Refuge in concert with BLM and
40 National Park Service in consultation with the Regional
41 Council, the Fish and Game Advisory Committees and the
42 Gates of the Arctic Subsistence.

43

44 If you'd turn to Page 53 in your book
45 will be the salient points that I'll go over. We had,
46 as I mentioned, a March 1 to 5 season in '07 and in
47 '08. No moose were harvested. Special action requests
48 were submitted to extend those seasons by an additional
49 five days in '07 and '08 because of extreme cold
50 weather that was experienced in early March for those

1 years. That extension was granted. Nevertheless, no
2 moose were harvested.

3

4 In my consultation process this year I
5 held a meeting in Allakaket on January 29th with the
6 tribal council and interested parties from Allakaket
7 and Alatna. It was pretty clear at that meeting the
8 people wanted a season in late March. In separate
9 discussions I've had with you, Mr. Chair, we talked
10 about an early April season because perhaps that would
11 allow better delineation of the bulls because they're
12 starting to sprout antler buds.

13

14 The village pointed out they had a
15 conflict in early April. That's when they have the
16 Koyukuk River dog mushing championship races. Another
17 person in Alatna didn't want to have it in early April
18 because of potential bad trail conditions with spring
19 melt-off. So they were fairly unanimous in wanting it
20 the last five days of March.

21

22 As a result of that meeting, Kanuti
23 Refuge submitted a special action request to change the
24 dates from the regulatory reading of March 1 to 5 for
25 this year, 2009, to be March 27 to 31, with the
26 intention of having the same parameters on the hunt.

27

28 Also some of the background I should go
29 through some of the salient points. If you'd look on
30 Figure 1 on Page 53 and the accompanying data that
31 generated that figure, Table 1 above that. This is a
32 very low density moose population. The estimate in '07
33 was .2 moose per square mile, in '08 .3 moose per
34 square mile. That difference is not statistically
35 significant. If you look at the bars for 2007/2008,
36 the little narrow bar on top of the thick black bar is
37 the error bar and those overlap, so that's not a
38 significant change.

39

40 In a discussion I just had earlier
41 today with Glenn Stout, the State area biologist, he's
42 done a further detailed analysis of this trend using
43 modern statistical techniques and concluded that
44 there's a statistically significant decline averaging
45 somewhere between three and four percent per year.

46

47 Also important points. Combined
48 Allakaket and Alatna had harvested about 40 moose per
49 year based on the Fish and Game Division of Subsistence
50 door-to-door surveys that were done in that village in

1 the late '90s and the early part of 2000 decade. We
2 now have a contracted RIT working for us in Allakaket
3 and since 2007 we have had him do telephone polling
4 along with looking at the State Fish and Game harvest
5 reports and the Federal moose hunting harvest reports.

6
7 Using that combination of data, we
8 concluded that the harvest in 2008 fall season was 13
9 moose. That's the best estimate we can get. So
10 compare that 13 moose in fall of 2008 with an average
11 of 40 moose in the latter part of the '90s and you can
12 see why people there are getting pretty concerned about
13 their lack of ability to meet their subsistence needs
14 for moose. In fact, people are getting pretty
15 desperate.

16
17 There was an Alaska State Bureau of
18 Wildlife Enforcement investigation of a case of killing
19 a cow and a calf right off the end of the runway the
20 day after the moose season closed. I was not able to
21 pursue that case, but did find evidence that that did,
22 in fact, occur.

23
24 I'm very concerned about potential
25 increasing desperation of people driving them to want
26 to take a cow sometime in the winter illegally. Again,
27 I've got to emphasize this is a very low density
28 population. We need to keep every cow alive and
29 producing calves, so we need to work together to make
30 sure people don't start going down that road and
31 provide some other opportunity that gives them a chance
32 at least for a moose.

33
34 If you'll then turn to Page 55 in your
35 book. It's a map of Kanuti Refuge with moose collar
36 locations. This particular map shows the
37 November/December locations, but I'll assure you that
38 the September and October locations are a very similar
39 pattern.

40
41 One of the reasons I believe that the
42 people have not been meeting their subsistence needs
43 has just kind of come out as a result of the first year
44 of this moose radio collar study, which shows in fall
45 time moose are generally not along the rivers. If you
46 look at the collar distribution with those dots,
47 they're away from the rivers. The different colored
48 patterns on the map show past wildland fire burns.
49 What we believe is going on is those moose are
50 optimizing, they're foraging in the burns away from the

1 rivers.

2

3

4 A good example would be if you look
5 northeast of Allakaket, there's a creek going up to the
6 north. That's Henshaw Creek. That dotted area is a
7 1991 burn, I believe. All those moose there right in
8 the center of that burn, they were all collared in
9 March, nearly all of them, so their annual movement
10 patterns based on only one year's collar data would
11 suggest they might be along the rivers in March, but
12 other times they're focusing their foraging and other
13 activities in the burns away from the rivers.

13

14

15 This was really clear to me when I
16 personally radio-tracked the moose in September while I
17 was up there for moose law enforcement. During our
18 September tracking there was only one moose that was
19 within meat packing distance of the river and it was a
20 cow. It was clear to me that moose generally seemed to
21 be not using the rivers in September. So you combine
22 that geographic distribution pattern of where the moose
23 are with the statistics, and it's showing they're not
24 getting the moose that they used to get. They probably
25 need some kind of winter opportunity.

25

26

27 When the State Board of Game readjusted
28 the seasons about four or five years ago, they also
29 recognized they needed a winter opportunity and they
30 provided for a December 1 to 10 season. The first few
31 years people didn't really know about that and didn't
32 utilize it, but the last two years they have utilized
33 that season. This year I had our RITs specifically try
34 and gather information on effort. Five people hunted
35 an average of 2.5 days during that December 1 to 10
36 season. No moose were harvested.

36

37

38 What I've decided is that in all the
39 consultations in the decision document that we would
40 not offer the March 1 to 5 hunt. We would try and
41 comply with the desires of the village and the desires
42 of the Chair of this Council to move that hunt later in
43 the month. So the special action was for March 27 to
44 31. I'm willing to try that again for this year. It
45 does come at some great cost. We have to do quite a
46 bit to implement that out in the field. It will be
47 bulls only with a quota of five bulls.

47

48

49 I was emphatic with my meeting with the
50 village that if they did not agree to support the law
51 enforcement efforts, that we would not go forward with

1 this. The village did agree to support the law
2 enforcement efforts. I have to point out that even
3 though the village council might agree with this, this
4 has generated considerable controversy and animosity
5 towards the Fish and Wildlife Service in the past.
6 There's some people there who are not happy campers
7 that were out there looking around.

8
9 The point is that if any cow is
10 harvested, it's going to damage the population. I made
11 it quite clear to them that if a cow is harvested and
12 we make a case, this hunt will shut down. Entire
13 season shuts down for the whole village. If we make a
14 case, there will be full law enforcement action. That
15 could mean up to \$2,500 fine.

16
17 Again, I wanted to emphasize that maybe
18 the village would make efforts to have younger hunters
19 pair up and work with older hunters. I'm a little
20 concerned about someone getting kind of trigger happy.
21 The older hunters seem to be pretty confident that they
22 can tell the bull by their tracks and when they get
23 close enough they'd be able to restrain themselves
24 until they can get binoculars on the animal and make
25 sure it's a bull.

26
27 I will not extend the hunt another five
28 days like the last two years. In both 2007 and 2008 we
29 did extend the hunt, through great effort on the part
30 of OSM to push through the special action request, but
31 participation by the village actually went down both
32 years. Not a single bull was harvested.

33
34 To the villagers credit, they did see
35 bulls on Native corporation lands nearby that were not
36 open to this Federal hunt. They're clearly pretty
37 frustrated by that geographic restriction of the Native
38 corporation lands not being available to them to hunt
39 on.

40
41 In summary, I think we all need to work
42 together, all the people that I'm supposed to work with
43 in consultation to make this decision, to make sure
44 that we provide some kind of winter opportunity because
45 I think even the hope of people that they might get a
46 bull in March will keep them from poaching a cow
47 earlier in the winter. I really don't want to see
48 people driven to that kind of desperation.

49
50 On the other hand, I also am in full

1 agreement with the State that this is a declining or
2 very stable population at low densities that we need to
3 take great care for that we don't do anything to damage
4 the population further. That would mean any cow
5 harvest whatsoever. We cannot tolerate that, both
6 outside the season and within this special five-day
7 Federal season.

8

9 I think we need to work together to
10 provide some kind of winter opportunity that means
11 something to the people. I would urge the Council here
12 to have dialogue with all the stakeholders to find out
13 what that opportunity would be. Continuing to have to
14 do this by special action is a fairly cumbersome
15 process. It doesn't allow as much public participation
16 as the full regulatory process goes.

17

18 So I would urge you to get back to your
19 constituents and think about ways we could perhaps work
20 together to provide some kind of winter opportunity,
21 alleviate the temptation to shoot cows, but also
22 protect this population. If we don't do this right, it
23 will continue to go down and I certainly don't want to
24 see that.

25

26 With that, that concludes my
27 presentation about the special action request and I'll
28 entertain any questions.

29

30 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I really appreciate
33 your presentation, Mike, and going all out to evaluate
34 and look at what the situation is and to provide an
35 additional special action request even though you took
36 great heat from people above you and local people, with
37 the enforcement issues. You still stayed the course to
38 provide for a reasonable opportunity to harvest moose
39 in late winter, so I really, really appreciate that.

40

41 Does the Council have any comments on
42 Manager Spindler's special action request for this
43 spring. Ray.

44

45 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. Mike. In
46 looking at these figures, the thing that strikes me is
47 your low survival of calves and yearling bulls. Just
48 offhand, I'd say you've got a predation problem there.
49 A bad one. That's what we had in McGrath area when our
50 population was low. You can see them going down and

1 that's not from hunting pressure. Is that the case?

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray, this goes in
4 this direction. This is the current populations.
5 These are the older.

6

7 MR. COLLINS: Oh, I'm reading it the
8 wrong way. I'm sorry.

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My position is,
10 looking at this data, as I projected it to the AC
11 meeting in Allakaket, the '06-'07 winter was a very
12 shallow snow year and very conducive to moose
13 survivorship. Wolf numbers declined dramatically in
14 the '06 spring and wolf predation numbers have actually
15 abated, although probably temporary. I trap wolves
16 just upriver from Kanuti. Wolf litters this year --
17 wolf numbers are low. I've yet to catch a wolf and
18 I've only seen two small packs and both of those packs
19 have two small pups, so they're still not nearly a
20 detrimental factor as they had been.

21

22 MR. COLLINS: I stand corrected. I was
23 reading the wrong way. I'm usually reading left to
24 right and I didn't look at the numbers on the top.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. We have 58
27 calves per 100 cows in the survey this fall with 14
28 yearling bulls per 100 cows. My perception of this
29 moose population is, a lot of the older cows from the
30 high population years and the older moose have been
31 dying off. If you look at the age class of the bulls,
32 a lot of the middle-age class high number of middle-age
33 bulls shows that we've got a really young age class
34 cows. That's their cohort. So that's showing the
35 productivity of this population. I looked at the
36 statistician's projection of this herd that the State
37 has drawn out and I don't agree with that. This
38 population has shown a dramatic increase in
39 productivity in the last three years on yearling and
40 calf production, so I don't agree with that State
41 statistician. That's my position on this population.

42

43 If Glenn would like to come up and talk
44 about that portion of the issue, I would entertain the
45 State's position on this biological component of the
46 special action request. Would you like to speak to
47 that, Glenn. Oh, you've got a slide presentation?
48 We'll take a couple minute break to set this up. I
49 want the State to have their say.

50

1 (Off record)

2

3 (On record)

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're ready to show
6 the slide show on 24B special action request under
7 consideration that will be going before the Federal
8 Board. He's going to present the State's presentation
9 on that issue. Go ahead, Glenn.

10

11 MR. STOUT: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
12 Actually I probably won't give much of a presentation
13 relative to that special action request. The comments
14 that we sent to Federal Subsistence Board, OSM, they're
15 in the consideration that Mike had on that. I really
16 don't have much to add additional to that.

17

18 The only thing that I'd just talk about
19 real briefly as far as things for consideration for
20 this proposal. This is a similar graph that I've
21 showed the last several years just looking at the
22 harvest. There's a lot of things in this that I've
23 talked about. One of the key things is some specific
24 strategies that we've enacted in the Galena management
25 area to improve our local resident harvest. Part of
26 the strategy is improving our hunter success rate
27 during the fall by improving our bull/cow ratios. If
28 we can get more moose harvested in the fall, we can
29 reduce our dependency on those winter hunts when so
30 many cows end up getting shot. That is a secondary way
31 that we affect this population decline that we're
32 seeing in the area.

33

34 This is just some of the harvest that
35 took place there, kind of a talisman of that whole area
36 that we often use as the Koyukuk River check station.
37 You can see one part of this whole strategy was we
38 implemented those drawing permits throughout the area.
39 We have remarkable control through the use of that
40 drawing and registration program on regulating the
41 number of hunters. You can see that 1999 was the last
42 year that we had those registration permits on the
43 Koyukuk.

44

45 We implemented the drawing and
46 registration permit where we cut the antlers in 2000.
47 Those variations you see in 2000, 2001, 2 and 3, those
48 four years the only variation was as a result of the
49 number of permits we issued. When you jump down here
50 to 2004, we had the exact same number of permits

1 available those four years and we basically had the
2 exact same number of hunters and very little variation
3 within four or five moose.

4
5 During this time, the big thing was we
6 went from about 22 to 23 bulls per 100 cows to 30 bulls
7 per 100 cows in our controlled use area. That was our
8 management objective. So it was remarkably effective
9 biologically and in terms of hunter management. We got
10 better distribution. In many areas we're actually
11 shooting more moose while we're increasing our bull/cow
12 ratio because we changed the distribution of the
13 hunters. We got them all off the river there, right on
14 the Nowitna River, forced them out into the lakes away
15 from there. Our bull/cow ratio on the Nowitna corridor
16 started going up from there. We had 13 bulls per 100
17 cows. This year for the first time in like five years
18 we're up over 30 again.

19
20 It's been, in my opinion, a really good
21 success story on how this management strategy works for
22 us. If we can get more bulls harvested in the fall, I
23 think it will play into helping us change the
24 trajectory in the population indirectly.

25
26 When we get up into this area of the
27 special action request, we have additional problems.
28 It's clear the population is declining where we have to
29 do something about the number of calves and yearlings
30 that are recruited into the population and get that
31 rebound in the population. We're producing a lot of
32 calves. We just aren't getting many adults.

33
34 Here's the 21B stuff. This is for the
35 new 21B and I went back in time here. You can see it
36 was clear back in the early '90s when we were up in the
37 hundred and teens. Dropped down clear to the 80's and
38 90's and this year the 21B harvest is up to 110, so
39 we're starting to come back up.

40
41 MR. GERVAIS: Glenn, what are you using
42 for your estimated unreported numbers?

43
44 MR. STOUT: This estimated unreported
45 is a use of the door-to-door subsistence surveys that
46 the subsistence division collects and they used it in
47 Tanana, Ruby and Galena. We use that data to input
48 into that. For here it's 25 moose, is our estimated
49 unreported harvest. That is a constant that I apply to
50 this each year. Those are really consistent numbers

1 that we had out at Tanana, Ruby and Galena that we just
2 go ahead and use as that consistent unreported
3 estimate.

4
5 This is on just the Nowitna check
6 station. You can see this pretty dramatic decline. In
7 fact, the first year we implemented it in 2004 our
8 objective was to reduce harvest by 50 percent in the
9 Nowitna corridor and that's almost exactly what we got
10 that year. We went through that period of time where
11 Nowitna corridor harvest was lower, but as I've showed
12 you in the previous slide the overall game management
13 unit harvest is now coming up higher. This year there
14 was actually 41 went out.

15
16 As far as the surveys, and we'll talk
17 about these numbers that Mike and Jack were just
18 talking to, it will be just this portion of it, but I
19 just wanted to highlight what we've done in the last
20 several years since '99 in the way of moose surveys.
21 This year there was a survey done here on the Kanuti.
22 Last year we did 5,000 square unit on the Hog River
23 that had never been done before. We repeated this
24 lower Nowitna area this year. In addition we added on
25 this upper Nowitna drainage. An area that had never
26 been done before too.

27
28 In all this area, we're getting a
29 pretty good idea of where moose distribution are. You
30 can see the hotter colors are basically where our
31 higher densities of moose are. The lower Koyukuk,
32 middle Yukon area down here. Here's the Nowitna River
33 corridor where we count a lot of moose in there too.

34
35 This is the survey we did on the Hog
36 River last year and we're pretty happy we got that
37 estimate. Had real good precision in our estimate on
38 that survey. Then this is the block of the area we did
39 this year, 8,500 square miles. It was a big effort.
40 We worked with BLM and the Koyukuk Refuge. I think on
41 the lower area we had 8.8 percent plus or minus on our
42 estimate, which is real good precision. The total area
43 was something like 18 percent.

44
45 One of the things that this year was so
46 important on the Kanuti was it was the fifth year that
47 we employed this technique. One thing we talked about
48 several times, when we do this, this is what we call a
49 population estimation survey. We randomly select a
50 little five square mile block and in this case we did

1 240 of these blocks and there's over 1,000 of them in
2 there. So we do a statistical estimate. We just
3 extrapolate the number of the randomly selected ones to
4 the whole area.

5
6 Another part of this. This strategy
7 was developed by Jay Verhoef, our biometrician with
8 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Jay has since
9 moved on, but we still employ this technique. We call
10 it the GSPE. It's a geospacial population estimator.
11 It uses the distribution of the animals to play into
12 the estimate of the number we come up with.

13
14 One other aspect of this we had never
15 achieved yet was there's a second tier of evaluation, a
16 statistical analysis that we get when we employ this
17 technique and it's called this Bayesian Smoothing
18 Analysis. We had to wait basically until we got five
19 years to be able to employ this. This was our fifth
20 year on the Kanuti. It's the first time in the Galena
21 area that we've actually been able to implement this
22 analysis. Bayesian technique is nothing new. It's
23 statistical technique that's been around for a long
24 time. These round circles here are each of the five
25 years that he showed you in the numbers.

26
27 This year, in addition to the survey,
28 Lisa and Mike, Kalyn Kelly are biologists and Tom Sedon
29 worked together to get a sightability correction factor
30 and this gives us an estimate of how many moose we're
31 missing when we go out there. We could never do this
32 before because we didn't have collars out there before.
33 It's going to take some time before we get that number
34 solid. We started down that path in improving our
35 technique once again.

36
37 When we use that 30 percent, we just
38 used it as a constant and it's a number that we applied
39 to all previous surveys even though we know it's not
40 necessarily exactly 30 percent. You can see all the
41 numbers jumped from the number Mike had up to this
42 black diamond here. You can see we have these error
43 bars associated and you can see in 2005. We didn't
44 have as much money, so we couldn't sample as many
45 units, so we have a large variance in what we figure
46 our estimate was. Some years, like in 2007, we had a
47 really good estimate because we were able to go out and
48 do many more sample units and that improves our
49 estimate for any given year.

50

1 With the Bayesian technique, what it
2 does is it uses each of the following years and
3 preceding years and develops a regression line. It
4 statistically fits those points to that regression line
5 and gives you a new set of estimates. At the same
6 time, it recalculates previous years estimates. You
7 can see in this year it was +/- 30 percent are error
8 and we went down to less than 20 percent in our
9 population estimate. So that helps improve our
10 estimates in previous years, but it also helps fit a
11 regression line and shows us the trend and that's
12 really what's important when we're doing a population
13 estimate, is to see what the trend in the population
14 is.

15
16 These numbers are preliminary right now
17 because we're looking at a few of the numbers and the
18 statistician is still going through these numbers,
19 particularly the '93 and '89 values and this population
20 sightability correction factor. At this point, he told
21 me that what he can say is that whether we use the
22 regression line on the sightability correction factor
23 adjusted line or whether we use just the observable
24 moose line, it came up the same way. We had a 4.5
25 percent decline since 1999. That was statistically
26 significant at the 90 percent confidence interval.

27
28 I've been coming in and showing the
29 same regression line. Many times when I come in my
30 numbers are varying between 3.9 and 5 percent and his
31 fell right in there at 4.5 percent. It's just a slight
32 variation.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The 4.5 percent, is
35 that an annual basis?

36
37 MR. STOUT: 4.5 percent annually and
38 basically we've got nine years here. It's what I've
39 been publishing many times, a 30 to 50 percent decline
40 comes in at 40.5, I think, since 1999. When he went
41 back, he did do the analysis back to '89 and '93 was
42 the peak and I think my next slide kind of shows --
43 this is the standard line that I've shown, this dark
44 blue one here, with my error bars. Same numbers that
45 he's using that I'm using. Basically if you look say
46 at '93, that was generally the peak here and if you
47 look at all the trend areas, '93, '94, was pretty much
48 the peak wherever we looked up and down the river, the
49 Koyukuk or the middle Yukon.

50

1 This is tailing up this direction
2 basically because we had a big gap here right in the
3 peak. It's really kind of irrelevant. If you look to
4 the right, 1994, you can see they all basically have
5 the same slope. The Koyukuk, I've been talking time
6 and time again about 2.5 percent decline. On the
7 Kanuti, 3.9 percent decline. We haven't talked about
8 it much on the Nowitna because we didn't have many data
9 points. If you look at the trend areas, it sure looks
10 like it's following the same pattern as everywhere
11 else. That just gives more confidence to me in
12 evaluating what's going on in our populations here the
13 last 9, 10 years.

14
15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The problem I had
16 with that analysis was that this slide here shows a
17 straight line decline, but it doesn't take into account
18 productivity of the population. So those numbers, if
19 you look to the left, those moose population were very
20 low reproductive. Your overall recruitments were very
21 low. Then you look up here in 2005 in the Kanuti
22 there's 20 yearling bulls per 100 cows and you multiply
23 that times two. That's four times as many moose were
24 recruited into the population. The older moose from
25 the previous generations are dying off, so we've
26 recruited a bunch of young moose into the population
27 that are now showing these 53 and 58 calves per 100
28 cows.

29
30 So this analysis, yeah, it's cool and
31 everything, but it doesn't take into account what the
32 population actually is. What the population actually
33 is is a highly productive younger component. It
34 doesn't reflect what kind of snow years you're entering
35 in, what kind of wolf predation and some other factors.
36 My opinion is, just like this bar graph here, that the
37 moose population, the older component has died off.
38 Now we've got a younger moose population that's become
39 very productive and we should be seeing this population
40 increase. It's never going to go right through the
41 roof like it was back when we had wolf control back in
42 the '70s, but it has turned around.

43
44 So I don't agree with that red line. I
45 just don't agree with it. The anecdotal on the ground,
46 which is what we do, observation is that these moose --
47 you collared two moose right off the end of our runway
48 in Wiseman. Both of those was a two-year-old bull and
49 that other cow that you collared there was a two-year-
50 old cow or yearling cow, so there was some very young

1 moose around and they're productive.

2

3 I don't want this Council to believe
4 that everything is just bleak, that this population of
5 moose, the Koyukuk downriver, two years ago and three
6 years ago was having some phenomenal calf recruitment
7 numbers. So those are younger moose. This is
8 something that the biologists -- you've got to look at
9 the age class of the cows and that's what this kind of
10 analysis does not account for. A statistician can make
11 all these lines, but you can do that with anything.

12

13 The reality is the age class of the
14 cows, when you're collaring these cows, there should be
15 teeth pulled or at least a rough cursory analysis of
16 what the age classes of those moose are. I would have
17 been doing that. The first thing I do when I pick up a
18 wolf kill is to look at its teeth. So that's what my
19 problem with this analysis is.

20

21 My impression in the Kanuti population
22 is that it's a recovered population, it's a good age
23 class now and if the wolf numbers stay low enough we're
24 starting to see an increase and this population could
25 be back up to 1999 level by next year with another good
26 recruitment year. So I don't agree with the red line.
27 That's just my opinion and I have plenty of opinions.

28

29 Robert.

30

31 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
32 Could you back up to where you showed the villages
33 moose hunting. I don't see any guides, transporters,
34 how many moose did they take other than the local
35 communities here, Glenn.

36

37 MR. STOUT: Through the Chair. Thank
38 you, Member Walker. This slide specifically was just
39 to show the local harvest to demonstrate how we're
40 improving our local harvest success. When I showed the
41 other slide following this for 21B, I do have those
42 data showing other harvest that's taking place, but
43 this was to speak to a specific point about local
44 hunters are doing better since we implemented these
45 regulations.

46

47 MR. WALKER: I understand. I'd like to
48 see what other hunters are taking. We're here as a
49 board to make sure that all the people here have a
50 chance for a subsistence moose, whether it's five in

1 the spring, five in the summer. That's what our job is
2 24/7/365. I'd like to know what the number total of
3 what the guides and transporters have taken versus what
4 the local community has taken for subsistence issues.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray.

9

10 MR. COLLINS: The Allakaket harvest
11 doesn't seem to correspond with what they're saying.
12 It showed it as being real low and increasing, yet last
13 year they say they only got eight where they got 20 the
14 year before. Is this just the reported harvest and if
15 you do household surveys it's higher? This shows that
16 all along it's been down just slightly. I thought they
17 were telling us anecdotally they were harvesting a lot
18 more than that and this year it really went down.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You could speak to
21 it, Glenn, if you would like to.

22

23 MR. STOUT: Member Collins. This is
24 reported harvest and I wanted to make sure that when I
25 presented this that it was consistently understood what
26 data is being presented here from a year now. This is
27 just what comes through the State harvest mechanisms or
28 the Federal harvest mechanisms, what's reported on the
29 cards. In all these villages, what we have done in the
30 past, the subsistence division of Fish and Game has
31 done the door-to-door surveys. That's a different way
32 of getting at harvest and that's the number that Mike
33 reported. He reported that those reports consistently
34 shown that they were taking 40 to 44 moose each year.

35

36 During that same period of time and it
37 was in '98, '99, 2000, 2001, right in there, the
38 reported harvest for Allakaket was running about five
39 or six moose. So there was this big gap and that's
40 different for each village. We see in Allakaket it's
41 19 percent reporting rate when you look at the
42 comparison. Just reported harvest to the door-to-door
43 survey. I think Galena is running about 58 percent of
44 the harvest is reported in the door-to-door. So it
45 varies from village to village.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eleanor.

48

49 MS. YATLIN: I wanted to ask, you said
50 Huslia, prior to 2005, I mean how accurate is it if you

1 do door to door? You know, we get this portion of the
2 moose harvest ticket that you're mandatory right now to
3 turn in. It seems like it started in 2006. I know for
4 a fact they never turn those tickets in. It's been
5 mandatory for a couple years. I was just wondering how
6 accurate that is.

7
8 MR. STOUT: Member Yatlin. That's a
9 really good question. Actually, at the Board of Game
10 last year I gave a pretty detailed and lengthy
11 discussion about how I looked at that data and there's
12 a couple things that have changed throughout the area.
13 We've gone to the drawing and registration permit.
14 Huslia is a little bit different because it's been in
15 the middle of the controlled use area and if you go up
16 and you look at that harvest thing clear back to 1992 I
17 think it is we had the RMA-30 and RMA-32 permit, which
18 was the only two permits available. Those have always
19 had that mandatory and strict reporting requirements.
20 Huslia has actually been pretty good at reporting.

21
22 When I went back and looked at the data
23 the last five years and unfortunately this has been a
24 real problem that we've talked about quite often, we
25 don't have any door-to-door subsistence surveys. We
26 lost funding for that the last five years, I think. We
27 haven't been able to do that to match up a recent
28 number. All we can do is go back to that 2002, 2003
29 and earlier data and compare it. My understanding is
30 that they're going to get funded for doing a
31 subsistence survey this year to recalibrates that. The
32 best we can do is go back in time and look at it.

33
34 One thing that I did talk about at the
35 Board of Game meeting that was really evident was that
36 there was also a really big change in Huslia. We had a
37 substantial number of non-local hunters shooting moose
38 in Huslia prior to this hunt. You can see a dramatic
39 increase in the difference of number of people that are
40 even applying for permits in Huslia. I feel pretty
41 confidently that there was a lot of meat being donated
42 by non-local hunters within Huslia that was offsetting
43 some of that demand.

44
45 Kind of an inadvertent effect that we
46 saw when we implemented this drawing and we took out a
47 large number of non-local hunters was all of a sudden
48 local hunters that pressure fell on them more to come
49 up with meeting their moose meat demands. So,
50 instantaneously it's not that they report any better.

1 There's actually more of them out hunting. It goes
2 into all this economic thing. You think about the
3 price of gas. It's not just getting one moose, but now
4 they've got to get two moose. It costs twice as much
5 money even to get the first moose and you can really
6 see how it feels to the subsistence hunter to have to
7 get more moose now because we've taken out a big source
8 of moose meat.

9

10 MS. YATLIN: That brings the question
11 to the outfitters. So you said you had data on that,
12 right? I just wanted to know how much moose they take.
13 I hear what you're saying, but I don't agree with it
14 because I live there.

15

16 Thank you.

17

18 MR. STOUT: Member Yatlin. I don't
19 have it in this slide show, but I've got it on another
20 one and I could certainly show that to you during the
21 break.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments.
24 Tim.

25

26 MR. GERVAIS: Glenn, so like in the
27 case of Allakaket and perhaps Alatna's data is in with
28 that or no?

29

30 MR. STOUT: They have the same mailing
31 address, so when I do a query on the database, I just
32 search for the res.com mailing address and it all comes
33 out. Some of that is Alatna.

34

35 MR. GERVAIS: Okay. So you have really
36 low compliance with the harvest reports. How accurate
37 do you think the door to door surveys are? It seems
38 like you're trying to manage a moose harvest and nobody
39 is telling you what's going on.

40

41 MR. STOUT: I have a lot of confidence,
42 Member Gervais, on the subsistence door-to-door survey.
43 It's mostly because, for instance in Galena, it was
44 done six years in a row and it was startling how
45 consistent it was from year to year. I think people
46 were really consistent on how they were reporting on
47 both mechanisms when we saw dramatic declines in our
48 reporting rate on the harvest tickets. We saw the same
49 declines relatively on that door-to-door survey. So I
50 have a lot of confidence in the numbers that they're

1 coming up with.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And then Kanuti is
4 done. You know the State Subsistence Division got
5 their funding cut, but Kanuti's RITs.....

6

7 MR. SPINDLER: I could address that.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Mike. So
10 the refuges are also doing a door-to-door survey. Go
11 ahead, Mike.

12

13 MR. SPINDLER: Yes, Mr. Chair. For the
14 record, Mike Spindler again. Starting in 2007 we had a
15 contracted RIT who basically did that door to door just
16 for moose for us. In 2006, I hired the State license
17 vendor under contract to do that door to door. So it's
18 probably not as thorough as Caroline Brown's work was
19 because they had a lot more rigid statistical protocol
20 for doing those door-to-door surveys. This was just to
21 get at the number of moose. We understand there is a
22 problem in reporting in Allakaket.

23

24 If you look back like Glenn said, the
25 reported harvest in those early years was five reported
26 but the door to door was saying 40. I think that
27 disparity now is probably not as great. I'm
28 speculating just based on the fact that we've had a
29 consistent license vendor there for the State for a
30 number of years. He's pretty good at encouraging the
31 people to do what they need to do with those harvest
32 tickets.

33

34 Since '06 we've been making an effort
35 to contact the hunters directly to see if they've got a
36 moose. Whatever disparity there is is probably not 5
37 to 40. It's somewhere in between there. We don't know
38 what it is. I applaud the Fish and Game for trying to
39 get that door-to-door survey going again. I think we
40 badly need it.

41

42 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43

44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. This
45 Council is to encourage the State Subsistence Division
46 to do those door-to-door surveys and we had a pretty
47 good database for a while and now we've got a gap.
48 That database was integral into setting our subsistence
49 needs in the Koyukuk planning process. We need to
50 reinstitute that door-to-door survey probably on the

1 Koyukuk and middle Yukon areas. The refuges have been
2 trying to fill some of those gaps without the State's
3 funding being available.

4

5 Any other comments on the presentation
6 by the State. Robert.

7

8 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 Mike, what if Allakaket and Alatna declared an
10 emergency for moose hunting. Are you prepared to let
11 them have anything or just say no?

12

13 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Chair. I don't
14 believe it's at an emergency situation now, but I will
15 tell you just recently they had a potlatch and there
16 was no moose meat at the potlatch in Allakaket, so
17 that's saying something. I think we need to look at
18 this population, recognize it is declining or stable at
19 a low level. As Chairman Reakoff pointed out, in
20 looking at the productivity and recruitment data from
21 the last few years, there's potential that this thing
22 could turn around. But I think there's also potential
23 that whatever turnaround we might manage could be
24 undermined by perhaps wolves coming back or, my worst
25 fear, by people forced into shooting cows. We can't
26 let them shoot cows. We've got to be really, really
27 vigilant on the enforcement efforts. All the modeling
28 work, all the research that's been done shows that is
29 the worst thing you can do when you've got a population
30 like this, is to allow cow harvest.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. You got a
33 comment, Ray.

34

35 MR. COLLINS: It just brings home the
36 difficulty we have as a group using this information
37 when there's such low reporting. I wish we could get
38 that message back to the village that we really need
39 accurate data. If we're supposed to assess what their
40 need is and we go by the reporting data, it just
41 doesn't give us a clear picture and it works against
42 the villages when we have to make decisions. If we had
43 an accurate figure, we could make our case.

44

45 I think as another check, when they
46 come and get that new license, why couldn't they check
47 on there whether they got one last year or not.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I've told people
50 that at the meetings over and over we need to have

1 reporting. If you don't report it, it's going to be
2 allocated to somebody else. You have to go deep into
3 the culture. There's actual reasons why a person
4 doesn't feel comfortable saying that they got a moose.
5 There's a bunch of reasons why they don't do that.
6 It's to their benefit for people to report.

7
8 Coming back through the fog bank of all
9 this discussion, the special action is for this spring.
10 So Mr. Spindler, the manager, has worked with myself
11 and the community to provide some kind of a reasonable
12 opportunity to harvest. The reality in the data is the
13 bull/cow ratio is very high ratio in Unit 24B within
14 this Kanuti Wildlife Refuge area at 60 to 46 bulls per
15 100 cows. The management objective is 30 bulls per 100
16 cows. We're far over our management objective for
17 bulls. There's really no reason not to have a quota of
18 five bulls to be harvested in a special action request.
19 I don't see any biological reason not to provide a
20 reasonable opportunity when the burns are snowed in and
21 the moose have moved to a more accessible areas to
22 provide a reasonable opportunity under a special action
23 request this year.

24
25 I talked to a lot of people down there
26 in Allakaket, Paul Simon and various people that are on
27 councils. The people down there are telling me their
28 freezers are empty. I was talking to Paul in January,
29 so people are in tough shape down there. We don't want
30 them to shoot cows. To provide a reasonable
31 opportunity to harvest a bull in late March, there's
32 lot of oversight, I would have preferred to have the
33 hunt progress into early April when the bulls begin
34 growing their antlers.

35
36 I feel that this special action request
37 should be endorsed by the Western Interior Council
38 because I feel that 13 moose harvested by Allakaket is
39 far under the 30 to 40 that ordinarily would have been
40 harvested. This late winter hunt, long days, the snow
41 settles, you can get away from the river and stuff. So
42 people have asked me over and over down there please
43 try and get us a hunt. They keep telling me that. So
44 I would like to see this Council endorse the special
45 action request for the Kanuti for this year and then we
46 should submit a proposal to have some other fixes that
47 we've worked out here.

48
49 Do we have a motion to support.
50

1 MR. STICKMAN: I'll make that motion.
2 Just to make it really clear, I think that a letter
3 should come from this Council to the residents up there
4 that Mike has really gone out on a limb to provide this
5 opportunity and any animosity towards the Fish and
6 Wildlife Service should be -- they should be working
7 with the Fish and Wildlife Service instead of having
8 any kind of animosity towards the Service.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would also say
11 that we should write a letter. Do we have a second on
12 that motion.

13
14 MR. COLLINS: I'll second.

15
16 MS. YATLIN: I'll second.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We got two seconds.
19 I'll take Ray's, I guess. Any further discussion on
20 the special action request.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 MR. STICKMAN: I call for the question.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question has
27 been called on transmitting an endorsement of the
28 special action request for the March 27 to 31 hunt for
29 2009 within the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge and the
30 associated BLM lands. Signify by saying aye.

31
32 IN UNISON: Aye. Go ahead.

33
34 MR. MATHEWS: The motion was two
35 letters, one endorsing the special action.....

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. I was going
38 to deal with the letter on a separate.....

39
40 MR. MATHEWS: Oh, okay. I
41 misunderstood.

42
43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That was an
44 endorsement of the special action request. Tied to
45 this special action request is this letter. I guess we
46 voted on that, didn't we? That letter to the community
47 is necessary because people are very upset not being
48 able to get their meat. They're so frustrated that
49 they're lashing out at poor Mike over here. So people
50 have to understand that Kanuti is going way out on a

1 limb to help them out at great opposition from various
2 entities. A letter to the community outlying the
3 special action request that's been submitted. And if
4 they would write a letter of endorsement to the Federal
5 Board, that would be nice also. Also that they should
6 work more closely with the refuge.

7

8 Vince, do you have something else.

9

10 MR. MATHEWS: All those that voted
11 understood that there will be these letters that will
12 be submitted and it's all clear on the record that
13 there will be these two components of the letter.

14

15 (Council nods affirmatively)

16

17 MR. MATHEWS: The record shows that
18 their heads are nodding in the appropriate direction.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Do you have
21 a comment, Robert.

22

23 MR. WALKER: Yes, I did. Mike, what is
24 the caribou population up in that area.

25

26 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Chair. Mr. Walker.
27 There was a small group of caribou that came through
28 while we were doing the moose surveys in November,
29 maybe 30 to 50 caribou. I've heard reports that some
30 of those kind of hung around somewhere between Bettles
31 and Allakaket. Nobody that I know of in Allakaket has
32 gotten any caribou recently. With the deep snow up
33 there now, it's probably less likely that caribou will
34 be moving down in there.

35

36 Just one other point that I'd like to
37 make is if in your letters you could encourage the
38 people there to embrace the reporting systems that
39 exist, the State harvest tickets and the Federal
40 harvest tickets, because that's really important that
41 we have good harvest data.

42

43 Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Walker.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. Those are
46 points of our discussion here. Any other comments by
47 the Council on that special action request.

48

49 (No comments)

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think it's dinner
2 time. I think we should break for dinner. I appreciate
3 your presentation there, Glenn. Not that I have any
4 animosity against the State. I love the state dearly.

5
6 (Laughter)

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was born in
9 Alaska. But I have to put my position on the table
10 also about my impression of that moose population.
11 We're all professionals here.

12
13 (Off record)

14
15 (PROCEEDINGS TO BE CONTINUED)

