

1 EASTERN/WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE

2

3 JOINT REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

4

5 PUBLIC MEETING

6

7 Pikes Landing

8 Fairbanks, Alaska

9 March 4, 2015

10 8:30 a.m.

11

12

13 EASTERN INTERIOR COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

14

15 Sue Entsminger, Chair

16 Andy Bassich

17 Lester Erhart

18 Andrew Firmin

19 William Glanz

20 Will Koehler

21 Rhonda Pitka

22 Virgil Umphenour

23 Larry Williams

24 Donald Woodruff

25

26 Regional Council Coordinator, Eva Patton

27

28

29 WESTERN INTERIOR COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

30

31 Jack Reakoff, Chair

32 Ray Collins

33 Timothy Gervais

34 Don Honea

35 Jenny Pelkola

36 Pollock Simon

37 James Walker

38 Robert Walker

39 Darrel Vent

40

41 Regional Council Coordinator, Melinda Burke

42

43

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Fairbanks, Alaska - 3/4/2015)

(On record)

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay.

Lester, come on up here. There's a few people from Western not here, but they will be showing up and we'll just get started with the meeting. I've been asked to Chair. Jack said he was pretty tired from an all-day meeting yesterday, so I'll do the best I can for you guys.

I have asked -- oh, first, let's do the roll call. Where is Andrew? He also is not here. Somewhere. Where is Eva? I'm going to ask Virgil to do the roll call for our RAC and then the secretary here could do the roll call for Western.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Sue Entsminger.

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Andrew is absent.

Larry Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Lester Erhart.

MR. ERHART: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: William Glanz.

MR. GLANZ: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Andrew Bassich.

MR. BASSICH: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Rhonda Pitka.

MS. PITKA: Here.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Will Koehler.

MR. KOEHLER: Here.

1 MR. UMPHENOUR: Don Woodruff.
2
3 MR. WOODRUFF: Here.
4
5 MR. UMPHENOUR: And I'm Virgil
6 Umphenour. Madame Chair.
7
8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
9 Virgil.
10
11 MR. REAKOFF: I'll call the roll for
12 the Western Interior Council.
13
14 Carl Morgan.
15
16 MR. MORGAN: Here.
17
18 MR. REAKOFF: James Walker.
19
20 MR. J. WALKER: Here.
21
22 MR. REAKOFF: Pollock Simon.
23
24 MR. SIMON: Here.
25
26 MR. REAKOFF: Robert Walker.
27
28 MR. R. WALKER: Here.
29
30 MR. REAKOFF: Jenny Pelkola. She's
31 absent currently. Don Honea, Jr.
32
33 MR. HONEA: Here.
34
35 MR. REAKOFF: Tim Gervais.
36
37 MR. GERVAIS: Here.
38
39 MR. REAKOFF: Ray Collins. He's
40 absent. And Jack Reakoff, present.
41
42 MS. BURKE: Darrel.
43
44 MR. REAKOFF: Oh, where's Darrel? Oh,
45 I didn't see his tag. Okay. Darrel Vent is also
46 absent temporarily.
47
48 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
49 Jack. Next is the invocation and I've asked Paul
50 Williams, elder, to give the invocation.

1 If we could all stand.

2

3 (Invocation)

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
6 Paul. Okay. Members are showing up. Andrew is here
7 on my side and did I see someone come in.

8

9 MR. REAKOFF: Yeah, Darrel Vent has
10 arrived. Still missing a couple.

11

12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'll call the
13 meeting to order. Welcome everyone. I see Ray Collins
14 coming in now. Introductions. We can start with the
15 Council and come around and then go through the
16 audience.

17

18 MR. BASSICH: My name is Andy Bassich.
19 I'm from Eagle, Alaska.

20

21 MR. GLANZ: I'm Bill Glanz. Central,
22 Circle area.

23

24 MS. PATTON: Eva Patton, Council
25 Coordinator for Eastern Interior Regional Advisory
26 Council.

27

28 MS. PITKA: I'm Rhonda Pitka from
29 Beaver.

30

31 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm Larry Williams from
32 Venetie.

33

34 MR. KOEHLER: Will Koehler, Wrangell-
35 St. Elias Park.

36

37 MR. ERHART: Lester Erhart, Tanana.

38

39 MR. WOODRUFF: Don Woodruff, Eagle.

40

41 MR. FIRMIN: Andrew Firmin, Fort Yukon.

42

43 MR. UMPHENOUR: Virgil Umphenour, North
44 Pole.

45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Sue
47 Entsminger, Mentasta Pass.

48

49 MR. REAKOFF: I'm Jack Reakoff, Chair
50 of the Western Interior Regional Council. I live in

1 Wiseman, up in the head of the Koyukuk River in the
2 Brooks Range.
3
4 MR. COLLINS: Ray Collins. I live in
5 McGrath on Western Interior RAC.
6
7 MR. GERVAIS: Timothy Gervais, Ruby.
8
9 MR. HONEA: Don Honea, Jr., Ruby.
10
11 MR. VENT: Darrel Vent, Huslia.
12
13 MR. R. WALKER: Robert Walker, Anvik.
14
15 MS. BURKE: My name is Melinda Burke.
16 I'm the Council Coordinator for the Western Interior
17 RAC.
18
19 MR. SIMON: Pollock Simon, Sr. from
20 Allakaket.
21
22 MR. J. WALKER: James Walker, Holy
23 Cross.
24
25 MR. MORGAN: Carl Morgan, Aniak, Middle
26 Kuskokwim.
27
28 MS. PETRIVELLI: I'm Pat Petrivelli,
29 BIA subsistence anthropologist out of Anchorage.
30
31 MR. JOHNSON: Carl Johnson, Council
32 Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence
33 Management.
34
35 MR. P. WILLIAMS: Paul Williams from
36 Beaver.
37
38 MR. JOSEPH: Victor Joseph, Tanana
39 Chiefs president.
40
41 MR. WHITFORD: Tom Whitford. I'm the
42 Alaska Region Subsistence Program leader for the Forest
43 Service.
44
45 MR. EVANS: I'm Tom Evans, wildlife
46 biologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division
47 of Subsistence Management.
48
49 MR. LIND: Orville Lind, Office of
50 Subsistence Management, Native liaison.

1 MR. SPINDLER: Mike Spindler, Refuge
2 Manager, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.
3
4 MR. CARLO: Good morning. I'm Glenn
5 Carlo, Denakkanaaga.
6
7 MR. ALEXIE: Good morning. Fred
8 Alexie, Kaltag.
9
10 MR. P. DEMOSKI: Good morning. I'm
11 Peter Demoski, Nulato.
12
13 MR. A. DEMOSKI: Arnold Demoski, Nulato
14 Tribal Council.
15
16 MS. INGLES: Palma Ingles, U.S. Fish
17 and Wildlife Service, OSM.
18
19 MS. FLEEK: Adrienne Fleek, OSM,
20 Council Coordinator for the YK Delta and Seward
21 Peninsula.
22
23 MS. YUHAS: Good morning. Jennifer
24 Yuhas. I am the State Federal Liaison Team Leader.
25
26 MR. MATHEWS: I'm Vince Mathews,
27 subsistence coordinator for Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon
28 Flats.
29
30 MS. GLEASON: Hi. I'm Christy Gleason,
31 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, assistant manager
32 for fall season.
33
34 MR. PETER: Walter Peter, Fort Yukon.
35
36 MS. OKADA: Marcy Okada, subsistence
37 coordinator for Gates of the Arctic and Yukon-Charley
38 Rivers Natural Preserve.
39
40 MR. DUDGEON: Good morning. Welcome
41 again to Fairbanks. I'm Greg Dudgeon, the
42 Superintendent of Gates of the Arctic National Park and
43 Preserve and Yukon-Charley Rivers Natural Preserve.
44
45 MS. MORAN: Good morning. I'm Tina
46 Moran. I'm the deputy manager for Kanuti National
47 Wildlife Refuge here in Fairbanks.
48
49 MR. MASCHMANN: I'm Gerald Maschmann
50 with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Yukon River

1 fisheries management.

2

3 MS. CLARK: Good morning. I'm Karen
4 Clark, Deputy Regional Director for the Fish and
5 Wildlife Service.

6

7 MR. BARRETTE: Al Barrette, Fairbanks.
8 Just here representing myself.

9

10 MR. BURR: I'm John Burr, Fish and
11 Game, Sport Fish Division.

12

13 MR. HJELMGREN: Jim Hjelmgren, U.S.
14 Fish and Wildlife Service, Chief of Refuge Law
15 Enforcement.

16

17 MR. BUE: Fred Bue, Fish and Wildlife
18 Service, Yukon River Fisheries Management.

19

20 MR. LORD: Victor Lord, Nenana Tribal
21 Council.

22

23 MS. CRAVER: Amy Craver and I'm the
24 culture resource manager and subsistence manager for
25 Denali National Park and Preserve.

26

27 MS. NELSON: Hazel Nelson, Director of
28 Subsistence Division, ADF&G.

29

30 MS. SCHMIDT: Good morning. I'm
31 Stephanie Schmidt, Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
32 Division of Commercial Fisheries and I'm the Yukon
33 River summer season fishery manager.

34

35 MS. GARCIA: I'm Sabrina Garcia with
36 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and I'm the
37 summer season assistant manager on the Yukon.

38

39 MS. BROWN: I'm Caroline Brown with
40 Fish and Game, Subsistence Division. I'm the Interior
41 Specialist.

42

43 MR. ESTENSEN: Good morning, members of
44 the Council. My name is Jeff Estensen. I'm with the
45 Alaska Department of Fish and Game here in Fairbanks
46 and I'm the Yukon fall season manager.

47

48 MR. FROST: I'm Bert Frost. I'm the
49 Regional Director for the National Park Service.

50

1 MR. RICE: Bud Rice, management
2 biologist for the National Park Service based in
3 Anchorage.
4
5 MR. ILLINGWORTH: Good morning. Kevin
6 Illingworth, University of Alaska, Tribal Management
7 Program.
8
9 MR. MEARS: Good morning. Jeremy
10 Mears, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist.
11
12 MR. LOLNITZ: Good morning. Leo
13 Lolnitz, Koyukuk Tribal Council.
14
15 MR. WRIGHT: Charlie Wright from
16 Tanana. I'm on YRDFA board and I'm here for Tanana
17 Tribal Council.
18
19 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Good morning. I'm
20 Alfred Demientieff, Jr., Holy Cross Tribal.
21
22 MS. FITKA: Good morning. My name is
23 Serena Fitka from St. Mary's. I live here in Fairbanks
24 and I am taking the introductory Federal subsistence
25 program.
26
27 MS. STEVENS: Carrie Stevens, UAF.
28
29 MS. GRONQUIST: I'm Ruth Gronquist, a
30 wildlife biologist with BLM for the Eastern Interior.
31
32 MR. JENKINS: Good morning. I'm Wayne
33 Jenkins, Deputy Director of Yukon River Drainage
34 Fisheries Association.
35
36 MR. STEVENS: Good morning. My name is
37 Ben Stevens. I'm from Stevens Village. I work with
38 the Tanana Chiefs Conference.
39
40 MS. MAHLER: Doreen Mahler, Fort Yukon.
41
42 MS. CHARLIE: Kristie Charlie from
43 Tetlin.
44
45 MR. D. ADAMS: Danny Adams, Tetlin.
46
47 MR. DAVID: Harold David, Allakaket.
48
49 MR. W. ADAMS: Wilfred Adams, Tetlin.
50

1 MR. BERENDZEN: Steve Berendzen, a
2 Refuge Manager for Yukon Flats National Wildlife
3 Refuge.
4
5 MR. KELLY: James Kelly from Fort
6 Yukon. I'm also here with the university tribal
7 management class.
8
9 MS. FIELDS: Shirley Fields, Fort
10 Yukon. Also with university tribal management.
11
12 MR. TITUS: Luke Titus, Minto.
13
14 MR. HAVENER: Jeremy Havener, Refuge
15 Subsistence Coordinator for Koyukuk, Nowitna and Innoko
16 National Wildlife Refuges.
17
18 MR. MOOS: Good morning. Kenton Moos,
19 Refuge Manager for Koyukuk, Nowitna and Innoko Refuges.
20
21 MR. HILL: Good morning. Jerry Hill,
22 Deputy Manager, Tetlin Refuge out of Tok.
23
24 MR. BAYLESS: Good morning, Council
25 members. Shawn Bayless, Tetlin Refuge in Tok.
26
27 MR. FOX: Good morning. Trevor Fox,
28 Regional Subsistence Coordinator for the Fish and
29 Wildlife Service out of Anchorage.
30
31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anyone else?
32 Did we miss anyone? I believe this is the most I've
33 seen even at our other double RAC meeting. Welcome
34 everyone.
35
36 We're going to review and adopt the
37 agenda. It was told earlier -- let me get this
38 straight, Melinda. I'm having a senior moment. I
39 forgot to introduce the people on the phone. I
40 apologize. So if the people on the phone could
41 introduce themselves, please.
42
43 MS. HYER: Yeah, good morning. This is
44 Karen Hyer from the Office of Subsistence Management.
45
46 MR. RIVARD: Good morning, everyone.
47 This is Don Rivard with OSM in Anchorage.
48
49 MS. MCBURNEY: Good morning, Madame
50 Chair and Council members. I'm Mary McBurney, Program

1 Manager for the National Park Service Subsistence Team.

2

3 MR. ROCZICKA: Good morning. This is
4 Greg Roczicka with Orutsararmiut Native Council in
5 Bethel and also Y-K Delta RAC vice-chair.

6

7 MR. CRAWFORD: Good morning. This is
8 Drew Crawford with the Alaska Department of Fish and
9 Game in Anchorage.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Has everyone
12 online been identified.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Then
17 we'll move along. So next is the review and adoption
18 of the agenda. There was a report that was given
19 yesterday to the Western Interior that was going to be
20 moved to our meeting, Eva?

21

22 MS. PATTON: Madame Chair, that's
23 correct. Yesterday Western Interior took up C&T, so we
24 will not do that as a joint Council today. Eastern
25 Interior will take up C&T tomorrow on their own and can
26 comment at that time.

27

28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Which is (e)
29 on old business?

30

31 MS. PATTON: Correct.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Anything
34 else?

35

36 MS. PATTON: Madame Chair, I believe
37 that's it for the moving around of agenda items and
38 then we'll have the Refuge's proposed rule towards the
39 end of the day and an opportunity for Eastern Interior
40 to continue with that discussion if Eastern Interior
41 wants to on Thursday morning as well.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. So I
44 need a motion.

45

46 MR. BASSICH: Madame Chair, motion to
47 adopt the agenda.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I have a
50 motion. Do I hear a second.

1 MR. FIRMIN: Second.
2
3 MR. UMPHENOUR: Second.
4
5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
6 discussion.
7
8 (No comments)
9
10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All in favor.
11
12 IN UNISON: Aye.
13
14 (No opposing votes)
15
16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Motion passes
17 for the agenda. Okay, reports. Do Council members
18 have any reports to give? We can have a raise of hands
19 and call or do you guys want to go around the table?
20
21 MS. PATTON: Madame Chair. We thought
22 this might be a nice opportunity for Council members to
23 share briefly from their community since we have
24 Western Interior here as well with a chance to check in
25 with each other and learn a little bit about each
26 other's Council region.
27
28 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So we'll just
29 start down the table with Andy.
30
31 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Madame Chair.
32 Yeah, I have basically three concerns. They're long-
33 standing concerns. We're going to be addressing most
34 of them in the meeting, so I'm not going to speak too
35 much. Primary one is hunter education and outreach on
36 some of the impacts on nonrural people coming out and
37 competing with the people that are living in remote
38 areas for fish and wildlife resources.
39
40 I'm really looking forward to that
41 discussion with the Council members from the Western
42 Interior. I think this is a really important topic
43 that we need to start discussing and begin some
44 outreach and education because it impacts all of us
45 that live out in the remote areas, so I'm really
46 looking forward to that.
47
48 The second thing is we really have a
49 lot of concerns about fall chum up in our region. Not
50 because they're so abundant right now, but because

1 we're afraid that they do cycle and we'd like to begin
2 to have some discussion on long-term protection for
3 fall chum into the Upper Yukon districts. It's really
4 vital to us because of our dependence on dog teams and
5 the lack of chinook salmon up in the area. That's
6 pretty much the only fish resource we have left. So
7 we're going to be developing some proposals for Federal
8 Subsistence Board and also the State of Alaska Board of
9 Fish.

10
11 Then finally I think the most important
12 thing is to continue chinook conservation. We've made
13 a lot of progress in the last three or four years on
14 conservation efforts from all people along the river.
15 It's paying off. I'd just like to continue the
16 outreach effort and continue to work on keeping
17 conservation chinook as a top priority. I know they
18 will eventually begin to come back, but I think it's
19 really important that we have some very long-term plans
20 for restoration of chinook. When I say long-term, I'm
21 thinking 15 to 20 years. We need to keep that in mind
22 as the chinook start coming back so that we can get the
23 chinook back up to a higher level of abundance for all
24 subsistence users.

25
26 That's it.

27
28 Thank you, Madame Chair.

29
30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Bill.

31
32 MR. GLANZ: I don't have much more to
33 add. Andy covered all the stuff that we're all
34 concerned with. Last fall at our meeting here we had
35 some politicians coming in, some campaigning. I sure
36 hope that we don't have that happen again. We've got
37 enough Fish and Game Board issues without putting up
38 with them coming in here.
39 Besides that, that's the reason why Fish and Game is in
40 a bad way anyway, because politicians have been trying
41 to run Fish and Game instead of biologists.

42
43 That's about all I have for this one.

44
45 MS. PITKA: I think the main concern
46 for the Upper Yukon River has always been the chinook
47 salmon and the crashes in the last few years have
48 concerned our area greatly. So we want to know why the
49 fish aren't coming back. We haven't seen any data or
50 any science on that. So I think that maybe some

1 studies on that would be a really good idea. I know
2 that we have Stephanie Schmidt in the room. Hi,
3 Stephanie. So I think that that's our main concern.

4
5 Also we have a high number of wolves in
6 our area, especially around the villages. It's higher
7 and higher throughout the years, so we wanted to know a
8 little bit more about predator control and those
9 issues.

10
11 Thank you.

12
13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Larry.

14
15 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. I don't
16 really have any concerns out of Venetie, but there's
17 some positive things I'd like to mention. The
18 Porcupine Caribou Herd was in and around Arctic Village
19 all winter and we had a mild winter. I heard recently
20 that there's going to be a study done on the chinook
21 salmon that migrate up the Tanana River and that's
22 being done by Yukon Flats Refuge in collaboration with
23 local knowledge and local elders and there's somebody
24 local that's going to be working directly with them.
25 See where they migrate and get an educated guesstimate
26 on how many there are and their overall health.

27
28 Like I've mentioned in meetings we've
29 had in the past that we had quite a few chinook salmon
30 migrating up in there. We'd like to have a good guess
31 so we can take care of that resource for future
32 generations.

33
34 Thank you.

35
36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Will.

37
38 MR. KOEHLER: I think probably the
39 major concerns in my area, not so much for me
40 personally, but in my area we do have a fair amount of
41 highway road access and as technology is improved,
42 whether it's all-terrain vehicles, boats, airplanes, as
43 technology improves it's earlier for non-subsistence
44 users not from the area to be coming in and utilizing
45 the resource. So we're just seeing more and more of
46 that, especially closer to the road system.

47
48 I think that will be a concern, so kind
49 of echoing some of what Andy talked about of hunter
50 education and really explaining to the people that come

1 into an area to hunt to have them have an understanding
2 of who is already there utilizing the resource and what
3 that competition looks like.

4
5 That's all.

6
7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Lester.

8
9 MR. ERHART: I have no comment.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don.

12
13 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Madame Chair.
14 One of my main concerns is the Bering sea bycatch and
15 I'm looking forward to the North Pacific Management
16 Council's presentation today. The other thing, of
17 course, is the user conflict issue.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Andrew.

22
23 MR. FIRMIN: Hello, everybody. This is
24 Andrew again. I guess some of the Yukon Flats concerns
25 and the Fort Yukon area a lot of it is the same
26 concerns everybody else has, but part of them stem from
27 having low moose populations and that adds to our user
28 group conflicts, which leads into hunter education and
29 outreach. Also being in the middle of the Yukon Flats
30 National Wildlife Refuge we're also concerned about a
31 lot of the statewide regulatory changes for the
32 National Wildlife Refuge system.

33
34 Like Rhonda said, we do have a high
35 number of predators in the area and we're trying to go
36 about a means of stemming some of the wolves and bears
37 in the country without having the predator management
38 system and some of the changes they're considering, you
39 know, they directly affect those methods that we've
40 added to the regulation in the past years. I think
41 those are some concerns and now they're all on the
42 chopping block to get changed back to where they were
43 previously.

44
45 Those are some of our concerns in the
46 Yukon Flats.

47
48 Thank you.

49
50 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Virgil.

1 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. I attended
2 the Yukon River Panel meeting in December, the first
3 week of December, as well as Andy and Andrew, and one
4 or two people in the audience. Anyway, one of the
5 things that seemed important to me and some of us did
6 testify before the North Pacific Fishery Management
7 Council about bycatch of salmon, both chinook and chum
8 salmon, was the latest genetic stock identification of
9 the origin of the salmon being caught as bycatch and
10 the latest genetic stock information indicated that 10
11 percent were bound for the Tanana River, which is a
12 discreet population, and 20 percent were bound for the
13 Upper Yukon, which is Canadian origin, on the other
14 side of the Canadian border.

15
16 So if you go by the king salmon bycatch
17 from last year, that means 1,500 salmon. Of course,
18 they come in multiple years because they're different
19 age classes there, but if you count the 10 percent of
20 the 15,000 bycatch that would have went up the Tanana
21 River, that's 1,500 chinook salmon bound for the Tanana
22 River and 3,000 bound for Canada.

23
24 To put that into perspective, if we had
25 a commercial fishery, which we haven't had since 2007
26 on the Tanana River, then commercial fishery would be
27 allowed to catch between 600 and 800 king salmon,
28 whereas they by-caught 1,500 and the sport fishery
29 manages for about 1,000 king salmon up the Tanana
30 River, which normally produces approximately 25 to 30
31 percent as the king salmon that enter the mouth of the
32 Yukon, and then, of course, 3,000 into Canada.

33
34 So I did present that to the Council in
35 my testimony and a couple other of us also testified to
36 the Council.

37
38 I attended the Board of Game meeting
39 last month in Wasilla. There were a number of
40 proposals to restrict nonresident hunters. Why is that
41 important to the RACs? The reason why that's important
42 to the RACs is over 70 percent of the budget for the
43 State Division of Wildlife Conservation to do all the
44 science to manage our hunting in the state comes from
45 the sale of nonresident licenses and tags and that's
46 after the Pittman-Robertson funds. That's a Federal
47 Act passed in 1935 to tax hunting and archery equipment
48 that gets matched by the Federal government to what the
49 State collects for license fees. That's very
50 important. But all those proposals were voted down by

1 the Board of Game, but there were a number of them to
2 eliminate or restrict nonresident hunters in the state.

3

4 The methods and means proposals by the
5 Park Service and the Refuge really have me concerned
6 about overriding proposals. Some of them put in by the
7 Eastern Interior RAC to the State Board of Game to
8 liberalize methods and means of hunting various animals
9 in the state, both in Park land and National Refuge
10 land really, really disturbs me, especially when I know
11 what the facts are of some of the studies.

12

13 Like the predation on moose calves done
14 in Koyukuk Refuge in the early '90s were between 50 and
15 70 percent of the moose calves are killed by bears and
16 wolves before they're 30 days old. For the regulations
17 that our RAC has put in so we might save a few more of
18 those moose calves, for the Park Service and Fish and
19 Wildlife Service to circumvent those regulations that
20 we went through the due process with the State system
21 to get those regulations passed, really disturbs me.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you,
26 Virgil. That was the short version.

27

28 (Laughter)

29

30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. I'm
31 going to consider this the Chair's report too. I was
32 asked in December to serve on the Governor's Transition
33 Team for wildlife, which I did. There was 10 of us.
34 And at the end of that there was so much discussion
35 about the dual management by the people there and how
36 difficult it is and how frustrating it is for the
37 users.

38

39 This meeting is an example how -- you
40 know, we are the volunteers at this level and we are
41 thrown an enormous amount of paper every time we get
42 here. I think I had one on the Arctic National
43 Wildlife Refuge, a CD, that was probably this thick in
44 volume to read. That's just one example of all the
45 stuff that gets thrown at us as volunteers. From the
46 start of being on here, that's my hugest frustration,
47 is being a volunteer and trying to have some impact for
48 the future of Alaska and our grandkids. My grandkids
49 because I'm too old to have any more kids. That has
50 been very interesting.

1 Then at the end of the whole Transition
2 Team there was three teams that come up with wanting a
3 constitutional amendment to solve the problems of
4 Alaska. The fisheries was one, the wildlife was one
5 and subsistence was the other one. Sky Starkey was the
6 chair of the subsistence part. It was kind of neat the
7 way they did that whole thing. They didn't let us
8 talk. They just gave us these sticky pads and you were
9 supposed to write all your concerns on there and put
10 them up on the board without talking. That was hard.
11 That was very difficult for people to do, but what a
12 process that is for getting something done. That
13 really worked well, I thought. I had never seen it.
14 Someone said it's 30 years old, but it worked well for
15 getting people to work together and come up with
16 concerns.

17
18 Just ditto with this whole process of
19 the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Park Service. It
20 just seems to me that if -- I serve on a Subsistence
21 Resource Commission on the Wrangell-St. Elias Park and
22 you're talking about subsistence needs. So when the
23 Park Service comes up and tells us, okay, this isn't in
24 the compendium, we're going to shut down anything with
25 wolves, bears and coyotes, and we try to explain our
26 side of the thing, it just seems like it doesn't
27 matter. It just seems like it comes from the top and
28 we're going to do what we're going to do anyway.

29
30 I'm not picking on people that work at
31 the Park particularly in Wrangell-St. Elias, but at our
32 last meeting we were very, very, very frustrated at how
33 -- for instance, the horns and antler thing that we've
34 been going through. I think the Eastern Interior wrote
35 the first letter and it's probably six or seven or so
36 years ago and we still don't have it through. But if
37 they want to get rid of something, it happens pretty
38 quickly. That's so frustrating as a user to see how
39 fast this kind of thing happens. At times you just
40 want to throw up your hands and say this is a
41 ridiculous amount of my time at the end of my life. So
42 I find it pretty frustrating and I just wanted to share
43 that with everyone.

44
45 Jack.

46
47 MR. REAKOFF: Thanks, Sue. I went
48 through my Chair report, but for the edification of the
49 EIRAC. I listened in on the Federal Subsistence Board
50 and the Federal Board was meeting on various proposals.

1 I couldn't travel. I listened in on conference call
2 and Robert Walker, our member here, attended because he
3 was working on the wood bison release for Shageluk,
4 which is inside the Western Interior Region. We
5 welcome those bison. Nobody seemed to want them. We
6 were jumping up and down and clicking our heels
7 together. Please bring them to Shageluk. So they
8 worked out a great management. Twenty-eight people
9 attended. Ted Spraker, people like Al was on that
10 thing, all these people showed up and come up with a
11 real good management plan for allocation. Those are
12 going to be released and so we're real happy about
13 that.

14
15 I'm real concerned about Dall sheep in
16 the Brooks Range. I live in the Brooks Range and we
17 rely on Dall sheep and our sheep populations have had a
18 real big hit in the last -- they've been taking down
19 for years. They get a little gained back and then they
20 go down. We keep getting these rains in the wintertime
21 and it knocked the tar out of them. That late spring
22 of 2013, they lambled into snow and it killed all the
23 lambs and it killed all the yearlings because it didn't
24 break up until very late May. So then last spring they
25 hardly had any lambs. They've reduced their
26 productivity dramatically.

27
28 So I, unlike Virgil, feel there's way
29 too much guiding pressure on the BLM and State lands
30 associated with the road systems. Maybe not in general
31 all the way across Alaska, but you get near road
32 systems where people are walking in, resident hunters
33 are competing and they've got hunting guides with
34 airplanes flying all over the place and they fly every
35 last day of the season.

36
37 We've got a guy -- and you know him --
38 lives off the end of our runway in Wiseman. His plane
39 flew every last day of the sheep season. His guys
40 screw up, they get on the SAT phone, they call up, the
41 plane comes picks them up, finds the sheep, dumps them
42 off, 3:00 a.m. of the next day they're hunting that
43 sheet. They could get five, six hunts in in a 10-day
44 hunts. It's out of control. So they're killing every
45 last legal sheep.

46
47 So the bottom line is with three
48 cohorts of no sheep coming up, I told Tony Kavalok with
49 Fish and Game model it. I want to see a model. We're
50 looking at four years of ram recruitments coming up

1 with nothing behind it. The Department says it will
2 fix itself because full curl protects all the sheep.
3 No. Full curl relies on recruitment. We don't have
4 recruitment. We're looking at the ram to ewe ratio
5 going right over a cliff in four years.

6
7 So we need drawing permits. We need
8 Proposal 208 to be enacted by the Board of Game in the
9 problem areas. You might have the same areas in your
10 region, but in Western Interior Region we've got some
11 real problems. I'm requesting the -- this Council is
12 requesting that the BLM come up with a sheep management
13 plan for the BLM lands and the Central Brooks Range in
14 24A, 26B and we also want -- we've been asking for a
15 guide concession permit process for the BLM lands. We
16 need control of these guides. BLM just -- if somebody
17 comes in the office, here, have a -- you can have as
18 many sheep as you want. BLM just can't stop themselves
19 from handing out concession permits. So I'm concerned
20 about that.

21 I'm concerned about the Western Arctic
22 Caribou Herd and Teshekpuk Herd, which is far away from
23 your region, but those herds are going down
24 dramatically. So I'm concerned that the Board of Game
25 -- the proposal that the State Board has submitted
26 doesn't take enough cuts. They need to restrict.
27 Caribou herds crash. It's like you hear that all the
28 time, like they're bunny rabbits or something. Caribou
29 herds crash because of weather. Deep snow kills
30 caribou. They're a grazing animal. You get rain on
31 snow and it kills them off. Jim Dau over there has
32 been documenting how those rain events reduces the
33 productivity of the caribou and it's a real hardship.
34 We've got now five rain events in 10 years. We just
35 had another one just the other day. See all this ice
36 on the roads here? Rain in the Western Brooks Range
37 and on the Seward Peninsula. Those herds are going
38 down dramatically.

39
40 I would like to see, and this Council
41 agreed with the Koyukuk River Advisory Committee, that
42 the Board needs to take further cuts. They need to
43 protect cow caribou from February 15 to October 1. Cow
44 caribou lead migrations. Close the cow caribou season
45 from February 15 to October 1. That allows the caribou
46 to wean their calves off, migrate, not be deflected
47 with lots of hunters getting in front of them. Go over
48 in the Western Brooks Range. There's all these camps.
49 They just line up in front of those herds and deflect
50 those.

1 I want to see bull caribou closed on
2 October 1. Our proposal, our comment, is that any
3 caribou that's got a shovel is closed after October 1.
4 You can't eat the thing. Guess where the meat is going
5 to go. It's going to go in the dump because you can't
6 eat it at all. Young bull caribou can be eaten, so
7 that allows you to take young bull caribou and cows
8 after October 1. So cows open from October 1 until
9 February 15. We need to be conservative with the
10 caribou.

11
12 I wanted to bring that up because you
13 guys work with this Forty Mile Caribou Herd. So I just
14 throw those kinds of ideas out there for your
15 edification so you can think about those things. But,
16 yes, Department of Fish and Game is an unfunded agency
17 and they need all these tag fees and stuff, but if
18 nonresident hunters are overwhelming the resource, then
19 we need to make cuts. So I will agree to disagree on
20 that one, Virgil.

21
22 I also told the Board of Game member
23 and on the record to the Board of Game and my comments
24 that sport hunting residents of Alaska need to pay a
25 tag fee. They pay a \$25 tag fee for brown bears. They
26 should pay a \$25 -- a \$100 tag fee for sheep so they
27 would make a contribution. What the ratio is for every
28 dollar the State sells in license they get \$3 in
29 Pittman-Robertson funds. A \$100 tag fee for Dall sheep
30 for resident hunters would give \$400 to the State.

31
32 We talked about this co-management
33 issue on the Kuskokwim River. They're asking for -- we
34 had some real problems with what's coming up with AVCP.
35 Sky Starkey was here yesterday. We had real concerns
36 about that. You should look at our record on that
37 issue. I've got some issues on the Dalton Highway with
38 traffic carrying biocides to the oilfields. They carry
39 biocides that are concentrated formaldehyde. One drop
40 will kill you deader than a hammer. They drive
41 truckloads of that stuff up the road unpiloted.
42 There's no car in front of it. They're driving 80
43 miles an hour.

44
45 Read the newspaper. They wrecked five
46 trucks last week. Those guys are -- they watch Ice
47 Road Truckers. We've got all these young guys come up
48 here from the states. They're driving biocides in your
49 region and in our region and North Slope Region 80
50 miles an hour on ice. They rolled them into the ditch.

1 If they were to puncture one of those things and
2 release a toxic spill, all the sheefish, whitefish,
3 they're all wintering in those streams. If that went
4 down the river, like the Koyukuk River, or went down
5 the Tolovana, my gosh, there would be a wave of death.

6
7 So I think that these Councils should
8 submit a joint letter to the State Department of
9 Transportation requesting that they review this policy
10 of letting toxic chemicals, these chemical trucks,
11 drive unpiloted. All I'm asking is that they have a
12 pilot car in front of them. They have long loads,
13 they've got wide loads, they got pilot cars in front of
14 them. If they've got toxic chemicals, they should have
15 a pilot car in front of them. I think
16 your region needs to know that one also.

17
18 So I'll shut up now because I can tell
19 Sue is getting tense up here. Go ahead, Ray.

20
21 (Laughter)

22
23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I have a
24 spatula.

25
26 MR. COLLINS: Ray Collins. I live in
27 McGrath. I'm the chair of the McGrath Fish and Game
28 Advisory Committee too, so I wear a number of hats.
29 And I'm on the Denali SRC. So in the Upper Kuskokwim
30 we haven't -- well, the whole Kuskokwim River hasn't
31 been making escapement on king salmon for the last two
32 years. We did a little better this year, but we had to
33 have a total closure in order to do it. So we're
34 concerned with building the kings up.

35
36 At the head of the river we have the
37 problem -- because we had the largest and richest fish,
38 just like the ones heading for Canada on the Yukon,
39 because they have so far to go, but they're fished all
40 the way up the river, so we get what's left to spawn
41 and it's been down ever since the commercial fishing
42 went in down there. The fishing methods changed
43 downriver with drifting in the main river.

44
45 Historically, I think they came right
46 up the middle of the river unfished because they
47 bypassed, they didn't stop in the side streams. They
48 even show up above McGrath. We don't catch any in the
49 set nets there in McGrath. They go right on up the
50 river and they catch them earlier up at Big River above

1 us. So that technique of drifting in the main river
2 with the large gear that came in with commercial
3 fishing and so on is really one of the factors that's
4 reduced the kings I know in the Kuskokwim.

5
6 And we understand we need to share
7 those all up and down the river, but we had an early
8 closure last year which really helped because that got
9 a slug of fish upriver. The ones heading for the
10 headwaters are some of the first ones in the river.
11 You probably have a similar phenomena over on the Yukon
12 with the ones heading for Canada may be the earliest
13 ones in the river there.

14
15 Shifting to the State side on the
16 predation issue there, we did have a successful
17 predator control program in McGrath, but it involved
18 capturing bears and flying them away from there during
19 that critical three-month period early on there, but it
20 turned the population around and we've got our moose
21 numbers up. We've got good recruitment again. We were
22 not getting any recruitment. That's what was holding
23 the moose down.

24
25 So it's really important to watch that
26 recruitment number of what you've got coming into it,
27 like Jack said with the sheep. If you get that down,
28 you're hindering the future population. So I'm glad to
29 say that the State's methods did work in that area.
30 It's mostly State land right around McGrath. But we
31 need to be watching it in all the areas where
32 subsistence hunting is taking place.

33
34 So that's all I wanted to share for
35 now.

36
37 Thank you.

38
39 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Madame Chair.
40 My name is Tim Gervais from Ruby. I'm going to repeat
41 some of my report from yesterday for the benefit of our
42 friends and neighbors from the Eastern Interior.

43
44 In the Middle Yukon Region, our game
45 populations are stable; moose, furbearers, bear.
46 Subsistence users have reasonable to good opportunity
47 to be able to harvest that type of subsistence product
48 and we're getting good communication and good practices
49 put in by our State and Fed managers.

50

1 By far the biggest issue in our region
2 is the deficiency of the king salmon. I am in
3 disagreement with the interpretation of the North
4 Pacific Management Council of the national standards
5 and feel that they're violating several of their
6 management objectives in the Fishery Management Plan
7 for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Island Groundfish Fishery
8 Plan.

9
10 We're going to discuss that with them
11 this afternoon, so hopefully we can make some progress.
12 It's a good opportunity for these Councils and
13 subsistence users to have an increased level of
14 communication and trust with that Fisheries Management
15 Council.

16
17 I'd also appreciate it if the State of
18 Alaska had any information. They've been conducting a
19 genetic stock composition of king salmon harvest for
20 State seine fisheries in Kodiak, Chignik and Area M.
21 It would be very helpful to us in putting together our
22 understanding of what the king salmon are doing around
23 the state to know what the genetic composition of the
24 king salmon harvested in those various regions.

25
26 I appreciate the ability to meet with
27 the Eastern Council. It's good for us to hear our
28 specific and shared issues on subsistence management.

29
30 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I
31 guess I'm not going to go into our reports from
32 yesterday, but I just wanted to again thank TCC and
33 Doyon for initiating a task force for the fish and the
34 game we have out there before we get into more dire
35 straits. I guess we share the same concerns. If we
36 had a hunter awareness class -- I mean this is
37 happening throughout the Interior. We had a meeting in
38 McGrath recently where a local resident came up and
39 testified they had been given meat that was out in the
40 field. Somebody brought it in. It was already green.
41 It was moldy. That's an insult.

42
43 So whether somebody out there could
44 make a difference, whether we're speaking -- you know,
45 look at all the people here. That's kind of like what
46 we -- we like to hold our meetings in our villages,
47 but, like we said, the participation sometimes is kind
48 of low. When we have all you guys here, we have all
49 the agencies. Somebody should hear this message. I
50 really agree with the idea of hunter education. I

1 don't know, it should be almost mandated to me to go
2 out there -- when we go out to the villages, let these
3 villages know. And I'm not trying to say it's the job
4 of the Refuge Managers or the Refuge stations
5 themselves. I think we as a people, we as a tribe, as
6 a community, have to let them know immediately, hey.

7

8 So this is kind of a plea to the
9 agencies whoever gives out those harvest tickets and
10 stuff, hey, maybe this is something that we -- because
11 we have like concerns. I'm going to leave it at that.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 MR. VENT: Good morning. I'm from
16 Huslia on the Koyukuk River. We have probably, I
17 guess, a dilemma because we have a moose population
18 that's low, our caribou population is low, the fish is
19 low. Just recently along the river -- we used to go up
20 on the Huslia River and every time you turn a bend you
21 see a beaver house. Well, one year we had a deep
22 freeze and it just about practically killed them all
23 off, so our beaver is in decline too.

24

25 The thing that I see that we're having
26 a problem with now is the predation. We have an
27 increase in bear, a lot of grizzly, black bears and so
28 they're having a lot more successful hunting out there.
29 So everything is kind of put on a decline on how we
30 live. We live a subsistence lifestyle out there, so
31 everything, you know, that we eat is mostly from off
32 the land and now we're getting concerned. So we need
33 to find a way to manage the predation.

34

35 Snowmachines don't cost cheap no more.
36 You buy one for \$14,000 and you break a piece on it,
37 that's \$1,000. I mean you're out there trying to
38 protect your resource and it's costly. Gas ain't
39 cheap. Food in the stores ain't cheap. We're putting
40 our back against the wall there, so it's kind of
41 hurting us. I just hope that we can find a way to stop
42 or limit the hunting out there, control the hunting.
43 Now we have to go practically to the other side of
44 Hughes or we have to go up around Kobuk to go hunt
45 caribou. Before it used to be right in the backyard
46 and now it's not so easy. All this is hurting us.

47

48 I think that, you know, under Federal
49 rules and regulations that subsistence is a priority,
50 so maybe this is where it starts trying to help our

1 people. The thing that I see, you know, is that we get
2 hunters from different areas because they have no areas
3 to hunt. So everything is coming down to us. You go
4 up around Bettles area, there's hardly any moose, so
5 the people from Allakaket and Hughes have to come -- if
6 they can't catch a moose up there, they have to come
7 down toward our area. The people from down in the
8 Middle Yukon come up on the lower end of Koyukuk River.

9
10

11 We try to do what we could, but this is
12 kind of hurting us in the long run and we just need to
13 learn how to manage this moose because that's our only
14 resource right now. We can't hunt caribou because the
15 caribou is too far away. The beaver wasn't good last
16 year. The fish, nobody can catch kings anymore. The
17 predation on the fish too is another problem I see.

18

19 We've got ducks and geese and muskrat,
20 a lot of these other resources, but we've been seeing
21 in the last probably maybe five to ten years an
22 increase in pike. They're predators too. So we know
23 there must be a problem, because they're really
24 increasing. They're having an easier time hunting out
25 there too. So I think that we need to get that under
26 control.

27

28 That's all I have to say.

29

30 MS. PELKOLA: My name is Jenny Pelkola
31 and I'm from Galena. Sorry I'm late, but I thought it
32 started at 9:00. I was just enjoying my knitting.

33

34 (Laughter)

35

36 MS. PELKOLA: But I'm sorry I'm late.
37 As I listen to the concerns of the RACs here, the
38 members, I have a lot of the same concerns. One thing
39 that I'd like to bring up about -- I brought this up in
40 McGrath last fall when my husband and I were moose
41 hunting in our area where we always go. There's
42 usually no one around. We just go there because we
43 like to be out. I usually drive the boat and I was
44 driving into where we normally go and he said you
45 better speed up and I said why. He said because
46 there's a big boat behind us. And I turned around and
47 there was just one little, tiny channel and I just
48 happened to turn around and they were going to -- I had
49 to make a turn because that's where the channel went
50 and I started to make a turn and I could see them out

1 of my eye, they were coming right towards my boat, and
2 I just turned and then they turned. They took off.

3
4 But to me that was like harassment
5 because we weren't the only ones that they did that to.
6 These hunters were from Anchorage. From what I
7 gathered, they hunted out of Galena in the sloughs and
8 they were harassing people. I think there were about
9 10 hunters there and out of the 10 hunters they got
10 nine moose, which -- and they were just all over the
11 river and a lot of people were very disappointed with
12 the way they were fishing -- I mean hunting.

13
14 They killed a moose across Galena
15 somewhere and they -- the whole moose, I don't know how
16 they did it, I think with their big boats, but they
17 pulled the moose across right to the -- from across the
18 river to Galena side and they were laughing because of
19 the way the moose was sliding on the river, I guess. I
20 don't really know. They got it to the beach and then
21 somewhere they had a forklift and they lifted the whole
22 thing, brought it up the bank. I don't know what they
23 did, but they were laughing that whole time and it was
24 very insulting to our area people because of the way
25 they were acting. We don't act like that to our
26 animals. It's like laughing at them and we don't do
27 that. So that was one concern that was brought up in
28 our area about the disrespect of some of these hunters.
29 Not all of them, but these certain people that came in.

30
31 Also with wanton waste, there was a lot
32 of that going on in our area of Galena. Yesterday I
33 brought up the fact that we like to eat our moose
34 bones. That's where we get -- we just boil that up and
35 make soup out of it. A lot of it was at the dump,
36 which was very sad. I think we need to educate our
37 people in processing the meat. How do you cut up the
38 moose and what parts to save. Ask elders. There will
39 be a lot of them that will take whatever you don't
40 want.

41
42 With that, I know I have a lot of
43 concerns also, the same thing that was expressed up
44 here. So thank you much.

45
46 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Jenny.
47 Thank you, Madame Chair. My name is Robert Walker.
48 I'm from Anvik. We have been working with this bison
49 project for a while, but there's some people that
50 worked a lot longer than I have. Earl Hamilton from

1 Shageluk and one of our late biologists, Randy, who has
2 done considerable for this. I'd like to take my hat
3 off to those guys. We're going to be moving them into
4 21E within a couple of weeks. I believe we're going to
5 have media there and cameras to take -- it's a
6 historical event here because they've never been in our
7 part of the woods for probably five, six hundred years
8 or more. There was a skull found in Holy Cross back in
9 1921 in the river, so it did show that bison were in
10 our area.

11
12 And there are other concerns about
13 wanton waste. We look at this where transporters come
14 in and just set camps up all over the place, 50 to 60
15 camps per transporter. Taking moose, taking the
16 antlers. You see the antlers go out first. When you
17 really look at the big picture, the Fish and Wildlife
18 for the state, they have like 179,000 square miles to
19 patrol. What usually happens close to where they are
20 usually is first priority. So a lot of these
21 priorities don't happen in our woods, 21E and also 21A.

22
23 Speaking of airplanes that was brought
24 up here too, they have three airplanes that work
25 through the area. We don't know what they do. They're
26 very successful hunters too because they always come
27 back with antlers in almost the same day they fly out.
28 Nothing is being done. I've hunted with a boat
29 sometimes for 10 days and I'm not that successful on
30 the first day, but with an airplane you're pretty
31 successful.

32
33 One of the things yesterday too when
34 Luke Titus testified that made us think, some of us
35 board members here, that Minto is right in the middle
36 of State land. Where they are, it's in the Eastern
37 Interior. I don't want to overstep my bounds here, but
38 maybe there's something that we could do to work
39 jointly on this for Minto. There is a State Division
40 of Subsistence. Maybe we should start working with
41 them. You're not the only village that has this. We
42 have villages in our area too and we have to start
43 thinking inside the box, make this part of our toolbox
44 to where our people have access to meat. This is where
45 we should and will work together, even with Lower
46 Yukon.

47
48 This is also where I would see that the
49 Doyon TCC Task Force would come in and work with us or
50 the State also. When Virgil brought this up also about

1 the State Division of Fish and Game and the killing of
2 animals to fund this division is really unrealistic in
3 our point of view. It might be okay for guides and
4 transporters, but our point of view is why do we have
5 to kill so many animals to fund this division.

6
7 I mean this is ludicrous. This is really
8 where I see, from our point of perspective, unnecessary
9 killing so a guy could have a nice pair of antlers.
10 It's just unrealistic. We live and we watch. There's
11 some people one time was standing on the banks and
12 said, hey, they got seven moose. What did they do with
13 the meat, they ate it all. Okay, yeah. That's part of
14 their -- they don't really understand the whole thing
15 is money. So something should be done in that
16 department to petition the governor to say that we'd
17 have to look at Division of Fish and Game to be part of
18 the State budget rather than killing of animals.
19 That's something to look into too.

20
21 One of the other things I brought up
22 yesterday, we have hunters coming out of 21D now coming
23 into 21E and 21A. People are migrating further and
24 further to go hunting because there are too many people
25 sitting on certain places where they used to hunt now.
26 It's private land where the corporation is, but it's
27 public land where it's Federal and it's public land
28 where it's State. So to work with these user groups,
29 you have to work with the other user groups, but I
30 think that we would have to start working with each
31 other to get these issues resolved. If not, we're just
32 going to end up -- somebody's going to get hurt and
33 it's going to be our responsibility because we didn't
34 do anything.

35
36 That's my morning concern.

37
38 Thank you.

39
40 MR. SIMON: Good morning. My name is Pollock
41 Simon, Sr. I live in Allakaket in the Upper Koyukuk
42 River between Allakaket and Alatna, about 40 families.
43 The last few years probably didn't even get 15 moose
44 for the area's two villages because of low number of
45 moose. The caribou hasn't come through in the last
46 five years. Around this time there's a lot of shortage
47 of moose. A lot of families don't have any meat.

48
49 The king salmon population crashed, so we're
50 restricted to taking king salmon. We like being good

1 citizens and we abide by the law and we didn't fish for
2 king salmon although king salmon is one of our main
3 fish diet. So sometimes tough times around Upper
4 Koyukuk River. It's hard to believe that we in-river
5 villages have shortage of fish and the high sea fishing
6 they throw some of this fish back in the sea or they
7 can't keep it or sell it.

8

9 One summer I caught 30 king salmon when there
10 was some and I thought that was lots. The village take
11 of king salmon is nothing compared to what's taken in
12 the high seas. I believe that if we're cut back on
13 taking king salmon or fishing, it has to be cut across
14 the board. The high sea fisherman, he has to take his
15 cut also.

16

17 I've been on this board a long time and I
18 think it's good to have a strong consultation with the
19 Eastern Interior. We have different beliefs, different
20 feelings, but our way of life is pretty much the same;
21 we hunt and fish and trap for our food. It's good to
22 sit down and talk and compare notes.

23

24 Thank you, Madame Chair.

25

26 MR. J. WALKER: Thank you, Madame Chair. My
27 name is James Walker from Holy Cross. I really
28 appreciate hearing each one of your comments and it
29 just brings to light that we all share a common issue
30 here. We're on this board for a reason, to ensure or
31 try to ensure that the resources we utilize and we hope
32 to have for our future generations to utilize are
33 there.

34

35 Not only the fact that the resources are
36 being in some ways abused, there's another side to this
37 whole issue too. We have to look at climate change, we
38 have to look at the lifestyles of the villages and how
39 that affects the taking of game.

40

41 In looking at the agenda itself, I'd just
42 like to cut my comments short and move on.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 MR. MORGAN: Thank you, Madame Chair. Like
47 all of you, I think both rivers have the same concerns.
48 I've been in this process, in this Western Interior
49 since 1997. I bet if you looked at the minutes, you'll
50 have these same concerns in the minutes. It's been

1 brought up almost every meeting I've been to. What
2 happened to the minutes? What happened to the annual
3 report? I don't blame our coordinator. I think he
4 takes good minutes, send them over. And I don't blame
5 the agency people. They get their orders from D.C.
6 Like you, Madame Chair, frustrating. No matter what we
7 do it don't go no place because their orders come from
8 D.C. Whose public land is this? It's the 50 states.
9 Every citizen of the United States own these Park
10 Services. And the walking orders come from down there.
11 But we've still got to continue to do our war cry and
12 still continue to be concerned.

13

14 Like the Yukon, last year was the first time
15 we pulled out our net 6-inch or greater May 27th
16 midnight. From then on till end of June we can only
17 use a net 4-inch mesh, 60 feet long. That's all for
18 the whole month. Then after that I switch to 5-3/8ths
19 to try to get reds and chum.

20

21 So I think these concerns have been going on
22 for so long that I am frustrated. I had to really
23 think this year whether I want to reapply for this
24 Council because I'm not going no place. I see the same
25 things. I feel like a broken record. Nobody listen.

26

27 Thank you.

28

29 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I appreciate that.
30 Thank you very much. The concerns I heard here,
31 something that I've noticed in all these meetings I've
32 gone to over the years, I've noticed that, okay, we
33 have a break and a bunch of us are sitting around the
34 table and we're looking at each other. One says, hey,
35 you know, this is what I think we should be doing about
36 this and pretty soon the dialogue between the people is
37 a lot easier done than this format of raise your hand,
38 push your mic on and be recorded.

39

40 Sometimes I think some kind of a work session
41 would allow us that freedom to be able to say, you
42 know, what you said, Robert, that's a good idea. I
43 think we should write that letter. I think we should
44 do that. All of you, like this meeting, we're always
45 challenged to do an annual report. As we hear these
46 concerns, we need to, while you're sitting there, write
47 that down and let's get it in our annual report and I
48 have a great idea how we can deal with this. Let's do
49 it that way. For me, I'd like to see us be really open
50 about this process and try to do more. If the

1 informalness scares you, let us know, because it does
2 me often myself.

3

4 I have three of these. Jack wants to speak.

5

6 MR. REAKOFF: I would like to comment that I
7 would like to get the annual reports for the EIRAC sent
8 to all of our Regional Council members. I want the
9 annual report from the Y-K Delta RAC also, their annual
10 report, because that lays out the burning issues with
11 each Regional Council and I would like our annual
12 report submitted too to the respective Councils.

13

14 Thank you, Madame Chair.

15

16 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's a good idea.
17 The hard part will be all of us reading it all. Maybe
18 that would be the number one thing we should read.
19 Let's all at break talk about some of these ideas that
20 we can be more effective. That's what I'm interested
21 in here is being more effective.

22

23 We have an opening here to have some public
24 testimony on non-agenda items. I've got three cards.
25 If we could do that before break. I'm going to call on
26 Leo -- I'm sorry, Leo, I don't know if I can pronounce
27 this, Lolnitz.

28

29 MR. LOLNITZ: There's only one Leo in here.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Did I murder your
32 name?

33

34 MR. LOLNITZ: Oh, no. I didn't even hear
35 you.

36

37 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay, good.

38

39 MR. LOLNITZ: Good morning, everybody. My
40 name is Leo Lolnitz. I'm the First Chief of Koyukuk.
41 I just came up on my own really, to be honest with you,
42 because I was concerned about this meeting and all the
43 issues that's going on in the Koyukuk and the Kuskokwim
44 areas on the hunting and fishing both.

45

46 You know, there's wanton waste and it'll
47 always be around if we don't do nothing about it. And
48 the fishing problem we have right now it's becoming
49 bigger and bigger each year. Even though we took our
50 nets out for the whole fishing season on the chinook

1 over there on the Yukon River, that proves that we --
2 we did make escapement goal, which is good, for the
3 Canadian Treaty. So we made that goal. That's good.

4
5 But what I want to see is that the Fish and
6 Game Department don't use this against us in the future
7 like they did in the past. We put upon ourselves to
8 hold off the first pulse closures up and down the Yukon
9 River, which is good. We tried it for a year and now
10 Fish and Game is using that every year against us. I'm
11 pretty sure they're going to use this one against us
12 too by the moratorium. We held off last summer over
13 there on the Koyukuk River. It just gives them another
14 tool, but then it proves to us that we are very
15 conservative, that we conserve these species of fish
16 throughout the years, number of years. Passed on in
17 history to our ancestors. We've always been good
18 providers and good preservers of these renewable
19 resources out there.

20
21 I'd like to speak in support of Peter
22 Demoski's proposal for 21D hunting season. It starts
23 on the 22nd and runs five days, I guess, the
24 subsistence season there on August 17th to 22nd, I
25 think it's at. But then fishery proposal said that
26 he'd like to move that first session into the back of
27 the hunting season, which runs from the 1st of
28 September all the way to the 30th of September and
29 eliminate the hunt there in August, which is good.
30 We're pretty well supportive of that in Koyukuk and
31 Kaltag, I presume, and Nulato.

32
33 In Koyukuk, the climate change has a lot to
34 do with the rutting seasons of the animals these days
35 and the way they migrate and where they eat and where
36 they go. This climate change is here and it's going to
37 be around for quite some time yet. I see it every year
38 and you see it every year yourself because last fall I
39 was out hunting and throughout the whole season and
40 never got a moose over there in Koyukuk. There's about
41 42 households there in Koyukuk and about 17 people out
42 of the whole village got moose, which was really down
43 from previous years.

44
45 That's one of the main reasons that we'd like
46 to move this first part of the hunting season into the
47 back part of later in the season, which would be good
48 for us, I guess. Otherwise, that's about all I have at
49 the present time for this.

50

1 Thank you, Madame Chair.

2

3 Appreciate it.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you. Any
6 questions.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 MR. LOLNITZ: Good, I'm off the hook. Thank
11 you.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Leo.

14

15 MR. LOLNITZ: Have a nice day.

16

17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Next is Victor
18 Joseph.

19

20 MR. JOSEPH: Thank you, Madame Chair. I see
21 that there's all the delegates. There's a lot of our
22 tribal chiefs here at the board and I recognize them,
23 tribal elders, and also our tribal delegates. In back,
24 we have some executive board members as well as other
25 tribal chiefs. I just want to take a moment with them
26 and recognize all the agencies.

27

28 First of all, thank you for all the work that
29 you've done. I know it's hard sitting here. I also
30 heard when Carl was talking specifically about there's
31 been a lot of talk for a long time without really any
32 serious results. One of the things that we continue to
33 look at is the fact that subsistence issues have been
34 impacting us all for a very long time. The decline of
35 our natural resources when it comes to wildlife and
36 fish has been impacted even more as the years have been
37 coming in.

38

39 Chief Lolnitz, he talked about the self-
40 moratorium that was imposed by all of our tribes on the
41 Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers last year, which was very
42 important as we look at the conservation of the chinook
43 salmon as a whole. At the same time, as Leo spoke to,
44 there is a risk. People may see this as a normal,
45 natural, to-be-expected way to manage the resource and
46 we have to be very careful with that.

47

48 That being said, last year when we all
49 gathered -- all the tribes gathered at St. Mary's, they
50 developed a resolution that was supported on the Yukon

1 and Kuskokwim Rivers for a self-moratorium, but also
2 for the formation of a fish commission on both the
3 Kuskokwim and Yukon River. The fish commission is
4 going to be a pilot project with DOI this year and
5 they're moving forward. That's also supported by one
6 of the RACs over there as they're moving forward on the
7 Yukon River. We're looking at that possibility too and
8 bringing our tribes together to have a voice.

9
10 Co-management is very important to us. As we
11 look at the current dual management system that's in
12 place right now, it hasn't been very effective. What
13 we have seen over the past few years is a steady
14 decline in our moose population, caribou population and
15 also with our chinook salmon. There's a lot of
16 concerns with the current management and the approach
17 of it and there is a lot of concerns about the research
18 and data that's being provided because we don't feel
19 it's very accurate for us to make consistent decisions.

20
21 At the same time, when we're looking at it,
22 we're also concerned that there's no traditional
23 historical knowledge that's being applied to this
24 research. There's people in this room that know, that
25 have a traditional knowledge about what it was and how
26 they protected their resources from way back and they
27 did that through multiple ways.

28
29 At the same time, when we're looking at co-
30 management, we also seen that it's been very effective
31 in other areas, even in the state of Alaska when it
32 came to -- and this is co-management with tribes, with
33 Feds and the State working together to improve the
34 species. There was a pilot project over in the Bethel
35 area with migration of birds and they were able to
36 improve that. There's been one in the North Pacific
37 area on the Snake River where they actually seen the
38 chinook salmon population increase over time. So
39 there's proven projects that show co-management is a
40 good thing.

41
42 Also bringing to point the fish commissions.
43 This gives us, the tribal people living up on the Yukon
44 River, and I'm talking about the Yukon Fish Commission,
45 coming together to help them provide solutions that may
46 protect our natural resources when it comes to wildlife
47 and fish and I think that's really important that our
48 tribes have a voice, our rural areas have a voice.

49
50 When we look at the past and we consider

1 Title VIII and we can see that Title VIII really hasn't
2 achieved what its intended purpose was, .804 of Title
3 VIII gives us an opportunity -- or .809, I'm sorry,
4 gives us an opportunity to bring in co-management that
5 could be a helpful factor. So I want to kind of stop
6 there as I'm looking at these. There's a lot of
7 opportunity here, but the one thing that we're all
8 concerned with here is food security and I think that's
9 really important. It's our subsistence way of life,
10 but we also need to make sure that we put food on the
11 table. Not just for today but for tomorrow and, as was
12 pointed out earlier, for all generations.

13

14 I do know there was concerns about fish
15 commissions and the fact that it might take away from
16 the RAC responsibility. That's not the case. What
17 we're looking for is a way that we can partner with all
18 stakeholders to protect the resources and that we can
19 move forward. I want to make sure no matter what area
20 you're in that you're going to have a voice at the
21 table and one that comes up with reasonable solutions.

22

23 As we look at the Hunt and Fish Task Force of
24 Tanana Chiefs, that's our process right now. We have a
25 strategy that's been approved by all 42 of our tribes
26 and it's moving forward with the emphasis on the
27 chinook salmon. So we're going to be moving forward in
28 this direction. We have upcoming meetings and I'm
29 really hoping that the chiefs and the RAC members here
30 are going to be participating in that meeting and we'll
31 get more information out as that moves forward.

32

33 So, with that, I'll just stop there and say
34 maasee' and any questions.

35

36 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Questions, Council
37 members. Okay, go ahead.

38

39 MR. VENT: I thank TCC for that, to help us
40 with some problems. I think what you're talking about
41 is a great opportunity for our Native people to be in
42 with the management program. I'm here on the RAC and I
43 remember probably about five or six years ago we tried
44 forming a board, but there was also one board that was
45 formed by the State and we didn't have any funding, so
46 it was kind of hard to try to form something. I thank
47 you.

48

49 MR. JOSEPH: Thank you, Darrel. I appreciate
50 it.

1 MR. J. WALKER: Madame.
2
3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead.
4
5 MR. J. WALKER: Thank you, Madame Chair.
6 Victor, I know it's preliminary, but in regards to, for
7 instance, Holy Cross, because Holy Cross is in Y3.....
8
9 MR. JOSEPH: Right.
10
11 MR. J. WALKER: And Hold Cross is also in
12 TCC.
13
14 MR. JOSEPH: Right.
15
16 MR. J. WALKER: So the boundary lines is in
17 Paimiut. Has there been any discussion as far as in
18 regards to the boundary lines?
19
20 MR. JOSEPH: For the commissions?
21
22 MR. J. WALKER: Yes.
23
24 MR. JOSEPH: It's the Yukon River and we're
25 also going to include the Canadian side as well as the
26 Yukon Delta, so we'll be bringing in tribes from the
27 whole area and that will be coming up, James.
28
29 MR. J. WALKER: Okay. Maybe my question
30 mostly is in regard to is the existing boundary line in
31 Y3 going to be maintained?
32
33 MR. JOSEPH: I don't have the answer to that,
34 but that would be something that needs to be discussed
35 if you have concerns around it.
36
37 MR. J. WALKER: I guess if the Lower Yukon
38 wanted to include the Y3, I'm looking at the escapement
39 per district. That's what I'm getting at.
40
41 MR. JOSEPH: Yeah, escapement is really
42 important and also catchment as we're looking at it,
43 but if we are not at the table, we're not going to have
44 the voice on what that's going to be. So we want to
45 make sure that in our commissions and as we're helping
46 with proposals regarding catchment, how an area is
47 going to look, what type of gear is going to be used,
48 it's going to be important that the tribes are part of
49 that discussion.
50

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Are there any other
2 questions. Yes, go ahead, Rhonda.

3
4 MS. PITKA: Hi. Thank you, Victor, for
5 coming in. Thank you for forming the TCC Hunting and
6 Fishing Task Force. It's been a really important tool
7 for the tribes.

8
9 I think that I also want to recognize some of
10 the State of Alaska RAC members from the Yukon Flats in
11 the room. There's Andrew Firmin, Larry Williams,
12 myself -- well, I was sitting in for someone, and
13 Walter Peter. They were all Yukon Flats RAC members.
14 So I think maybe having the Hunting and Fishing Task
15 Force reach out to them also would be really important.

16
17 MR. JOSEPH: Okay.

18
19 MS. PITKA: The whole dual management system
20 is kind of hokey, I think. I don't know. It just
21 doesn't work very well. So there are all these boards
22 that we sit on and none of them seem to work together.
23 So I think having that kind of coordination and having
24 a concerted voice on co-management is really important.

25
26 Thank you.

27
28 MR. JOSEPH: Thank you. We also agree with
29 that position there, Chief Rhonda, as we're looking at
30 co-management and what's working and what hasn't
31 worked. We're also very concerned with it as proven by
32 the decline of our resources.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
35 questions. Robert.

36
37 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you. It's really a
38 pleasure to see you here, Victor, because this really
39 makes everybody feel better that TCC is also partaking
40 in this, our board meetings here.

41
42 I mentioned a while ago about Minto here,
43 it's being on State land. You have two boards here
44 that could write support letters, you know. I mean
45 even though it's in Eastern Interior we could write
46 support letters for -- if TCC would put a proposal in
47 there -- to state what I mentioned earlier, to listen
48 to Luke Titus yesterday when he testified in front of
49 us, that was a real sad story because these people
50 don't have a chance at moose or to compete with

1 somebody else who has more money to do these things and
2 come to their Native allotments and tear their signs
3 down and this and that, disrespect.

4

5 Maybe -- you know, I'd talk to Caroline
6 Brown. She's a part of Division of Subsistence too.
7 You have the resources right here, right now. Time to
8 take a look at it. The Board of Game is still meeting
9 if I'm not correct. The Board of Game, are they all
10 done meeting?

11

12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Robert, would you
13 put your mic a little closer. I think it would be
14 better for people to hear better.

15

16 MR. R. WALKER: Shall we start over again,
17 Victor?

18

19 (Laughter)

20

21 MR. JOSEPH: No, I heard every word you said,
22 Robert.

23

24 MR. R. WALKER: All right. But, anyway,
25 since you've got two boards here, to write support
26 better is here. And take a hard look at it. Like I
27 mentioned Caroline Brown, I mentioned it to her this
28 morning and she's going to look into that too. She is
29 Division of Subsistence where maybe that could be
30 looked into. Victor, are we on the same page?

31

32 MR. JOSEPH: We're on the same page, Robert.
33 As I look at it and as I understand Traditional Chief
34 Luke Titus for Minto, I mean I have his same concerns
35 about the Minto Flats and the areas he hunts in. I
36 understand and it's no different than what's happening
37 up on the Koyukuk River or any other rivers by tribes.
38 There's a large influx and the management that's going
39 in there is depleting the moose population and it
40 hasn't been working over the last few years in the
41 Minto Flats. Traditional Chief Luke Titus may want to
42 correct me here, but there was over 400 cows taken out
43 of a fairly small area in a couple years period.

44

45 MR. R. WALKER: We've heard that too.

46

47 MR. JOSEPH: So how do you sustain a
48 resource. Then we hear about how the Galena tribe and
49 the tribes on the Koyukuk were able to -- when the
50 moose first started going in to that country, how they

1 were able to protect it from predator control, some of
2 the concerns that Darrel brought up. In addition to
3 that, let that population move forward.

4
5 The same things we were hearing about --
6 Jack, as you were talking about your concerns with the
7 caribou and the sheep, those are our concerns too. We
8 want to partner with those and have those relationships
9 and we can get a letter out. I have a staff person in
10 the room. We can get that letter out as soon as
11 possible that could support Minto's position. I hope
12 all tribes here, all rural communities here, know that
13 when it comes to food security that TCC is a partner.
14 So I just wanted to share that and I hope that answered
15 your question.

16
17 MR. R. WALKER: Yes, that makes me feel a lot
18 better here. It just struck me when Luke Titus
19 testified yesterday, just like, wow, unbelievable.

20
21 Thank you, Victor. Appreciate that.

22
23 MR. JOSEPH: Thank you, Robert.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don.

26
27 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Madame Chair. Victor,
28 yesterday we heard a report from Sky Starkey on the
29 Kuskokwim Working Group, whatever, and that was kind of
30 new to me. I mean I don't know if they had formed
31 already for the funding. There's a lot of questions
32 there.

33
34 But my question through the years since I've
35 been attending maybe some salmon meetings in the past
36 that's initiated by TCC, whatever, that it's always
37 been and I always mention this, that, you know, we have
38 the RACs, we have our ACs. Now that kind of threw me
39 off because, okay, I mean that's the Kuskokwim Working
40 Group or something and, you know, maybe they're working
41 exclusively for the Kuskokwim, but AVCP and TCC, with
42 the task force and stuff that you guys just initially
43 started. So, to me, it's always been like who is our
44 voice. I mean which ones, you know. Where do we bring
45 our concerns? Because they have that working group,
46 then you have AVCP, which is in Bethel, whatever. You
47 have members on there. Are you guys formulating a plan
48 for over all the drainage for both rivers?

49
50 MR. JOSEPH: So, Don, as you're looking at

1 it, there is a -- first of all, AVCP and Tanana Chiefs
2 have a relationship built. And then, as we first
3 gathered last year and was established in this
4 relationship that is working together in collaboration
5 because of the decline of the chinook salmon, we've
6 also partnered in other areas. But even prior to the
7 formation of that agreement there was the Hunt and Fish
8 Task Force strategy that was supported, I think about
9 two years ago at our annual convention, that said this
10 is what we're going to do to move forward.

11
12 Since that time there has been a lot of
13 reports going out either at the convention or in our
14 newsletter that's sent out or at times updates through
15 our communication department. That being said, we sent
16 out correspondence last year to all of our tribes when
17 the resolution was being passed around, the intent of
18 that resolution I had attached to the letter, and all
19 of our tribes, with the exception of one in our region
20 that abstained from going for that. So we had almost a
21 99 percent turnout on that resolution that supported a
22 resolution for a moratorium and establishment of the
23 fish commission.

24
25 That being said, even two months ago we sent
26 out -- we dedicated our council newsletter -- the only
27 thing it was talking about was the conservation of the
28 chinook salmon and where we're at on it. So we had a
29 lot of information going out.

30
31 I also heard concerns yesterday -- from
32 yesterday's meeting I get all these bits and pieces of
33 information flying at me all day that there was
34 concerns that some of our tribal members said they
35 weren't aware of the commission. I'll put that on
36 myself. I know that even at the best, even as we try
37 to communicate really effectively, sometimes we fall a
38 little short. I mean we're putting it on in the
39 council, we're putting it on the website, we're putting
40 it out however we can and we just need to make sure
41 that we're coming together.

42
43 That's one of the areas why I'm really
44 supporting the fish commissions, so that tribal
45 leadership or the leadership out there can have a voice
46 and also be really aware of where we're at because that
47 leads to your main part of the question is who do you
48 go to. For Tanana Chiefs, you can call me. If you
49 can't call me, then Ben is in charge of our Hunt and
50 Fish Task Force, Ben Stevens. You can talk to him. If

1 that don't work, then you call Norma Dall and she'll
2 track me down. That's the way that one works. But for
3 us, for the fish commission, that is on the main
4 contact, it would be moving to Ben.

5
6 MR. HONEA: Madame Chair. I guess maybe I've
7 got to rephrase that question. I mean overall, the
8 whole picture, I mean you guys, and I appreciate the
9 task force, I appreciate what Ben is doing there, but I
10 guess -- I mean overall, you know, through the years,
11 what I'm saying is there's so many different things
12 here and I can say we need a unified voice. That's all
13 I'm saying.

14
15 MR. JOSEPH: Right. And that's what we're
16 trying to work through. That's one thing. If there's
17 no other questions, Madame Chair, I do want to ask
18 Virgil for a favor here if I can. I know you have a
19 concern that you called up yesterday. I don't want to
20 talk about it right now. Can you call me, please. I
21 appreciate it.

22
23 Thank you, Madame Chair.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you. One
26 more question.

27
28 MR. J. WALKER: Thank you, Madame Chair. I
29 just have one more question, Victor. You mentioned
30 lightly on it. I'm really pleased to see TCC and Doyon
31 getting involved in this issue because it's an ongoing
32 issue, it's an important issue. However, I'd like to
33 -- you mentioned or lightly touched on other joint
34 ventures with AVCP. Would that be economic issues?

35
36 MR. JOSEPH: There are things that we -- kind
37 of, sort of, yes, but in my administration I've been
38 working really closely on improving our partnerships
39 with other agencies that could help promote the
40 direction we're trying to go into. One of our
41 coalitions, just so that you know, out of the 227
42 tribes, we have over 160 tribes put together, working
43 together collaboratively on our issues that we are all
44 concerned with. That's a powerful force when we're
45 looking at it as far as an advocacy. So, for the most
46 part, it is on some projects, but a large part it's on
47 advocacy.

48
49 MR. J. WALKER: Thank you, Victor. Thank
50 you, Madame Chair.

1 MR. JOSEPH: And I look forward to seeing
2 whoever at the convention, all right.

3
4 You all have a nice day.

5
6 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Thank you.
7 Next is Al Barrette.

8
9 MR. BARRETTE: Thank you, Madame Chair and
10 members of the Councils. My name is Al Barrette. I
11 reside in Fairbanks and I have since 1988. I'm pretty
12 much what government has deemed a sport hunter because
13 of where I live. There's many people on the Council
14 that know me and I probably don't fit the
15 description of a sport hunter, but politics have deemed
16 me that.

17
18 I came to speak on the State's proposal on
19 the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Member Reakoff had
20 mentioned his concerns about it. I have the same
21 concerns of that proposal. I don't think their
22 proposal is adequate or addresses the issue of the
23 declining population out in Western Arctic Caribou
24 Herd. It's proposing to limit nonresident to one bull,
25 proposing the no-taking of cows and that's an animal
26 that's less than 12 months old, and to allow cow hunts
27 to continue from 30 June to 15 May.

28
29 I would ask you to either oppose this
30 proposal or amend it. Like Member Reakoff was stating,
31 I would have the amendments to no cows taken from 1
32 April to 30 September. I think Member Reakoff's
33 suggestion was just as adequate as mine. No bulls
34 without a shovel from 1 October to 30 October.

35
36 The reason for this is, you know, during the
37 calving season we closed the season for taking cows and
38 calves and that season lasts 45 days. So after they
39 drop their calves and 45 days pass, all of a sudden
40 their mothers become targets for food on the table and
41 yet those calves have just about virtually no chance of
42 surviving without a mother.

43
44 Weaning, seems a very little bit by sex is 50
45 percent of the female calves are weaning as early as
46 October and the males are September. There's not 100
47 percent weaning until April.

48
49 So I think that this is a very poor proposal
50 put in by the State. Limiting nonresidents to one bull

1 caribou is something to do, but it's not doing anything
2 statistically since basically 150 caribou that are shot
3 in this region or out of this herd are taken by
4 nonresidents. Less than a very small handful of them
5 ever shoot two caribou. So that's not statistically
6 going to get us any caribou back on the range.
7

8 I hear a lot of discussion about lots of
9 camps and lots of caribou taken from people outside the
10 area. That amounts to 576. A very small percentage.
11 You could eliminate that hunt altogether, non-resident
12 and non-locals, and you would not statistically do
13 anything to the declining population. The problem with
14 the population declining is weather and predators.
15

16 The range seems to be pretty healthy. The
17 statistics show that the animals they do find dead of
18 natural causes have been healthy and they've had good
19 fat samples. Their marrow isn't show that they're
20 starving. So it seems like the range is still in
21 fairly good condition. The bull/cow ratio is good yet
22 and that's shown.
23

24 It didn't show in the outline you have on
25 your table, but at the Western Arctic Caribou Working
26 Group they presented this information and the biologist
27 out there said the pregnancy rates are good. They're
28 getting impregnated. It's the problem of saving them
29 calves through the first year. And we have some adult
30 cow mortality that's unexplainable right now as far as
31 I know. So I'd like the Councils to address that for
32 the upcoming Board meeting in latter March.
33

34 My second concern is about the advisory
35 process, why we're here. You know, this system is set
36 up to regulate ourselves. I think what I've seen in
37 observing -- and I don't attend all these meetings or
38 even speak at a lot of them, but I felt compelled to do
39 it today since there's a joint Western and Eastern RAC.
40 You know, in times of abundance things work really well
41 and there's not much blame going around of who's doing
42 what and who's not doing anything.
43

44 This system breaks down in my opinion is
45 management and it seems on the Federal side the Federal
46 system manages to crisis. When populations get into
47 crisis mode, that's when they want to start managing
48 and how does the Federal side manage. The Federal side
49 manages by reducing opportunity. They start
50 prioritizing. They start labeling people on where they

1 live and who can participate. So that seems to be a
2 fall.

3

4 I think Member Vent yesterday says, you know,
5 what are we doing to prevent this management of crisis.
6 Why aren't we looking at what we can do today to
7 prevent it happening in the future and I think that's
8 being overlooked a lot. It happens because the Federal
9 side doesn't recognize the ability to manage one
10 species over another one. They don't want to have
11 predator control. They don't want to allow urban
12 people to participate. They want to
13 change regulations that the State has done.

14

15 If you agree or disagree by saying taking
16 grizzly bears over bait or bear denning and if you're
17 from an urban area, that's not sporting, yet we'll
18 allow the use of boats to herd caribou in a river and
19 rope them and shoot them. We'll allow the same thing
20 on snowmachines, herd them up and shoot them. That
21 doesn't seem very sporting either, but it's about meat
22 on our tables. Sometimes the outside world doesn't
23 recognize what we need to live on and have and provide
24 for our families.

25

26 I think like Chief Luke Titus said yesterday,
27 you know, the villages are getting smaller. They're
28 moving into urban areas. That traditional upbringing,
29 that traditional lifestyle is not going to change
30 because of where they live. We have to start
31 recognizing that and that's what he was trying to point
32 out yesterday is, you know, we can live a traditional
33 lifestyle. My whole entire lifestyle in Fairbanks
34 revolves around fish and wildlife in this state. I
35 receive my income from it, I raise my family on it, we
36 grow our vegetables, we fish with nets and we live that
37 traditional lifestyle right here in urban Alaska.

38

39 So that's all I have right now, Madame Chair.

40

41 Thank you.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Questions, anyone.

44 Donald.

45

46 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you for your testimony.
47 I misunderstood you. Did you say you think it's legal
48 to harass wildlife with a boat or a snowmachine?

49

50 MR. BARRETTE: Through the Chair, Mr.

1 Woodruff. There's areas in the state that you're
2 allowed to use a boat, like up at Ambler, the Kobuk
3 River, when the caribou are swimming across the river
4 you can go out in your boat and surround them and take
5 the bull caribou that you wish and shoot them and tie
6 them to your boat and take them back to the village,
7 yes. Also through State regulations you can use a
8 snowmachine to position yourself to take caribou in
9 Western Alaska.

10

MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you.

12

13 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
14 questions. Robert.

15

16 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Madame Chair.
17 Thank you for all your work you did on the bison also,
18 Al. Just a reminder here for the Council is that all
19 our villages we always have to take a real hard look at
20 this because there's always 30 to 40 percent of the
21 people that's going to live there forever and that's
22 one of the things that -- you know, Minto, there's
23 going to be 30, 40, 50 percent there to live forever
24 because that's the way they are and that's the way we
25 are. These are the people we have to protect because
26 they're going to live there. I'm going to live there
27 until I die. That's my option.

28

Thank you very much.

29

30
31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
32 questions. Way down there. I see you now. Go ahead.

33

34 MR. VENT: Thank you. I thank you for
35 mentioning about the predation. You know, it's always
36 been a problem and nobody wants to deal with it. It
37 always has to fall back on the people in the villages.
38 From my area, our village is increasing. We're one of
39 the fortunate ones. We have a lot of children coming
40 up. I think it's about 33 percent. So kind of like we
41 feel like rabbits out there right now.

42

(Laughter)

44

MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Anyone else.

46

47

48 (No comments)

49

50 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right. I have

1 four more. Let's see how we can do and if you guys
2 want to take a break, you've got to let me know. Next
3 is Paul Williams, Sr.

4

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Madame Chair, Eastern and Western
6 board. It's good to get together, you know, like
7 Pollock said and be friends. I haven't seen him for a
8 long time and other people in here that I haven't seen
9 for a long time. They're happy to see me, you know, so
10 really happy to be here today. I didn't know I had to
11 sign a little paper to get up here, but that's what I
12 did. Learn through example. You know, I'm 78 years
13 old and still learning, so that's the way the elder --
14 they learn from the younger people and the young people
15 they learn from the elders by what they see by example
16 and the words that they hear from the elders and that's
17 how it works. I'm really glad that you guys are
18 putting your minds together in friendship, handshake.
19 You guys will get it done, you know, for the good of
20 the land.

21

22 I just wanted to make a comment on the things
23 I've been doing with my own little life, you know.
24 I've been working since 1996 for the Fish and Wildlife
25 Service, the Federal government. I think we done
26 somewhat of a good job, you know. We tried our best.
27 They learn in college, you know, so we can't blame them
28 for everything. They can't learn everything in college
29 and university.

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 MR. WILLIAMS: You've got to be out there
34 amongst the people and see what they say, you know.
35 They been there over thousands of years. They've been
36 this long and looking around, you know, and see that
37 our spirituality and living on the land and listening
38 to the elders speak. We're from a long time ago. How
39 the things that went on and how the management of the
40 fish and wildlife came about. It came about by people
41 listening to one another and working together. So we
42 go back to the basic necessity of putting life back
43 into the Yukon Flats and other areas.

44

45 First I noticed that there's hardly any
46 water, you know, and the lakes are drying up for years
47 and years. Even the local fish is getting low. You
48 know, the song birds are low in numbers. Maybe the
49 park is increasing, but the beaver is going away.
50 There haven't been no muskrat or rabbits around for a

1 long time. You know, I grew up on these things.

2

3 To recount and to remember how things were a
4 long time ago, they were different. You know, like no
5 jet airplanes, you know, and no snowmobile. Remember
6 dog teams we used all the time to travel. We don't
7 stay one place too long, you know. You know, we got
8 four seasons and we stay there in the springtime.
9 Because people got to understand, you know, the four
10 seasons. You've got to think about it for a while
11 before you really start to understand. Those people
12 that don't come from the land a long time ago, you
13 know, it's hard for them to manage and to do good for
14 the land and the people, the people that understood
15 management a long time ago and through friendship and
16 working together, cooperation, they make the land
17 productive.

18

19 Looking at all these things that I see today,
20 you know, not living on the land and pretty short on
21 spirituality, not speaking our language and not
22 understanding it and don't know how to survive on the
23 land, I've been thinking about that quite a bit. A
24 couple year ago a university professor I know he called
25 me and he said, Paul, I've got a question for you. He
26 called me over the phone and I said what is it. He
27 said I got a call from a woman down in Tanana, her name
28 is Mary, and I know that woman because she went to the
29 same school I did down in Inglewood, California.
30 There's an A&P school there. Well, she's got an A&P
31 mechanic license too like I do and in the early days
32 that's how I got to know her.

33

34 So she questioned, you know, elders in
35 ancient times people from Siberia moved across the
36 Bering Sea and these people were really powerful, not
37 only in their physique but through their mind too.
38 They had powerful minds. So they came across there.
39 They made a land bridge. It wasn't a natural land
40 bridge. They said they made it with their mind. A big
41 pile of dirt all the way across the ocean. Hundreds
42 and thousands of them came across, lots of them. They
43 could break sticks and they could count that way. Not
44 like today, you know, when you can write down 100,000.

45

46 Well, anyway, did you hear about that, he
47 told me. Yeah, I hear -- you know, I'm from
48 (indiscernible) and David Salmon, when he was living a
49 long time ago, he told me about the story and so did my
50 mother. They came here and they made slaves out of us,

1 you know. We called them (in Athabascan), the ones
2 that came across the land bridge. We hear gitsa (ph),
3 you know, I'm a gitsa and David said he was a gitsa
4 too. So that's how the story got started.

5
6 I was thinking, gee, you know, I'm going to
7 die pretty soon, you know, I mean within the
8 foreseeable future and with all the memories that I
9 have and the stories that I heard and how people
10 subsist off the land a long time ago, you know, what
11 kind of implements that they used to go out and harvest
12 moose or rabbit, you know. They had throwing sticks
13 and they had snowshoes. Different kind of snowshoes.
14 A sled too. Everything made out of moose hide, this
15 fancy. You know, it's got yarn and bells on it and
16 their toboggan so fancy and they wore fancy clothes,
17 you know. I should have wore my Chief's vest to show
18 you how fancy they were along time ago. We've got old
19 pictures of people with shirts with design on it. They
20 were looking pretty good them days, you know, and
21 that's where we come from.

22
23 And kids, you know, they don't know their
24 families and they don't know their history. It's good
25 that kids have identification of where their family and
26 where their clan come from. That's very important for
27 self-identity and being proud of where you come from
28 the way I see it. So the last two years I gathered
29 some elders and we lost one of them too from Venetie,
30 from Arctic Village. Venetie, Beaver, Stevens Village
31 and Fairbanks. There was about six of us, you know,
32 when we got time. It's all volunteering.

33
34 We told stories about a long time ago. You
35 know, the one about the (indiscernible). When people
36 came over the Continental Divide, you know, and where
37 people come from, you know, actually the different
38 tribe that move around and where they come from and
39 what their clan was and what their name was. You know,
40 sort of like me, I'm the 12th, you know, on my father's
41 side and Gwitso (ph) on my mother's side, you know. My
42 great great great grandpa's name was Henry Gwitso and
43 that's where my mom come from, you know. And Dachee
44 (ph), you know, he was the man that had a plan around
45 Birch Creek. That's where my father come from.

46
47 That's the kind of stories we're putting down
48 through the University of Alaska. We talk in our
49 language, using the Athabascan language, and we store
50 that information at the university. A guy named Bill

1 -- I forgot. He's a curator up there. I guess you
2 guys know him, but he going to retire. Schneider,
3 yeah, that's his name. He got his fishes from Beaver,
4 so I knew him real well. So, hopefully, you know, one
5 day when my children would go to the university and go
6 to the archives and, hey, that's my grandpa Paul
7 Williams from Beaver, he's talking in our language and
8 help them understand.

9

10 So, you know, I was just thinking that (cell
11 phone ringing). Maybe it's the President.

12

13 (Laughter)

14

15 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm kind of busy. Do you need
16 help?

17

18 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Cell phones with
19 this new technology.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, new technology. Anyway, I'm
24 going to close now. I just wanted to tell you this
25 information because I think, you know, we're out there
26 doing this work for a couple of years, you know, and
27 nobody knows what we're doing and by working together
28 we could become stronger. This is for our children,
29 you know. It's all voluntary basis. So I want to say
30 to you thanks for the opportunity. I appreciate it.

31

32 (Applause)

33

34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Paul.
35 Are there any questions?

36

37 MR. WILLIAMS: I give you guys a hand too for
38 doing a good job. You know, you're starting to
39 understand what this is all about and how are we going
40 to get it done, you know, and put a good solid
41 structure of knowledge and things to be done in the
42 future. We came a long ways and have a long ways to go
43 yet.

44

45 Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Paul.
48 Any questions.

49

50 MR. COLLINS: Madame Chair.

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Ray.

2

3 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, this is Ray Collins. I
4 have a comment. Thank you for your comments on there.
5 What you reminded me of when you talked about how
6 things used to be and now, one of the biggest
7 challenges we have is that traditionally there was
8 flexibility there. If one resource wasn't available,
9 they shifted to another. If the weather wouldn't let
10 you hunt now, you'd wait until the weather let up and
11 now we're down to seasons and bag limits and so on. We
12 create a winter season that gets five days, but there's
13 really no opportunity because it turns down to 30, 40
14 below or something. And we don't have the flexibility
15 on the part of the managers often locally to extend
16 that season. You have to go through special actions
17 and everything else.

18

19 We've really lost that being able to use that
20 traditional knowledge to hunt when it's appropriate and
21 being able to shift from one resource to another. We
22 need to think about that when we're passing all these
23 regulations of how we can make them flexible if it's
24 possible. I think there was some of that coming up
25 with the caribou of when you close the season and when
26 you open it.

27

28 It's really a challenge to try to make the
29 current seasons and bag limits fit traditional life so
30 that people can get the food they need. So thank you
31 for reminding us of that.

32

33 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Any other
34 questions.

35

36 (No comments)

37

38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right. Thank
39 you.

40

41 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Very nice. I have
44 three cards left. Ben Stevens, Fred Alexie and Alfred
45 Demientieff, Jr. Would you guys like to take a break
46 and bring that up. Okay, let's take a break for 10 and
47 try to get back here.

48

49 (Off record)

50

1 (On record)

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I'm going to start
4 the meeting. We've got a quorum on both sides. Ben
5 Stevens. Maybe if I hit my head it would work. Sorry,
6 Ben, for this confusion, but we've got to get started.

7

8 MR. STEVENS: Don't be sorry. Madame Chair,
9 thank you very kindly for the opportunity. Mr. Chair,
10 members of the RAC. Thank you for this opportunity to
11 come and speak with you. For those of you who don't
12 know me, my name is Ben Stevens. I'm a Koyukon from
13 Stevens Village. I grew up there. I was raised by my
14 grandma and trained by my uncles and that whole deal.
15 We spent the summers in fish camp. Our fish camp fed
16 quite a few families. So I basically grew up in that
17 type of a traditional lifestyle.

18

19 I serve these days the Tanana Chiefs
20 Conference. I help coordinate the strategy for the
21 Hunting and Fishing Task Force that has been mentioned
22 a few times throughout your meeting yesterday and
23 today, I believe.

24

25 I do have a moment with one of the biologists
26 later on this afternoon, but what I want to do is give
27 you a brief overview now so we can afford him as much
28 time as he needs later on, but I will make myself
29 available throughout the day in the event that you have
30 questions or comments.

31

32 Just a brief overview of the Task Force. Has
33 anyone seen this right here? This is the strategy from
34 2014. Okay. I'll get Melinda and Eva, I believe,
35 copies for you to take home. Basically what the Task
36 Force is designed to do is help advance or protect the
37 hunting and the fishing rights of Alaska Native folks
38 in the Interior.

39

40 That said, part of that strategy involves
41 partnerships, so we're talking to folks from the First
42 Nations in Canada all the way down to the AVCP folks
43 that Vic mentioned earlier. We believe that the key to
44 changing the paradigm of resource management is through
45 partnerships. We have all grown to this point fighting
46 like cats and dogs over the last fish. Now that that
47 last fish is gone, we need to shift. So we're trying
48 to do right now is take historical challenges and then
49 make them opportunities.

50

1 Al was up here earlier. I had the
2 opportunity to meet him and some of the folks that he
3 works with. A tremendous group of folks. The great
4 part about almost everybody that has anything to say
5 about hunting and fishing is that we all have some very
6 common things involved here. What we're trying to do
7 with the Task Force is change that paradigm. Offer the
8 authorities at this point something different to ponder
9 to consider because what we have found is over the last
10 100 years we've been trying resource management. The
11 State and the Federal folks, bless their hearts, are
12 trying with superhuman strength to get this to work.

13
14 So what we want to do is we want to add some
15 salt to that soup. I think that that comes in the form
16 of local involvement, whether it's Al and the folks
17 living here in Fairbanks or whether it's the guy
18 standing out on a dirt road village Alaska who's
19 looking at the river trying to get a fish. I think
20 local involvement is going to be where it's at.

21
22 The guy that comes from an indigenous
23 background does not just bring TEK, the traditional
24 knowledge of his ancestors. They just don't bring
25 that. They bring the whole thing to the table. So I
26 think to disregard that type of knowledge, that
27 indigenous science, is probably going to be a mistake.
28 So what we want to do is we want to help folks
29 understand that when you talk about TEK, you're talking
30 about something that you should probably consider and
31 not just consider and then throw out, take what you
32 want, but really get a meaningful understanding of what
33 that is. I think
34 that is the missing element in resource management
35 today.

36
37 I've heard some folks throw out the word
38 co-management and everybody just shook. Well, I'm
39 sorry that that is a startling term for folks to hear,
40 but I think it's about time we consider that term or
41 something similar to it because right now we need a
42 shift in that paradigm and that's where I think we're
43 heading. That's only part of the strategy of the Task
44 Force.

45
46 One of the things that we have done that some
47 of you may have heard about is our partnership with the
48 University of Alaska. In terms of getting the local
49 involvement involved in resource management we found
50 that groups like this is incredible because you guys

1 are utilizing the tools, the mechanism that is afforded
2 us on both the -- you know, the State has the Board of
3 Game and the local advisory committees. The Feds have
4 the RACs and the Federal Subsistence Board.

5
6 Those are tremendous opportunities. However,
7 we're not utilizing them as well as we should. So our
8 partnership, for example, with the University of Alaska
9 is we're taking Federal subsistence management and
10 making it a 101 introductory course. Dragging our
11 folks in and basically starting from the beginning and
12 saying, okay, this is what it is and this is how you
13 can change it. And, by the way, here is a form that
14 you can use to propose a change.

15
16 Just mentioned was how inflexible the system
17 is. Well, it doesn't have to be that way because it
18 doesn't work for you or me. So let's change it. Let's
19 find a way. The thing is, these students are learning
20 right now how it is that they can best help you guys in
21 looking at regulations and how that can help the people
22 out on the street, out on the dirt road.

23
24 Right now, the way that we see it, is that a
25 lot of times you folks don't get good quality help from
26 us so you can better do your jobs. So we're working on
27 trying to partner with you also to help you do what you
28 need. I believe that's the only way we can
29 successfully achieve our mission.

30
31 The goals of each of us I think are
32 strikingly similar. Mine might be a little bit
33 different from Jenny's or from Darrel's, but I think
34 they're all strikingly similar and there's a tremendous
35 amount of opportunity for us once we sit down and we
36 talk about how we can help each other. So that's kind
37 of where we're headed. The Task Force is looking to
38 change the paradigm a little bit.

39
40 There was some reference yesterday about me
41 not knowing who the Task Force was. I have to apologize
42 to the RAC because I'm dealing with five different
43 meetings right now as part of my job with five
44 different constituents, five different groups of
45 attendees with pretty much three different goals. So I
46 may have caused some confusion, but I do know who is on
47 the RAC and it's a very, very regionally representative
48 group of folks, including Doyon, we've got a board
49 member, and senior vice president and we've got the
50 executive from FNA and we've got three reps from our

1 council of elders, not to mention regional
2 representatives from across the region.

3

4 With that, I want to leave you -- and, again,
5 I'm going to be here throughout the day, so I welcome
6 your comments and your questions, but what I want to
7 leave you with is the concept that we had briefly
8 flashed on yesterday and that was the fish commissions.
9 The fish commissions is someplace that some folks are
10 reluctantly going, but it's the last option that they
11 have available to them.

12

13 My son stood with me on the bank of the river
14 this summer and said, Dad, how come we can't fish.
15 Well, I didn't have an answer for him. I didn't.
16 That's where we're at. So the Alaska Native folks that
17 live along the river have come to the end and they are
18 desperate. They are tired of going to meetings where
19 people listen to them and they say, well, we hear you,
20 my God, we empathize with you and let's meet again to
21 talk about it.

22

23 So I don't want folks to rear up and get
24 defensive and get scared when folks at the local level
25 start talking about having an involvement in something
26 that is going to keep them alive. So I beg you not to
27 close the door on the concept of local involvement
28 because I truly believe that when it comes right down
29 to it, that is what's missing in resource management
30 here in Alaska, is effective local involvement.

31

32 Again, my name is Ben. I will be here all
33 week. Please feel free to ask me questions and I'm
34 going to be back here and I'm going to make myself
35 available. I have these I will get to Eva and Melinda
36 if you want. And I want to thank Eva and Melinda for
37 helping me try to figure this out. You guys are so
38 patient and helpful.

39

40 So with that, Madame Chair, I will take
41 questions or I will give you the mic back.

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Ben. I
44 have one. His hand was already risen before you
45 stopped here. Others, if you have anything, does
46 anyone else have anything? You would be next. Okay,
47 I've got two more.

48

49 MR. REAKOFF: I didn't want you to get the
50 impression that I was afraid of the co-management

1 thing. I was afraid of the make-up of the
2 representation. I'm afraid. I've been to way too many
3 Board of Fish meeting and seen politics of the Lower
4 River and CDQ money funds representation, so I'm
5 worried about politics, the appointing sources and the
6 governors. I want to see a healthy -- they call it an
7 advisory committee in ANILCA law. There's Federal
8 advisory committees, so that's the preferred term I
9 would like to use. I really want to see this on the
10 Kuskokwim River.

11
12 I'm just cautioning that there's some issues
13 and I wanted Sky and the public and the Council to be
14 aware that there's some real issues with what Sky had
15 come up with so far. I think it edified his thought
16 process and he's probably going back and re-evaluating
17 some things.

18
19 I think that on the Kuskokwim River, this is
20 a template, this is a pilot program, so that's within
21 the WIRAC region and YK Delta region to develop a co-
22 management working body and advisory using local
23 knowledge. I think that's extremely important and I
24 encourage that. But I'm concerned about the Lower
25 River hijacking the process. They are very good at
26 politics.

27
28 MR. STEVENS: Very effective.

29
30 MR. REAKOFF: They have some very influential
31 people in the legislature. So I'm concerned about that
32 and I'll state it on the record. I want the EIRAC --
33 if we go into this process on the Yukon River, it's
34 going to affect all three RACs, so I want you to pay
35 attention to how this template, this pilot program is
36 working on the Kuskokwim because it could shift over to
37 the Yukon, but that's going to be very complex with the
38 Trans-Canada agreement. There's going to be some more
39 complexities that are on the horizon.

40
41 But that's what I want to say. I'm not
42 afraid of that at all. I want local process, I want as
43 many -- as much advisement, State advisory committees,
44 Federal advisory committees. I want as much co-
45 management, I want as much input as we possibly can get
46 because that's what this is. This is a forum for
47 public input to the process. So I'm not a bit afraid
48 of it. I just want to make sure that it's got equal
49 representation by all of the communities along the
50 river.

1 Thank you, Madame Chair.

2

3 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Next. I think he
4 didn't ask a question, but maybe I missed that. Did
5 you?

6

7 MR. REAKOFF: I didn't ask a question,
8 but.....

9

10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. These are
11 questions.

12

13 MR. STEVENS: Point well taken.

14

15 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Larry is next.

16

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Madame Chair. I've
18 known Ben Stevens for quite a number of years and I'd
19 like to thank him publicly for all the hard work that
20 he's done for the Native people. He's working for TCC
21 now. And I'd like to make a comment on the traditional
22 knowledge that he mentioned.

23

24 Over the years our people have lived off the
25 land and they gathered quite a few knowledge of fish
26 and game. For too many years we haven't been utilizing
27 that knowledge and some of them have passed on, so it's
28 too late to use our knowledge. These corporations,
29 Doyon and Tanana Chiefs and these other corporations
30 are built on the foundation that our ancestors put down
31 on this land. They were here long before -- our people
32 were here long before the state became a state. They
33 were here in the territorial days. I remember the
34 territorial days and we built these corporations using
35 the land and the resources that they protected.

36

37 So I really like that comment about using
38 traditional knowledge in your work. There's a lot of
39 people out there that have a lot of knowledge, but, you
40 know, as a people we're inherently polite and we're not
41 aggressive or pushy to make our voice heard because we
42 kind of tend to stay in the background. Those people
43 that are not picked for a meeting like Tanana Chiefs
44 Conference, we never use their knowledge because nobody
45 invite them specifically. So that knowledge that they
46 have never get passed on. I know they have it, you
47 know.

48

49 So it's something to think about. These 42
50 villages that the TCC represents, they can pick elders

1 that has a lot of knowledge and say, you know, we would
2 be honored if you would speak to the people at the
3 Tanana Chiefs Conference, we'll put you up, pay you a
4 little per diem, and you pass on what you've learned
5 over the years to these people, to the generation so we
6 can know.

7

8 So I'd like to make a comment and I don't
9 want to ramble on here too long. You know, just
10 something to think about and thank you again.

11

12 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Questions.
13 Any other questions. Donald.

14

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Madame Chair. Ben,
16 thank you for coming. I welcome this template that you
17 guys are talking about. I think it's a new approach
18 and it's refreshing. One of the questions I have for
19 you is at these five meetings you're having today or
20 this week, you're saying the same issues?

21

22 MR. STEVENS: Well, just like Mr. Morgan here
23 said, all we have to do is rewind the tape for the last
24 20, 30 years. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be snide.
25 Yes.

26

27 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. The other question is,
28 are you consulting with YRDFA on these issues because
29 they have an anthropologist here and they do TEK
30 research and incorporate that into their program
31 tremendously.

32

33 MR. STEVENS: Absolutely. The one thing that
34 I've heard before that I really, really have to sign on
35 to is you're in a field of deep snow and you've got to
36 get to the other side and you've got snowshoes on and
37 there's several of you there. There's no reason for
38 all of you to be breaking trail across the field. One
39 person go ahead and everybody follow. When that person
40 gets tired -- so you're helping each other.

41

42 Part of the paradigm shift here is
43 cooperating, utilizing your strength with me. And,
44 yes, so YRDFA, they're on the radar pretty large.
45 Anyone that has anything to say about this subject is
46 going to be heard. Like I said, it's not about butting
47 heads, it's about meeting and coming together, creating
48 synergy.

49

50 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. And one other

1 thing is that YRDFA -- I was on the board for YRDFA and
2 my wife has been on the board for YRDFA. They function
3 on a united voice, just like you're talking about.
4 They're a unanimous vote. So when they move forward
5 with a proposal or a resolution, it's a united voice up
6 and down the Yukon and including the input from Canada,
7 so that's very important.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 MR. STEVENS: Yeah, and that is very, very
12 powerful too to have the First Nations all the way down
13 to the coast speaking with unity. When you see this,
14 you will see the word unity probably at the top of it.
15 It's tremendous to have that kind of power at play. As
16 we've seen, any time anything is to get done, if you
17 have the local folks and they're all speaking one word,
18 it will get done.

19

20 Take the moratorium last year. How long have
21 we had challenges getting enough fish to the spawning
22 grounds. And then you get the local folks involved
23 and, bam, it happens without very much complications
24 whatsoever. So, yes, it's going to be important that
25 we all work together here. And I don't say that like
26 we've all said it for the longest time, yeah, we've got
27 to work together. No. I'm talking about, like I said,
28 a shift in the paradigm.

29

30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: One more question
31 here. Go ahead.

32

33 MR. VENT: Ben, my question is, you know,
34 there's a whole bunch of tribes along the river and we
35 all have different issues. Our area we're really
36 getting hit hard on our food resources and we've been
37 letting the State know and I imagine coming to the
38 meetings here -- I think I came to a meeting with this
39 WIRAC board in Galena and I mentioned our moose
40 population is down. I've been saying that for quite
41 some time. I've been saying that, saying that. Now
42 you guys are coming up with this -- are you going to be
43 helping the villages? I mean how are you going to be
44 helping the villages, not are you going to be.

45

46 MR. STEVENS: One of the ways that we can
47 help that is easy but complicated, difficult, is
48 helping our folks understand how to use the systems
49 that we have available to us. The State has an awesome
50 system for resource management. It's just that our

1 people don't know how to use it. So one of the things
2 that I want to do is I want to sit down with some of
3 the Fish and Game Advisory Committee folks and tell
4 them how much tremendous power they have to help make
5 change for the better.

6
7 Right now, normally what happens is some
8 local folks come in and sit around a table like this
9 and a bunch of officials come in and give them some
10 verbiage. With all due respect to our precious people
11 that sit on the ACs, they don't understand enough to
12 effectively run forward. So what I'd like to do is sit
13 down with those ACs -- not me personally because I'm
14 not the professional here. Sit down with the ACs and
15 start to clarify what it is that they can do and then
16 start walking that up the ladder to help them make the
17 change for their area.

18
19 I totally agree that it's different in every
20 area, so it's going to change with your AC, with the
21 folks down around Tanana, Manley, you know, up around
22 Yukon Flats. They're going to change, but they're
23 going to be pretty the same because there's quite a few
24 consistent elements in rural Alaska amongst our people,
25 how they rely on the land. It's just a matter of
26 tweaking that and making the system work. That also
27 applies to you guys.

28
29 We're smack dab in the middle of a class with
30 I-AC with the university system here on Federal
31 subsistence management. That is one small key of
32 helping folks better understand how to help you guys.
33 So there's a number of ways.

34
35 By the way, I think your name showed up on
36 our Task Force list, so sorry about that.

37
38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. I just want
39 to remind everyone Ben is on the agenda again this
40 afternoon, so if there -- I think in depth might end up
41 with more questioning at that time.

42
43 MR. STEVENS: Right. And after you get this,
44 maybe you'll have more questions. I'll meet with you
45 whenever, wherever, tonight.

46
47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. But you're
48 going to be here all day, right?

49
50 MR. STEVENS: Yes, ma'am.

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: All right. Thanks,
2 Ben.

3
4 MR. STEVENS: Thank you very much for your
5 time.

6
7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Uh-huh. Fred
8 Alexie. As he's coming up, I would -- go ahead, Fred,
9 come on up. Nate Turner is here from the Alaska Board
10 of Game. He's sitting in and listening to our joint
11 RAC meeting. I just wanted to recognize him. Go
12 ahead.

13
14 MR. ALEXIE: Good morning. Madame Chair,
15 thank you. This meeting is very powerful. It's the
16 Western and Eastern RAC Committee. Very powerful.
17 Powerful committee that we can use to help us preserve
18 our fish and game. You people could make proposals,
19 maybe even write laws to help protect our resources.

20
21 I'd like to get into some of the things that
22 I had jotted down. Fall chums and later fall into the
23 kings. Fall chums was very plentiful in Kaltag. It's
24 an alternate source to our king salmon closure that we
25 had last summer. Born and raised on the Yukon for 72
26 years and living off the land. I am totally a
27 subsistence user. Even my grandchildren now. I hardly
28 go to the stores to buy food. Where my food comes from
29 is off the land. I go hungry. I'm hungry right now,
30 even one day in town. I'm hungry. What am I missing?
31 I'm missing my food. I can eat and eat and eat, but as
32 soon as I get done eating I'll go back over to
33 McDonald's and I'll have another one.

34
35 (Laughter)

36
37 MR. ALEXIE: Why? Because I'm hungry. You
38 don't understand that. A lot of people don't
39 understand that. Okay, I'd like to just keep going.
40 Fall chums are very plentiful and that's one thing I do
41 carry with me when I travel is my subsistence food,
42 both strips and dry meat. I don't want no phone calls.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 MR. ALEXIE: But, hey, I want dry meat or I
47 want strips. But it goes back to -- you know, I heard
48 there's going to be a lot of return, I think some of
49 the Fish and Game people here, of the king salmon
50 coming back, the four-year-old. I said it yesterday,

1 four-year-old kings coming back? There's humongous
2 fish. Humongous fish and they're coming back. I want
3 a piece of that. Even if we set a limit two per
4 village along the Yukon.

5
6 In the Kuskokwim area, the fish don't go up
7 to Canadian border, but we people along the Yukon got
8 to live by that treaty that was drafted up by the
9 Federal government. Who's paying for that? Us people
10 along the Yukon. Canadian dollars, where's their money
11 to help research. Sure they're happy to see that king
12 salmon spawn up in the Canadian border, but, God, you
13 know, let's be real. Hey, give us some money, give
14 some money to the research, see how we can better --
15 yeah, we know how to manage. I've lived on the Yukon
16 for all my life. My grandparents showed me how to
17 manage our fish and game. When our smokehouse is full,
18 that's it. We don't fish no more. We're done. All it
19 is we're taking care of the fish that we put in the
20 smokehouse.

21
22 Non-resident guides. I would like to see a
23 proposal somehow limiting the number of guides. Those
24 guys, they don't care. What do they want? The biggest
25 antlers. What happens to the meat. I'm pretty
26 fortunate that Kaltag has got -- my nephews are guides
27 in Kaltag. I hate to say that about it, but, you know,
28 I'm happy to see them do it. But I'm happy to see it
29 because the local guides they can give the meat to the
30 -- you know, the local guides will say, hey, these
31 people here in Kaltag has got no meat, why don't you --
32 they tell the client give all that meat to that or
33 divide it up and that's what they do.

34
35 I was jinxed. Five years I was jinxed.
36 Never got a moose. Never got a moose. Five years.
37 Hunters, people, we all know. We all go through this.
38 You're not lucky every year you go out. You're not.
39 My uncle was very -- my late, late uncle he tell me
40 don't ever use the word lucky, but I'm using it today,
41 you know. He'd say you think that moose is going to
42 walk in front of your camp. You think that marten is
43 going to walk to your trap. Don't use the word lucky.
44 You got to go out there and you've got to get it.

45
46 You know, at any rate, not getting off that
47 non-resident guides. They show no respect for the
48 country, no respect for the land. You fly into a lake
49 with a little Super Cub. You think you can put a whole
50 moose in that darn little airplane? What do they do,

1 they debone that moose, take the best parts out, the
2 big part of the moose and leave the rest there. Wanton
3 waste. That's wanton waste.

4

5 The guides -- me and a friend from Koyukuk,
6 my best friend from Koyukuk, he stalked a moose for
7 five days, stalked it for five days, he knew where it
8 was in this lake, but he couldn't get at it. Guess
9 what. He went back there the next day after five days.
10 Here there's a red airplane there. Got that bull
11 moose. Boy was he mad. He told me that.

12

13 It happened to me also. I stalked mine for
14 three days. Three days me and my whole family, my
15 grandchildren, we were all down at my dad's camp.
16 Three days we hunted. I knew where this bull moose was
17 and so did my grandchildren. My little six-year-old
18 grandchild, you know, he's running through that tall
19 grass. You know, we can't see him, but make sure he's
20 with us all the time. After three days we hear it, we
21 heard this airplane. I just knew right off the get-go
22 where this airplane was and what he got. He got that
23 moose. After three days of stalking that moose, he got
24 that moose. At any rate, guess what he took out. Left
25 all the bones there, deboned the meat. I didn't have
26 no choice but to go back there and salvage what I
27 could. Me and my grandchildren, we all went back there
28 and we packed out what we could pack out. I just hate
29 to see that. We all emphasize the same thing.

30

31 Fishing with the nets. Boy, these days it's
32 very technical. They got these fish sonars that you can
33 fish with. Know where the fish is at all times. They
34 got the deep nets, large mesh. They do good. I'm not
35 saying nothing about technology. That's technology now
36 if you go out fishing with the fish sonars.
37 Traditionally, where the name Kaltag came from, Ggaal
38 Doh, Native name. What that means, where the king
39 salmon swim, they come by. Kaltag. The white man
40 couldn't say Ggaal Doh, so they said, hey, why don't
41 you name it Kaltag, so that's where the name Kaltag
42 came from.

43

44 Okay. Bears and wolves. I think Rhonda said
45 it. Too many wolves in the villages. I'm afraid for
46 my grandchildren. My little six-year-old grandchild,
47 he get on his 120, he cruises. I don't know where he
48 cruises. That little guy can run out of gas any place.
49 That's my main mission every day is to look for that
50 120 to see where it ran out of gas to get it and drag

1 it home, fill it up and he go again.

2

3 (Laughter)

4

5 MR. ALEXIE: At any rate, for his safety and
6 the kids' safety. The wolves are just too close and
7 the bears. Oh, we got a lot of bears in Kaltag.
8 Because why, Kaltag is situated in between two major
9 spawning streams, the Kaltag stream and Old Village
10 River, main spawning streams. Where's the bears?
11 They're going in between those two spawning areas.
12 We've got a lot of grizzlies. I'm glad to see our
13 local guides kill a grizzly. I'm glad. They get some
14 nice grizzlies. You heard over the last couple days
15 now what the bears do to the calves.

16

17 Like Virgil or Jack, you said something about
18 the snowfall, the rain. Rain right now. Boy, Alaska
19 is changing. The rain and then the snow. What is that
20 doing? Wolves can run on that crust to run down moose.
21 The moose will slow down because his foot is -- the
22 crust is cutting his legs up, so it's hurting. He's
23 not running. He's trying to keep his foot out of the
24 same place, but he's hurting. The wolves are really
25 having a field day right now with the moose.

26

27 MR. SUMMERS: National Park Service,
28 Clarence.

29

30 MR. ALEXIE: Huh?

31

32 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Don't worry. It's
33 something to do with the teleconferencing. I think
34 they have to identify themselves when they come on.

35

36 MR. ALEXIE: I thought he was telling me to
37 shut up.

38

39 (Laughter)

40

41 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: A message from
42 above.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MR. ALEXIE: I'd like to go on. My last
47 comment. Remember I was telling you I was in this
48 five-year jinx. Me and my wife would drift in the
49 Kaiyuh National Refuge. Seventeen hours drifting. I
50 just bought a brand new 115. What are we doing

1 drifting? My wife can drive that 115, pilot, while I
2 be the gunnar. We drifted for 17 hours in the Kaiyuh
3 Flats. Every time I heard a moose, there's a lake, I
4 know there's a lake, I know all the lakes in that area.
5 Stop. I walk back there. I call, call, call, but
6 that's how jinxed I was, they're not coming. Maybe
7 wrong season. I know it was wrong season. The moose
8 don't come down -- the big bull moose don't come down
9 off the mountains until late September. Then they'll
10 come to anything.

11
12 I just wanted to say about the Fish and Game
13 harassment. In just coming out of -- in Kaiyuh, coming
14 to my dad's cabin, boy, that slough is just winding
15 like that going through there and my grandkids were
16 saying, Grandpa, there's a plane back there flying
17 behind us. I didn't want to stop because I knew who it
18 was. You know, for miles was doing that. I just kept
19 my boat at three-quarter trawl because I know he's not
20 going to land. He's not going to land on a bend
21 because he can't take back off if he land. At any
22 rate, just coming to a straight stretch and gosh darn
23 it, he just flew up his plane and lands right in front
24 of us. State Fish and Game in the Kaiyuh National
25 Refuge.

26
27 I call that harassment. He stopped. He said
28 you got a license and I said, you know what, I'm 70
29 years old, I've got permanent hunting, fishing,
30 trapping license. He looked at me and he says what. I
31 tell him I've got permanent hunting and fishing
32 license. What's there to argue about. He said let me
33 see that. I said you've got to come to my boat because
34 it's stapled inside my boat because I don't carry my
35 wallet with me when I go out hunting. I had it stapled
36 inside my cabin. He said you got a fire extinguisher.
37 I said, yeah, it's right there. You got pallets.
38 Yeah, there's one right there. All the safety things
39 he asked me. He can see it. Why he ask me.

40
41 Boy, I was -- in front of my grandchildren,
42 wasn't I hurt. Was I hurt. No consideration from that
43 Fish and Game -- we call them Fish and Game warden. We
44 call them game warden in our area. No respect. I'm
45 sure he's got his job to do. I'll give it to him.
46 Yeah, he's got his job to do. That's his job, but to
47 do it in such a way in front of my grandchildren, you
48 know, I just got offended. I wanted to do like my
49 uncle, shoot that darn thing, that darn pontoons, leave
50 him there, but I didn't because I feel I'm a little

1 more civilized than to do that. Otherwise I'd never
2 sleep my camp is right down the slough from him. I
3 know he'd come to my camp and ask for help if I did
4 that and I'd have to help him.

5
6 (Laughter)

7
8 So I didn't do that. But, please, you know
9 -- okay, I don't want to take too much of your time,
10 but I just wanted to briefly touch on the things I
11 said. What I'm after is the protection of our
12 resources, of our fish and game. Who are we doing it
13 for? Myself, I feel like I'm doing it for my six-year-
14 old grandchild who like to hunt and fish.

15
16 When I was fishing that last season of king
17 salmon fishing, he was out there with me 7:00 every
18 morning, just me and him and his grandma out there. We
19 was pulling in the nets and, Grandpa, he was just
20 jumping up and down on the bow. We make sure he's got
21 his life jacket on. The fish, fish, fish. Gee, we got
22 to this area where the net was just going like this,
23 going like this. I pulled that lead line in first,
24 then the float line. So I bundled up the fish and they
25 wouldn't get away because they were too big. Here it
26 was three 50-pound king salmon in that thing. Boy, I
27 had them, just pulling, pulling, pulling. I was
28 against the boat, my feet was against the boat. And
29 all of a sudden they all jumped. Boy, I flew in with
30 the three kings. I flew against the other side of the
31 boat. I hurt myself. I hurt myself, but I didn't want
32 to show my grandchild. I got up -- even though I was
33 hurt, I got up and I crawled to those king salmon and I
34 start taking them out of the net. That was the last
35 time we fished 50 pounders.

36
37 I just wanted to say we got to -- Western and
38 Eastern, we've got to protect our resources. Do
39 whatever we can. Predator control, whatever. Quotas,
40 restrictions against non-resident guides. Lower that
41 number. Protect our resources. Okay, thank you. I
42 don't want to take too much of your time.

43
44 Thank you.

45
46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Fred.
47 Okay. I'm getting lots of requests here. I do have
48 one person left, Alfred Demientieff. The scheduling
49 that we have, I need to probably have announced earlier
50 that these could have been kept a little shorter. So

1 if you can help us out on that, I'd really appreciate
2 it. We have a lot on our agenda that we need to deal
3 with, so I really appreciate it.

4

5 Thank you.

6

7 MR. DEMIENTIEFF: Good morning, Madame Chair
8 and board. I'm just making kind of a serious comment
9 about our elders. Something about like what Mr. Fred
10 Alexie was saying. Our elders grew up on king salmon
11 all their lives and that's all they live for. Like
12 Fred was saying, they're starving, you know. I was
13 just wondering if -- oh, I'm sorry. I'm a student here
14 at the management class at TCC.

15

16 I just brought up that our elders are
17 starving for fish. You know, they're passing on,
18 they're dying right now and I was just wondering if
19 without eating those salmon. They say the salmon is
20 going by and why aren't we getting them, you know.
21 We'll see how it goes. Anyway, I was just wondering if
22 the managers would kind of set aside a little bit of
23 salmon each fishing season so the elders can eat their
24 fish, you know, because, like Fred was saying, they're
25 starving. There's nothing to eat and that's all they
26 grew up.

27

28 I saw a video up in the other end of Canada.
29 You know, the
30 bears are really chewing on -- having fun with all the
31 salmon that went by and that kind of made me kind of
32 sick because, you know,
33 bears can eat them, why can't the elders. That's just
34 a comment that I'd make.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you. Are
39 there any questions.

40

41 (No comments)

42

43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. We'll move
44 along here. Looking at the agenda, it was also
45 suggested.....

46

47 MR. ROCZICKA: Madame Chair.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes.

50

1 MR. ROCZICKA: Yeah, are you getting to the
2 end of the public comments?

3
4 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, we are.

5
6 MR. ROCZICKA: This is Greg Roczicka calling
7 from Bethel. I wanted to speak at this time.

8
9 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Hi, Greg. Go on.

10
11 MR. ROCZICKA: Good morning. I wanted to
12 speak briefly on the proposed Kuskokwim co-management
13 demonstration project and while I appreciate that both
14 Victor and Ben are much more articulate than I am --
15 oh, for the record, Greg Roczicka. I work as a
16 director for the Natural Resource Program of
17 Orutsararmiut Native Council and, as most of you know,
18 I've been involved with the State and Federal
19 regulatory management issues for nearly 30 years as an
20 advocate for subsistence. I sit on the Y-K RAC, I'm a
21 member of the Bethel Advisory Committee. I'm also on
22 the steering committee for this group and on the
23 Kuskokwim Salmon Working Group. I'm the Lower
24 Kuskokwim subsistence representative alternate for Mike
25 Williams.

26
27 You guys asked a lot of questions earlier and
28 I might have some helpful answers for you. I
29 appreciate Jack did provide some of his, as always,
30 thoughtful comments, but I was rather surprised with
31 the level of concern that was conveyed to me that he
32 had as far as moving this group forward and primarily
33 on the membership point. That group, as it's being
34 proposed, would be 12 members and it's very strongly
35 worded towards making sure that we have that equal
36 representation spread out throughout the river.

37
38 Actually, your concern about the Lower River
39 taking over or running the show, I can say you can
40 probably set that aside because, if anything, it's more
41 weighted towards the Middle and Upper River having a
42 predominance of voting membership on there. It's
43 scheduled to be equal between Lower, Middle and Upper
44 River, but when you're talking of the Lower River,
45 that's essentially District 1, which would be the mouth
46 of the river up to Tuluksak. Middle River, through the
47 working group process, consists of the four villages
48 Aniak, Chuathbaluk and the Kalskags, Napaimiut as well.
49 Then the Upper River is the Stoney/Holitna area and
50 then we actually have one more within the working group

1 that's called the headwaters group.

2

3 For a rough comparison maybe on the Yukon, I
4 think you'd be looking at something for the Lower,
5 Middle, Upper and, again, this is just very rough, but
6 as an example you might be looking at the Lower River
7 as being Districts 1 and 2, Middle River being 3 and 4,
8 and perhaps Upper River 5 and 6.

9

10 Granted, we recognize it as being a pilot
11 project and you've got the eyes of a whole bunch of
12 people on us looking to, throughout the state, not just
13 the Yukon, on possibly incorporating it into their
14 management structures later on down the line. We
15 really have kind of a unique window of opportunity here
16 in that Deputy Secretary of Interior Connors has taken
17 a personal interest in it and, as we mentioned at AFN
18 annual convention last year, we stated the intent to
19 start this on the Kuskokwim with a potential of moving
20 it onto the Yukon in following years and perhaps other
21 areas of the state. It's, in my mind, one of those
22 places where, my gosh, we have a chance here to really
23 start taking things in a more productive direction.
24 There's a lot of things we're going to have to wrestle
25 with on the Kuskokwim.

26

27 The point about trying to incorporate
28 traditional knowledge versus -- not versus, but
29 actually an integration of traditional knowledge and
30 current science. We're looking at, you know, if you
31 talk about the 10,000 years that people have as that
32 traditional science knowledge, actually 29,998 of those
33 30,000 generations within those 10,000 years were not
34 affected with what we have right now. Now we're in the
35 last two generations we had that influx of technology
36 with modern gear, 50-fathom net. People have boats
37 that can run 50 miles in a couple hours, run up and
38 down the river, follow the fish.

39

40 There's no comparison to that, the
41 catchability, the power of the subsistence fleet that
42 adapted, that commercial gear that came in in the 1960s
43 and '70s. It was just incredible. That's going to be
44 a really rough one that we're going to have to come to
45 grips with. It needs to happen. Two years ago, if I
46 would have said what I just said, it would have been
47 political suicide, but back to that unfortunate -- it
48 takes a crisis to make people realize. If something
49 positive can come out of the failed runs of the kings
50 that we're experiencing, maybe that's it.

1 The State, we want them to be a part of it.
2 We see the management structure coming from this. It
3 has to be a three-legged stool. It needs the State, it
4 needs the Federal and it needs what you're calling
5 local or in the form of a commission the tribal
6 involvement of the people. That's the way to get the
7 buy-in. It will also help to address there are certain
8 factions of folks that still feel like they should be
9 able to catch as much as they want, whenever they want,
10 wherever they want and however they want and no Fish
11 and Game or no Fish and Wildlife is going to tell me
12 what to do. A real positive aspect I see of this
13 commission as well is that it's going to make the
14 villages accountable to each other, which is what it's
15 really all about.

16
17 So, again, this is a real opportunity for us.
18 It might not occur again in our lifetimes. I've heard
19 a lot of good, positive comments here, at least
20 statements of support. Yeah, it's a work in progress.
21 The Fed system hasn't even bought off on it yet. This
22 is just a proposal from TCC and AVCP to start the
23 process forward. It hasn't worked its way through the
24 whole administrative process and got the blessing and
25 buy-off of folks at Fish and Wildlife Service. I'd
26 venture to guess that there's probably some of them
27 within the management structure that feel rather
28 threatened by this. It's highly unusual.

29
30 You know, the advisory committees that we
31 have are advisory and they're only to the Federal
32 Subsistence Board. The Federal Subsistence Board
33 doesn't manage anything but the harvest. The Fish and
34 Wildlife Service as a whole does not even manage the
35 populations. But this brings people that next step
36 into the realm of actual management.

37
38 So I'd highly encourage you and recommend
39 that if you think this is a good concept to pursue, not
40 necessarily buying off and saying you give your
41 blessing to everything that's in this draft proposal,
42 but before you do recess or adjourn from your meetings,
43 if it's something that you do think is worth supporting
44 and pursuing, that you do make some sort of statement
45 of record to that regard. That's what we did at the Y-K
46 RAC this last week. It wasn't to this specific
47 language, but it was that conceptual support and
48 approval that this is where we would like to see things
49 go, this is where it needs to go for anything to be
50 effective and change that aspect of people saying they

1 always hear us but nothing gets done. Well, here's our
2 chance to really do something productive for the
3 future.

4

5 In closing, I'd.....

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah, thanks, Greg.
8 We have this coming up on a joint fisheries report and
9 I think we'll be talking about it. I would encourage
10 you to stay online for this afternoon because I think
11 it's going to -- that's where it's all going to come
12 up, under the Tanana Chiefs TCC fisheries research,
13 monitoring and education. We've got Brian and Ben
14 Stevens at bat.

15

16 MR. ROCZICKA: Okay. I apologize then
17 because I didn't know if that was something that was
18 going to be incorporated into that other area. I would
19 have held my comments until then.

20

21 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's what Ben has
22 said earlier, so that's my understanding.

23

24 MR. ROCZICKA: Okay. I did miss that then.
25 My apologies.

26

27 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair. Yeah, this got
28 jumped out of the gate with TCC. So we've discussed it
29 fairly extensively and your comments are -- I am not
30 opposed to this planning process, but the draft had
31 some issues that I felt should be pointed out. So it's
32 just best to talk about it, get it all out there. I
33 had concerns about the appointing sources. I feel
34 tribal communities need to make appointments, not the
35 commission itself. I am concerned about governor
36 appointments up -- the governor should be up and down
37 the river.

38

39 But this is all for the Kuskokwim River.
40 This is a template for the Y-K Delta RAC and the
41 Western Interior RAC and this doesn't actually affect
42 the EIRAC, so it was just strictly informational for
43 the joint meeting with EIRAC, but this is possibly
44 going to bleed over into the Yukon. I don't think this
45 meeting can put a lot more time into this issue. We
46 discussed it at the Western Interior side and
47 everything we've said has been an encouraging and
48 advisory committee, which is in the ANILCA law, is what
49 you could call it, and that's what the Federal
50 Subsistence Board process can fund and so forth.

1 I think we've covered this issue so much. I
2 see the EIRAC is getting blurry-eyed over here, so I
3 think we need to move on in this agenda. I very much
4 appreciate your comments, Greg.

5
6 Thank you.

7
8 MR. ROCZICKA: And as I did yours. I didn't
9 mean to say negative. They were very well made and
10 those are the type of things we're going to be
11 incorporating into the process as it goes forward.

12
13 MR. REAKOFF: Thank you. I can tell you're
14 impassioned with it and that's a good thing. That will
15 help move this along.

16
17 We need good comments also, so thank you very
18 much.

19
20 MR. ROCZICKA: Thank you guys.

21
22 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Greg.

23
24 MR. ROCZICKA: And I'll try to be here this
25 afternoon.

26
27 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That would be
28 great. I've had a request to end at noon and come back
29 at 1:00. That's five minutes from now. I'm also
30 looking at old business and it sounds like the rural
31 determination was taken up by the Western Interior, so
32 I would suggest we move that over to our meeting. So
33 the next thing on the agenda will be this National Park
34 Service report.

35
36 MR. REAKOFF: Madame Chair. I can give a
37 brief overview of what the WIRAC did with rural
38 determination in two minutes.

39
40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Do it.

41
42 MR. REAKOFF: The rural determination process
43 -- I was at the Federal Subsistence Board meeting last
44 April. They scrapped the aggregation stuff. There's
45 no timeframe, there's no set amount. It just goes to a
46 Regional Council or some entity can submit a proposal
47 to determine if there's a rural issue. I'm in full
48 favor of that. I hated the aggregation process from
49 day one and commented heavily against that when they
50 started that. So I think that the Federal Board is

1 moving in the right direction. The WIRAC Council is in
2 agreement with the new rural determination process.

3

4 You've seen the Southeast proposal to do away
5 with all C&T. We had lots of problems with that. We
6 do not want to see the eight criteria done away with.
7 We do not want to see the customary and traditional use
8 determinations that all of the Regional Councils have
9 worked on, especially in the Interior of Alaska, go
10 away because here's what's going to happen. If we
11 throw away all the C&Ts, we're going to be in .804s all
12 the time and it's going to be very expensive for OSM to
13 administer.

14

15 The other thing is I have no C&T for caribou
16 then. I'm going to have people from Southeast getting
17 on ferries coming up and driving up and shooting
18 caribou in my back yard and I'm going to have to get an
19 .804 to control that kind of influx. We don't have the
20 time for all this. Maybe Southeast is unique. They
21 got -- I could throw a pot or a net in front of my
22 house in Southeast and eat like a pig. They got lots
23 of resources down there. This is not Southeast and I
24 do not want to see our region lose its current
25 customary and traditional use determinations.

26

27 That's the position of this Council.

28

29 Thank you, Madame Chair.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Jack. I
32 do want to report that when we have -- these blue cards
33 came in, three, and then they kept adding on and it
34 added up and I apologize. I could have done some
35 timing on that and we'll look at that closer. We'll
36 recess now and we'll bring up the reports and we'll
37 probably put a timeline on the government maybe.

38

39 Thank you.

40

41 Be back at 1:00.

42

43 (Off record)

44

45 (On record)

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: We'd like to call
48 this to order. Eva had a quick announcement and then
49 I'm going to turn the Chair over to Jack.

50

1 MS. PATTON: Madame Chair and Council and
2 public. Just a reminder for the Council and for the
3 public. The Eastern Interior Council will take up
4 rural themselves tomorrow, but this evening we have the
5 public meeting to give both a briefing of rural
6 determination for the public. It's also the
7 opportunity for the Eastern and Western Interior
8 Councils to hear comments from the public and then
9 Eastern Interior Council will take action on rural
10 tomorrow at their meeting.

11
12 Then we have just a few things to cover after
13 lunch here, running just about 40 minutes here. We
14 have a briefing from Orville Lind on the tribal
15 consultation and then we also have an update on the
16 fisheries -- let me find it here. We have an
17 announcement on the call for fisheries proposals and
18 then really briefly also we will cover open discussion
19 on the hunter etiquette education and outreach and
20 we've had a lot of discussion on that so far, so it
21 would be an opportunity to add to that.

22
23 I'll turn it over to Sue.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Eva, I'm going to be
26 chairing the second half of this meeting so Sue can
27 rest now.....

28
29 MS. PATTON: I'll turn it over to Jack.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:on her laurels so to
32 speak. So we're on agenda item 8(c), National Park
33 Service subsistence collection use of discarded animal
34 parts and plants and that will be Bud Rice speaking to
35 the double Council.

36
37 Go ahead, Bud.

38
39 MR. RICE: Thank you, Chairman Reakoff and
40 Chairwoman Entsminger and RAC members. Appreciate the
41 opportunity. We're discussing an item that's in your
42 RAC books. For the Western Interior RAC book, this is
43 on Pages 47 through 49 and for the Eastern Interior
44 it's in your RAC book on Pages 43 through 45. This is
45 an update on the regulations that we'll be proposing to
46 allow subsistence collections and uses of shed or
47 discarded animal parts and plants for National Park
48 System areas in Alaska.

49
50 The reason we're -- we made a decision last

1 April to proceed with regulations after we had an
2 environmental assessment, so this has been going on for
3 a while. I apologize that we're not further along, but
4 we're moving as quickly as we can. The reason we're
5 doing this is because the National Park Service has a
6 nationwide regulation that prohibits possessing,
7 destroying, injuring,
8 defacing, removing, digging or disturbing from its
9 natural state living or dead wildlife and fish, or
10 their parts or products thereof, such as antlers or
11 nests. We've typically called this the horns and
12 antlers proposal, but also the standing regulation
13 prohibits the taking of plants or parts or products
14 thereof.

15
16 However, ANILCA Titles I, II and VIII
17 authorized subsistence uses in Park areas of wild
18 renewable resources for direct or family consumption
19 and for the making and selling handicraft articles out
20 of nonedible byproducts of wildlife resources taken and
21 for barter and for customary trade. That's in the
22 definition of Section .803 of ANILCA. A lot of people
23 say, hey, we thought ANILCA allowed us to be able to
24 collect these things and use them the way we've done
25 for millennia and since ANILCA passed they thought it
26 was legal. When people learned that there was this
27 standing regulation, we were asked to correct that
28 situation for subsistence users, so that's what we're
29 doing and that's why we're doing it.

30
31 So at the decision last year in the press
32 release we said that we'd begin the process of drafting
33 these new regulations within a year of the decision.
34 The decision was April 2014. It's March 2015 now and
35 we actually have some draft regulatory language. It's
36 in your package. That's preliminary draft. We
37 actually have a farther advanced draft that we're going
38 through internal review. I promise you that -- I think
39 I can promise you that these will be available for --
40 the actual draft proposed regulation will be available
41 for public and RAC and SRC reviews this next
42 fall/winter session. So we'll hopefully cover those
43 meetings then and then you can really get into the
44 details, but I think you've got a lot there already.

45
46 So we have a few questions for you in this
47 little packet here. We want to do this in a sensitive
48 manner. We don't want to cause a problem by allowing
49 these collections. We've heard from some people around
50 the state that, hey, sometimes these antlers mark

1 burial sites. We heard that from the AHTNA people.
2 It's like, you know, that's pretty sensitive. We don't
3 want those things taken. Of course, anything that has
4 any marking on it should be left where it is.

5
6 We heard a suggestion at the Wrangell-St.
7 Elias Subsistence Resource Commission -- and all the
8 SRCs have gone through this briefing, but not all the
9 RAC members have heard it, so I apologize in a way to
10 those who have already been through this a couple
11 times. I know that the SRC members have been through
12 this. But other people have said that, you know, we
13 have mapped cemetery and historic sites, ANCSA
14 selections, and maybe those should be areas that should
15 be off limits to collections because they're sensitive
16 areas.

17
18 A lot of these areas that may be sensitive we
19 need help in identifying them. Each area
20 superintendent would work with their local groups,
21 tribes, SRCs and RACs to identify areas that maybe we
22 shouldn't be taking those things. But, for the most
23 part, millions of acres would be open for collections.
24 So the idea is each superintendent would work with the
25 local groups and identify areas open and show it on a
26 map.

27
28 The decision also indicated that the
29 collectors would need to have written authorization
30 from the superintendent. A lot of people are going to
31 say, oh, that's a permit. We don't really need to
32 require individuals to get a permit to collect the
33 stuff. By having it means that it's available to you.
34 We can actually give it to the rural residents, rural
35 resident communities so that they know what areas are
36 open and not open for reasons.

37
38 Another issue that came up in conversations
39 with local groups is that they're concerned about
40 people who are not local residents might come in and
41 take stuff that's valuable to the locals that should be
42 left there. So we recognize we probably need to have
43 kind of a -- roll out a public education program. So
44 my vision is we'll probably have a brochure or
45 something to share with the general public as to why
46 local rural residents have this authorization but not
47 everybody in the world does. So we need to be clear
48 about that.

49
50 So if you look at the second page on the

1 handout, we have a couple questions. The first one,
2 and we've done this with some groups already, is what
3 type of written authorization would be the best for
4 your area. I can add to that. Maybe another way to
5 phrase that question is what would be the best way to
6 assure local rural resident subsistence users have the
7 written authorization. So there's different ways to do
8 that. We can post it in communication and.....

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this point I'll stop
11 you and we'll answer these questions. For the two
12 Councils here, I sit on the Gates of the Arctic
13 Subsistence Resource Commission and we have other
14 subsistence resource commission members on these
15 Councils. We've stated that the resident zone
16 communities that are eligible to hunt in the Park and
17 the 1344 permit holders are the authorized users. So
18 you don't have to have a written authorization if you
19 live in a resident zone community or you have a 1344
20 permit individually that allows you to go on Park
21 lands, then you're eligible to take these resources.

22

23 Is that agreeable to these two Councils here?
24 Does that sound good?

25

26 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yes. That was our position
27 at the Wrangell meeting. We don't want to see
28 superintendents coming out and writing little personal
29 permits for every little thing that's going on unless
30 there's a problem. Hand-wringing, I call it
31 hand-wringing, you make a problem, then that comes down
32 the road and address it at the time.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see affirmative from the
35 two Councils to that question for using the resident
36 zone and the 1344 permit.

37

38 (Councils nod affirmatively)

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You had another comment,
41 Bud.

42

43 MR. RICE: Yeah. Thank you, Chairman
44 Reakoff. Yeah, we wouldn't write individual permits.
45 It would be something that would be broadcast, posted
46 at the post office, given to tribal councils, et
47 cetera. What we did hear from some of the tribes is
48 that not all rural residents know about sensitive
49 tribal resources. So that's why we want to show on a
50 map some of these areas that maybe would be sensitive,

1 like map CNH, they're quarter section or sections.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll answer that question.
4 And so you're talking about like prehistoric type of
5 things. Like if there's an antler there, it's like
6 very degraded and has hardly any value, it's rotted
7 out. So the other thing is is that the sensitive sites
8 have to go through the tribal consultation process. So
9 this documentation needs to be sent to all the tribes
10 in the area so that they can say, well, this area here
11 is where we know we have some sites and these would be
12 off limits. So the tribal consultation process is how
13 you identify those sites.

14

15 When the local communities, if they're
16 identified, they should know what those sensitive sites
17 are next to them. So I don't think that's really that
18 big of a problem either. I think it's easily
19 documented using the tribal consultation process which
20 is in statute.

21

22 Go ahead.

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to tell the
25 group, sitting on that Wrangell SRC, and its Ahtna that
26 he talks about, there's three Ahtna members on our SRC
27 and this sensitive thing did not come up at our SRC
28 meeting. A lot of these places that they might
29 consider sensitive could be on the tribal lands.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So continue, Bud. We want
32 to answer your questions in an expeditious way.

33

34 MR. RICE: Sure. Good. The other two
35 questions on the second page are -- well, we sort of
36 addressed that one, which areas should be open or not
37 open to subsistence collections. The first question is
38 the type of written authorization. So we'll work with
39 the tribes on that and that was definitely a
40 recommendation we heard from Gloria Stickwan in the
41 Wrangell SRC. She said really the best way to deal
42 with this is to have tribal consultation and make sure
43 you involve the elders because they know where a lot of
44 these sensitive sites are. So that would be an action
45 item for us to complete at the Park level.

46

47 The third and last question is what should be
48 included in a
49 public education program for the general public so they
50 know that we're allowing this for subsistence users,

1 not -- we don't want these sensitive resources removed
2 by people that don't know any better, that type of
3 thing. So I mentioned we would probably do a pamphlet.
4 We'd have something, a map showing areas where this is
5 allowed.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you want to comment on
8 any of this -- I'll give the other SRC RAC members an
9 opportunity to comment on the third question, what
10 should be included in the public education program.

11
12 I'll just state for the record that the
13 public should be aware that the customary and
14 traditional users who have a Federal priority for those
15 typically mammal resources also have the ability to
16 collect shed antler and horn from the Park lands. That
17 basically would allow the public to understand these
18 users have a defined eligibility and they have the
19 ability to take shed parts, antler and horn from the
20 land. That's about all the public really needs to know
21 and then you can make it -- clean it up from there with
22 flowery language if you'd like.

23
24 The other SRC, Ray or Sue or who else is on
25 an SRC in here?

26
27 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, Denali was for going
28 forward with the regulations. Whatever information you
29 put out to the public what they're not allowed to do,
30 just say that on these additional lands they're not
31 allowed to do it either except they're a qualified,
32 recognized subsistence resource person in the
33 communities. That would be enough. But you have to
34 inform the general public anyhow that they can't do
35 that. So just add a statement on there, except for
36 those who are in one of those communities.

37
38 MR. RICE: Okay.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have a comment,
41 Sue.

42
43 MS. ENTSMINGER: No. He probably has
44 everything we said at the meeting. That particular
45 thing seems like it's -- what can we suggest other than
46 what you guys are saying. I don't know what else there
47 is to say.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And the Councils are
50 comfortable with that kind of educational process? So

1 I see -- oh, you're on an SRC, aren't you? No, Will?
2
3 MR. KOEHLER: Lester is.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, Lester.
6
7 MS. ENTSMINGER: Lester is from Denali.
8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, I see. Okay. So the
10 Councils, by affirmative head nods, I see are
11 comfortable with the statements made on the record here
12 to you.
13
14 (Councils nod affirmatively)
15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I look forward to seeing
17 this at the SRC and RAC meetings this fall.
18
19 MR. RICE: You bet.
20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.
22
23 MR. RICE: The other little things, we have
24 some preliminary draft language I'll just point out
25 that this is really the guts of what the regulation
26 would look like. There's more to it with the preamble
27 and all that sort of stuff, but this focuses on the
28 animal parts, so there will be another just a phrase
29 that say anybody who has C&T to collect animal parts or
30 C&T to take an animal, they can collect the animal
31 parts and they can collect any plant material they
32 might need similarly.
33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This has been a long time
35 coming. The Gates of the Arctic SRC submitted
36 Proposal.....
37
38 MR. RICE: 1999.
39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:99-01 back in 1999.
41 So we've been working on this a long time. So we're
42 glad to see that it's moving forward and hoping for
43 finalization in this fall meeting cycle.
44
45 Thank you.
46
47 MR. RICE: Thank you.
48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We need to move on in this
50 agenda.

1 MR. RICE: Thank you much.
2
3 MR. WOODRUFF: I've got a question.
4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, go ahead, Don.
6
7 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It
8 says Park areas. Does this include Preserves as well
9 or just Parks? Thank you.
10
11 MR. RICE: Yes, this includes Preserves as
12 well. Right now the national regulation applies to
13 Preserves as well as Parks and Monuments, so it would
14 allow for these collections in Preserve areas by the
15 rural residents in the areas.
16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Sue.
18
19 MS. ENTSMINGER: I just wanted to make a
20 point. This is an example of our frustration, how long
21 it takes to get something done. It just doesn't equate
22 to your common ordinary person that the government has
23 to go since '99 to work on something that seems so
24 simple to us. And it's really not a big deal because
25 mice eat the horns and antlers before this thing will
26 ever get done. I'm sorry, but I'm frustrated.
27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Final comment. So
29 thanks so much and we'll look forward to future
30 documents and finalization.
31
32 Thank you.
33
34 MR. RICE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're on new business
37 under (a) tribal consultation and outreach. So Orville
38 Lind will present for us. Come on up, Orville.
39
40 MR. LIND: Finally. Good morning or actually
41 it's good afternoon, Chairman and Council members. I
42 am pretty excited to be here. I am a son of Fred and
43 Annie Lind. My grandparents are Dora and Fred Lind
44 from Chignik Lake and I moved from Chignik Lake up to
45 King Salmon. I joined the Service in 1991 and I've
46 been in the Service for just over 23 years. I live a
47 subsistence lifestyle. I don't like calling it
48 subsistence. I like to call myself a provider because
49 I provide for my family, relatives and the elders.
50

1 I wanted to give a little background on the
2 implementation guidelines. If some of you remember in
3 January 23rd, this last January, the Federal
4 Subsistence Board finalized tribal consultation
5 policies and guidelines for the Alaska Native Claims
6 Settlement Act corporation consultation policies. A
7 lot of big words, but the guidelines are intended to
8 provide additional guidance to the Federal staff on how
9 to put into operation the Board's government-to-tribal
10 government consultation policies.

11
12 Now I hear you guys talking about
13 consultations. That is so important. Basically what I
14 like to see, in my position as a Native liaison, to be
15 in contact with local people, the users of the land and
16 oceans, be able to know me and to contact me as their
17 Native liaison and for me to refer them to the people
18 they need to talk to. For example, if they want to do
19 proposals.

20
21 As I should remind the students in back,
22 anybody at any time can make proposals. So that's
23 very important to know. This document also provides
24 guidance to consultations meeting protocols, how to
25 carry out consultations during the regulatory cycle and
26 for special actions and non-regulatory issues. This
27 document is a living document. It can be changed as
28 needed and as policy itself is reviewed on an annual
29 basis for effectiveness.

30
31 Additionally, the Board also discussed
32 conducting closed government-to-government
33 consultations and information sharing with the Regional
34 Councils. It is determined that the Board could
35 engage in closed-door sessions with tribes and
36 corporations and still be in compliance with the
37 Administrative Procedures Act as long as records of
38 discussions were kept and those records were made
39 available for public review. These records would also
40 be used to share information on what was discussed to
41 the Regional Advisory Councils.

42
43 Just to sum it up, I know you guys have a
44 busy schedule, as your Native liaison I look forward to
45 meeting each and every one of you and working alongside
46 of you, really. If I hadn't introduced myself, please
47 pull me to the side and say, hey, you're the new guy.

48
49 That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much, Orville,
2 and I commend you on being very articulate on the
3 record and clear and I'm very happy to see a Native
4 liaison at the OSM office, which was lacking for
5 several months.

6
7 On the tribal consultation and outreach
8 process I'm glad that this document is finally moving
9 forward to hit -- the rubber hitting the road because
10 because we've needed -- when we attend meetings and
11 we've had people unsure what's actually going on,
12 tribes coming before our Council not sure what's going
13 on, we've needed your position, we've needed this
14 tribal consultation, and I'm very happy that we're
15 going to -- I expect to see lots more comments and
16 proposals coming from the tribes. So I'm real happy to
17 see this.

18
19 Any comments from the double RACs here. Go
20 ahead, Don.

21
22 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I recently
23 read a letter concerning this same subject and I'm just
24 wondering how you could be more specific in reaching --
25 you know, we have the classes that's going on right
26 here, okay, and I'm really glad for it. These guys are
27 picking up a lot of stuff on how to do proposals and
28 stuff. But on a village level, for the most part, in
29 our village we just say I'm on a tribal council, so
30 we'll put you in charge of hunting and fishing and
31 stuff, but for the most part there is really -- when
32 you're talking about involving tribes and stuff like
33 that, for the most part a lot of it just gets pushed to
34 the back burner. We don't see it or anything like
35 that. You don't really get a lot of tribal input. I
36 was just wondering how you could bring it down to a
37 local level in a way, whether it's going out to the
38 villages on an invite or something like that. I
39 appreciate your answer.

40
41 Thank you.

42
43 MR. LIND: Through the Chair, Donald. Good
44 question, good comment. You know, just a little more
45 background. As a former tribal chief before I joined
46 the government, village government, you're aware of how
47 we come to resolutions and develop proposals within
48 tribal government themselves. The next step is to work
49 with your local RACS. In my job, I have to work with
50 all 10 Regional Councils, 229 tribes and up to 200

1 village corporations, which is a tremendous, for me, an
2 honor and a privilege to be that constant and
3 consistent contact. My goal is to do exactly that,
4 just to put the word out to those folks at a local
5 level that if they have a subsistence issue, please
6 give me a call and I will steer them in the right
7 direction.

8

9 Thank you, sir.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Orville. Any
12 other comments, questions from the Councils.

13

14 (No comments)

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much. Very
17 clear.

18

19 MR. LIND: Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So our next agenda item is
22 discussion on hunter education and outreach incentive
23 strategies. I'm not sure who is making the
24 presentation. Eva.

25

26 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair. There is no
27 presentation for this. The Eastern Interior Council
28 had quite a bit of discussion at the last meeting and
29 has been wanting to move forward on a formal program
30 that would help with the outreach, with the education.
31 There's been a lot of discussion at this meeting, a lot
32 of concerns from the communities and Council members
33 about wanton waste.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I understand that, so I'll
36 turn this over to Sue and she can sort of lead this
37 discussion since it's your baby. So go right ahead,
38 Sue.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It's our baby.

41

42 MR. REAKOFF: But we might adopt.

43

44 (Laughter)

45

46 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yeah. Okay. I'm a
47 little slow.

48

49 (Laughter)

50

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. We've got to
2 laugh once in a while. It's good for the health.
3 People wanted to do something and the discussion is
4 open. I think I heard a lot of things here, so ideas.
5 One of our key persons is not here that talked about
6 this.

7
8 MR. KOEHLER: He's right outside if you want
9 me to grab him.

10
11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: But the problems
12 that we have, we know the problems. You've identified
13 a lot of the problems this morning, so let's go into
14 discussion. What would you do to suggest to start this
15 group and how should it go about. Virgil. Did I see
16 something over here?

17
18 MR. REAKOFF: Ray's here too.

19
20 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Virgil, you're
21 trumped by Ray.

22
23 MR. COLLINS: Well, I think that education
24 has to start at the village level. You know, as I look
25 traditionally what happened is children were taken out
26 early on, like the boys for hunting, and they went
27 along and watched while it was going on. They didn't
28 take their first animal, but they started going on
29 trips and they were educated that way and the proper
30 way to care for meat and then maybe they just packed
31 meat, but they were watching somebody who knew
32 butchering. By the time they got their own first
33 animal or when they're 15, 16 they knew how to butcher
34 a moose.

35
36 So I think we ought to encourage villages to
37 do that. Now some young children don't have parents,
38 so they could set up a system in the village where they
39 would be taken out by a relative or someone else. That
40 would be the best kind of education you could get on
41 how to traditionally handle stuff.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Well, Ray, this was
44 for educating the people from nonrural areas that are
45 coming in and not caring for it. It wasn't really
46 designed for people in the village.

47
48 MR. COLLINS: Okay. Okay.

49
50 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: It was designed for

1 the people that are abusing things that we all eat out
2 there.

3

4 MR. COLLINS: Then it would have to be
5 orientation when they picked up their permits or
6 whatever they need. Yeah, some kind of brochures.

7

8 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I mean to start it
9 off I think it has to start with something that goes
10 into both the handy dandy of the Federal and State or
11 there's got to be stuff that goes in there about
12 respect. So how do we want to get that out there.

13

14 Virgil.

15

16 MR. UMPHENOUR: Well, there are
17 misconceptions on people's parts and both the rural
18 residents and the urban residents. There's
19 misunderstandings about different things and some of
20 that was brought up today. One speaker that spoke
21 today spoke about the area down by Kaltag and his
22 nephew is one of the guides there. Well, his nephew is
23 one of the guides there that works with me and I know
24 what he does and it was said he does this. The meat
25 from his clients go to the village for subsistence use.

26

27

28 But he also spoke about these guides with
29 airplanes. Well, those people aren't guides. They're
30 either transporters or someone that owns an airplane
31 that's out moose hunting is who they are. They're damn
32 sure not guides. The Refuge Manager is sitting in the
33 audience. He knows they're not. Whoever they are,
34 what they're doing is illegal.

35

36 Okay, I'm getting to the point, Madame Chair.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Virgil.

41

42 MR. UMPHENOUR: She's always chewing me out
43 because I take a long time to explain something.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: He takes a long
48 version. It's a history lesson, first, but let's get
49 to the point.

50

1 MR. UMPHENOUR: Okay. The hunter education
2 thing is important to me. When I served on the Board
3 of Fish, I wanted more education to the public on
4 different ways of preserving our subsistence-caught
5 resources. I own a meat and fish processing facility
6 and my grandparents were farmers, so I learned about
7 processing animals at a very young age. I shot my
8 first beef cow when I was 10. One shot with a .22.

9
10 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: In the barn.

11
12 (Laughter)

13
14 MR. UMPHENOUR: Tied up to the back of a
15 tractor.

16
17 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Right.

18
19 MR. UMPHENOUR: But anyway. Part of our
20 problems we have are with meat not being taken care of
21 properly and not understanding how the people live in
22 the villages and the rural areas. Part of that is by a
23 transient population that we have, a transient hunting
24 population. We've got a lot of guys in the military
25 and I was in the military too.

26
27 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Short version.

28
29 MR. UMPHENOUR: But we have a lot of people
30 in the military that don't really understand how they
31 should take care of animals and don't understand the
32 customs up here.

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Virgil, let me
35 interrupt. We know the problems. We want.....

36
37 MR. UMPHENOUR: No, let me -- let me. I'm
38 almost to where.....

39
40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER:the way we're
41 going to have a solution to it. How are we going to
42 get it out there.

43
44 MR. UMPHENOUR: Okay. The solution is, and
45 the Department is finally starting to do this, that's
46 the Department of Fish and Game, but the Federal
47 departments need to maybe help on this. Like the
48 drawing permit supplements. Now they're finally
49 putting in there for various drawing permits that is
50 the words access is very difficult and words to the

1 effect of try to figure out the access before you put
2 in for this drawing permit because it's going to be
3 really hard to get there, but they don't say that in
4 there.

5
6 I think that the Department of Fish and Game
7 and maybe Fish and Wildlife Service could get together
8 and BLM and maybe come up with some type of a pamphlet
9 that explains some of the problems that you have here
10 in Alaska that you don't have in the Lower 48 with
11 taking care of meat, various -- our land ownership is
12 greatly confusing. Of course, like when you land at
13 the airport at Huslia they have a map there that shows
14 you what is corporation land and the Native allotments
15 and stuff like that. The check station has that on the
16 Koyukuk.

17
18 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Solutions.

19
20 MR. UMPHENOUR: But we need to do more of
21 those type of things to educate the public that doesn't
22 really understand land ownership, customs and
23 traditions.

24
25 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: So how do we do
26 that? That's what we're coming down to. Where is it
27 going to happen?

28
29 MR. UMPHENOUR: Right, we're coming down to
30 that. I just got through saying we need our agencies
31 to get together and maybe form a little think tank, get
32 their heads together.....

33
34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. Agencies get
35 together.

36
37 MR. UMPHENOUR:and try to figure these
38 things out. We've got multiple agencies, both State
39 and Federal, that need to get together and address this
40 issue. I think that's kind of a starting point.
41 Madame Chair.

42
43 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Rhonda. At the
44 same time, I would like to -- Bob Hunter is the Alaska
45 Department of Fish and Game hunter education. He's
46 here. Could you come to the mic and then as things
47 come up, maybe you could raise your hand and add to how
48 we could -- we want solutions. We talk about this too
49 long. You guys have the same problems in your area of
50 hunters coming in and having no respect for the local

1 people.

2

3 I've talked about this in my own mind many
4 times and I know that living around Native communities,
5 they see a bunch of people, you know, like we're all
6 talking about and any waste of meat. That's really
7 important and the care of meat. I thought about if
8 there was a way to have somebody go to the village, the
9 people that hunt there when they say, okay, you hunt in
10 Unit 11 or 13, you're going up behind Mentasta Village,
11 you should really stop and talk to the people there and
12 get -- there should be some kind of sharing of the
13 customs so that if they did butcher a moose up there
14 behind the village and they eat the moose and they eat
15 the head, that these guys knew how to take care of it
16 and drop it off before it spoiled. So these are the
17 kinds of things that I thought about.

18

19 Now Rhonda is next and then if there's -- did
20 you have anything you wanted to add for how to, a
21 solution?

22

23 MR. HUNTER: Thank you for having me up here.
24 We have currently in the existing hunter ed program,
25 the hunter information training program within the
26 state, we do have sections that deal with meat care and
27 we try to get those out. But specific concerns like
28 this can be addressed through a variety of ways. We
29 also have a wildlife education program that we work
30 with, kind of a sister program. Mike Taras is the lead
31 of that here in the Interior. He and I work together
32 on a lot of these issues that have mutual benefits or
33 concerns.

34

35 We have one video that's available online to
36 the public on field care of game. It may not be a
37 perfect one, but it's good. The Cooperative Extensive
38 Service just recently came out with a game care video
39 that's quite good too and we try to promote those to
40 all the new hunters that come in so we can get the word
41 out on proper meat care.

42

43 One of the things that hasn't been addressed
44 is traditional meat care. For instance, how to butcher
45 moose heads or whatnot for proper consumption or even
46 letting people know this is something that's valuable
47 and if you're not going to salvage it and you're in an
48 area that other people might be interested in it, how
49 to take care of it and how to contact those
50 communities.

1 So I think we could very easily work together
2 to try to develop a better network to get that out. I
3 think a lot of the problems that we run into
4 consistently with improper meat care in areas are new
5 hunters to Alaska. Most people, after they've shot
6 their first moose and realize just how big it is and
7 how daunting, they eventually learn how to take care of
8 it. At least the majority of it.

9
10 But with the majority of our newer hunters
11 being younger people, we're looking at more ways of
12 getting that out in social media and electronically
13 because that's where people are going for their
14 information. The brochures aren't a bad idea, but
15 we're finding that they're not being used very much
16 anymore, at least amongst the general public.

17
18 But a concern like this -- I'll cut it real
19 short. A concern like this could be forwarded to our
20 unit, the hunter information training and the Wildlife
21 Education Units to collaborate. We have
22 rural and urban reps there that understand cultural
23 concerns and we could gladly work with the system to
24 try to improve those relations.

25
26 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Rhonda.

27
28 MS. PITKA: Yes. Who's your Native rep?

29
30 MR. HUNTER: We don't have a Native rep
31 necessarily, but we do.....

32
33 MS. PITKA: That's part of the problem.

34
35 MR. HUNTER: Right. And.....

36
37 MS. PITKA: I mean if we're talking about
38 traditional use and you don't have a Native liaison,
39 then how are you going to get your information?

40
41 MR. HUNTER: We do have reps in the rural
42 communities. Meghan Nedwick, for instance, is in
43 Kotzebue. We have folks in Nome and we rely on our
44 area biologists that work with the communities and
45 whatnot.

46
47 MS. PITKA: I think you need to work on
48 getting your Native liaison and doing something along
49 those lines. Also, when you hand out hunting licenses,
50 you can hand out a brochure also at that same time and

1 maybe do some of that kind of education because I think
2 that -- I mean if you start at the beginning when they
3 have to fill out the permit and go through the
4 application process -- right? I mean that's somewhere
5 you can throw in some education.

6

7 MR. HUNTER: It may be possible, but the vast
8 majority of the licenses are sold over the counter at
9 places like Fred Meyers. Fish and Game actually
10 distributes very few of them. It's not that we
11 couldn't provide those in locations, but the efficacy
12 of that might not be what we want.

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Ray.

15

16 MR. COLLINS: Let me try again for the
17 general public. I think this is a place where a good
18 CD maybe working with TCC or some of the others with
19 elders can make comments about how they traditionally
20 use those animals and not just butchering them, but
21 their feelings about the animals and using all of it
22 and so on.

23

24 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Yes, I agree.

25

26 MR. COLLINS: So if Denakkanaaga or some of
27 the others bring them together and work with them to do
28 a CD, it could go to the general public that would
29 inform them about how rural people look at those
30 resources and how they use them.

31

32 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Over here.

33

34 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Madame Chair. I'm
35 glad we're talking about this. We've talked about this
36 quite a bit at our RAC a number of years ago and we
37 actually started to get a little bit of action from OSM
38 in the form of them identifying a person to help us to
39 start the process. We did a little bit of
40 brainstorming at that time and what we kind of came up
41 with -- I think Will was a part of that as well -- was
42 that maybe it would be really advantageous to get some
43 representatives from all the different user groups
44 together in a statewide -- I hate to say organization,
45 but a statewide committee that would work on this
46 because it's really important that we include people
47 from not only the Bush to share their experiences, but
48 it's very important for people that are hunting guides
49 to represent what their interests are. People from
50 urban areas. Everybody needs to be at the table for us

1 to come up with positive messaging.

2

3 I think the real danger here is that people
4 -- if this isn't done properly, people will tend to
5 feel like someone is trying to take their rights to go
6 hunting away from them and that's not the intent here I
7 don't think from anybody here at these tables. The
8 intent is to do things as ethically and as non-invasive
9 and intrusive as possible.

10

11 So I think it's very important, if we're
12 going to start going down this path, that some time be
13 spent to plan and include all user groups' views to
14 come up with -- I think what would be most effective
15 would be to do some actual media distribution
16 throughout the state come closer to the hunting
17 seasons, whether it be through radio, whether it be
18 through TV ads. I think Raymond's idea, we talked
19 about that, create CDs from Natives on how they take
20 care of their meat and different processing techniques
21 for different whether conditions. These are all things
22 that could very easily just be put right in the
23 regulation book. There's no reason why a CD couldn't
24 be incorporated into this. It goes to every single
25 hunter who gets this regulation book, both Federal and
26 State.

27

28 So these are just some ideas. My
29 recommendation and I think our vision that we had at
30 the time was to try and, to summarize, basically to
31 pull a group of people together, contact Safari Club,
32 contact some of these different user groups. I think
33 to try and do it completely all over the state is a big
34 job, but maybe a pilot program that would include the
35 Western RAC's region and the Eastern region because
36 we're fairly similar in our weather conditions and
37 hunting techniques and patterns, village use. That
38 might be a really good pilot program to try and start
39 something.

40

41 But to just say throw it on Fish and Game or
42 throw it on OSM, it's not going to be effective. It
43 has to be a statewide program and it's going to have to
44 take some money spent by legislature to make this
45 happen and do it right. But this is a big problem. I
46 mean you're hearing -- every person here identified
47 that as a problem and it's a growing problem and it's
48 not going to go away. So the quicker we can be
49 proactive on trying to stem some of these issues, the
50 less chance it's going to be turning into a lawsuit or

1 something worse.

2

3 So I'm really trying to encourage both OSM
4 and the State to work with us and get some people
5 involved in this because this is a really serious issue
6 for people in the Bush. Probably one of the most
7 important ones in my opinion.

8

9 Thank you, Madame Chair.

10

11 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I've got Jack and
12 then Will and others.

13

14 MR. REAKOFF: I've heard about wanton waste
15 at practically every meeting I've ever been to and
16 here's the problem. People in rural Alaska consider
17 the heart, liver, head, the bones all part of the
18 animal. They consider all those pieces that hunters
19 just cast on the ground for the bears and the wolves as
20 a huge amount of food.

21

22 I think the rural/nonrural understanding for
23 the hunters should be if you don't want the heart,
24 liver, head and these bones, don't hack all that stuff
25 up, take it out. Pull over to the next village. Bring
26 it into town. I bet I could give away tons of meat
27 here in this community in Fairbanks. There's a lot of
28 Native people that live here that would gladly have
29 soup bones and heads and stuff like that.

30

31 I think hunter education -- I bought my
32 hunting license online this year and when you're
33 license -- you print it out until they send you -- when
34 you get a printout of your license, it should spit out
35 all this stuff. If you don't want these heads, bones
36 and liver and heart, give it away to the local people.
37 Salvage it. If these guys shoot a moose in the ditch
38 with a pickup, throw it all in there, take it out and
39 give it to somebody. It will make a lot of people
40 happy and you'll make a lot of people -- the
41 displeasure with wanton waste in rural Alaska will go
42 way down if guys are donating these things to local
43 people.

44

45 That's my comments.

46

47 Thank you, Madame Chair.

48

49 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: You did a great
50 job, Jack. Will is next and then over here and here

1 and over here again.

2

3 MR. KOEHLER: I have seen the CDs that are
4 already made on moose butchering. I think the two I
5 saw were very, very good. I think it's an excellent
6 step in the right direction, but I would disagree with
7 you in the fact where you said they were well
8 publicized. I think they're terribly poorly
9 publicized. I'm looking at the hunter education
10 section in the State regs and I'm looking at the meat
11 salvage section in the State regs. There's nothing
12 about them there that I can find.

13

14 Like what Jack was saying, if so many people
15 are getting their hunting licenses online under that,
16 when that spits out. At least have the links where you
17 can access those things online would be a tremendous
18 help just to publicize the resources that we already
19 have because I think it's a good step in the right
20 direction. It's just people don't know about it.

21

22 For a GI that is new here and wants to go
23 hunting and is new to Alaska and he buys his hunting
24 license and he sees access being an issue, meat salvage
25 being an issue. These are links where you can learn
26 how to get into an area, what you do once you're in
27 there and what you do once you harvest something. That
28 would go a long way I think into solving a lot of the
29 problems that we have because people would then at
30 least know what questions to ask.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Or make it a
35 requirement for the first time hunter that they have to
36 do that.

37

38 MR. HUNTER: Yeah, I'm sure that we can
39 consider things, as you're all well aware our resources
40 are limited and probably even more so here in the near
41 future. But simple things like adding links in the
42 hunting regs are easy things to do. We have a separate
43 committee that oversees the production of the hunting
44 regs. All we have to do is put in a request to have
45 that added in the proper section. So it's just a
46 matter of aligning the different programs and we have
47 very limited personnel. But concerns from the
48 committee can be forwarded to us and they'll certainly
49 be taken seriously and there are things that we can do
50 fairly inexpensively.

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: That's an easy one.

2

3 MR. HUNTER: Yes.

4

5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Let's work on that
6 one. Pollock.

7

8 MR. SIMON: Pollock Simon from Allakaket. I
9 wish to teach those young peoples how to skin our
10 resources. At the village we have our traditional way
11 of butchering moose or caribou or whatever. Each part
12 is carefully cut out. Some parts kept for potlatches,
13 some for special occasion. We need our younger
14 generation to know all this.

15

16 I hunt and trap and fish all my life, so my
17 kids know what to do if they bag a moose, but not so
18 much for some families. Like last year three teenage
19 boys in Allakaket they bagged a moose and it was mostly
20 down. They sat out there one hour to keep poking it to
21 make sure it doesn't jump up again, but after it took a
22 long time for them to butcher it. Some education is
23 needed there, you know.

24

25 At the village level we have certain ways of
26 butchering an animal and it's different than the urban
27 centers, you know. They cut their meat up anyway they
28 want to, but in the village we have traditional way of
29 butchering our game. So that should be incorporated
30 into our hunter education for something like that.

31

32 Thank you.

33

34 MR. HUNTER: Thank you. I'm sure that we'd
35 be interested in compiling that information. It seems
36 that most of the cultures have particular ways they
37 like butchering and we can see how big a project that's
38 going to be. We may not be able to show every culture.

39

40 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Maybe you've got to
41 think outside the box and have volunteers that say,
42 hey, why don't you give us a little video of how you
43 guys butcher and then present it to you guys. I mean
44 we all got to be a part of this. I have a real love
45 for like the moose head and the stomach and stuff like
46 that because the people I'm around that's what they
47 utilize and the bones.

48

49 MR. HUNTER: Right.

50

1 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Even cooking off
2 the bones and the hoof and eating that little tiny
3 grizzle that's in the hoof. I mean once you get
4 introduced to that you see all these wonderful things
5 that nobody knows about and they need to know about it.

6
7 Who was next?

8
9 MR. VENT: Yeah, I had a couple of things
10 there. You're talking about going to these villages
11 and Fairbanks and letting these people know. The thing
12 is, sometimes it's the contact person. If you don't
13 have a contact person, a person that can help
14 distribute that meat. That's one of the things that I
15 see out in the village is who are you going to get a
16 hold of for this meat. A lot of times that happens.
17 So the meat just sits there and spoils. The same thing
18 here in Fairbanks, who do you contact, you know. So
19 those kind of information you need too to pass that
20 meat out for them.

21
22 The next thing I heard from what Pollock was
23 saying is you have to take care of that meat. If you
24 want to give somebody some meat, it's about respect.
25 Like what we do when we start skinning a moose, we gut
26 it out, we take the kidneys, the liver, the heart, but
27 when you take that kidney out, you don't just throw it
28 in a bag. You have to spread it open so it will cool
29 off, otherwise it will spoil. It will be no good. So
30 there's certain things you have to consider. You learn
31 from what the elders tell you. The heart, the same
32 thing, you spread it, get the blood out of there so it
33 don't spoil because it sits in that warm blood and it
34 will spoil.

35
36 My third concern is these transporters they
37 bring in these meats to us and they say, hey, you know,
38 you guys want this and we smell it and it smells awful.
39 They need to know a little bit about how to treat that
40 meat. You don't just cut that meat off and throw it in
41 a plastic bag and tape it up.

42
43 MR. HUNTER: Right.

44
45 MR. VENT: That meat will spoil. It's warm.
46 That's what seems to be happening sometimes. They put
47 it on a plane and it doesn't smell good. I know it
48 ain't going very far. It's probably going to come off
49 in Fairbanks and probably toss it in the dump or
50 something because it doesn't smell very good. So it's

1 not only the young kids, we're also having a problem
2 with transporters now. So just a little bit of
3 information there.

4

5 MR. HUNTER: Thanks.

6

7 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Donald.

8

9 MR. GLANZ: I think I'm Bill. Glad to meet
10 you.

11

12 (Laughter)

13

14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Wait until you get
15 as old as I am. You won't know your own name.

16

17 MR. GLANZ: Another problem that we
18 experience by living on the road is -- I don't
19 understand it and I spent a lot of years working for
20 the BLM at Ft. Wainwright -- you see GIS coming in to
21 the base with a caribou or two in the back of their
22 truck. The next morning I see the caribou sitting over
23 there in the back of the truck. I go knock. What are
24 you going to do with that caribou? Well, you have
25 nothing to say to me, sir. We only have to get them
26 out of the field according to regs.

27

28 So we need to get into the military area
29 there and really get in to them to let them know that
30 we've got people to take all that game that you bring
31 in. You only have to bring it. We'll take care of it,
32 any of the villages will. And we have a couple
33 subsistence hunters around our neighborhood, we've got
34 roads, of course, so they see a moose go by in the back
35 of a truck, they take off. They come back with some
36 livers, hearts, you know, ribs. I mean they come back
37 with loads of stuff. They're patrolling every day
38 watching where they get the moose at.

39

40 I'll tell you what, talk about -- any of you
41 guys want to come caribou hunting with me in August,
42 I'll show you one heck of -- you don't even want to go
43 out in the field there's so many hundred people out
44 there. Boy, we was chasing them. There's got to be a
45 message taught somewhere, somehow. I don't know how
46 it's going to happen.

47

48 I've been bitching about it ever since we
49 started opening the Forty Mile Herd. It's not getting
50 taken care of. There's no quality hunts for the locals

1 probably anywhere on the Yukon; Eagle, Circle, Fort
2 Yukon. You can't hunt. Everybody's coming from the
3 town. They don't care. Flying down, driving their
4 boats down. Birch Creek, it's like you have to have a
5 traffic cop out there. I mean, you know, it's just
6 horrible. So ethics are really a bad situation to take
7 care of meat.

8

9 MR. REAKOFF: So, Bill. Bill.

10

11 MR. GLANZ: Yes.

12

13 MR. REAKOFF: We've got a whole bunch of
14 other stuff to go. This hunter education is just one
15 part of the agenda. I do want to stress the point non-
16 resident hunters with moose are a fiasco. They have no
17 clue how to handle a moose. They gut out these deer,
18 they barely can get them out to their four-wheeler in
19 the states. They have no -- they've never cut an
20 animal in their life. Non-residents for moose that are
21 not being guided should have to go through an
22 educational class. They're a big, big problem. Ask
23 any enforcement officer. They'll tell you
24 non-residents are the highest wanton waste cases of all
25 wanton waste cases they make every year and especially
26 on moose.

27

28 But we do need to move on. You've got a
29 comment, Jennifer.

30

31 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Oh, you took over
32 without me knowing.

33

34 MR. REAKOFF: Oh, sorry.

35

36 (Laughter)

37

38 MS. YUHAS: If Madame Chair wishes to
39 recognize me, I have a brief comment.

40

41 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Go ahead, Jennifer.

42

43 MS. YUHAS: Thank you, folks, for engaging
44 with Bob. We kind of threw him in the hot seat. I
45 don't think he'd be here as an information resource. As
46 the State's liaison, I do have a request of the RACs as
47 you have this discussion. You know that I always take
48 real good notes. We pull the transcripts and we try to
49 follow up on everything that we can find in there.

50

1 One of the detriments to interacting with the
2 Federal program is that you only meet twice a year, so
3 we usually have about four to eight months between the
4 next time we'll get to see you. It would be highly
5 beneficial in my opinion for each of the two RACs to at
6 least designate one person for regular communication
7 between now and the next meeting so that we can have
8 more meaningful dialogue on things that would improve
9 these things.

10

11 We take a few notes and then Bob has to go to
12 a committee and explain them and hope maybe it looks
13 the way you wanted it to by six months from now, but a
14 contact who could work with us in the interim would be
15 beneficial.

16

17 MR. REAKOFF: I will act as the contact for
18 the WIRAC. Is that agreeable for the Western Interior
19 Regional Council?

20

21 (Council nods affirmatively)

22

23 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Do I hear
24 volunteers from here.

25

26 MR. KOEHLER: I would volunteer for the
27 hunter education part. I don't know if I have enough
28 knowledge for some of the other parts.

29

30 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I would like to
31 participate unless there's someone in the Native
32 community that really would love to get on this because
33 I think it's important that we not lose the tradition
34 in the way you utilize the meat versus non-Native
35 people and urban people.

36

37 Rhonda, does that mean you'll be on the
38 committee?

39

40 MS. PITKA: Yes.

41

42 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: Okay. And, Andy,
43 you'll be on?

44

45 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I'm happy to get involved
46 at any level. I think this is really important. I
47 just wanted to make one brief comment. I don't think
48 that's carrying it far enough. I really think the only
49 way we're going to move this forward, given what Ms.
50 Yuhas just said, is we need to have some sort of a

1 statewide committee formed or at least a committee
2 between these two RACs, OSM and Fish and Game to start
3 brainstorming.

4
5 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: I think that's what
6 I'm hearing, a committee that.....

7
8 MR. BASSICH: That's not what I'm hearing. I
9 hope that's what's going to happen. I'm hearing that
10 you're going to work independently from OSM and then
11 they're going to get back to us. This needs to be a
12 collaboration.

13
14 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: What am I hearing?
15 I thought I heard it differently.

16
17 MS. YUHAS: Madame Chairman. My initial
18 thought -- we're working with a bureaucracy, we can't
19 ignore that, and I think what Andy is talking about is
20 a much bigger picture. That probably is not going to
21 be something that's going to be formed and funded in
22 the next six months by any of the entities that we know
23 in the next six months looking at the budget situation.
24 We don't know.

25
26 But at least for a start, you're asking for
27 some specifics to be added to the hunter information
28 and training program and Bob works with the committee
29 who tweaks that and makes changes and makes
30 improvements at small and large levels. Small things
31 happen more quickly than large things do, but this
32 would at least be a start to work with the committee
33 that puts out the information. Looking forward to
34 sometime in the future a much larger picture item like
35 Mr. Bassich is discussing.

36
37 MADAME CHAIR ENTSMINGER: We can talk about
38 that part individually, I think, unless you guys want
39 to adopt the baby.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Western Interior is very
42 interested in maintaining this dialogue with the
43 Department of Fish and Game on hunter education, so we
44 will -- I feel that this Council will be ascribed to
45 this process. I don't know that there's funding with
46 budgetary constraints at OSM and then State government.
47 I do think that we can work with the Department
48 internally with Bob here and I think that we'll have
49 input. You can listen to our transcripts. You can
50 dialogue back to the Councils and we'll dialogue back

1 to you. You've gotten contacts. If I'm not available,
2 this is the vice-Chair and we'll go on down the road
3 here. So Eastern has set out their people for contact.
4 We have a large agenda to move onto.

5
6 Thank you for all of your participation.

7
8 MR. HUNTER: Thank you very much.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

11
12 MR. HONEA: May I say something?

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

15
16 MR. HONEA: A comment for OSM. If they would
17 take these two pages, Page 22 and 23, out of the State
18 manual and put it in their hunter guidelines, then it
19 would be a big step forward for that because they have
20 nothing in their hunting manual or their hunting regs
21 and methods and means about care of meat and that's
22 critical. All it would be is just take the same format
23 and put it in the manual. Everybody carries two or
24 three of these different things around with that.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's a good idea and I
27 think this Western Interior Council is agreeable to
28 include hunter education in the Federal subsistence
29 regulations. Is the Eastern Interior agreeable to
30 that?

31
32 (Councils nods affirmatively)

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I see affirmative. So
35 we're going to move on to funding edification. We've
36 got Palma Ingles and Karen Hyer is on the
37 teleconference. Are you on the conference call, Karen?

38
39 MS. HYER: Hello? Can you hear me?

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you.

42
43 MS. HYER: Is this better?

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can hear you fine now.
46 Go right ahead.

47
48 MS. HYER: Okay. I just have a brief update
49 on our Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. We have
50 every other year, so we have a bi-yearly call for

1 proposals, which we now call a notice of funding
2 availability and that has gone out. The deadline is
3 next week, March 11th at 5:00 p.m. So we've been
4 contacted by several different investigators, so we
5 know some investigation plans are coming our way.
6 We've not received any as of yet.

7
8 It's similar to what's been done in the past
9 and the proposals will be submitted to us and then they
10 will be evaluated on the same criteria as before. So
11 strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, the
12 investigator's ability and capacity building, then
13 they'll be scored accordingly with those categories.
14 They'll first go to the TRC and then from the TRC
15 they'll go to the RACs and then the Staff Committee and
16 then finally to the Board. So that process hasn't
17 changed at all.

18
19 So that's all I have for that. I just wanted
20 to update you. Are there any questions.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All the current Council
23 members on the WIRAC are aware of this process and
24 Darrel will be learning the process for the funding for
25 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Is there any
26 questions from the Eastern Interior side?

27
28 (No comments)

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, no. That looks good.
31 I think our Councils are aware of the process, Karen.

32
33 MS. HYER: Okay. Super.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So looking forward to
36 those -- those.....

37
38 MS. HYER: Investigation plans.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yes.

41
42 MS. HYER: Yes, we are too.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to move on
45 in this agenda. We're on point 10, joint fisheries
46 reports. The first (a) is North Pacific Fisheries
47 Management Council. Steve MacLean and Diana Stram.
48 I'm real happy to see those people here. We always
49 enjoy talking to the North Pacific Fisheries Management
50 Council and I'm sure Eastern is happy to see you here

1 also. Thanks for your attendance. You're going to
2 give us a PowerPoint. For those on the line they're
3 setting up a PowerPoint. So, welcome. Turn your mic
4 on.

5
6 MR. MACLEAN: Mr. Chairman, Madame Chairman.
7 Thank you very much for this opportunity to be here and
8 talk about an item that is very important obviously to
9 all of you here and also very important to the Council.
10 My name is Steve MacLean. I'm an analysis with the
11 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. Diana
12 Stram is also here. We're also very pleased to have
13 three of the Council members with us and they'll all
14 introduce themselves before we get started.

15
16 Our purpose here is twofold. Number one, to
17 present information that the Council is considering now
18 and to answer questions that you might have about that
19 information. Secondly, equally as important, is to
20 hear your comments and concerns and take those back to
21 the Council. I will be preparing a report on the
22 comments and questions that we do hear here and I will
23 be delivering that to the Council at our next meeting
24 in April.

25
26 So, without any further ado, I'm going to
27 step back and allow Diana to introduce herself and then
28 the Council members as well.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I will state for the
31 record that we're transcribed. You'll be able to
32 access this transcript online probably within a couple
33 weeks and you can thoroughly look at what these two
34 Councils are saying, so nothing will be lost in the
35 cracks. So go ahead, Diana.

36
37 MS. STRAM: Thank you. Thank you for having
38 us. My name is Diana Stram. I'm a fishery analyst
39 with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and
40 the lead analyst on this analysis. Again, as Steve
41 indicated, is going to be before the Council for final
42 action at our April meeting, which I'll walk through in
43 going through the presentation. I'll let the Council
44 members introduce themselves before we get to the
45 presentation.

46
47 MS. KIMBALL: My name is Nicole Kimball. I'm
48 the Federal Fisheries Coordinator for the Department of
49 Fish and Game, so in that role I basically support the
50 commissioner in his seat on the Council and I'm an

1 alternate to him on the North Pacific Council. So I'm
2 based in Anchorage at Fish and Game there, born and
3 raised in Alaska.

4

5 MR. MERRILL: Thank you very much for having
6 us. My name is Glenn Merrill. I'm the Assistant
7 Regional Administrator for the Alaska Region of the
8 National Marine Fisheries Service. I serve on the
9 Council in the stead of my boss, Jim Balsiger, who is
10 the Regional Administrator. Our job in sustainable
11 fisheries is the day-to-day management of Federal
12 fisheries off the coast of Alaska.

13

14 MR. TWEIT: And I'm Bill Tweit. I sit on the
15 Council. I'm from Washington state. I'm the
16 Washington state representative, so I work out of
17 Olympia for the Washington Department of Fish and
18 Wildlife. When I'm not doing North Pacific Council
19 issues, I spent a lot of my time on Columbia River
20 fisheries issues, both dealing with mitigation but also
21 dealing with harvest management. So I'm quite familiar
22 with the challenges of getting fish to fisheries all
23 the way up the river as well as making sure that all
24 the fisheries along the way have a shot at it too. As
25 well familiar with the ups and downs of salmon
26 management, the good times and bad times.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Thanks for
29 your introductions. Go ahead, Diana.

30

31 MS. STRAM: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Members of
32 the Councils. I'm going to walk through an overview of
33 kind of the current management structure, how our
34 management changes and then the alternatives under
35 consideration. I'm happy to take questions either
36 during the presentation, that's up to you, or when it's
37 over. The Council members again are here to also field
38 questions, particularly of policy and rationale and
39 those sort of issues.

40

41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I may stop you at certain
42 points if I see somebody jumping up and down.

43

44 MS. STRAM: That's fine. So the first
45 section then is just to go over what the current status
46 of salmon bycatch is in the pollock fishery and what
47 our current management is. To remind folks in terms of
48 salmon, we're talking solely about the Bering Sea
49 pollock fishery, which is an offshore fishery and it's
50 mid-water trawl fishery, so that means it doesn't drag

1 directly on the bottom, but is in mid-water.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Somebody has to push *6 on
4 the teleconference. You're scratching around and
5 making a lot of noise on our end.

6

7 Thank you. Go ahead, Diana.

8

9 MS. STRAM: Thank you. So the pollock
10 fishery does not catch hardly anything as bycatch, but
11 does catch salmon as bycatch and solely chinook and
12 chum salmon. So the other three species of salmon are
13 not caught in any appreciable number, although we do
14 look at that every single year. But we're really
15 talking about chinook and chum salmon as bycatch in the
16 fishery.

17

18 By law, the bycatch is counted, but it cannot
19 be retained or sold and some proportion of it is being
20 donated to food banks. I would just note that as a
21 result really largely of conversations that we had with
22 all of you beginning in 2009, at that time food bank
23 distribution centers were not in existence in the state
24 of Alaska, but since the Council's action in 2009 and
25 the comments that we've heard from a lot of the members
26 of the public, food distribution centers have been
27 established in various villages in and distribution
28 centers in Alaska. At this present moment, since 2012,
29 all of the salmon and halibut that the food donation
30 centers can handle and distribute is being distributed
31 within the state of Alaska. So should their capacity
32 increase, so would the donations to them.

33

34 The Council management of salmon bycatch
35 isn't a new thing. It's something that's been going on
36 since the 1990s. However, in the past, prior to the
37 current management program, it has always had large
38 time and area closures in the Bering Sea.

39

40 So just to give you an idea of where the
41 pollock fishery itself operates. There's two different
42 seasons in the pollock fishery. The winter season,
43 which begins in late January and continues through mid-
44 April, and then the summer season that begins in mid-
45 June and continues until the end of October.

46

47 The winter fishery is limited by ice, so it's
48 from the Pribilofs south, but again very far offshore,
49 concentrated north of Unimak Island and up towards the
50 Pribilofs along the shelf edge. The summer fishery

1 then, with a lack of sea ice, can extend all the way up
2 to the Russian border. Again, we're talking about
3 fisheries three to 200 miles offshore that are
4 management by the Council.

5
6 There are different sectors of the pollock
7 fishery and that's important with respect to how those
8 sectors themselves are managed and how the relative
9 bycatch by each sector and the available tools to each
10 sector individually. So there are large-scale catcher
11 processors. They catch fish and process them at sea.
12 There are motherships, which are floating processing
13 platforms to which catcher vessels deliver to them and
14 they again can be further offshore. Then there is a
15 large portion of the fleet that is shoreside catcher
16 vessels, so those are vessels that are operating really
17 no further than the Pribilofs, and usually where this
18 concentration is down here, and delivering to shoreside
19 catcher processors. So they're limited by how much
20 time they can travel with the fish in their hold. The
21 CDQ, community development quota, we consider another
22 sector in the pollock fishery, but that's prosecuted by
23 the catcher processors themselves.

24
25 Just to go over the different numbers then.
26 Historically, and this is showing you both chinook and
27 chum here on the same graph and in reference to the
28 different changing management measures. As most
29 people are aware, in 2005 the pollock fishery took a
30 historic high of chum salmon at over 700,000 chum and
31 that's really the tipping point where different
32 measures were being considered. We had previously been
33 managing by these time and area closures in the Bering
34 Sea and that was when the Council began looking rapidly
35 at different measures. In 2007, the pollock fishery
36 took about 122,000 chinook and that focused the
37 Council's prioritization of immediate management
38 measures on chinook management measures.

39
40 In 2009, the Council took final action on the
41 management program I'll walk through called Amendment
42 91 and that was implemented in 2011. Since that time
43 the Council has been hearing reports on both the status
44 of stocks for chinook as well as the efficacy of the
45 measures in place in the Bering Sea pollock fishery and
46 continuing to look if there can be incremental
47 improvements to how it's being managed.

48
49 So Amendment 91. This is the first time that
50 hard caps, caps that would limit the pollock fishery

1 prosecuting, have been put on the pollock fleet and it
2 was combined with hard cap levels as well as an
3 industry incentive program. So the overall level at
4 which every sector of the fishery closes is a
5 cumulative level of 60,000 chinook. It's divided out
6 by individual sector, but the important part of this
7 program is the fact that there's a lower level of cap
8 and again divided out by sector, to which the sectors
9 design industry programs that are designed to not reach
10 the lower level cap. So if that lower level cap is
11 reached by any of the sectors under their individual
12 portion of it in more than two out of seven years, then
13 they are no longer able to operate on anything but the
14 more restrictive lower level.

15

16 The important part of this measure by the
17 Council was to reduce bycatch at all levels of
18 encounter by the pollock fishery, not just when they
19 reach these cap levels. So integral to that were these
20 incentive programs that the industry created by sector.

21

22 Currently our bycatch levels have been much
23 lower than the caps themselves, so at that level that's
24 where the industry programs really become critical
25 because in order to reduce bycatch further we're
26 looking at measures that are already below the current
27 levels of the caps. So looking at whether or not the
28 industry's incentive programs themselves have been
29 effective.

30

31 Some additional provisions that went into
32 place in doing this action. One hundred percent
33 observer coverage on the fleet, which effectively
34 increased the observer coverage on the shoreside
35 component. Everyone else already had over 100 percent
36 observer coverage.

37

38 A complete census of all salmon species, so
39 every single salmon is counted. There is no sub-
40 sampling. All salmon that are brought on board in a
41 haul, whether at a processing plant or on board a
42 vessel, are counted and this includes both chum and
43 chinook.

44

45 Increased genetic sampling for stock of
46 origin, so systematic sampling across all of the catch
47 for both species with genetic reports to the Council on
48 the stock of origin. Previously we had periodic
49 reports on genetic stock of origin, different studies
50 that were done, but now we get an annual report on

1 that. Annually, the pollock industry by sector reports
2 to the Council on how they believe their program is
3 working and what the measures that they're intending to
4 put in place to do so are.

5
6 So now in 2015 the Council is going back,
7 primarily in concern for the continuing low returns of
8 Western Alaska chinook, the Council is looking at ways
9 that they could reduce bycatch even further. The focus
10 of this has been again strengthening what the
11 incentives are that are encouraging everyone to reduce
12 bycatch no matter how low it is at the present moment
13 underneath the cap levels as well as to look at
14 combining bycatch reduction for chum and chinook.

15
16 Currently chum is not managed under a hard
17 cap. It is managed under small-scale industry-imposed
18 closures. The intention was to always go back and try
19 to fold in chum and chinook measures more
20 comprehensively because when we tried to look at chum-
21 only bycatch measures, it had the potential to make
22 chinook bycatch worse and that's not anyone's
23 intention.

24
25 So what's the process then for how our
26 current management changes. Just to provide you an
27 overview in terms of the Council authorities under the
28 Magnuson-Stevens Act, the North Pacific Fishery
29 Management Council and the National Marine Fisheries
30 Service together manage the fisheries, the U.S.
31 fisheries, Federal fisheries 3 to 200 miles offshore.
32 This is coordinated and some species jointly managed
33 with the State of Alaska. The Council itself makes
34 recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce on policy
35 changes and management changes.

36
37 There's 15 total members on our Council and
38 this is a mandate under the Magnuson-Stevens Act for
39 the North Pacific Council. Eleven of those members are
40 voting members, four are designated seats; the head of
41 the National Marine Fisheries Service, Departments of
42 Alaska, Washington and Oregon. There's seven seats
43 that are appointed by the respective governors, so five
44 of those seats are appointed by the governor of the
45 state of Alaska, two of those seats are appointed by
46 the governor of the state of Washington. And then we
47 also have four non-voting advisory seats; the Coast
48 Guard, Pacific states, Department of State and U.S.
49 Fish and Wildlife.

50

1 Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, there's 10
2 national standards and all actions by the Council must
3 consider all 10 national standards, some of which are
4 more of a balancing act depending upon the action than
5 others, particularly under these actions when we're
6 addressing bycatch management. The two national
7 standards that are trying to be addressed and balanced
8 are National Standard 9 to minimize salmon, in this
9 case, bycatch to the extent practicable, and National
10 Standard 1, to prevent overfishing while achieving on a
11 continuing basis the optimum yield from each fishery.
12 So in this case allowing the optimum yield from the
13 pollock fishery to be achieved.

14
15 The process for making changes to fishery
16 management plans. An environmental and economic impact
17 analysis is required by various Federal laws and that
18 is presented to the Council, provided to the public and
19 it's an iterative process, so the review of these
20 analyses oftentimes takes several meetings before a
21 final decision is made.

22
23 So we have already gone through iterative
24 reviews of discussion papers of what might be good
25 tools to look at and then an initial review of an
26 analysis of these actions at the December 2014 Council
27 meeting. So now we're on to finalizing an analysis
28 that will be brought forward to the Council in April
29 for final action on this action itself. Again, the
30 final Council decision that will come out of the April
31 meeting is then submitted to the Secretary of Commerce
32 and the National Marine Fishery Service writes the
33 implementing regulations. There are public comment
34 periods that are built into each of these phases at the
35 Council meeting and as well as in the rule-making
36 process that NMFS goes through.

37
38 So what information is used by the Council on
39 how to change management. Over the past several years
40 we've been bringing back to the Council as analysts
41 some of the factors that we know affect salmon bycatch.
42 Basically there are a multitude of factors that affect
43 how much and where bycatch is caught in the pollock
44 fishery, some of which lend themselves to management
45 tools better than others.

46
47 So we know that there are fleet behavioral
48 changes. We know that temperature affects bycatch, so
49 we've done a study to show that there is a relationship
50 between water temperature and the amount of salmon

1 bycatch. There is interannual and spacial variability
2 in where by-catch is caught on an annual basis, on a
3 seasonal basis. Where the fishery is located affects
4 both how much bycatch as well as what the stock of
5 origin is in the bycatch because it is spatially
6 concentrated in different areas.

7
8 There are also vessel specific differences.
9 We spent a lot of effort in the last year and a half
10 trying to look at individual vessels and how their
11 behavior may or may not be changing under different
12 incentive measures. There is a component to bycatch
13 that is related to the relative run sizes.

14
15 So in 2014 the Council started asking for
16 analyses of these different factors to try to look at
17 what might be good measures to tweak and to manage. So
18 they asked us to evaluate Western Alaska chinook
19 bycatch rates specifically to update an impact analysis
20 that we had done on Western Alaska stocks. To look at
21 what would happen to that impact analysis if the
22 bycatch levels, not just as they currently are, but
23 what if they reach the cap levels that are currently in
24 place. To look at individual vessel behavioral
25 changes, so we looked at all the vessels in the fleet
26 to look at when and where their bycatch might be higher
27 than others around them. And then looking at how we
28 would evaluate the effectiveness of this program in low
29 abundance years.

30
31 So just to review for folks in terms of
32 salmon genetics. These are the relative breakouts.
33 Unfortunately, as you'll see, they are very broad
34 genetic breakouts that we cannot resolve currently the
35 bycatch to river levels that are smaller than this. So
36 the entire Coastal West Alaska, all the way from the
37 Nushagak up here past Norton Sound, is all in one
38 genetic grouping and they can't be individually
39 resolved lower than that at this point. The Middle
40 Yukon can be resolved separately, but we include it
41 with Coastal West Alaska because we have no run size
42 information explicit to the Middle Yukon. Then the
43 Upper Yukon can be resolved separately. So our focus
44 in terms of characterizing the relative impacts have
45 been on this large Coastal West Alaska grouping as well
46 as impacts to the Upper Yukon. Then we also have
47 information on breakouts to Asian origin, British
48 Columbia and Southeast Alaska stocks.

49
50 MR. COLLINS: A question. Are you going to

1 do the same thing for the Kuskokwim? You don't have
2 genetic data on that?

3

4 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chair, Mr. Collins. No, we
5 don't have genetic data explicit to the Kuskokwim.
6 That's some of the problems we have in trying to
7 indicate what the impacts of bycatch are to those river
8 systems. We have to aggregate them, so we have to look
9 at them all in combination and then combine the run
10 size information that we have for all of them together
11 as well. So you just get a broad impact analysis.

12

13 MR. COLLINS: I'd like to point out that the
14 Kuskokwim is the largest subsistence fishery in Alaska
15 for kings. There are more taken there for subsistence
16 than in any other place in Alaska.

17

18 MS. STRAM: And in terms of the information
19 we provide to the Council in these impact analyses, we
20 do provide them all of the subsistence information. We
21 provide them river-by-river stock status and the
22 relative subsistence information and commercial. But
23 when it comes to trying to relate what the bycatch is
24 to individual river systems, we don't have the genetic
25 information to allow for that.

26

27 So as a snapshot of what genetic information
28 we have, and this is just giving you relative
29 percentages on an annual basis. We do have 2013
30 genetics now and they're relatively similar to these
31 that are listed here. This has been fairly constant
32 across most years in which bycatch information has been
33 resolved this way. Over 60 percent of it tends to be
34 from this broad Coastal West Alaska stocks, about 11
35 percent from the North Alaska Peninsula, 10 percent
36 from the broad British Columbia grouping, less than
37 that, 7 percent, from the west coast of the U.S. and
38 then the Upper Yukon makes up just shy of 3 percent.
39 That's when you look at it annually. We also have that
40 information by winter and summer fishery and there are
41 some seasonal differences that become important.

42

43 MS. PITKA: I just had a question on the
44 actual numbers. They're a percentage. What is the
45 actual number?

46

47 MS. STRAM: The percentage is of the samples
48 that are taken in the bycatch. So what the geneticists
49 do on an annual basis because they are sampling across
50 all of the catch. What they are providing is a subset

1 of all the bycatch that has been taken and then they
2 resolve it to a relative proportion or percentage so
3 you could apply those percentages in theory to any
4 level of bycatch and know if you have a certain level
5 of bycatch what amount of it would have come from those
6 river systems.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So those bycatch
9 percentages are fairly static annually? Year after
10 year they're around the same amounts proportionately?

11

12 MS. STRAM: In general, yes. The level in
13 2013 was slightly less from Coastal West Alaska and
14 this is where also the spatial extent of the fishery
15 influences the relative proportions of the genetics.
16 So if the fishery is concentrated in an area, say in
17 the Southeast Bering Sea, you would have possibly a
18 higher proportion from the B.C. and Southeast Alaska
19 stocks. Similarly, if there was additional fishing in
20 the winter compared to bycatch that's taken in the
21 summer, there's a slightly higher proportion of the
22 Upper Yukon. So it does vary, but in general it's been
23 in these same relative percentages for years.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Continue.

26

27 MS. STRAM: Okay. So we also have genetic
28 information that's provided annually on chum stocks.
29 Here the proportion from Western Alaska in general and
30 by year is around less than 15 percent and the vast
31 majority of the stock of origin of the chum that's
32 caught as bycatch is coming from this broad Asian
33 origin stock. While we can't resolve it to hatchery
34 fish, we also have information on the numbers of
35 hatchery fish that are being put into the Bering Sea
36 from Japan and Russian and those areas.

37

38 So we use this information as well as the
39 bycatch numbers themselves to look at an impact rate
40 analysis to try to provide the Council and the public
41 information on what the relative rate is of impact on
42 the total runs. So in order to do so there's certain
43 information that we need. We need both the number of
44 the fish caught as bycatch, which we have very precise
45 numbers of, we need to account for the age of the fish
46 in the bycatch in order to look at which ones would be
47 going back to a river in any one year.

48

49 Because of our observer program we have
50 excellent information on the relative age in the

1 bycatch. In general, they range from three to seven-
2 year-olds and we know what proportion the actual number
3 of fish of any one age. In general, it varies a little
4 bit by year, but generally the three and the four-year-
5 olds comprise most of the bycatch and some years it's
6 higher to four to five-year-olds, but it varies mostly
7 in between the three to five-year-old age range.

8

9 We then need to account for the estimated
10 maturity by those age categories going back to the
11 river systems because we're trying to focus on Western
12 Alaska, we used Western Alaska rivers for their
13 maturity information and then weighted it. So we're
14 basically using one estimate of maturity by each age
15 category so that we can apply each of the ages in the
16 bycatch to a maturity estimate and that estimate of
17 maturity is influenced by certain rivers in Western
18 Alaska.

19

20 In general, because we have better
21 information on maturity in the Kuskokwim area and the
22 Nushagak area, those estimates are heavily weighted by
23 the maturity schedule of those rivers. Once we have
24 that estimate, then we use the genetic information for
25 those stocks of origin to apply that proportion of the
26 fish that would have returned to those broader areas.

27

28 Because the Council specifically asked us to
29 look at an impact rate we then worked with ADF&G to get
30 an estimate of the total run size by year in those
31 river systems. So one large one for the whole Coastal
32 West Alaska grouping and then another estimate for the
33 Upper Yukon. Then we basically look at what the total
34 number of fish returning that year is divided by the
35 total run estimate.

36

37 So in order to do that then we have this
38 percentage of the total run that we're reporting.
39 Looking at from 2003 through 2012 what our impact rate
40 as a percentage of the total run has been. So the
41 impact rate on Coastal West Alaska range from 1.6
42 percent, which occurred in 2011, to a high of 7.7
43 percent, which occurred in 2008. The Upper Yukon a low
44 of 1.3 percent to a high of 3.7 percent.

45

46 The Council also asked to look at focusing on
47 years since this new program was put into place, so
48 2011 and 2012, what was the percentage impact rate in
49 those years, which is basically between 1.4 and 2
50 percent for both Coastal West Alaska as well as the

1 Upper Yukon. Then the Council asked what if the impact
2 rate was at the cap level itself. So if you had
3 achieved the caps in those years under the same run
4 size information, what would the impact rate be. So
5 for that it would range from 2.2 to 6.2 percent for
6 Coastal West Alaska and the Upper Yukon from 1.8 to 4.6
7 percent.

8
9 We also have some information in order to
10 estimate similar groupings for chum bycatch impacts
11 only from 2005 to 2009. For that, the lower
12 percentages are much lower for the Coastal West Alaska
13 and reaching a high of only 1.23 percent at the highest
14 in 2005, which was that high impact year. The Upper
15 Yukon lower than that but with a high in 2006 of 2.63
16 percent.

17
18 So the general overview of what the results
19 of these analyses were is that while chinook bycatch
20 levels have been lower in recent years for all sectors
21 since implementation of this program, we looked at the
22 fact that particularly when you looked at individual
23 vessel levels it was clear that some incremental
24 improvements could be made. Not every vessel has
25 changed behavior to reduce bycatch. Some vessels still
26 are consistently higher in bycatch than other vessels.

27
28
29 So that gave the Council something to focus
30 on in terms of improving the program itself. In
31 looking at the vessel level bycatch, we noticed in
32 particular at the end of the summer season. So we know
33 that chinook bycatch is highest in the summer season in
34 September and October. When we looked at the
35 individual vessel level, it's clear that there are some
36 vessels who overall are always higher than their
37 neighboring vessels in the months of September and
38 October. So there was clearly room for improvement at
39 the vessel level and in overall in September and
40 October.

41
42 We did see evidence that vessels were
43 consistently moving away, however, from areas of high
44 bycatch once notified. We also did a census to see
45 how many vessels are using salmon excluder devices and
46 what their individual sectors are mandating in terms of
47 excluder usage.

48
49 So just to explain to people in terms of the
50 excluder, it's a hole basically that's in the pollock

1 trawl net where there's a part of the net put in place
2 that creates a lee in the current, so the current is
3 lower, right next to the hole, and salmon are better
4 swimmers than pollock, so when they both align
5 themselves into the current, the salmon can last
6 longer, the pollock will drop back and the salmon can
7 sense that the current is better over by the hole and
8 will swim out.

9

10 So there's been a lot of work that's been
11 ongoing for several years funded by the pollock
12 industry to keep improving these salmon excluders. So
13 now we've gotten to the point where most people are
14 using them and we're seeing increasing proportion of
15 vessels that are employing a salmon excluder in their
16 nets. It's not something that's mandated by
17 regulation, but we're finding that there are some
18 sectors now that are beginning to mandate that all of
19 their vessels use these as well.

20

21 Chinook bycatch then occurs in both the
22 winter and the summer fisheries whereas chum bycatch
23 occurs only in the summer fishery. So part of this
24 issue with chinook bycatch increasing in September and
25 October was that anything that you do to slow down the
26 pollock fishery for when you catch chum bycatch has the
27 possibility to make chinook bycatch worse because if
28 the industry is trying to catch their pollock at the
29 end of the summer, then they're more likely to run into
30 higher chinook. So the Council took a step back to say
31 that we need to make sure that these measures on the
32 same fishery are being considered comprehensively so
33 that they would be complimentary measures rather than
34 one making the other one worse or vice versa.

35

36 Now moving on to what the Council is
37 considering currently as changes to the program.
38 There's three broad measures that the Council is
39 considering based on the results of these analyses of
40 how well the current program is working as well as
41 indications of low Western Alaska chinook abundance.
42 The broad level measures that they're considering, one
43 to combine any measures considered for chum and
44 chinook. The second is to change the incentive plan
45 requirements. So to look at how the requirements of
46 each individual sector's plan could be modified to
47 improve vessel level behavior other issues. The third
48 is to establish lower bycatch caps in years of low
49 chinook abundance.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can I stop you right
2 there. If individual vessels continuously violate and
3 obtain the most bycatch, why doesn't the North Pacific
4 Fisheries Management Council set each sector with a
5 certain amount of bycatch cap and then each vessel that
6 participates has an individual cap. If they keep doing
7 it, they're out. They get kicked out right off the
8 bat. Why isn't that one of the considerations? Go
9 ahead.

10
11 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chairman. That is part of
12 the current program, but not at the individual vessel
13 level. So under the current allocation they are
14 allocated to sector and within the sectors the sectors
15 allocated them to individual vessels. None of those
16 vessels have exceeded their allocation to date because
17 the bycatch has been lower. So what the Council is
18 trying to look at was not just whether or not the
19 sectors or individual vessels have exceeded their
20 allocations, but is everybody trying as hard as they
21 can. Even though no one has exceeded any of the
22 allocations that have been put in place under Amendment
23 91.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. James.

26
27 MR. J. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In
28 regards to the percentages, are those percentages a
29 combination of the winter fishing areas and summer
30 fishing areas?

31
32 MS. STRAM: By percentages, do you mean the
33 genetic percentages or the impact rate?

34
35 MR. J. WALKER: Yes.

36
37 MS. STRAM: The impact rate is a combination
38 of both.

39
40 MR. J. WALKER: Combination of both. And
41 also in regards to Jack's last comment there, you know,
42 fishermen on the Yukon are restricted in their type of
43 gear. They're mandated in the type of gear they have
44 to use. I see no difference in imposing the fishery on
45 the high seas to follow the same pattern as people in
46 fisheries on the Yukon.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll reiterate that
49 mandate, the use of the excluders. I think that's
50 completely warranted. Continue.

1 Oh, I have one more question here. Robert,
2 go ahead.

3
4 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Diana,
5 the overall picture that I look at here is that Alaska
6 is really not a play state. It's not where Fish and
7 Wildlife go after people for breaking the law trying to
8 get something to eat, especially king salmon that is
9 being dumped overboard from their ships as wanton
10 waste. Is that what you guys call it when you throw it
11 overboard? It is something that I find really hard to
12 look at, that it's not being salvaged enough for
13 different agencies that could use these products for
14 food, chum salmon.

15
16 We are sacrificing high-quality fish for our
17 diet. A lot of our people on the Kuskokwim and Western
18 Alaska and Southeast is that for a low quality fish has
19 a priority over this. I mean it's kind of hard for --
20 and we do discuss this over campfires. Like why, why
21 are they doing this. Do these fast food chains have
22 priority over us because it's food over there? But
23 what about us? There's a question here that we all ask
24 ourselves here. Why? Why this? I mean is there an
25 answer you can give us? There's people back here who
26 would like to know too.

27
28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Robert. Response,
31 go ahead.

32
33 MS. KIMBALL: Sure. I'll give it a try
34 because I think it is completely counter intuitive and
35 we're working under different authority. So it's not a
36 wanton waste law that applies in the Federal fisheries.
37 It's a regulated amount of bycatch that's allowed in
38 order to prosecute the groundfish fishery. So it is
39 under a different system. I think what we're
40 struggling with is how to provide that balance that
41 requires us to provide for those groundfish fisheries
42 while minimizing bycatch to the extent practicable,
43 which is what the Council is required to do.

44
45 So I do think it is completely
46 counterintuitive to have a fish like pollock take some
47 sort of precedence over a fish like chinook, but that's
48 the structure that we're working in in the Federal
49 fisheries and I'm afraid there's not a better answer
50 than that. We're required to allow for the prosecution

1 of those fisheries, which, while we'd like bycatch to
2 be zero, it won't ever be zero. So at this point the
3 Council is trying to minimize that bycatch further,
4 especially in these years of low chinook abundance.

5
6 That's about the best answer I could provide,
7 but my Washington counterpart might have some comment.

8
9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

10
11 MR. R. WALKER: I have another question too.
12 What do you do.....

13
14 MR. TWEIT: I just wanted to finish out on
15 the first one and then.....

16
17 MR. R. WALKER: Okay, finish out on the first
18 one.

19
20 MR. TWEIT: I did want to clear up that we're
21 continuing to find ways to retain as many of the
22 chinook as possible and get them back into food banks
23 in Alaska. Right now a very high percentage of the
24 chinook that are caught are now able to be retained.
25 Some of them just aren't marketable. Some of them are
26 young enough that there's no food value.

27
28 But for the bulk of them they're now being
29 retained at the cost of the ship owners and then turned
30 over to the food banks. The harvesters don't make any
31 money off that and obviously they pay a little bit of
32 money to help make it work, but I think everybody
33 recognizes that it's a real shame to actually waste a
34 beautiful chinook in particular, so they've gone to
35 great extremes to make that work and they'll continue
36 to try to make that work.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll state we met with the
39 North Pacific Fisheries Management Council before with
40 Western Interior and at that time we advocated for
41 retention of the fish, the chinook and the salmon, and
42 we also advocated that they be returned to the river of
43 origin. Sam Cotten, your boss, said, oh, my gosh, that
44 would cost a heck of a lot. Yeah, that's the
45 disincentive. I feel that the fishery should pay for
46 the return of those not to food banks in Anchorage.
47 That doesn't benefit the people on the river. I feel
48 that the disincentive should be the cost of processing,
49 retention and return to the rivers of origin by the
50 apportionments that you delineate.

1 Another question is, is the chronic violators
2 who have the highest bycatch, are they the ones who do
3 not use the salmon excluders?

4
5 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chairman. So just to clarify
6 in terms of -- under the current structure there's no
7 one violating the program. We were trying to look at
8 who would we best target that may not be trying as hard
9 as others. We have not yet collected data on a vessel
10 by vessel basis as to which vessels are using excluders
11 and which haven't been because it wasn't part of the
12 reporting requirements. So we've had to go back and
13 back-estimate within each of the groups how many of
14 their participants are using excluders and by what
15 proportion of time.

16
17 So we're getting better at asking the right
18 questions so that we can look at whether or not those
19 vessels that have consistently higher rates compared to
20 the others, what behavior patterns are they doing
21 differently, but we didn't have all that information at
22 this time to be able to say whether or not none of them
23 were using excluders or if they were using excluders
24 some of the time but just trying not to fish at certain
25 times.

26
27 In general, what we found is that the longer
28 -- some vessels choose or were making decisions to get
29 on the grounds later, which puts them on the grounds
30 longer, and those were the vessels in general that had
31 the higher bycatch.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: One more question and then
34 we have to continue. Go ahead, Robert.

35
36 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
37 Diana, one of the other things too -- this is my second
38 question. When you have a fishing period, what is it,
39 10 days, 12 days, if these boats don't reach their
40 quotas in those days, do you or do the companies get
41 extended or extend their days longer to fish for
42 pollock or to meet their quota, to get their quota?

43
44 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chairman. Two things. For
45 one, our seasons are set up very -- they're very long
46 seasons. They're not managed on a 10 to 12-day basis
47 in terms of the pollock fishery. There's one season in
48 the winter that begins January 20th and goes until the
49 quota is reached or until the end of season. Quotas in
50 the pollock fishery, it's a rationalized fishery, so

1 they are assigned by sector and then within sectors
2 those are assigned to individual vessels so that
3 vessels have their own individual quota. They are then
4 -- in the summer fishery, they have a certain
5 proportion of their quota that's available to them in
6 the winter fishery, which can then roll into the summer
7 if they haven't caught it.

8
9 In the summer fishery, then they have from
10 June 1st until the end of the October to reach their
11 quota. Because they are not managed for shorter time
12 segments for their quota, that's why we were looking at
13 the vessel decisions that are being made as to when
14 they get on the grounds and trying to provide them --
15 as you'll see in the alternatives, trying to provide
16 them additional flexibility for how they might make
17 better or more informed decisions on when they begin
18 fishing in order to get off the grounds when it's going
19 to be higher rates.

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. That
22 clarifies that. We want to move through this
23 presentation and then I'd like to take a lot of -- I
24 can tell we've got Council members that want to ask
25 them.

26
27 MR. GERVAIS: I just wanted to add in
28 addition to Dr. Stram's comment their effective season
29 is 10 months long in practice.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim. Continue.

32
33 MS. STRAM: Okay. Just moving into then what
34 the specific alternatives are. So in terms of changing
35 their incentive plans. The requirements for the
36 incentive plans are in regulation. They're rather
37 broad, so what the Council is considering under two of
38 the alternatives are to make additional requirements to
39 what must be included in the industry's incentive
40 plans, one of which would be that they must manage chum
41 bycatch under their incentive plan agreement.

42
43 The second is to look at tweaking some of the
44 requirements that they currently have. One would be to
45 mandate the use of salmon excluders within those
46 incentive plans. The second is to have closures of
47 weekly bycatch rates that exceed a specified threshold.
48 The third is to place penalties and restrictions on the
49 vessels that have the highest bycatch rates and
50 particularly targeting that time period in September

1 and October when the rates seem to be highest. So
2 those are changes that would be made within those
3 incentive plans themselves.

4
5 The second is to look at changing the pollock
6 fishery seasons. One of them would be to move the
7 start date to June 1st. Right now the start date is
8 June 10th. One of the considerations is by backing it
9 up to June 1st you might be able to get some of the
10 pollock fishery on the grounds earlier when the chinook
11 bycatch rates are much lower to begin fishing so that
12 they catch their quota and get off the grounds.

13
14 The second is more of a measure to restrict
15 them from fishing late in order to shorten the summer
16 fishery to avoid those highest chinook bycatch periods.
17 So there's a range of dates from mid-September to
18 October that the fishery would be shortened by, which
19 would force everyone to get on the grounds earlier.

20
21 The third, which was just modified in
22 December, is to look at not changing the season, but to
23 change how much pollock is available to them in the A
24 season compared to the B season. So it basically takes
25 5-10 percent of their available quota and shifts it to
26 the winter fishery in order to give them the
27 opportunity to catch it at the end of the winter
28 fishery, ideally when the rates are lower. That would
29 also alleviate the need to be on the grounds later in
30 the B season.

31
32 I would note in terms of the Council
33 selecting a preferred alternative none of these
34 alternatives are mutually exclusive. They could all be
35 combined. These are tools that are there that are
36 trying to be put forward and several of them could be
37 put forward at the same time in order to provide the
38 maximum flexibility.

39
40 And then the final alternative broad level is
41 looking at lower bycatch caps in times of low chinook
42 abundance. So this would lowering the cap levels that
43 are currently under consideration in years in which an
44 index of chinook runs in three indicator systems would
45 indicate it was a low abundance year. And working with
46 ADF&G this low abundance threshold was determined to be
47 a total run of less than 250,000 chinook for the
48 combined Unalakleet, Upper Yukon and Kuskokwim River
49 systems.

50

1 So, for example, under this alternative any
2 given year if the combined run sizes of those index
3 system is lower than that threshold, then the current
4 bycatch caps in operation would be reduced by a certain
5 percentage and right now the percentages under
6 consideration are by 25 to 60 percent. The threshold
7 that was put in place at 250,000 for that combined
8 index system is intended to represent historically low
9 run sizes over all of Western Alaska not just in those
10 systems.

11
12 An analysis was put forward in December and
13 some of the conclusions of that and we are still in the
14 process of revising our analysis for the Council's
15 consideration later this month. Managing chum and
16 chinook bycatch together does provide greater
17 flexibility for managing chum and a potential for
18 greater Alaskan chum focus than we would have under
19 other more blunt management measures without increasing
20 chinook bycatch.

21
22 At present there's limited but there is some
23 incremental impact of modifying individual aspects of
24 those incentive plans specifically. There is a higher
25 potential for lower chinook bycatch under Alternative 4
26 at that time, which was just to shorten the season and
27 then Alternative 5 provides an explicit mechanism to
28 adjust the caps in years of low chinook abundance.

29
30 The options that the Council considered that
31 will be in this new analysis again, this provision to
32 move more pollock quota to the wintertime, that has the
33 potential to provide substantial chinook savings, but
34 the impacts really are going to depend on how fishing
35 behavior changes and when the fishery is out there
36 trying to catch the fish in the A season.

37
38 The Council is now also looking at reducing
39 both cap levels. Before we were looking at reducing
40 just the performance standard. Now the Council is also
41 considering reducing the overall cap level, so both of
42 them by a range of 25 to 60 percent. Again, how that
43 connects to the action behavior of the fishing fleet is
44 really going to depend on how the industry responds
45 both in their incentive plans and their individual
46 behavior to lower cap levels.

47
48 Again I would just note that the Council can
49 mix and match across all these alternatives. They can
50 look at a broad suite of tools and combine across them

1 to provide the most flexibility and the best
2 incentives.

3

4 So how to provide input to the Council on
5 changing the current management approach. The analysis
6 of all these alternatives will be available to the
7 Council about two weeks from now and that will be
8 posted on our website and can be made available in that
9 manner. The Council will take final action the week of
10 April 6th, 2015 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage. At
11 that time the Council will select their preferred
12 alternative from the range of alternatives that's in
13 front of them and they can mix and match across them to
14 create their preferred management approach.

15

16 The Council takes written comments received
17 through April 1st. We also take public commentary.
18 This analysis will be reviewed both at the advisory
19 panel as well as at the Council during that meeting.
20 We are in the process of our outreach meetings and, as
21 Steve MacLean noted in the beginning of the
22 introduction, we'll be summarizing all the comments and
23 any resolutions and information received at these
24 meetings and presenting a report to the Council in
25 conjunction with final action in April on the
26 information that we have heard at all these meetings.

27

28 This just provides you the dates of the
29 meetings that we've participated in. We've
30 participated in all of the RAC meetings for the Bristol
31 Bay, the Y-K and again the combined Western and Eastern
32 here today. We also held a meeting in Nome in
33 conjunction with Kawerak in order to reach out to that
34 area as well.

35

36 You can testify in person at a Council
37 meeting, you can provide written, faxed or emailed
38 comments and this is our address and the email address
39 in order to provide comments.

40

41 I included a slide that has -- there's a lot
42 of information on our website. That's also where the
43 analysis will be listed. We also have previous
44 analyses listed there, genetic information, papers that
45 have been published on looking at the evaluation of all
46 this on the pollock fishery and all of these things can
47 be downloaded on our website or you can call the
48 Council and we'll make arrangements to have them sent
49 to you.

50

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2

3 That's all I have on the report.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Diana. The
6 Councils have questions. My intention is to have both
7 of these Councils, with concurrence of my co-Chair
8 here, to make a joint recommendation to the North
9 Pacific Fisheries Management Council to adopt portions
10 of options four and five to reduce bycatch, reduce the
11 cap numbers, reduce the seasons. We rely on your
12 expertise to adjust the seasons, but we want to see
13 reduction of bycatch. We're in critical condition on
14 the Yukon River chinook salmon and we're also looking
15 at a cyclic pattern of chum salmon and a reduction
16 probably coming up pretty soon.

17

18 So I would like the Council to make comments.
19 Does anybody have comments. Darrel.

20

21 MR. VENT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My question
22 is fishing this pollock and you've got a long season
23 there. Do you got enough fish? That's my question.
24 How is the pollock doing?

25

26 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chairman. In terms of the
27 status of the pollock stocks? Pollock stocks are very
28 healthy. They're actually fished at a much lower level
29 than the estimated amount that they could be fished at
30 specifically in the Bering Sea. They're at a much
31 higher than target level.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Andrew.

34

35 MR. FIRMIN: I have a question and I'd also
36 like to include that the salmon excluders be mandatory
37 for all boats. I mean the same like we're restricted
38 to certain gear types regardless of how they might
39 work, knowing beforehand, so that seems a fair change.

40

41 Also I was wondering how much credit is given
42 to the fleet's effort for lowering the bycatch rates
43 when there's all the major salmon producing streams and
44 rivers in Alaska are at such a low abundance? Wouldn't
45 it be safe to say that there isn't as much salmon in
46 the Bering Sea to be caught? Is any of that calculated
47 into your figures or what's your guys's -- I don't know
48 what you'd call it. I guess your plus or minus rate of
49 error or is all of that look at how much they've
50 lowered, but look at how much all the salmon streams

1 have been lowered also. I mean is that figured into
2 your equations there?

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Diana.

5

6 MR. STRAM: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Firmin. What
7 we've been looking at is, as I mentioned, there's
8 several things that factor into what their bycatch is,
9 but one of them is the relationship between the total
10 run strength and the salmon that are in the ocean. We
11 can't use that to come up with the appropriate number,
12 but we can look at that in terms of we know that
13 there's outlier years where the bycatch is not related
14 to the run strength and that's certainly a behavioral
15 mechanism and something that has now been constrained
16 below that level. Now we're trying to look at where on
17 the level of what's related to run strength can you
18 manage so that ideally the runs come back, but there
19 will be a relationship between the bycatch that's
20 caught in the pollock fishery in relationship to the
21 run strength. We're just trying to focus on the lower
22 end of it when the run strengths are so low. Is there
23 more management we can do to decrease that relationship
24 basically.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Andrew.

27

28 MR. FIRMIN: One follow-up question. Is
29 there any progress on working with the Russian pollock
30 fleets on any of their bycatch rates or any progress in
31 that neighborhood whatsoever?

32

33 MS. KIMBALL: Bill, can I answer that as
34 well. We're both involved in a group of people that
35 are appointed as an advisory group to the Russians and
36 we talked specifically about pollock. We've had a very
37 difficult time getting bycatch information, genetic or
38 numbers from the pollock fleet. They don't even
39 characterize that as bycatch. It's just catch. We
40 have a specific meeting this fall with that group where
41 we've set aside half a day with our scientists and
42 their scientists to come together and actually have
43 some cross-pollination and get information.

44

45 We're trying to do it in the sense of here's
46 what's happening in our runs, are you seeing the same
47 thing in your runs. Here's what we're seeing in our
48 pollock fishery in terms of age of fish and size of
49 fish, are you seeing that in your fishery. I think
50 it's our best most recent effort to get real data and

1 we'll give that to the Alaska Fisheries Science Center
2 to try to incorporate that into our total run strength
3 and trends both in Alaska and Russia.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Bill.

6

7 MR. TWEIT: I would just caution though that
8 until the Russians adopt the same scientific collection
9 mechanisms that we have, we're not really going to know
10 the true story. When we ask them now, they say, oh, we
11 don't catch any and that's just because they don't have
12 any observers on board, so those fish just disappear.
13 It's a small enough percentage. I mean it's a tiny
14 percentage of the total pollock catch, so it's not too
15 hard to make it disappear. But until they have similar
16 to us where all the catcher vessels have one full time
17 and where the catcher processors, the factory trawlers,
18 have two full-time observers, until that happens I
19 don't think we're going to be able to have much
20 confidence in their estimates.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Other
23 comments. Go ahead, Don.

24

25 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just real
26 quick. I just had a real quick question here. You
27 have three alternatives under consideration in 2015.
28 Number three is lower bycatch caps in years of low
29 chinook abundance. So what does that mean? I mean are
30 you guys willing to go below whatever that -- I mean
31 because if we can't fish period for chinook, isn't that
32 considered low and can we lower that? I mean I'm just
33 stumped as to what that means.

34

35 MS. KIMBALL: I think that's exactly why that
36 alternative is on the table. So if we're nowhere near
37 the cap level right now, the pollock fleet is not near
38 the cap level, we want to insure there's no possible
39 way they could be anywhere near the cap level, so
40 they're trying to put in these additional measures. At
41 the same time, they know that all the conservation for
42 chinook is falling on in-river users, so there needs to
43 be some sort of link to abundance that causes the
44 bycatch caps to be lowered at the same time that we see
45 run strength lowered and that's the whole concept.

46

47 So that's Alternative 5 in this group of
48 alternatives where we look at specific years and the
49 idea is -- Diana didn't have time to get into a lot of
50 detail, but Fish and Game would be providing on an

1 annual basis these three systems, the Unalakleet, the
2 Kuskokwim and the Upper Yukon, if those three aggregate
3 systems post-season that run index didn't meet that
4 threshold of 250,000, then the next year the bycatch
5 cap would be lowered by up to 25 percent or 60 percent.
6

7

8 Those are the options on the table. This is
9 the closest we've ever been to doing a salmon bycatch
10 cap, that we've been comfortable with the data in order
11 to do something like that that links it to abundance.
12 It's not based on forecast. It's based on post-season
13 run data. So all the escapement data, any subsistence
14 harvest that occurred, that's what would comprise that
15 index. So that's for that reason, to try to lower it
16 in those years and it would have to be below that
17 threshold that the Council chooses in order to lower
18 the cap the following year.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have Tim next. Go
21 ahead, Tim.

22

23 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Chairman Reakoff.
24 Thanks to North Pacific Council staff and the Council
25 member Tweet. We appreciate you coming to communicate
26 with us and appreciate all the time, months, years of
27 your lives that you put into this bycatch issue.

28

29 What I'd like to communicate today is the
30 significance of these subsistence users losing the king
31 salmon resource in our households. It's really
32 difficult to quantify. The best I could come up with
33 is it feels as though somebody has stole a child from
34 our household. King salmon is an integral part of who
35 we are and now, because of low abundance, it's not
36 available to us. But we feel that the inequity that
37 the pollock trawl fleet is still allowed to harvest
38 king salmon as prohibited species bycatch and to our
39 way of reasoning it doesn't agree with the national
40 standards. You know all the national standards better
41 than any of us.

42

43 To inform people in the room, part of them
44 are for sustained participation of a community and
45 minimize adverse economic impacts to such communities
46 and promoting sustainable opportunities for subsistence
47 participants and communities, avoiding significant
48 destruction of economic and social structures. This
49 impact of all these years from 1991 of the pollock
50 bycatch has just been a tremendous issue for us.

1 I am encouraged by what I'm hearing on your
2 Council's efforts to retweak Amendment 91. I feel
3 Amendment 91 was very late in its implementation,
4 approximately 20 years after the start of that trawl
5 fishery. Then the caps were not representative of what
6 the current chinook biomass is, but I see you're
7 addressing that in this upcoming meeting, so that's
8 encouraging.

9
10 I talked to three fishermen from Kodiak
11 during the lunch hour to prepare for this meeting
12 regarding what was their experience with reporting
13 bycatch in the SAI and Gulf of Alaska pollock fisheries
14 from 1990 to 2005. I feel, and they reiterated that
15 they feel like the observer requirements that are in
16 place now are providing a fair amount of bycatch
17 reporting. In those earlier years, two of the
18 fishermen stated that they felt that only half the king
19 salmon that was brought on deck was reported as bycatch
20 and the third fisherman said he didn't want to comment
21 because he felt that his actions were illegal and he
22 didn't want to go on record.

23
24 Anyway, if you add up your bycatch levels
25 throughout all these 24 years or so of Bering Sea,
26 Aleutian Island pollock fishing and Gulf of Alaska and
27 just tweak that number to move it from reported bycatch
28 to actual bycatch and do that conservatively by just
29 adding 40 percent to it. It's about 3 million king
30 salmon. So I agree with you and Marine Stewardship
31 Council that that is a low percent of bycatch, but it's
32 clearly too much for the king salmon population to
33 withstand.

34
35 So I would like to -- some of the proactive
36 steps I thought that the fleet and the Council could
37 take would be to require excluders on all the
38 harvesters. Quickly determine what is the best
39 excluder. Perhaps it's already done. I see a lot of
40 innovative net designs and construction materials
41 coming out of Norway and New Zealand and I'm not really
42 seeing those being employed in Alaska. You know, for
43 excluder design and for non-crushable cod ends, things
44 of that sort.

45
46 At this point I would trust the Council and
47 the industry to be focusing on what they can do with
48 existing trawl net style, but what about other
49 harvesting techniques that don't involve trawling
50 that would be a way that pollock could be harvested

1 that doesn't involve the trawl gear. I don't know if
2 that's pelagic long line or seine or some kind of
3 pelagic trap or hot trawl. I think that deserves some
4 thought.

5
6 We've seen in the last century that the trawl
7 fleets were able to destroy the North Atlantic cod
8 resource and the wild Atlantic salmon stocks, so you're
9 trying to manage or regulate the trawl fleet that is
10 truly an ecologic force in the Bering Sea. I'd like to
11 see utilization of that pollock resource, but I would
12 like to see where other fishing techniques are employed
13 to be able to harvest that without creating too much
14 impact on the king salmon stocks.

15
16 That's about it for right now. Thank you.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are all excellent
19 comments, Tim. I would like to incorporate many of
20 your statements into our joint comment to the North
21 Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

22
23 Go ahead, Bill.

24
25 MR. TWEIT: I did just want to briefly
26 address the state of the art on salmon excluders and
27 that is continuing to evolve. It certainly is -- a lot
28 of the excluder work is actually being done in
29 conjunction with Scandinavian companies as well, so
30 it's a global discussion.

31
32 One of the hesitancies that we have about
33 requiring excluders at this point is that as soon as
34 you require an excluders, the regulations actually have
35 to describe that excluder in great detail and you
36 immediately stop further innovation. You immediately
37 freeze any further development or new innovation in
38 excluders. I think most of us as Council members
39 aren't satisfied that we're through the innovation yet.

40
41 You've got to remember every fisherman who's
42 out there fishing pollock right now is fishing with a
43 chinook ax hanging over their neck the whole time
44 they're fishing. Some of them take it a lot more
45 seriously than others, but all the ones who take it
46 seriously are using excluders most of the time. The
47 only reason they wouldn't is during those time periods
48 when it's totally clean pollock they don't want the
49 excluder on because they want to be catching as many
50 pollock as possible. They don't want even that small

1 leakage that occurs with excluders.

2

3 So they want the ability to make the business
4 choices to use those to minimize. As soon as we tell
5 them what an excluder is, we shut off all innovation.
6 That's something the Council is worried about because
7 it's clear there's been, as you noted, a tremendous
8 amount of innovation and we expect additional
9 innovation.

10

11 I did also just want to comment that, at
12 least as one Council member, I'm not aware of any
13 fishing gear that doesn't have a bycatch problem and
14 that's everything from hook and line all the way up to
15 the big trawls and everything else. All those gears
16 you mentioned, they all have bycatch problems. There
17 isn't a gear out there that doesn't fish without some
18 level of bycatch.

19

20 The question for us as a Council is how do we
21 motivate every single skipper so that every day they're
22 out there fishing pollock they are worried about any
23 chinook on their deck. We've gotten to a lot of them.
24 We've gotten to the great majority of them. There's
25 some that are apparently proving tougher than others
26 for all kinds of reasons. Most of them aren't evil.
27 They've made other business choices. We're interested
28 in making everybody take it as seriously.

29

30 We think we've got a successful program in a
31 lot of ways and if you're right and the former numbers
32 were even higher, then that clearly demonstrates how
33 successful this program is. We recognize that low
34 abundance there still is no right number. In any
35 abundance there's no right number. The only right
36 number is zero. We think the only way to get there is
37 ultimately through every single skipper of ever single
38 pollock boat fishing every single day to minimize if
39 not eliminate their bycatch of chinook in their pollock
40 fishery.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Andy.

43

44 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
45 just wanted to say I've been involved in testifying at
46 a lot of these Council meetings for many many years and
47 when I think about where we are now and where we were
48 eight or 10 years ago, it's actually quite remarkable
49 what we've done or what you have done as a Council to
50 try and take care of this bycatch issue. I'm always

1 constantly amazed at the wide range of analysis and
2 ideas for trying to do those incentives to get these
3 skippers to knock off the bycatch and I think you've
4 been pretty effective.

5
6 I've always felt that if you really want good
7 behavior, you've got to reward people rather than
8 penalize them. I guess maybe that's what I'm trying to
9 do right here. I'm trying to reward you with a few
10 compliments about the good work that's being done. I
11 remember when excluders were first being developed.
12 There was a lot of time and money going into it and now
13 we're seeing that paying off now. So I agree with your
14 comments, keep developing things, keep thinking outside
15 the box.

16
17 Just to put my two cents in, I really like
18 Alternative 3 for some of the different aspects of
19 that, but most importantly Alternative 5, at this point
20 in time, chinook salmon is going to be in my mind the
21 most important thing to consider. We're trying to
22 rebuild chinook stocks and every single chinook salmon
23 counts when you're doing it when we're at the levels
24 we're at right now. So in my mind that's probably the
25 most important, but these other alternatives I think
26 they certainly have their place and I would certainly
27 leave that up to you and your analysis for that.

28
29 I just wanted to say thank you for a lot of
30 the good work that's done. I know there's been a lot
31 of progress. We oftentimes forget that when we see the
32 numbers of chinook on the Yukon River where they are
33 now. We forget about where we'd be right now if none
34 of this took place.

35
36 Thank you.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I want to commend Diana on
39 what I consider excellent work that you're doing
40 developing these ideas in the analysis. We've covered
41 two hours of our agenda and we need to come to a
42 resolution of this issue.

43
44 I feel that Alternate 5 is a priority, as
45 Andy does. I think Alternate 5, to analyze the run
46 strength and put reductions in the hard cap of 25 to 60
47 percent as a minimum that the Council should look at.
48 I feel that the other alternatives I personally would
49 like to defer to your expertise on how to weave those
50 into the incentives to get this reduction objective

1 down to levels that we need.

2

3 Is that acceptable to the Council?

4

5 MR. GERVAIS: Chair, can you clarify what
6 slide you're looking at when you're saying Alternative
7 5.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Alternative 5 in the slide
10 shows cap by year tied to an index of chinook runs in
11 three indicator systems of the previous year. Low
12 abundance thresholds of less than 250,000 chinook
13 salmon in Unalakleet, Upper Yukon, Kuskokwim combined
14 post-season in-river runs would have a 25 to 60 percent
15 bycatch. That's paraphrasing that slide. I feel that
16 that's a priority to reduce that bycatch cap if the run
17 strengths are at that level.

18

19 MS. PITKA: Hi. This is a resolution from
20 Tanana Chiefs Conference. They wanted the Councils to
21 consider it before we deliberate, so they asked to pass
22 it out.

23

24 MR. WOODRUFF: Can I make a comment?

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Don.

27

28 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
29 want to thank the Council member for coming and, Diana,
30 what a fine presentation you gave us. It was clear,
31 concise and fairly easy to understand. When I went to
32 Nome and testified to the North Pacific Management
33 Council I got a PDF file from the Bering Sea fishers
34 about their salmon excluder and it was just a tear in
35 the net. That was 2011. Now it looks like from this
36 photograph on your presentation that it's quite a
37 sophisticated salmon excluder, so I want to compliment
38 everyone on the progress that you've made towards that.

39

40 I want to echo Tim's and Jack's comments and
41 thank everyone that came to do this presentation and I
42 think we are making progress. We can keep working
43 forward. I think when you said you wanted to describe
44 the salmon excluder and put it in writing, I think that
45 can be a living document that can be changed. It's not
46 in stone. We're not carving it with a chisel. So we're
47 not locked in like you said we might be. I don't
48 believe that, you know. It could be changed to reflect
49 new thought processes. I know that there's video
50 cameras in these nets that show the salmon swimming out

1 of them. That's how this photograph was taken.

2

3 So I compliment everybody on the progress
4 that was made. There's one thing that came to my
5 attention is that Trident Seafoods in Kodiak this last
6 season had a tote sitting for two weeks with salmon in
7 it on ice for someone to come and pull the genetics on
8 these fish and they just sat there for two weeks.
9 Nobody ever came and pulled the genetics on them. So
10 there is a little breakdown on the fish that are
11 getting caught and the fish that are getting to the
12 food banks.

13

14 I know the fishermen are doing their best to
15 take good care of this bycatch, but if it gets to the
16 cannery, they're locked in. They can't do anything to
17 that fish. They can't touch it until somebody comes,
18 pulls the genetics or takes the computer chip out of
19 the fish or whatever. So there's a little bit of
20 breakdown in communication and that can be improved.

21

22 Thank you.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We need to move on here on
25 this agenda and we can't deliberate a long time. We
26 have a resolution from TCC that basically said what we
27 were saying. I see Becca from YRDFA wants to speak
28 real quick and Becca's covers this bycatch issue. Can
29 you come over here and grab this mic on the end.

30

31 Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
32 has been very involved in bringing together the
33 communities on the Yukon River on this bycatch issue.
34 So go ahead, Becca.

35

36 MS. ROBBINS GISCLAIR: Thank you. I just
37 wanted to clarify that the resolution is actually from
38 the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association. I was
39 going to cover this in my presentation. I can just
40 briefly touch on it now for you. This is a draft for
41 your consideration. I think you guys have talked about
42 some other alternatives that you may want to add into
43 this. Overall, I think you guys hit the nail on the
44 head that Alternative 5 is really critical.

45

46 That's the piece -- it's clear that the cap
47 is way too high for the conditions that we're in and
48 that gives us an opportunity to lower the cap when
49 salmon abundance is really low in-river. I think it is
50 important to indicate what percentage reduction you'd

1 like to see in that. Sixty percent is the highest
2 percentage being considered right now and that would
3 still -- I think that would leave the overall cap at
4 about 24,000 and the performance standard at about
5 19,000. So I would definitely recommend looking at
6 that.

7
8 I just wanted to touch briefly on the other
9 alternatives and why we are recommending including
10 those Alternative 2 methods of combining chum salmon
11 management with chinook salmon bycatch management and
12 in some way that's actually a way to reduce chinook
13 salmon bycatch as well. It lets you make sure that
14 when there is a conflict that chinook can be
15 prioritized. I think the chum issue has kind of become
16 secondary to chinook bycatch as we've really struggled
17 with chinook runs, but it's important I think to
18 include that while we can as well.

19
20 Alternative 3, I think, allowed some ways to
21 do more through the incentive plans, so including those
22 I think makes sense as well.

23
24 In the resolution I passed out, I didn't
25 include Alternative 4 as a recommendation and part of
26 that is a concern with reducing flexibility if you
27 shorten the season, but I think this is one where it's
28 difficult to look at. We don't have the analysis yet,
29 so that piece of it looks at splitting the A -- all
30 during how the A and B seasons are allocated for
31 pollock, something that we haven't seen an analysis on.
32 So, certainly, if Alternative 4 was something you
33 wanted to see included as well, there's no harm I think
34 in including that.

35
36 So I would just encourage the RACs to comment
37 on this. I encourage people to attend the Council
38 meeting if you can, but also encourage people to
39 comment as individuals. I think it's great that the
40 Council is looking at these things, but they still have
41 to make the decision to actually move forward with
42 them. So comments from individuals, from tribes, from
43 regional groups is really critical.

44
45 I do have some handouts, just one page here,
46 with information on how to comment that I'll leave on
47 the table over here and encourage everyone to send
48 those in. I'd be happy to answer any questions on the
49 resolution as well.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Is there any
2 questions for Becca's resolution? I was under the
3 impression it was TCC's.

4
5 MS. PITKA: I was too.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tim.

8
9 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Chair Reakoff. I
10 have a question for Becca or for North Pacific Council
11 members or staff. One of the proactive steps I'd
12 listed but didn't state was to reduce the amount of
13 time that's allowed for trawling to only four or five
14 months a year in an effort for habitat protection.
15 That leaves the salmon -- apparently it's the pollock
16 and the king salmon are sharing the same habitat area
17 in the Bering Sea. That gives them eight to seven
18 months of unmolested life per year, which I think would
19 increase their life and reduce the bycatch too. Has
20 the Council or advisory panel looked at that type of
21 management action that would get the gear out of the
22 water for a majority of the year?

23
24 MS. ROBBINS GISCLAIR: Maybe I'll start. I
25 mean I think to some extent Alternative 4 begins to
26 look at that and shortening the season, but certainly
27 not to the extent that you're talking about. I think
28 there's a balance between -- you know, if you shorten
29 the season, then you have much more concentrated
30 fishing in a shorter period of time. So, off the top
31 of my head I don't know that that would necessarily
32 result in lower bycatch, but certainly turn to those to
33 my left if there's more data on that.

34
35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I need to move this agenda
36 on and we cannot -- we've made plenty of comments. I'm
37 sure that the North Pacific Fisheries Management
38 Council is very aware that we are striving and want you
39 to strive for reduction in bycatch. I need a
40 motion.....

41
42 MR. UMPHENOUR: Jack, I move.

43
44 (Laughter)

45
46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay, go ahead and move,
47 Virgil.

48
49 MR. UMPHENOUR: I move that the joint two RAC
50 committees, Western and Eastern, adopt this resolution

1 that we were just presented concerning chinook salmon
2 bycatch.

3

4 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Moved and seconded.

7 Further discussion on the motion.

8

9 MR. UMPHENOUR: Yes.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Virgil.

12

13 MR. UMPHENOUR: I'll speak to the motion I
14 made. I've been going to meetings and heard about
15 bycatch ever since they had an observer program, which
16 is 1991. I'll never forget the very first report we
17 had. Maybe it was 1990. This was the salmon treaty
18 meeting before we had a salmon treaty on the Yukon.
19 The fleet reported, and this is report your own bycatch
20 with no observers, from the first of the year until the
21 middle of February 248 chinook salmon caught. Put
22 observers on them and the next year they reported
23 24,000 caught in the same period of time. So that goes
24 to the old saying, how do you tell when a fisherman is
25 lying. It's when his lips are moving.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 MR. UMPHENOUR: Mr. Chair.

30

31 MS. ENTSMINGER: Okay. You guys do all the
32 fisheries stuff and I tried to glean all this to make
33 sure we didn't have anything fall through the cracks.
34 In this motion, Virgil, does this include the
35 suggestions I just heard about including 3 and 4 in
36 this resolution?

37

38 MR. KOEHLER: It's on the other side.

39

40 MS. ENTSMINGER: As long as it's included,
41 I'm happy.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So, yeah.

44

45 MS. ENTSMINGER: Because it's all the
46 whereas's, it's the therefore's, I guess.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So the motion is on the
49 floor. Any further discussion.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 MR. WOODRUFF: Call the question.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Call for question. Those
6 in favor of submitting this resolution on reduction of
7 Bering Sea and chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea
8 pollock fishery to the North Pacific Fisheries
9 Management Council for their next meeting, signify by
10 saying aye.

11

12 IN UNISON: Aye.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Opposed same sign.

15

16 (No opposing votes)

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'd also state for the
19 record this will all be transcribed. I want the North
20 Pacific Fisheries Management Council to draw out or all
21 of the dialogue that we produced here, interaction, for
22 your record. So I would suggest you do that. So,
23 Tina, you'll have our transcripts probably in 10 days
24 or so.

25

26 REPORTER: You keep making it shorter and
27 shorter.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It will be posted on the
30 OSM website. It's real easy to find and downloads real
31 easily. So we need to move on in this agenda. I think
32 we need to go to a break for about 10, 15 minutes
33 because we've got a lot of agenda to go here.

34

35 (Off record)

36

37 (On record)

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Western and Eastern
40 Interior Regional Councils we're going to come back to
41 order. We have an evening session also for a listening
42 session on rural determination, so we need to move
43 through this agenda. We don't have all night to do
44 that. We went over two hours on that last agenda item,
45 so we're going to take Yukon Fisheries Drainage and
46 then I'm going to move down the list. We have the U.S.
47 Fish and Wildlife proposed rule and I want to move that
48 up right after the TCC and then we'll drop back into
49 the agenda again because I think that's going to be a
50 hot issue, that proposed rule.

1 Go ahead, Wayne, from Yukon River Fisheries.

2

3 MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Chairman. Good
4 afternoon, Federal Regional Advisory Council members,
5 both the Eastern and Western. I want to thank you for
6 giving me just a few moments to share some of Yukon
7 River Drainage Fisheries Association's programs with
8 you. This is just informational. No actions are
9 requested at this time.

10

11 The first program I'd like to speak to
12 shortly is our preseason salmon fishery preparation
13 meeting. For the edification of our young folks that
14 are here, just a brief description of that. Preseason
15 fishery preparation meetings give State and Federal
16 managers an opportunity to share early in the season
17 the management goals for various salmon species on the
18 Yukon River, thoughts on conservation strategies for
19 chinook salmon, gear types and fishing timing for other
20 species and how subsistence needs of communities along
21 the river can be met. Representatives, fishers from
22 the full length of the river share their concerns and
23 needs and discuss proposed management strategy with
24 fisheries management personnel.

25

26 So this year, the preseason fishing
27 management meeting is planned for April 29th in
28 Anchorage. The meetings rotate location on an annual
29 basis between Fairbanks and Anchorage. A fisherman
30 from each village along the Yukon River and sometimes
31 more than one will be invited to attend a river-wide
32 fisheries meeting and they have their travel covered to
33 attend the meetings. This meeting is funded by the
34 Yukon River Panel Restoration Enhancement Fund and it's
35 hosted by YRDFA. It's a one-day meeting for fishermen
36 to meet with fishers, fisheries managers and biologists
37 from Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and
38 Wildlife Service, to prepare for the upcoming fisheries
39 season. A preseason outlook will be given as well as
40 stock status updates and time will be spent in open
41 discussion talking about specific scenarios to
42 anticipate and plan for in-season fishing on the Yukon
43 River.

44

45 The second program I'd like to describe is
46 our in-season salmon teleconferences. They give
47 communities along the Yukon River in Alaska and Canada
48 an opportunity to inform State and Federal managers on
49 in-river conditions throughout the fishing season
50 itself, how they are doing fishing-wise and whether

1 subsistence needs are being met. These calls are
2 important to State and Federal managers for getting
3 real time information for informing and adapting
4 management decisions for meeting conservation goals and
5 providing opportunities for subsistence harvests.

6
7 YRDFA has hosted the in-season salmon
8 management teleconference for many years now and we
9 expect that many of you know about this program, funded
10 by both the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries
11 Resources Monitoring Program and the Yukon River Panel
12 Restoration and Enhancement Fund. YRDFA hosts these
13 calls every Tuesday most likely beginning June 2nd,
14 2015 this year. They will run through the last week in
15 August. Last year the calls were started a week early
16 in response to early entry runs coming into the river.
17 That may happen again this year.

18
19 The calls follow an agenda each week, opening
20 with subsistence fishers reports from Alaska Yukon
21 villages and fishers in First Nations reports from
22 Yukon Canada. Then reports from State and Federal
23 fisheries managers on their test fisheries results,
24 assessments and management strategies and hearing from
25 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Canada also.

26
27 These calls are an open forum for members of
28 the public to call in and hear weekly fisheries updates
29 and also a place to ask questions about the salmon
30 fishery in-season. Managers gain valuable information
31 from Yukon River fishers as to river conditions and how
32 well people are meeting their subsistence needs. We
33 hope people continue to find these calls useful. We
34 look forward to speaking with many of you on these
35 calls this season.

36
37 I also have Catherine Moncrieff on the line
38 and she would like to share a brief description of the
39 program she's focused on. Are you there, Catherine?

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 MR. JENKINS: It sounds like maybe she's not
44 there, so I will go ahead and give her reports very
45 briefly. Catherine is focused on in-season harvest
46 surveys. Since 2002 in-season harvest surveyors funded
47 by the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program have been
48 hired in communities along the Yukon River to ensure
49 consistent participation in reporting on subsistence
50 harvests and perceived abundance in the YRDFA in-season

1 salmon teleconferences. This summer we will be
2 conducting a scaled-down version of the harvest survey
3 due to a lower level of funding. We're still working
4 out the details, but we are thinking we will select
5 three key communities with a strong surveyor to
6 participate.

7
8 We're also reapplying for funds and hope to
9 bring the program back up to full scale in 2016 with a
10 focus on in-season fisheries communication among
11 community members. We are finding that the strength of
12 the program is based on consistent participation of the
13 communities and on the teleconferences as a good method
14 for communication and information sharing between
15 fishermen and managers.

16
17 So the second program I'd like to speak to
18 that Catherine is focused on is her customary trade in
19 the Upper Yukon River. This project, also funded by
20 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program is a
21 partnership between YRDFA and Subsistence Division of
22 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The project will
23 examine historic and contemporary customary trade of
24 harvested salmon in the Upper Yukon and the Tanana
25 Rives. We will use ethnographic interviews to describe
26 how customary trade practices fit within the overall
27 subsistence use of salmon and do a survey on barter and
28 exchange practices to document the scope and local
29 nature of customary trade.

30
31 The final objective of this project is to
32 improve understanding of the role of customary trade
33 within a continuum of exchange practices and to
34 describe any potential effects on customary trade from
35 declining salmon runs. We have made some progress on
36 this project since I last reported to you, including
37 receiving approval to conduct the project on all three
38 proposed communities; Fort Yukon, Manley Hot Springs
39 and Stevens Village.

40
41 A turning event has been held in Fairbanks
42 for our team to use the survey tools and the initial
43 field work has been completed in Manley Hot Springs.
44 In Manley, we found that some residents were
45 uncomfortable with discussing customary trade or
46 illegal activity in their community and they refused to
47 participate or declined to answer ethnographic
48 questions about their own participation, but that was
49 expected.

50

1 This is not the easiest project to
2 administer, but we're getting really good feedback.
3 Customary trade and barter operate on this continuum of
4 exchange. It is very ingrained in the unity and fabric
5 of the community. We found that foods and goods are
6 constantly being exchanged and it's a very important
7 practice to the people. We are planning our field work
8 in Fort Yukon for later this spring.

9
10 Lastly, a project that she is working on
11 called value of salmon that may be of interest to
12 Council members. The title of the project is How
13 People of the Yukon River Value Salmon. It's a case
14 study taking place in the Lower, Middle and Upper
15 portions of the Yukon River. The study communities are
16 Russian Mission, Nenana and Fort Yukon.

17
18 The main objective is to document the value
19 of salmon to people in these communities through
20 ethnographic interviews and describe how salmon/human
21 relationships have changed over the last 20 years due
22 to changes in abundance and the availability of chinook
23 salmon. So far, Catherine has done the initial field
24 work in Nenana and Fort Yukon and plans to work with
25 Russian Mission this spring and summer. This project
26 is funded by North Pacific Research Board.

27
28 That is all I have for you if you have any
29 questions.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks so much, Wayne.
32 Appreciate all the work that YRDFA does for the Yukon
33 River fishery and the people. Council members that
34 want to make brief comments. We've got a lot of agenda
35 to go.

36
37 (No comments)

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think you were thorough.
40 Thank you.

41
42 MR. JENKINS: Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We had Tanana Chiefs, but
45 Ben went somewhere, so I'm going to move this U.S. Fish
46 and Wildlife Refuge proposed rule up next. Oh, Brian
47 is here. So, Brian, do you want to give us your
48 overview. Oh, we've got Orville too. Come on up,
49 Orville.

50

1 MR. HUNTINGTON: I'm going to go ahead and
2 let Brian talk. I just got out of a 10-day Board of
3 Fish meeting and I'm a little bit tired. I want to
4 thank Virgil for all his work. I sure appreciate this
5 Council, the RAC process itself. At every Board of
6 Fish meeting I go to I really count on RAC members to
7 provide good testimony. It's really an important part
8 of the process. I really appreciate it. I'll let
9 Brian talk.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Orville. Go
12 ahead. State your name. I haven't met you yet.

13

14 MR. MCKENNA: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman.
15 Madame Co-Chair and members of the Council. My name is
16 Brian McKenna. I'm a Partners fisheries biologist with
17 the Tanana Chiefs Conference here in Fairbanks. This
18 will just be a brief overview of the TCC fisheries
19 program. I'll go over results from projects we
20 operated last summer. I'll touch on projects we're
21 anticipating operating this coming summer and fall and
22 then also we'll finish on future research ideas.

23

24 So the first project I'd like to speak to is
25 the Alatna River sheefish study. This was a population
26 structure study originally funded in 2012 through the
27 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. It was a one-
28 year study, but there was floods in 2012 and there was
29 early ice on the river in 2013, so it got delayed until
30 last year. In the upper left there is Stanley Ned and
31 the middle is Jared Sam and that's Paige Drobny. The
32 three of them are contracted by TCC to help facilitate
33 this project.

34

35 The Alatna River is the only known spawning
36 tributary for sheefish in the Koyukuk drainage. The
37 spawning grounds are located about 50 river miles up
38 from the mouth of the Alatna, which is just above the
39 villages of Alatna and Allakaket. Our objectives were
40 to collect and sample 200 sheefish. We're going to
41 look at otoliths to determine age structure, collect
42 tissue samples to develop a genetic baseline for this
43 population, examine lengths and weights to determine
44 fish condition, look at ovary weights to determine
45 maturity and spawning condition and also analyze
46 stomach content to see if they were actually feeding or
47 not.

48

49 The project took place from the 15th to 22nd
50 of last year. Like I said, Stanley Ned, Jared Sam and

1 Paige Drobny and myself participated in the project.
2 We had anticipated site snagging and beach seining as
3 the preferred methods, but the river was high and
4 murky, so site snagging was rendered ineffective and
5 the beach seining wasn't effective either. I think I
6 only caught four total fish beach seining. So we tried
7 drifting a six-inch gillnet and that proved most
8 effective. We were averaging about 10 sheefish per
9 drift and the bycatch was minimal. I think we only
10 caught five or six whitefish.

11
12 So let's see here. We collected 198 sheefish
13 in three days of fishing. Two fish were caught in 2012
14 before the flood happened. So we got the 200 total
15 fish for the sample size there. After the fish were
16 caught and sampled they were all donated to the tribes
17 of Alatna and Allakaket for customary and traditional
18 use.

19
20 This is just a descriptive table here showing
21 length, age and weight. Randy Brown, with the Fish and
22 Wildlife Service here in town aged all the otoliths
23 over the winter and helped provide this information.
24 It's pretty straightforward. The average length for
25 females was about 74.5 centimeters, males came in under
26 that at 66. Average weight for female was about 5,300
27 grams, whereas the males were just below 4,000. The
28 female's average age was almost 10.5 years and males
29 were 8.8.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you want to convert
32 that into pounds? I can do metric, but the gram
33 weight.

34
35 MR. MCKENNA: Anybody want to help with that
36 one?

37
38 (Laughter)

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So they're about 10-pound
41 average?

42
43 MR. MCKENNA: Yeah, that sounds about right.

44
45 MR. HUNTINGTON: A little bit more for
46 females. Females are a little bigger.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I want our Councils
49 to be aware of what you're actually saying. Go ahead.
50

1 MR. MCKENNA: Yes. This is a figure here
2 illustrating weight versus length. The red illustrates
3 the male sheefish and the blue is the female. So a few
4 things you can take away from this. Obviously we
5 caught and sampled more males than we did females. Not
6 surprisingly, the males ranged lower or smaller in both
7 weight and length whereas the females came in heavier
8 and longer. Also, if you look -- you don't see much
9 overlap here, so that suggests that the females weigh
10 more at length than the males, which isn't surprising
11 considering that they were in the spawning season.

12
13 Twenty-eight percent of the population we
14 sampled was female. We also looked at the GSI and
15 that's calculated by egg weight divided by total
16 weight. The average was 21 percent for the females and
17 basically that just means that all the females were in
18 spawning condition.

19
20 Stomach content analysis showed that they
21 were not actively feeding. There wasn't any food in
22 any of the stomachs. And then the tissue samples are
23 waiting in line right now at the Fish and Wildlife
24 Service conservation genetics lab. Those will be used
25 to help develop the genetic baseline for that
26 population.

27
28 The next project I'd like to touch on is
29 genetic stock identification project for fall chum in
30 the Black River. It was a one-year project funded by
31 the Fish and Wildlife Service research and management
32 fund. We partnered with Chalkyitsik Village Council to
33 help facilitate this project. On the top left there is
34 Nicole Farnham. She's a TCC fisheries technician and
35 the gentleman in the camouflage is Jonas Carroll, Sr.
36 from Chalkyitsik and we contracted him to help us with
37 the samples and collections.

38
39 The objectives were to collect 800 tissue
40 samples to combine that with pre-existing samples that
41 were collected in the early '90s to provide 200 total
42 samples, which is kind of the standard for developing a
43 genetic baseline. Jonas Carroll, Nicole and I sampled
44 between the 25th of September and October 1st. We set
45 two four-inch nets, one just upriver from the village
46 and one just downriver.

47
48 Both nets were checked twice daily. We were
49 barely able in that timeframe. We were successful, but
50 just barely able. I think we caught our last few fish

1 maybe 30 minutes before the plane arrived to leave
2 town. But we got our 88 samples. We collected an
3 additional 8 coho samples and those were all sent to
4 ADF&G's gene conservation lab and those again will be
5 analyzed to help further redefine that genetic stock ID
6 for that population.

7
8 The next project that most of you I think are
9 familiar with is the Henshaw Creek Weir. This is a
10 project that's been going on since 2000 and it's funded
11 through Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. It's
12 located in the upper Koyukuk drainage, just a little
13 bit above the village of Allakaket. Our goals are to
14 determine run timing and abundance of chinook and chum
15 salmon and to determine the demographics of the
16 population through age, sex and length data. We also
17 utilize this project as a platform to allow for a
18 science camp for the local youth in the area as well.
19 So we partner with the Fish and Wildlife Service,
20 Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge and also Alaska
21 Department of Fish and Game to help achieve these
22 goals.

23
24 Last year, unfortunately, the project was
25 flooded out and no data was collected, so just a few
26 photos here illustrating that. On the right, in a
27 normal year you can see the beach normally exposed, the
28 weir in, the camp high and dry. On the left there was
29 last year. No exposed beach and water flowing through
30 camp.

31 Here's the cook tent and sleeping quarters on a normal
32 year high and dry and then last year the water almost
33 breached the top. So we had to evacuate for safety.
34 Needless to say, no data was collected last year.

35
36 This is just illustrating the results from
37 the 15 years the project has been going on. The top
38 there is average escapement for chinook salmon. You
39 can see that it's ranged from just over 200 to upwards
40 of 1,800 with an ongoing average of just under 1,000
41 per year. The bottom figure there is chum salmon
42 escapement. The average ongoing is about 135,000, but
43 it kind of tells two stories here.

44
45 If you look at the first few years of the
46 project before 2004 roughly, averaging about 30,000
47 chum per year and then the last three or four years
48 it's been upwards of 285-300,000. So that would be
49 something to look at. We'd definitely like to compare
50 it with other escapement data and then overall run

1 strength throughout the Yukon and see what kind of
2 factors might be leaning towards this increase.

3

4 So I'll move on to projects that were -- we
5 will be operating this coming summer. So Henshaw Creek
6 Weir is funded through 2016, so we have two more years
7 of that. We also have another project. It's a genetic
8 stock ID for chinook salmon in the Salmon Fork River.
9 It's funded through the Yukon River Panel Restoration
10 and Enhancement Fund. We partner with ADF&G on this
11 and the goals are to collect tissue samples from 50
12 chinook in that stretch of the river to help define a
13 genetic stock ID for that population.

14

15 We haven't secured funding for the next few
16 projects, but we do anticipate operating them for this
17 coming summer. It's the Henshaw Creek Science and
18 Culture Camp. Again, we partner with Kanuti National
19 Wildlife Refuge and then the Koyukuk River villages to
20 help facilitate this. We applied for funding through
21 the Challenge Cost Share Grant. It's a really good
22 program that's been operational most of the years the
23 same as the Henshaw Creek. It enables us to bring in
24 youth from surrounding villages and expose them to both
25 Western science and traditional knowledge and skills.
26 So we look forward to hopefully having that back in
27 action this coming summer.

28

29 This is another genetic stock ID project.
30 Here it's for chinook on the Black River, very similar
31 to the two others I've already touched on. If this
32 gets funded, we'll be partnering with Chalkyitsik
33 Village Council as well as ADF&G.

34

35 The last one here is a feasibility study to
36 help establish a weir for fall chum salmon on the
37 Salmon Fork River. We applied for funding to the R&E
38 Fund and if that's successful, we'll be partnering with
39 CATG and Chalkyitsik Village Council. The Yukon River
40 Panel will be meeting in April, so I think in that
41 timeframe we should be expecting decisions.

42

43 Looking into the future, I'm currently
44 working with multiple other individuals and
45 organizations. We're looking to apply for funding to
46 continue the Partners biologist position at TCC. It's
47 currently going to expire at the end of this year, so
48 we're going to try to secure funding through 2019 for
49 that. Henshaw Creek Weir is currently funded through
50 2016, but we'll be reapplying for that one as well to

1 try to keep that project going through 2019.

2

3 Recently I was contacted by Arnold Demoski
4 and Nulato Tribal Council and there's a lot of interest
5 in trying to reestablish a weir on the Nulato River, so
6 we're working together to try to get that proposal
7 submitted to the FRMP as well.

8

9 That's all I have. I'm not going to read off
10 all the names on here, but we have a fairly small
11 department in the fisheries at TCC, so everything we do
12 is with the help of a lot of different agencies and
13 organizations. So I'd like to just say thanks to
14 Allakaket and Alatna Tribal Councils, Chalkyitsik
15 Village Council, OSM, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife
16 Service, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska
17 Department of Fish and Game and then also TCC staff.

18

19 That's all I have, so open it up to
20 questions.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Brian. Do
23 you have something to say there, Orville? Go ahead.
24 Appreciate all your work on Board of Fish.

25

26 MR. HUNTINGTON: Yeah, I just wanted to thank
27 you guys for all the good proposals you guys put in and
28 all the work you've done, the good work you're doing
29 with the North Pacific Council there. I really
30 appreciated your comments. I thought they were well
31 crafted. I liked some of your ideas to help people.
32 You know, there's a lot of people out there that need
33 this fish and food and I'm glad you guys are looking
34 out for them. We're thankful you're there. I'll
35 answer any questions if you have any.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does the Council have
38 comments or questions for the presentation and Orville.

39

40 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I've got Andrew down here.
43 Go ahead, Andrew. I'll get Ray next.

44

45 MR. FIRMIN: I just had a quick question.
46 What was the average age of the sheefish in your
47 project?

48

49 MR. MCKENNA: The females were, I believe,
50 just over 10 and the males about 8.8, so in the middle

1 there. Female 10.43 years and male 8.82.

2

3 MR. FIRMIN: Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

6

7 MR. COLLINS: It's too bad that that weir
8 didn't work because that's the first year you had a
9 total closure, isn't it, on chinook? Do you have any
10 impression on what happened? Any way to estimate
11 whether the return was good or not? I know with the
12 closure we saw bigger fish in the Upper Kuskokwim than
13 we'd ever seen before because we had that closure
14 earlier and I'm wondering if you had any response up
15 there.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That was a complete
18 wipeout. They have no data this year.

19

20 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. You didn't fly after or
21 do anything.

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No. It was just muddy all
24 summer. It had high water all summer long. It never
25 got clear from breakup until way up until September.
26 Go ahead.

27

28 MR. HUNTINGTON: In the past, Virgil
29 commented a lot that during these high flood years a
30 lot of our salmon get stranded up on those bars and end
31 up freezing in. So it might look good -- probably one
32 of the actions we took at Board of Fisheries that
33 helped was we went back to the old Board of Game cycle
34 of staggered openings and what that does is it lets a
35 lot of those kings go through when you have staggered
36 openings, so that's why you were seeing them in the
37 upper drainages.

38

39 It's too bad our weir didn't go in. We could
40 probably ask Fish and Game how their counts went. At
41 least we'll know what went up there, but we won't know
42 their survival rate for a few years until we find out
43 if they froze in or not this year because a lot of them
44 got up there in the high water and got stranded, so
45 we'll find out.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Andy.

48

49 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
50 think this might go towards you, Orville. I think

1 weirs are probably the single best tool we have for any
2 salmon assessment projects. They give us a lot of
3 really good data and it's really pretty clean data,
4 pretty good confidence intervals. I'm just wondering
5 if there's been any talk between TCC or AVCP to help
6 support in developing more of these weirs throughout
7 the system in streams that are identified as
8 potentials. I'm hearing from the State with budget
9 cutting there's going to be some reduction in
10 assessment projects throughout the drainage and I'm
11 really concerned about that for the long term because
12 of the need for that data long term.

13

14 So I guess I would just put it to TCC if
15 there's money in your pockets that you can put towards
16 some of that. That's money really well spent for the
17 future and that's really what I would like to see. You
18 know, we talk about partnerships. There's a lot of
19 discussion going on with the Salmon Commission or
20 whatever you want to call it, but, quite frankly,
21 that's where the partnership really needs to take
22 place, is funding of really critical assessment
23 projects for long-term assessment. So that's probably
24 more of a comment, but I was just wondering if you had
25 any thoughts on that.

26

27 MR. HUNTINGTON: Yeah, we struggle with it
28 like anyone else. We're in support of all the
29 Department of Fish and Game does, but I think we have
30 to look more at outside philanthropy groups to try to
31 find conservation funds and that would probably be the
32 only way we could address those concerns. I agree with
33 you, you know. How we help the Department of Fish and
34 Game in the future will be -- it's going to be all of
35 our work collectively. So I can't really say TCC has
36 deep pockets. We're hurting just like everybody else.

37

38 (Laughter)

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Orville. Yeah, I
41 think everybody's got budgetary constraints. We lost a
42 weir on the Takotna this year because of budgetary
43 constraints up by McGrath. So thanks so much.
44 Appreciate that. We have a lot to go here.

45

46 And at this time my Co-Chair and I concur
47 that we should move the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
48 presentation up on the proposed rule to this portion of
49 the agenda. So I would like to have Mitch and your
50 staff come up to the table. I don't know if we have

1 enough chairs. Go right ahead.

2

3 Go ahead, Melinda.

4

5 MS. BURKE: I just wanted to make a quick
6 announcement to the folks in the room. We have a
7 birthday in the house. If he wants to raise his hand,
8 I'll let him, but we're going to have a cake in the
9 back and we'll have some sugar as we need it in the
10 next couple hours. So I just wanted to let everybody
11 know.

12

13 REPORTER: Raise your hand. Darrel, raise
14 your hand.

15

16 (Applause)

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's Darrel's birthday.
19 He's an elder now.

20

21 (Laughter)

22

23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Mitch.

24

25 MR. ELLIS: Okay, thanks. I appreciate the
26 opportunity to speak before the RACs, Chairman Reakoff,
27 Chairman Entsminger. We appreciate this. Public input
28 is very important. Talking to groups like this is very
29 valuable as we move forward on various issues.

30

31 My name is Mitch Ellis. I'm the Chief of
32 Refuges in the State of Alaska for the U.S. Fish and
33 Wildlife Service. I have with me my Deputy Sarena
34 Selbo and then we have five of our Refuge Managers here
35 today, the five managers that are within the RAC area,
36 so I'm going to let them introduce themselves if that's
37 okay.

38

39 MR. BERENDZEN: Steve Berendzen, Yukon Flats
40 Refuge Manager.

41

42 MR. GLASPELL: Hi, I'm Brian Glaspell. I'm
43 the Manager at Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

44

45 MR. SPINDLER: Mike Spindler, Manager at
46 Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.

47

48 MR. BAYLESS: Good afternoon. Shawn Bayless,
49 Tetlin Refuge in Tok.

50

1 MR. MOOS: And Kenton Moos. I'm the Refuge
2 Manager for Koyukuk, Nowitna and Innoko Refuges.

3
4 MR. ELLIS: Okay. With that, you can see I
5 have lots of backup today. I heard I was going to need
6 that. Just kidding. You should have received a couple
7 documents in your package. There's a fact sheet on the
8 proposed regulations and also a question and answer
9 sheet.

10
11 What I'm going to do today is really go over
12 what the proposed regulations might look like. Again,
13 we don't have a draft yet, but we're developing one.
14 So I want to talk a little bit about exactly what those
15 regulations might look like, why the regulations are
16 being proposed, to who the regulations would apply,
17 where the regulations would take effect and also how
18 specifically the changes, if any, how they would affect
19 these two particular RACs and also give a timeline as
20 to where we are and what the next steps would be.

21
22 So basically I have about a 20-page script.
23 I'm not going to read from that. I'm going to move
24 through this really quickly and just paraphrase this
25 for you. The regulation process that we're embarked on
26 within the Fish and Wildlife Service for Refuges
27 basically at this point involves two broad areas. One
28 is how we treat predator management on National
29 Wildlife Refuges here in Alaska and I'll talk in detail
30 about that. I know there's a lot of questions
31 pertaining to that issue.

32
33 The second part of the rule would potentially
34 address closure procedures. Emergency, temporary and
35 permanent closure procedures as well as how we notice
36 the public and include public involvement in those
37 processes. So that second part is really more of a
38 housekeeping issue, although there's some really
39 important parts to it that need to be discussed and
40 vetted with the public.

41
42 The first part of the proposed rule -- and we
43 have a PowerPoint that we'll go through. Basically how
44 we treat predator populations, how we would conduct
45 predator control on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska
46 is driven by a couple of statutes or laws that have
47 direct bearing on that. The first one would be ANILCA.
48 So ANILCA lays out the purposes for Refuges in Alaska,
49 so we have a purpose to maintain wildlife and the
50 habitats in its natural diversity on Refuges. Also,

1 ANILCA requires that Federal agencies manage wildlife
2 consistent with the conservation of healthy populations
3 of fish and wildlife populations.

4
5 We also have the National Wildlife Refuge
6 System Administration Act, which applies to all Refuges
7 throughout the country and it was amended in 1997 by
8 the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act.
9 What that statute directs the Service to do is manage
10 wildlife and habitat and biological integrity,
11 biological health on Refuges, so we have a policy that
12 steps down what exactly that means. It basically means
13 we treat all wildlife, all plants equally. We don't
14 manage one species to the detriment of another unless
15 there are conservation purposes or concerns that would
16 drive that. So I suspect we'll get into a little bit
17 of that discussion today.

18
19 I do want to say that we have been discussing
20 these potential regulation developments with the
21 tribes, with Native organizations and with the State of
22 Alaska for about six to eight months now. So this
23 isn't an issue that should be new to folks. I know the
24 RACs had been given a heads-up on this at the last
25 meeting. So we've been doing the public process at
26 least initially with tribal organizations and the State
27 for some time, about a half a year now.

28
29 So what are the proposed changes. With
30 regard to how we treat predators or conduct predator
31 control in Refuges, we have a draft statement that you
32 see on the screen there, but it basically says that
33 predator reduction activities with the intent to alter
34 or manipulate the natural diversity of species,
35 populations or habitats are inconsistent with our
36 Federal mandate and, as such, would be prohibited on
37 Refuges in Alaska. An example of that would be
38 suppressing a predator population for the sole purpose
39 of providing additional harvest opportunities.

40
41 If you go to ANILCA, the purposes, as they're
42 laid out, mandate us to manage for natural diversity.
43 We have a couple other purposes and one of the more
44 important ones, obviously, is subsistence purposes.
45 Subsistence purposes are guaranteed by ANILCA, the
46 opportunities to pursue subsistence activities are
47 guaranteed by ANILCA, but the way we apply that is they
48 have to be consistent with conservation and with
49 natural diversity purposes of the Refuge.

50

1 I will say at this point just to be clear,
2 the Fish and Wildlife Service does employ predator
3 control as a tool. We do it to help meet the purposes
4 of Refuges, endangered species recovery. For example,
5 migratory bird habitats have been altered, habitat
6 fragmentation issues. It could be all sorts of
7 problems that we, as humans, have caused that need to
8 be addressed. So there are many cases where the Fish
9 and Wildlife Service uses predator control as a tool.
10 This is just simply pointing out how we manage predator
11 populations on Refuges in Alaska with regard to natural
12 diversity.

13
14 When we embarked on this process six to eight
15 months ago, through the public process we have pared
16 down the potential rule. We've taken out a number of
17 methods and means that we were addressing, some other
18 issues related to the collection of resources on
19 Refuges. We were going to look at the issue of
20 allowing visitors, not subsistence users but other
21 visitors to collect wood, other materials on Refuges
22 and we've taken that out of the rule. It's really not
23 an issue that needs to be dealt with. The point is, we
24 have listened. We've pared the rule down to its basic
25 core. It deals really now with just the closure
26 procedures and predator management on Refuges.

27
28 So we had the broad policy statement. We
29 also have some specific methods and means.....

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Can I stop you there for a
32 second, Mitch.

33
34 MR. ELLIS: Yes, absolutely.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Sue says she has a
37 question.

38
39 MS. ENTSMINGER: I have a question. You
40 sound real good, but I think you might be putting me to
41 sleep.

42
43 (Laughter)

44
45 MS. ENTSMINGER: Where did this all start?
46 Did this start with you guys working with the Park
47 Service? Did this start in Alaska? I have a concern
48 about that.

49
50 MR. ELLIS: Thank you, Madame Chair. It did

1 start in Alaska. It's been an issue -- and I'll try to
2 liven it up a little bit.

3

4 (Laughter)

5

6 MR. ELLIS: It did start in Alaska. We have
7 had issues, confusion, a need to clarify how we address
8 predator management on Refuges, so we've had conflicts
9 with the State mandates. It isn't so much that one is
10 wrong or right, it's that some of the nuances of the
11 State's mandates regarding how we manage wildlife are
12 different than they are on Federal Wildlife Refuges.
13 Normally we're able to reconcile that and I would say
14 most of the time we can, but there have been instances
15 where we've had discussions and testimony with the
16 Board of Game where we didn't agree. The Board of
17 Game, for example, went ahead and did what they had to
18 do with their regulations, but they were in conflict
19 with regulations that we could allow on Refuges.

20

21 MS. ENTSMINGER: Is that an interpretation?
22 Because I look at things a little different than you, I
23 believe. What the Board of Game does and how you're
24 interpreting this proposed -- I know it's not out there
25 as a proposed rule, but I see it a little differently,
26 like it might be coming from Washington. I mean I
27 don't see what -- I don't get it, I guess. I'm really
28 disturbed that we're going down this road.

29

30 MR. ELLIS: Well, there's been other cases
31 where there's been confusion about what we can support
32 and what we can't. So it's not so much a clarification
33 or development of a set of rules just to address one
34 problem. It's been a number of issues. So confusion
35 with the State and coordination with the State, we
36 needed to clarify what we can and can't do on Refuges.

37

38 We also have, I think, confusion with a lot
39 of our user groups that think that we can do things
40 that we can't by law. Predator management is one of
41 those areas. We've also had, admittedly, confusion
42 within our own agency about the interpretation of our
43 laws and statutes, so we need to clean that up too.
44 That's really the driving force behind this.

45

46 It is Alaska driven. Our agency, in
47 discussions with the managers here and Native
48 organizations and others, we realize there's a desire
49 obviously to have subsistence opportunities, to have
50 moose, caribou, other populations that are available

1 for people to harvest and sometimes we're at odds with
2 how we can address some of those needs pertaining to
3 predator control.

4

5 MS. ENTSMINGER: If I may. Did this start
6 together with the Park Service?

7

8 MR. ELLIS: Well, I think the Park Service
9 had similar issues, so we had talked to the Park
10 Service, it's been over a year now, because they were
11 having the same issues and were developing a rulemaking
12 process, so we've been coordinating with the Park
13 Service. They're further along than we are. We don't
14 have a proposed rule yet, but we certainly talk to the
15 Park Service and we're observing what they do and there
16 is coordination as you would expect, but ours is
17 different. It's not the same. The content is a little
18 bit different.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Rhonda.

21

22 MS. PITKA: Hi, I'm Rhonda Pitka. I'm from
23 Beaver. I live within the Yukon Flats National
24 Wildlife Refuge. So when you say that you've come to
25 the tribes and you've asked input, when did you do
26 that? Because I actually just saw this paper last
27 month. So when you say six months ago you were asking
28 for input, you weren't asking any of the tribes that
29 live within the Refuge. I mean we're considered
30 inholders in the Refuge and I think that that's sort of
31 the fundamental difference in our philosophy.

32

33 And I also think that when you say predator
34 management, we're talking about bears and wolves. I
35 live within the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge
36 and the numbers of bears and wolves have risen. I mean
37 we know this with your own studies. In my village
38 alone, they've killed eight wolves in the fall within
39 the village. So I mean these are actual things that
40 are affecting people too.

41

42 MR. ELLIS: Those are great points and I
43 appreciate the work that the tribes are involved in.
44 Frankly, they get a lot of requests for input. We did
45 send a note out to all of the tribes this past fall and
46 I don't remember the exact date, September. And I
47 realize that these can get lost in the shuffle because
48 you get so many requests for input, but back in
49 September Fish and Wildlife Service sent out to all of
50 the tribes in Alaska, except for the Southeast, we

1 don't have Refuges down there, requesting
2 government-to-government consultation opportunities and
3 we got some requests for that. Not as many as we had
4 hoped. We had a couple statewide calls where we
5 offered and I participated in one of those where we had
6 some of the tribes call in.

7
8 Again, this is an issue where we've tried to
9 get on people's radar screen. It's been difficult
10 because people are so busy and we appreciate that,
11 which is why we're moving a little bit slower than we
12 might have otherwise because it's an important issue
13 and we realize people want to weigh in on it.

14
15 As far as how we're treating predators, when
16 I'm talking about predator control programs, predator
17 management, these are systematic either management
18 actions or a set of harvest regulations that are
19 intended to suppress predator populations for the
20 purpose of increasing ungulates. I'm not talking about
21 harvest regulations where -- you know, we have very
22 liberal harvest regulations for wolves, bears and
23 coyotes and we're not proposing to change what the
24 State has in place for some of those sport harvest
25 opportunities.

26
27 We do have a couple of methods and means that
28 we are looking at because we think collectively if we
29 allow some of these together it might have population
30 level impacts. Is there more questions?

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Virgil seems to have a
33 question. Go ahead, Virgil.

34
35 MR. UMPHENOUR: Yes. My question is this.
36 You just said you don't intend to change your methods
37 and means. What you're intending -- the State has, but
38 what you're intending to do is exactly that. It's two
39 things. You're going to change methods and means and
40 seasons. It's not predator control, it's opportunity
41 for the people that live there. It's not predator
42 control, it's harvest. People eat these animals. They
43 may not eat the wolves, but they use the wolf skin, but
44 they do eat the bears.

45
46 There's a guy sitting at the corner I know
47 they eat bears in Huslia because every bear we harvest
48 -- like my guiding operation harvests over there, it
49 goes to the village and it gets eaten. And the ones
50 from Kaltag. We ship a lot of the bear meat into town

1 and I make it into Polish sausage or summer sausage and
2 ship it back to the village.

3

4 So what you just said, what you're doing is
5 reducing opportunity for Federal subsistence users,
6 that's what you're doing. You're only changing two
7 things, methods and means and seasons and some of those
8 regulations were proposed by this very RAC to the State
9 Board of Game. So I just don't get it. What it
10 appears to me, because when I read on the very first
11 page prohibit the following methods and means for
12 predator harvest on Refuges in Alaska. It's identical
13 to what the Park Service is saying.

14

15 I have to compliment you guys that you didn't
16 just publish the rule. At our last meeting in October,
17 you said you were going to go through a public process.
18 I'm glad that you're doing that. But now we're in the
19 public process and so what I have to say is you're
20 changing the methods and means to restrict opportunity
21 for bonafide Federal subsistence users and part of
22 these methods and means that you want to do away with
23 were submitted by the Eastern Interior RAC.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thanks, Virgil.
26 Darrel.

27

28 MR. VENT: I'm getting conflicting
29 information here. Meanwhile you guys are making all
30 these rules and stuff, we're having a problem over
31 there with predators and there's nothing being done.
32 We have to do it ourselves. I mean everything falls on
33 the people in the villages. We're trying to be
34 reasonable, you know, catching wolves when we can,
35 catching bears when we can, but we can't keep up with
36 the amount that's coming in.

37

38 I mean if it makes it easier for the
39 predators to catch these animals, they're going to move
40 into the area. That's how they survive. Their way to
41 survive is the same way we survive. We moved into the
42 area because that was a good place to live. Now
43 they're doing the same thing. You're saying you can't
44 help us because the State can't help us. I can't -- I
45 don't understand what you're trying to say. You can't
46 send somebody in there to help us try to lower the
47 predation. That's what I'm getting there.

48

49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we need to move through
50 this. I would like Mitch to continue with the

1 presentation.

2

3 MS. ENTSMINGER: Short version.

4

5 MR. ELLIS: Okay. We can do that.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: There's some -- on the
8 second page here there's some other issues that you're
9 going to have in the proposed rule that I see some
10 things that these Councils would like to speak to. So
11 go ahead, continue.

12

13 MR. ELLIS: Just a real quick point. We are
14 not planning to restrict Federal subsistence
15 regulations. So if a rule is proposed by the RAC and
16 goes through, it would be honored. We made that
17 commitment at prior meetings. So if there's a
18 customary and traditional use or some rule that moves
19 through the Federal side, it would be allowed for
20 Federal subsistence users. This is to restrict -- it
21 will apply only to sport hunting. Now I understand
22 that.....

23

24 MS. ENTSMINGER: I need to comment on that.

25

26 MR. ELLIS: Well, okay.

27

28 MS. ENTSMINGER: No, you wait a minute
29 because it's not fair. I mean we are the volunteers and
30 we sit here and we have all these issues that you hear.
31 The people in that northern region they're always
32 crying, for 12 or 13 years I've been on this group,
33 about the bear problem up there. I mean we come in and
34 -- I'm not trying to be against you personally, but it
35 comes across as, you know, we're going to give you this
36 report and this is the way we're going to do it and
37 this is the way we decided to do it and it's like we
38 don't care. You don't care what's going on up here and
39 I care and I disagree with you when you say it doesn't
40 affect subsistence.

41

42 If you take away seasons and bag limits --
43 for instance, if Andrew decided that he wanted to
44 become a guide and he wanted to take out bear hunters
45 and there was a grizzly bear season over bait and he
46 feels that that would be a great thing to do, not only
47 would they be able to harvest the bears, it would help
48 maybe their moose population and that you would take
49 away and that affects subsistence because the more
50 bears out there taking moose calves has something to do

1 with what's going on.

2

3 So I disagree with that point. I'm sorry. I
4 have to make that point.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Point well taken, Sue.
7 Continue on.

8

9 MR. ELLIS: Thank you. Again, this is why
10 public input is so important. These methods and means
11 are there for the public to comment on when the
12 proposed rule comes out. We need to hear from folks
13 about whether or not this is an undue hardship, taking
14 opportunities away from the public, that sort of thing.
15 Let's go on to the next slide.

16

17 Again, this is just background information
18 and why the legal mandates are what they are. Again,
19 it's not something that we have a lot of control over.
20 The mandates to manage fish and wildlife in their
21 natural diversity is in ANILCA. Again, the second
22 point -- well, let's just go on. I think we need to
23 move through this quicker. Again, we talked about the
24 differences with the State purposes.

25

26 So the public closure procedures. Again,
27 this one is another area. This is a different area
28 that we needed to address. We actually are trying to
29 make the closure procedures more consistent with the
30 way closures occur in the Federal subsistence system.
31 We already have closure procedures in place for other
32 uses in 50 CFR 36. This would update those. It would
33 take the emergency closure time period from 30 days to
34 60 days. It would take the temporary closure time
35 period from one year not to exceed five years. It
36 would also address and update the notification
37 procedure to the public.

38

39 So the way it was before, you know,
40 newspaper, signs and radio, we have other ways to
41 include people, so we wanted to update the regulation
42 to reflect use of the internet, other available
43 methods. We will still require public meetings in the
44 local area affected. We will still keep the other
45 requirements.

46

47 We got a lot of feedback initially about the
48 temporary closure procedures and going from a one-year
49 closure maximum to up to five years. Anyway, these
50 really are to update the closure procedures and include

1 really a more realistic approach to how we implement
2 temporary and emergency closure. I know there's
3 probably questions on that.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I wanted to comment. A
6 temporary closure exceeding 12 months going up to five
7 years I don't think would be considered temporary.
8 That would be a significant closure timeframe. So I'm
9 not exactly sure how that can be -- you know, the
10 Refuge Manager or the authorities could just close
11 something down temporarily for five years. Well,
12 that's a heck of a long time.

13

14 I feel that the public should have input and
15 why even an emergency closure is happening,
16 notification to the tribes, notification to the public,
17 a public meeting, and the notice through paper, signs
18 and radio and internet, I do feel that public meetings
19 should be added to that list. It's not actually stated
20 as public meetings there.

21

22 And really, 36 CFR 42(d), I'm real concerned
23 about going to a five year temporary closure. That
24 doesn't give the public adequate input into the
25 process, so I feel it's actually -- Alaska, because of
26 our cyclic or fluctuating nature of game populations,
27 fish populations, there needs to be more rapid response
28 to the public to comment on what the Service is doing.

29

30 So I just wanted to make those points. I was
31 looking at this. Other Council members, both Councils,
32 comments on this sheet here. Andy.

33

34 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I share a lot of the same
35 concerns you have. I guess I would like to ask why are
36 you changing from 30 days to 60 days. What has changed
37 to make you feel that that's necessary for increasing
38 the emergency closures from 30 to 60 days. It just
39 seems like there's a large attempt here to basically
40 just make it so that there is not as much public
41 participation.

42

43 I guess I'm really confused about what has
44 changed
45 in this world that you feel it necessary to double the
46 amount of time on that closure and go by five fold on
47 the other one. I've heard your answer, but it doesn't
48 seem to have much weight behind it. It's more of a
49 matter of, well, we decided we want to do this, so this
50 is what we're going to do, but I don't really hear any

1 legitimate reasoning so far as to why you want to make
2 those changes.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Response, Mitch.

5

6 MR. ELLIS: Sure. Yeah, I mean those are
7 great comments, good feedback. The emergency closures,
8 the kinds of things where if there's a public safety
9 issue or some other emergency, closing it for 30 days,
10 a lot of times, you know, the trouble of re-upping or
11 redoing the process again after the initial 30 days is
12 -- most of these emergencies last longer than a couple
13 of weeks so they can run -- this is just an efficiency
14 mechanism for us so that we don't have to repeat the
15 process if it's an emergency. Again, these are for
16 public safety issues, those sorts of things.

17

18 If it's a temporary closure, I completely
19 understand your concern about going to a five-year
20 process. That's a long time. Again, the reason we
21 went -- we had initially thought maybe three years, but
22 the temporary closure being up to five years is to
23 allow public process, NEPA processes to play out
24 because they are very burdensome and they take so much
25 time.

26

27 MS. ENTSMINGER: What are you anticipating to
28 move from one year to five years? What are you scared
29 of?

30

31 MR. ELLIS: Hopefully we wouldn't have a
32 temporary closure that went five years. If it was a
33 conservation concern or some -- it could be.....

34

35 MS. ENTSMINGER: But that is something that
36 can be handled in State. It doesn't have to be handled
37 by -- this goes into the public or the CFRs and it's
38 forever there. We're concerned about stuff like that.
39 We don't like seeing things forever there that's that
40 intrusive. And that came out in my region, so I'm
41 reiterating what they're saying.

42

43 MR. ELLIS: Fair enough.

44

45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would also say that the
46 Regional Council process and consultation with the
47 tribes and the Federal Subsistence Board process to any
48 kind of a management reduction and the Federal
49 Subsistence Board can modulate take. The solicitors
50 tell us that at the Federal Subsistence Board. I feel

1 that the one year temporary closure is adequate to
2 develop regulations to address. That would be for fish
3 and wildlife issues. I feel that that's adequate with
4 the management structure that we have with these
5 Regional Councils.

6
7 On the emergency closures, I think it should
8 say if you want to go to 60 days because of
9 reauthorization up to 60 days. My question is if it
10 doesn't take 60 days, can it be lifted before that. So
11 it should state that if it's a temporary closure, an
12 emergency closure and the problem alleviates in two
13 weeks, it lifts. You don't get stuck in the 60 days.
14 You know, that's a burden to the public and so it
15 should be clear there.

16
17 I really question a five-year issue because
18 we have management authorities and processes in place
19 in Alaska and I feel that a 12-month -- you know, there
20 can be special action requests of the Federal
21 Subsistence Board. There's various mechanisms to do
22 certain things. You'll have to explain further why the
23 NEPA process -- I mean that's like every last Dall
24 sheep dies in the Arctic Refuge and you need to like
25 close it for five years. Well, that's a given.
26 Nobody's going to have any kind of a season then.
27 You're going to get State and Federal managers to close
28 it indefinitely until that rectifies.

29
30 But to make it five consecutive years, I feel
31 the public should have the opportunity to comment.
32 Within one year the public should be able to comment on
33 the need for that additional time of closure. That's
34 my impression looking at that. Your response.

35
36 MR. ELLIS: Sure. Thank you. Our intent is
37 to only have these closures in place as long as
38 necessary. So they say up to 60 days, but hopefully it
39 wouldn't be in emergency closure taken. The same thing
40 with the temporary closure. I can't imagine that would
41 happen where it went to five years. So we're open to
42 suggestions on how to alter that. If we keep it at one
43 year, we don't have this problem very often, but
44 occasionally when there's a temporary closure and we
45 know that it's going to require looking at a permanent
46 closure, one year doesn't give us enough time to get
47 adequate public involvement to effect a permanent
48 closure or to address it.

49
50 So what we end up doing is something very

1 similar to the Park Service's prospectus process where
2 we have to, after the one year temporary closure, we do
3 it all over again, which, again, maybe that's not a bad
4 thing to require revisiting with the public the need
5 for the closure, et cetera. So we're open to input
6 like that.

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I don't think it's a bad
9 thing to re-involve the public in the process. Sue
10 seemed to want to make a comment. Go ahead, Sue.

11

12 MS. ENTSMINGER: Yeah. I guess I'm trying
13 not to get angry, so forgive me. We have a State Board
14 of Game that has the authority to make seasons and bag
15 limits, so I'm, for the life of me, wondering what is
16 going to potentially give us a five-year closure from
17 the Fish and Wildlife Service. I would think that
18 there's a better avenue, you guys working together,
19 than for us to be sitting here listening to these
20 frightening things of five-year closures. When you
21 guys put that in here, it seems like it's iron clad and
22 I'm scared of that.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that's what the public
25 process is, for people to voice their opinions at this
26 forum. So this is what you came to hear, so this is
27 what you're going to hear.

28

29 MR. ELLIS: Absolutely.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

32

33 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, I guess what I have a
34 problem with is you're going to manage the Wildlife
35 Refuges the same way as the Parks. In the Parks, let's
36 say the old Parks at least, there's no hunting, so
37 you're allowing natural populations in there to up and
38 down and these numbers go up and down and so on. When
39 you get into a certain state like Denali Park, they
40 don't produce the caribou that used to be produced
41 there way back. They're held down by predation and so
42 on. It's true that they're stable in there, but
43 there's no hunting.

44

45 Now we can regulate the hunting on moose,
46 let's say, but when you say we're depressing predators
47 to create more moose, both the predators and humans
48 benefit from that. It's not the human harvest that's
49 bringing it down. We can regulate that. It's the
50 predation that's bringing it down. If you're not

1 getting any calf survival, the general public they're
2 not killing the calves off, it's the predators.
3 There's too many of them in relation to their prey
4 base.

5
6 So if you want to maintain healthy
7 populations within those Refuges, and I'd think you'd
8 want to do that and manage for diversity in there,
9 there ought to be some balance between predator and
10 prey. That may mean you have to do something to
11 depress it or to balance the number of predators. To
12 put restrictions, let's say, on bear harvest when the
13 bear population is healthy, I would think there would
14 be no biological reason for putting any restrictions on
15 bear harvest when their numbers are healthy and they're
16 also contributing then to falling moose populations.

17
18 So I would like to see more management not
19 for natural diversity but for healthy diversity and
20 that's what the State is trying to do in many cases.
21 If you don't, you're going to get into predator pits on
22 a lot of the Refuges. They're going to go down and the
23 predation will just keep that population low or it's
24 going to take a long time for it to come up. So it
25 looks like at some point you have to reduce predation
26 numbers in order to get a healthy population again.
27 And you can look at twinning rates and other things to
28 see that they're healthy. The food base is out there.
29 What's keeping them down is predation. So why wouldn't
30 you want to work for some balance between the two?

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I wanted to comment to the
33 prohibitions page. It says except allowed for resident
34 hunters to take black bear sows and sows with cubs
35 under customary and traditional use activities at a den
36 site October 15th to 30th in specific Game Management
37 Units in accordance with State law. That has to be
38 local rural residents and it should say take black bear
39 cubs and sows with light. The regulation allows the
40 use of artificial light at a den site. So that's the
41 legal.

42
43 So if we don't have -- if you close the light
44 aspect, basically we would have to submit a Federal
45 subsistence proposal to that effect. So I would not
46 enjoy having to go all through that trouble. And so I
47 feel that your wording should reflect local rural
48 resident hunter and the caveat and that they also can
49 use a light and that's a customary and traditional
50 practice recognized by the Board of Game and recognized

1 and endorsed by the Western Interior Regional Council
2 because we don't like to talk about these bear issues
3 in the Koyukon Region, but that is a very important
4 practice and I'm adamant and stolid about maintaining
5 that subsistence activity and I don't want it to fall
6 through the cracks in this process here. I want to get
7 that on the record.

8

9 Other comments from the Council members.
10 Darrel, did you want to comment on the bear denning
11 thing. I mean you live dead center where this happens.
12

13 MR. VENT: I see that there. That is our
14 customary taking of bears. We do try to lower the
15 predation rate, so we use any means and it helps us.
16 We use the meat. I mean we utilize everything. We
17 don't throw it away. We respect the animal. The thing
18 that we seem to be having more problem with is the
19 grizzly bears. We seem to be getting a lot more
20 grizzly bears in our area than we usually had before.
21 We're not comfortable hunting them yet. I think that's
22 what it is, so that's why they're moving into the area.
23 We do catch some, but we're not really comfortable
24 hunting them yet because we have respect for them.
25 We're trying to adapt.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Mitch.

28

29 MR. ELLIS: Thank you. I do want to point
30 out that we intended to allow for that. We heard loud
31 and clear during the consultation process that people
32 wanted to make that harvest opportunity remain
33 available through the State system. So we'll look at
34 that wording, Jack, and we'll make sure that we get
35 that right. So that was an exception that we intended
36 to allow for.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I need to clarify.
39 You're going to be here tomorrow for the Eastern
40 Interior meeting and will be available for this issue
41 on their side. We're kind of stuck in a timeframe here
42 with this joint meeting. So Sue and Lester -- Lester's
43 got his hand up and we'll let those talk. I think that
44 we made a lot of comments from the Western side, but we
45 need to move on. Are you going to be here tomorrow for
46 the Eastern?

47

48 MR. ELLIS: I will. I'll be here all
49 morning. I'll be happy to engage in all that.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. They can continue
2 to hash this out. Go ahead, Lester. We'll get one
3 comment from you.

4
5 MR. ERHART: Yeah, this getting black bears
6 in the den have been going on for hundreds of years. I
7 don't see anything wrong with it, you know. A lot of
8 the people, this is where they get their fat and render
9 it out. The best donuts I ever ate was cooked with
10 bear meat, you know. So I don't think it should stop,
11 you know.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, we're protective of
14 that. We're going to maintain that and they're
15 agreeing to that. Go ahead, Sue.

16
17 MS. ENTSMINGER: So they're agreeing to
18 listen to us more and not move this into the Federal
19 Register for a while? I don't even want to see it go
20 into the Federal Register. It frightens me to death.
21 Give us a chance. See, this is what I was trying to
22 allude to earlier in my opening remarks. We just have
23 this limited time. As you see, we're struggling to get
24 through an agenda.

25
26 Your report could have been two hours long,
27 but then we would have never got our chance to say what
28 we wanted to say. That's why we interrupt and I
29 apologize for that, but it's very important. Give us a
30 chance. I mean I don't feel like we had a chance with
31 the Park Service and they're moving along rapidly. I
32 do appreciate that that isn't in the Federal Register
33 right now and I would appreciate if you'd give us more
34 time.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So Eastern Interior will
37 be able to address this further with you tomorrow. I
38 think the Western Interior has made adequate comment on
39 our side. So I appreciate you coming to the joint
40 meeting, but I still have quite a bit of other
41 fisheries issues to deal with tonight. We also have a
42 hearing on the rural determination at 7:00, so I'm
43 under a time constraint. I appreciate your coming here
44 and explaining things and dialoguing with the two
45 Councils.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 MR. ELLIS: Yeah. Again, thank you very
50 much. We appreciate the opportunity. Great comments

1 and we're available whenever.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Sue will have that seat
4 nice and hot for you tomorrow.

5

6 (Laughter)

7

8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we're going to continue
9 to move on in this agenda. We're on the Yukon
10 Fisheries Research Monitoring update with Fred Bue,
11 Aaron Martin and Stephanie Schmidt. So we're going to
12 talk fish now. WIRAC and EIRAC love to talk fish.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Stephanie. Your
15 name, state for the record.

16

17 MR. MARTIN: Good afternoon, everybody. My
18 name is Aaron Martin. I'm a fisheries biologist with
19 the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office in
20 the Subsistence Fisheries branch.
21 I have to rescue my wife from my five-month-old and my
22 four-year-old in 20 minutes, so Stephanie is agreeing
23 to let me go first.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I know how it goes. I've
26 got a two-and-a-half-year-old. Go right ahead. Speak
27 like an auctioneer if you can.

28

29 (Laughter)

30

31 MR. MARTIN: Thanks for the opportunity to
32 talk. I was asked just to give an overview of the
33 projects that the Fish and Wildlife Service is going to
34 be hosting within the Yukon. Overall we have three
35 core areas that we have fisheries projects. One is on
36 the Andraefsky out of St. Mary's. It's the East Fork
37 Andraefsky River weir and then the Gisasa River weir
38 off the Koyukuk River and then the Chandalar sonar
39 project. I'm going to speak briefly on these projects
40 and what we're doing there and some of the other side
41 projects that we have going on.

42

43 So the East Fork Andraefsky River weir is an
44 OSM-funded project that has now passed its 20th year of
45 operation. The Andraefsky weir and the Gisasa River
46 weir are the longest continuous running projects on the
47 Yukon for chinook and summer chum populations looking
48 at demographics and the quantity of escapement
49 throughout those areas. Again we're looking at chinook
50 and summer chum and these projects are in operation

1 from June through July.

2

3 The Andreadfsky River weir we're using as a
4 platform project also to look at lamprey within the
5 Andreadfsky to better understand some of the basic
6 biology of the populations there. Then we've also
7 worked with some of the other fisheries programs on
8 different whitefish species trying to understand the
9 demographics of those populations.

10

11 We're also working with the State and NOAA
12 Fisheries on a river wide AYK area wide thymine study.
13 Thymine is a B vitamin that's essential to all of us.
14 I'm looking at a potential cause or link to chinook
15 declines throughout the Yukon and Western Alaska. We
16 also have hosted open houses at the weir on the
17 Andreadfsky.

18

19 The Gisasa River has also passed its 20th
20 year of operation. We're looking at the same
21 demographic and abundance characteristics of those
22 populations there. With those two weir projects, after
23 they've passed their 20 years of operation, we're
24 diving into an intensive review of those datasets now
25 that we have a goldmine of data. We're going to be
26 looking at doing some intensive trend analyses over the
27 next couple years. We're just at the beginning of that
28 right now and we'll be reporting back to you guys as we
29 proceed through that.

30

31 Chandalar River sonar. We've come to 19
32 years of operation there. The population there is
33 doing really well. Fall chum are at their peak right
34 now and it's expected that they'll probably start to
35 drop down over the next few years. This project we
36 typically hire three or four people to maintain the
37 project. It's about 15 miles up the Chandalar.

38

39 We also began a project in 2013 as a pilot
40 project and last year again carrying forward with more
41 pilot work looking at the salmon habitat in the Upper
42 Chandalar trying to better identify where the
43 corresponding areas are for chinook and coho and chum.
44 The Chandalar is one of the biggest contributors of
45 fall chum in the Yukon, so we're trying to better
46 understand what the limiting factors are there with the
47 understanding that there's some proposed mine activity
48 there and anecdotal evidence from Yukon River Panel
49 discussions linked to the productivity of the Porcupine
50 River, which is a sister river just over the hillside

1 from the Chandalar.

2

3 So with this we're looking at temperature
4 velocity and water chemistry of the corresponding areas
5 for fall chum. Overall we've identified 250-400,000
6 fall chum are keying in on virtually 40 miles of the
7 Chandalar River between Venetie and the East Fork of
8 the Chandalar confluence, so we've identified some of
9 the corresponding areas within that and we're setting
10 up a long-term project over the next three or four
11 years that will be assessing the habitat conditions
12 there.

13

14 Right now we've got equipment in the ground
15 looking at water temperatures throughout the winter,
16 episiometers, which measure the upward ground water
17 pressure to get a better idea of what the current
18 conditions are with the understanding that it would be
19 nice to have a baseline condition so if things do
20 shift, if we do start to see dramatic changes or if we
21 do see some more mining activity increasing in that
22 area.

23

24 Overall, our office hires 10 to 12 people.
25 We are fortunate to get local hires from Galena and
26 Fort Yukon and Venetie and St. Mary's. We put local
27 hire announcements out each year and send them to the
28 RAC coordinators and they help distribute those. We've
29 also been trying to work with the Alaska Native Science
30 and Engineering Program, the ANSEP program, to recruit
31 some students through that and then general contracts
32 throughout the project.

33

34 With that, I'll leave it for questions.

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Aaron. Does the
37 Council have any questions or comments on those
38 projects U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has going.

39

40 The Chandalar upwell project, I think that's
41 an excellent project. There's a hydrology rift all the
42 way across the south slope of the Brooks Range and goes
43 all the way across the north slope of the Brooks Range,
44 so those are important spawning areas for Dolly Varden,
45 char on the north side and all these salmon and
46 sheefish on the south side. Those are important
47 hydrology sources, so I'm glad to see you're looking at
48 those.

49

50 Any comments or questions on those projects.

1 Tim.

2

3 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Aaron, I
4 don't have a comment on those comments, but do you know
5 Doug McBride?

6

7 MR. MARTIN: Uh-huh.

8

9 MR. GERVAIS: Will you communicate with him
10 regarding this Council's desire to have -- he's a
11 member of the North Pacific Fisheries Management
12 Council. We would really appreciate you to communicate
13 with him that we need him to use his seat to push for
14 more conservative management measures regarding this
15 chinook and chum salmon bycatch. And you heard the
16 discussion from both Councils earlier.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Tim. Appreciate
21 that. Any other comments or questions from the
22 Councils on the presentation.

23

24 (No comments)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You can go get your baby
27 now.

28

29 (Laughter)

30

31 MR. MARTIN: Thank you everybody for the
32 opportunity.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Appreciate that. Those
35 are worthy projects. Stephanie.

36

37 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For the
38 record, I'm Stephanie Schmidt. I'm the Yukon River
39 summer season fishery manager for the State of Alaska.
40 I just stepped into that position in November and prior
41 to that I was the fishery research biologist on the
42 Yukon River for three years.

43

44 Today I'm just going to give some highlights
45 of the research that the Division of Commercial
46 Fisheries is overseeing in 2015. Hopefully you have a
47 handout in front of you or there are a couple of
48 handouts. One on the top it says 2015 Yukon River
49 salmon research highlights and the other one is a flyer
50 that provides an overview of one of the projects that

1 we completed last year.

2

3 Starting with two projects that I think are
4 really fascinating and interesting that's happening
5 within the Division of Commercial Fisheries being led
6 by Dr. Katie Howard, who is our AYK regional research
7 coordinator. She's been doing research on juvenile
8 chinook salmon for several years now in the northern
9 Bering Sea, so one of her projects is to continue doing
10 these research surveys in the northern Bering Sea.
11 These surveys help determine abundance, health, diet
12 and size of juvenile salmon in the Bering Sea, so these
13 are predominantly two-year-old salmon that they're
14 catching in those surveys.

15

16 That project has been going on since 2002
17 with a collaboration with NOAA and they're now starting
18 to use the data I gathered from that project, the
19 abundance estimates and the different size and age
20 classes that they're catching in those surveys to
21 forecast adult returns to the Yukon River. They first
22 used this last year to estimate the number of adult
23 chinook salmon that were coming back and their model
24 estimate was actually fairly accurate, so they will do
25 that again this year and provide a forecast estimate in
26 addition to the estimates that I produce with other
27 models.

28

29 You'll see they're based on recent juvenile
30 data. They are forecasting that the 2015 chinook
31 salmon run size would be similar to what we had in 2014
32 and they're expecting a higher than average abundance
33 of four-year-old chinook salmon to return to the river
34 this summer. That's because in 2013 they had a record
35 abundance of juvenile chinook salmon that were caught
36 in that Bering Sea survey. So in 2013 those are two-
37 year-old fish, so now in 2015 those are the four-year-
38 olds coming back.

39

40 I can corroborate that potential estimate
41 that return based on the fact that we saw quite a few
42 three-year-old fish come back in 2014. We heard it
43 from fishermen, we saw it at our escapement projects,
44 we saw it at the Pilot Station sonar program. So we
45 are expecting to have a fair number of four-year-olds.
46 So if you see a lot of jacks in the river, that is not
47 unexpected.

48

49 The second project that she's doing with
50 juvenile chinook salmon is one that was just initiated

1 last year in 2014 and is continuing this next year.
2 It's another collaboration with NOAA and this one is
3 funded by the Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon
4 Initiative with some contribution from the North
5 Pacific Research Board. This project is focused on the
6 Yukon River Delta. They're based out of Emmonak and
7 what they're trying to do is estimate outmigration
8 timing, health, diet and size of Yukon River salmon as
9 they're leaving the river and entering into the marine
10 environment.

11
12 Katie is actually then taking the data
13 collected from that particular project and comparing it
14 to what she's then seeing in the northern Bering Sea
15 just a few months later. So this project of
16 outmigration timing from the Delta occurs predominately
17 in May, June and July and then Katie does these
18 northern Bering Sea surveys in August, September and
19 into early October, I believe. She's actually shown
20 how much weight, how much size some of these smolts are
21 putting on in just those first few months at sea in the
22 nearshore habitat and it's really remarkable. It just
23 points, I think, to the importance of that nearshore
24 habitat in that early marine life stage to the overall
25 health of salmon.

26
27 Then I guess another project that's not
28 listed on here that I'll just mention and that's
29 because it's within the Division of Sport Fish. Matt
30 Evenson is heading up that project, I believe, and it
31 would be funded by the Chinook Salmon Research
32 Initiative. That's a State-funded program examining the
33 decline of chinook salmon in the state. He is
34 attempting to look at juvenile outmigration actually in
35 the Chena River. So if you have more questions about
36 that, you can contact Matt Evenson with Sport Fish. I
37 think that project has been approved for 2015, but it's
38 possible, given some of the budget constraints that the
39 State is facing, I'm not quite sure.

40
41 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are for juvenile
42 one-year-old chinook smolt that are outmigrating.
43 They've spent their entire early life cycle in the
44 Chena River?

45
46 MS. SCHMIDT: Uh-huh.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: They don't go to any other
49 drainage?

50

1 MS. SCHMIDT: Well, it's uncertain if they
2 have. I'm not sure if he'd be able to tell if they've
3 spent time in another drainage and then come into the
4 Chena and then move back out. He did some initial
5 feasibility work last spring just trying to find good
6 sites on the Chena River where he could catch some of
7 the juveniles in different types of gear to determine
8 what would be most effective.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you.

11

12 MS. SCHMIDT: Yep. And then moving on, we
13 will also be initiating a genetic mark recapture study
14 for chinook salmon. This is again funded by the
15 Chinook Salmon Research Initiative through the State.
16 The intent of that project is to provide a drainage-
17 wide estimate of chinook salmon on the Yukon River.
18 Currently, the way that we do our total run
19 reconstruction on the Yukon River is we look at -- we
20 complete a total run reconstruction for the Canadian
21 component because we have data at the border and we
22 have data from harvest of how many Canadian origin
23 chinook salmon are caught.

24

25 Then what we do is we multiply that number by
26 two because, on average, 50 percent of the chinook
27 salmon entering the river are of Canadian origin. In
28 reality, that number can vary from year to year. It
29 kind of bounces around 50 percent. So what this
30 project is trying to do is to get us a more reliable, I
31 guess, drainage-wide estimate of chinook salmon on the
32 Yukon River.

33

34 That project would take place out of Mountain
35 Village and we are currently working on contacting
36 local fishermen in Mountain Village who would do the
37 test fishing for us. Chinook salmon would be caught
38 with soft mesh nets and sampled as quickly as possible.
39 They're just really taking a fin clip off of them and
40 then releasing them back to the water. The person to
41 contact for more information on that project is Holly
42 Carroll. She's the new Yukon area research biologist
43 for the summer season.

44

45 Ongoing, we have genetic sampling of chinook
46 salmon in the harvest and again the project lead for
47 that is Holly Carroll, the Yukon area research
48 biologist. These projects are funded through Alaska
49 Department of Fish and Game and the Yukon River Panel
50 Restoration and Enhancement Fund.

1 These projects are really essential for us to
2 be able to do that total run reconstruction. If there
3 is a subsistence harvest, we like to get samples from
4 those fish that are caught to determine the proportion
5 of Canadian-origin kings or chinook salmon that were
6 harvested in the subsistence harvest. This did not
7 happen last year because there was very little
8 subsistence harvest, but in past years we have worked
9 with AVCP and with Paige Drobny in the upper river here
10 to collect tissue samples from subsistence harvest
11 caught fish.

12
13 When there is a commercial fishery for summer
14 chum salmon in the lower river using gillnets and
15 chinook salmon are incidentally caught in that fishery,
16 we do take genetic samples off of those chinook salmon
17 that are caught in that fishery. This year there
18 essentially weren't enough chinook salmon that were
19 caught in that summer chum gillnet fishery for us to
20 run for genetic analyses. Again, if we do have enough
21 samples we'll go ahead and run those.

22
23 Moving on to summer chum salmon. We
24 initiated a study last year. It's a radiotelemetry
25 study. It's a tagging study. Similar to the chinook
26 genetic mark recapture, what this study is attempting
27 to do is to provide a drainage-wide estimate of summer
28 chum salmon in the Yukon River. Because we're tagging
29 the fish, we're able to track them and track how fast
30 they're swimming. So we're using this project to
31 identify where summer chum salmon travel and spawn on
32 the Yukon River, when different stocks enter the river
33 and how fast they swim to their spawning locations.

34
35 The reasons for this is that we're seeing an
36 increase of reliance on summer chum salmon since the
37 decline of chinook salmon. It's really important for
38 us to -- in order to manage that fishery, we need to
39 have a good understanding of timing of stocks entering
40 the river, where fish are moving in case we need to put
41 in different projects on different rivers and how fast
42 they're moving through each part of the river. We do
43 find in different parts of the river the salmon move at
44 different speeds, so it's critical if we're trying to
45 time openings to get folks on a group of fish that we
46 understand the migration rates as they move upriver.

47
48 In terms of providing a drainage-wide
49 estimate of summer chum salmon, this information will
50 also be used to help set a drainage-wide escapement

1 goal for summer chum salmon. In 2016, the Board of
2 Fish -- we'll have the AYK cycle and at that time the
3 Department intends to submit a proposal for a summer
4 chum salmon escapement goal on the Yukon River and we
5 will use the data collected from this project from last
6 year and this next year to help us set that escapement
7 goal. This project is being funded by the Alaska
8 Sustainable Salmon Fund and you have a handout that was
9 provided by the project lead Sean Larson, he's the
10 assistant research biologist on the Yukon River, of
11 what they found last year and what they did.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We were given a project by
14 Koyukuk-Nowitna and they were putting radiotelemetry on
15 chum salmon. Is this the same project or an
16 overlapping project?

17

18 MS. SCHMIDT: It is separate from that
19 project, but we did collaborate with the project lead,
20 Mr. Harris, on that and made sure that they knew what
21 tag colors to look for for us and we also collaborated
22 with them on flying some aerial surveys of the Koyukuk
23 drainage.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Go ahead.

26

27 MS. SCHMIDT: Lastly, one of the projects or
28 a couple of the projects that are kind of ongoing
29 through the Division of Commercial Fisheries relate to
30 fall chum salmon and this is genetic sampling of the
31 harvest in both the subsistence fishery and the
32 commercial fishery that occurs in the lower river.
33 These two projects help determine the proportion of
34 Canadian-origin fall chum salmon that are being
35 harvested in those fisheries and the funding for these
36 projects are pending from the Yukon River Panel
37 Restoration and Enhancement Fun.

38

39 So that's all I have for the Division of
40 Commercial Fisheries. There are a couple Subsistence
41 Division projects that I can just very quickly touch on
42 and if you have specific questions about them I think
43 Caroline Brown is in the room and can answer more about
44 that.

45

46 The first one is a local traditional
47 knowledge of freshwater salmon ecology. This project
48 is again one of those projects funded by the Chinook
49 Salmon Research Initiative, that's the State of Alaska
50 funding program to look at the decline of chinook

1 salmon in the state. This local traditional knowledge
2 project is documenting LTK of fishers throughout the
3 Alaska portion of the Yukon River. They're going to
4 St. Mary's, Anvik, Huslia, Allakaket and Fort Yukon and
5 they're attempting to understand the landscape,
6 waterway changes that may be contributing to or related
7 to chinook salmon decline.

8

9 Another project that the Subsistence Division
10 is doing that's funded by the Chinook Salmon Research
11 Initiative and partially by
12 North Pacific Research Board is looking at patterns and
13 trends of salmon fishing in the Yukon. This includes
14 studies in Alakanuk, Marshall, Nulato, Galena, Beaver
15 and Eagle and the goals are to identify trends in
16 harvest by species, namely salmon, on the community
17 level and also to understand the various factors that
18 drive household level harvest through time.

19

20 Caroline notes that a primary focus on
21 characterizing changes as they relate to social,
22 economic and environmental factors that affect
23 harvesting ability, while managers may not be able to
24 control for such changes, a better understanding of
25 these contacts may allow them to better adapt to
26 management.

27

28 So that gives you a very -- well, not too
29 brief, but gives you a summary of the major research
30 that we have going on in 2015. We also have a number of
31 run assessment projects that we conduct as part of our
32 research program at Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll stop you there for a
35 second, Stephanie. I wanted to see if that covered
36 everything Caroline wanted the Councils to hear.

37

38 MS. BROWN: (Nods affirmatively).

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think it's very
41 important to know what this harvest is as people are
42 shifting towards summer chum and fall chum. So I think
43 those are very worthy projects. Continue.

44

45 MS. SCHMIDT: I actually don't have much to
46 say about the run assessment projects. I think most
47 people know a lot of the projects that we operate on
48 the Yukon River and the tributaries. We are intending
49 to operate a status quo in 2015, but again, until the
50 Legislature approves our budget, it's uncertain if

1 we'll have to make a cut to any of our projects, but we
2 are hoping to operate a status quo in 2015.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any questions from the
5 Council members. Go ahead, Don.

6

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
8 Stephanie, my question is that you wanted to estimate
9 the chinook run with your techniques and then adding
10 the component of harvest, is that correct?

11

12 MS. SCHMIDT: That's right.

13

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. On the Upper Yukon
15 we've discussed this until we're blue in the face, but
16 these after-season surveys of harvest, the confidence
17 interval to me is magic and I don't know quantitatively
18 how you can put an estimate on the chinook run or the
19 chum run if you're adding the harvest component on a
20 figure that there's no mandatory requirement for
21 reporting harvest. It's these after-season surveys
22 that I think are just total magic.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Response.

27

28 MS. SCHMIDT: The subsistence harvest surveys
29 -- you know, it is difficult when you don't have
30 mandatory reporting to have on-the-nose accurate
31 information, that's true, but the way that the
32 subsistence harvest surveys are conducted is that they
33 take a random sampling in the villages and they try and
34 visit a certain proportion of households known to fish
35 heavily, known to fish a moderate amount, known to fish
36 a low amount and then households that are known not to
37 fish. They attempt to really stratify that design and
38 take the best, I guess, statistical approach that they
39 can to those subsistence harvest surveys and then apply
40 that to the entire village or expand that out to the
41 entire village. It is the best available information
42 that we have to us for subsistence harvest estimates.

43

44 In years when you do have a subsistence
45 harvest, the confidence intervals are smaller because
46 you have more individuals who are fishing and you have
47 more data that's contributing to that for sure. Years
48 when you have low subsistence harvest your confidence
49 intervals widen because you have many more individuals
50 in each of the categories who are not fishing or you

1 might have an individual who is considered to be a
2 heavy fisher and they only catch one fish and you might
3 have an individual who is considered to be a low-impact
4 fisher and they only catch one fish, so they caught the
5 same number of fish, but the person who is from a low
6 impact household is given more weight. So that does
7 play out.

8

9 In this particular year, the way that we look
10 at our subsistence harvest data is it was the lowest on
11 record and it was as close to zero as we're possibly
12 going to get and that's how we'll consider that. Is it
13 within our confidence intervals of our total run
14 estimate this year.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. That explains
17 that. That's the best we can get, so we've got to work
18 with it.

19

20 Tim.

21

22 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 Stephanie, thank you for your presentation. It's good
24 to see the State is working hard to understand what's
25 happening with the king salmon. Can you make available
26 to this Council the genetics results for -- I believe
27 it's the Division of Commercial Fisheries is doing a
28 stock of origin research project for the commercial
29 catch and directed salmon seine fisheries for Kodiak,
30 Chignik and Sand Point. I'm interested in what the AYK
31 component of those harvests are.

32

33 MS. SCHMIDT: So are you referring to Area M,
34 the question you had earlier during your testimony?

35

36 MR. GERVAIS: Well, during the presentation
37 that the Department made to the Chignik Regional
38 Aquaculture Association about three weeks ago, they
39 brought up this study that they had this genetic
40 testing done for those three fishery areas, not just
41 Area M, Chignik and Kodiak, and they provided us with
42 genetic information on the hatchery component of those
43 runs, but they didn't have available the wild stock
44 genetics of that run.

45

46 MS. SCHMIDT: I don't have their genetic
47 information in front of me, but I will say that from
48 the tagging information, the tagging studies that have
49 been done on Western Alaska chinook salmon stocks very
50 few, if any, migrate below the Aleutians or pass

1 through the Aleutians the way that summer chum salmon
2 do. The vast majority of the chinook salmon to our
3 knowledge, again the best available data that we have
4 to us, shows that the chinook salmon from Western
5 Alaska migrate primarily in the Bering Sea and stay in
6 the Bering Sea and are only intercepted in Bering Sea
7 fisheries.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Virgil.

10

11 MR. UMPHENOUR: Stephanie, do you know if the
12 Department is going to do any genetic sampling of the
13 king salmon caught in the South Peninsula fishery in
14 June in Area M?

15

16 MS. SCHMIDT: I cannot comment on that, but,
17 as usual, we can look that up for you and get some
18 information to you.

19

20 MR. UMPHENOUR: Do you think they are going
21 to do some?

22

23 MS. SCHMIDT: I'm not certain.

24

25 MR. UMPHENOUR: Okay.

26

27 MS. SCHMIDT: I'm not, unfortunately,
28 involved in our genetics lab, so I'm not sure what
29 their plans are.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So that completes
32 your research. Then we're going to go into Yukon
33 fishery management with Fred and yourself. Welcome,
34 Fred. Long time no see.

35

36 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Fred Bue,
37 Fish and Wildlife Service Yukon River Manager. I
38 wasn't certain just how the agenda would work out and
39 stuff with all these projects and who would actually
40 get to speak towards the end because we're at the
41 bottom of the list.

42

43 (Laughter)

44

45 MR. BUE: Stephanie did a very good job
46 explaining projects that are ongoing. Aaron Martin, my
47 assistant, explained quite a bit. I draw your
48 attention to this handout. Again, the Yukon River --
49 some of you are part of the Western Interior RAC. You
50 understand the Kuskokwim issues also. The Yukon is

1 many times larger. It's discontinuous State/Federal
2 waters all the way up the river. We have seven
3 different Refuges that pertain. It has a lot of
4 challenges for management.

5
6 As people on the Yukon are familiar with is
7 that State and Federal managers work really closely
8 together. Well, we have to. There's so much to do. We
9 have to share data, we have to share information. We
10 have a lot of different capacities that we bring and we
11 can help each other. So I guess throughout the season
12 we have news releases joint as much as we can. Part of
13 that we do
14 have different missions, responsibilities, but to the
15 fishermen those differences shouldn't be as apparent
16 and we strive to not confuse people and that's really
17 one of the biggest issues, that we try to do as much
18 jointly and cooperatively as we can for the sake of the
19 users on the river.

20
21 So contact information. Stephanie, myself,
22 Jeff Estensen, the fall season Yukon State managers on
23 here. That's the information. If nothing else, this
24 is our phone number. It's on everything that we put
25 out, but use that. Again, this packet is just
26 supplemental information for a lot of people that maybe
27 don't follow it as closely as some people that are
28 intimate with it every day. It shows trend data
29 projects that Stephanie spoke to research, but these
30 are just our assessment monitoring projects that shows
31 the trend data for commercial, subsistence, run
32 reconstruction and then some of the projects that we
33 see throughout there. It's really pretty basic. Most
34 of you are familiar with it, but it gives you some
35 relevance of where we are today.

36
37 Page 7 I guess is really one of the things
38 that boils down to is the top graph. That's our
39 challenge. You can see the red is our summer chum and
40 the blue is our chinook and that's the situation we're
41 in. How do we manage opportunity to utilize those
42 abundant summer chum and still protect the chinook.
43 That's where we come to these Councils asking for
44 direction, ideas, constructive criticisms and that's
45 the job of this Council. It's the job of me to listen
46 to what you have to say and apply it as best we can.

47
48 We do have three Councils, actually four when
49 we include the Seward Peninsula, so it may seem like
50 we're not listening to you, but we're trying to take

1 everybody's view and we have to give the other Councils
2 consideration also. So it is nice having two RACs in
3 one spot. I wish we had three. It sounds like maybe
4 next year they're going to try to do that. Well, it's
5 going to be all 10 RACs, excuse me. It would be nice
6 to have all Yukon RACs. We did that once in the past.
7 Maybe it's not comfortable completely, but it sure is
8 constructive, I think.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're all going to be down
11 there. We might as well all get in the same room and
12 talk about king salmon fishery problems. Go ahead.

13

14 MR. BUE: Okay. And I guess, you know, we'll
15 speak to some of the management tools and stuff, but I
16 think Stephanie maybe had a little bit more to add to
17 what we found out about subsistence harvest
18 demographics last year and then also her outlook for
19 2015.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Before we go into further
22 review I had one issue since you're now the summer in-
23 season manager. 7.5" gillnet was allowed on the Tanana
24 River after there was much conservation with dipnets
25 and 4" mesh and manned wheels. And when I found out
26 there was 7.5" gear used for subsistence fishery in
27 District 6 in the Tanana River, I saw it on Facebook, I
28 thought people were illegally fishing. I couldn't
29 believe the Department allowed after that kind of
30 conservation when we had extremely high water that was
31 going to wash out the spawning beds on the Chena and
32 the Salcha in mid-July.

33

34 I was very concerned about that. And so I
35 want this Council to know I'm still concerned about
36 that. I do not want to see that happen again. What's
37 good for the goose is good for the gander. If fishers
38 on the Yukon River scrimped and saved to get those fish
39 on the spawning grounds, I don't want to see people
40 using 7.5" king gear in the Tanana River.

41

42 Your response, Stephanie.

43

44 MS. SCHMIDT: I'm in the hot seat for
45 someone's actions.

46

47 (Laughter)

48

49 MS. SCHMIDT: They're not mine.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Since you're the in-season
2 manager, I want assurance you're not going to do that
3 again.

4
5 MS. SCHMIDT: I will evaluate the in-season
6 information. I think the intention for 2015 is to
7 remain conservative. I can provide the justification
8 that was given to me about the 7.5" on the Tanana, but
9 that would be something that I would evaluate in-season
10 as to are we going to meet escapement goals or not. I
11 intend or we intend on the mainstem that we don't
12 anticipate seeing king gear in the water in 2015.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was very concerned that
15 occurred especially with the -- I feel the Alaskan
16 stocks, Koyukuk River, Chena River, Tanana River
17 stocks, they had so much high water that the erosion in
18 the spawning zones -- I mean it was like closing the
19 flood gates on the Tanana or the Chena River twice and
20 only done it 21 times ever. I feel that there was
21 probably a
22 spawning disaster when the kings actually got on the
23 spawning ground. So we had no fish to give, we had no
24 padding at all.

25
26 So I would like you to really seriously
27 consider if other fishers on the Yukon River have
28 conserved the stocks, if we go back to dipnetting and
29 4" mesh and manned wheels all the way up to the Tanana
30 River, I don't think anybody should be using king gear
31 at least. I'm really concerned about that.

32
33 I want the Eastern Interior -- that's in your
34 region. I want you to know how much concern I have for
35 that. Okay, I'll get off my high horse now. You can
36 continue on.

37
38 MS. SCHMIDT: So, on that note, I'll talk a
39 little bit about what we know from subsistence harvest
40 surveys this year. Like I alluded to earlier, it was
41 the lowest subsistence harvest on record. That's no
42 surprise to everyone in this room, given the
43 restrictions that were in place for the entire season.

44
45 Our preliminary estimates of subsistence
46 harvest on the Yukon River, this includes all in-river
47 harvest and the coastal district came in at around
48 3,400 chinook salmon. Of that, about 75 percent of the
49 in-river harvest did occur in Districts 1 through 3.
50 That's about 2,100 chinook salmon were harvested in

1 Districts 1 through 3. The primary reason for that is
2 late in the season we did go with 6" gear in the Lower
3 River to target summer chum salmon and chinook salmon
4 were incidently harvested in the subsistence fishery
5 during that time. We went with the 6" gear when 90
6 percent of the chinook salmon run had passed.

7
8 The other thing to note in full disclosure is
9 that in the Lower River of the fish that were caught or
10 that were recorded I should say as subsistence, 855 of
11 those fish were fish that were given away through our
12 test fish giveaway from our Lower Yukon test fishery
13 and from the test fishery that occurs with the sonar
14 program at Pilot Station. When you account for that,
15 that represents a significant portion of the
16 subsistence harvest on the Yukon River. Nearly a third
17 of the harvest is coming from test fish giveaways.

18
19 We did try and make efforts this year to
20 reduce the number of chinook salmon that were taken in
21 our test fisheries and we will be looking at ways to
22 reduce that even further. We released 80 percent of
23 the chinook salmon from the sonar program at Pilot
24 Station and we released close to 45 percent of the
25 chinook salmon from the Lower Yukon test fishery, but
26 if there are ways that we can release even more, we're
27 going to be looking to do that.

28
29 That said, our total run estimate I can't
30 quite release that yet because basically of our treaty
31 that we have with Canada these numbers need to be
32 approved by my Canadian counterparts before they're
33 officially released to the public. The run size
34 though, I can say drainage-wide estimate was likely
35 around 130,000 chinook salmon. That's drainage-wide,
36 so that's all Alaska stocks and then the Canadian
37 stocks too.

38
39 What we're expecting to return for 2015 --
40 again, I can't quite release the exact estimate until
41 those numbers are approved by my Canadian counterparts.
42 That will happen in mid-April. But we're looking at
43 2015 will be a similar run size. In 2014, we
44 met all our escapement objectives. We met our
45 objectives in Alaska and we met the border objective,
46 but we did that with severe restrictions and at the
47 burden of fishermen on the Alaska side.

48
49 So I think we're looking at 2015 to remain
50 conservative until we have an indication of what's

1 actually coming into the river, but it's possible that
2 there may be some allowable small chinook salmon
3 harvest. We're not talking full-on subsistence fishing
4 here, but if the run size really does come in like
5 we're expecting, similar to last year, that means that
6 there might be some small allowable harvest.

7
8 One of the things that's interesting of what
9 we're expecting, as I mentioned with the juvenile data
10 is a lot of four-year-olds to come back. The other
11 component of the run that we're expecting is six-year-
12 olds. So I think the run is going to be dominated by
13 six-year-olds and then have a lot of four-year-olds and
14 not many five-year-olds.

15
16 So if we were to go fishing for chinook, it
17 wouldn't be directed chinook salmon fishing, but if
18 there were to be fishing, are there ways where we can
19 target summer chum salmon and try and -- you know, the
20 incidental harvest that is occurring, try and get
21 people on some of the smaller four-year-olds that are
22 passing through and try and get as many six-year-old
23 fish to the border as possible.

24
25 So that is kind of the situation we're
26 facing. Fred, again, alluded to the fact that we're
27 expecting a good run of summer chum salmon, so 2015
28 will be all about balancing conservation of chinook
29 salmon while providing subsistence opportunity on
30 summer chum salmon and how can we do that in all areas
31 of the river. There are a number of management
32 strategy and options that are outlined on this handout
33 that Fred has provided and on the back there are
34 several management questions that if we have time for,
35 I think we'd like to solicit some feedback.

36
37 I'll turn it over to Fred if he wants to
38 highlight any of the management strategy and options.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Fred.

41
42 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, we
43 don't have a lot of new tools, but we have used fairly
44 new tools in recent years and the idea is getting
45 feedback on how people feel about those. We've told
46 people they have to use dipnets, beach seines. Some
47 places don't have chum fishing, so what happens in
48 those places. So essentially what we're looking at is
49 -- you know, one of the predicaments in the Lower River
50 is sheefish before chinook ever get there. We like to

1 enter the season as conservative as we can, but there's
2 these sheefish out there that's a good opportunity for
3 people. In the last few years we've used 6" nets. It's
4 not what people prefer for those fish, but it is
5 something and does give them some fish.

6

7 In regulation, we do have the pulse closure.
8 The first pulse closure everybody should plan on that.
9 I think also just as far as planning nobody should
10 expect to target chinook. If there's going to be
11 fishing opportunity, it's going to be how are we going
12 to allow opportunities to catch some of those other
13 fish out there. That is a really gray area and that's
14 probably an in-season decision on how -- just to what
15 extent opportunities are allowed.

16

17 2013 one of the techniques we used was to
18 have a 6" period in between pulses of chinook and
19 that's variable. Again, that depends on the strength
20 of the run as we see in-season. Everybody up here
21 should understand in the Lower River it's difficult to
22 assess a run as the fish are just coming in. Once
23 they're in the river we have a lot better understanding
24 what's going on, so we're more confident in the actions
25 we take upriver. That's just the nature of how it
26 works.

27

28 Four-inch gillnets. Again, the idea there,
29 some people think that that's how they have to catch
30 their king salmon. Well, that's not the idea. Four-
31 inch nets are to try to catch some other fish, but
32 every area has a different way of using that gear, they
33 have different water conditions, different fishing
34 situations. So, yeah, we could really be specific on
35 how to use that gear, but it's different constantly,
36 it's constantly evolving and I think leaving it up to
37 the fishermen is probably the best thing.

38

39 Also I want to step back. You know, the best
40 conservation tool we have is cooperation with people.
41 We can do a lot of things, but it's that people
42 cooperation. It's your resource and
43 and we need that cooperation and I want to tell
44 everybody how much we appreciate the cooperation we had
45 last year. Even going beyond that I'd like to make
46 sure to recognize AVCP and TCC who had a pretty good
47 hand in that last year bringing tribes together, bring
48 people together just for that purpose to see if there
49 was someplace that they could find common ground in
50 that cooperation. Yeah, maybe not everybody agreed

1 entirely, but there was cooperation and we really
2 appreciate that and I'd like to recognize that. That's
3 what management is about, is working with people.

4
5 Some of the -- essentially on the back page,
6 Page 10, there were three questions there, as Stephanie
7 mentioned. You know, again, the door is never closed
8 on management tools. The first question is the same
9 one that we ask all the time and you don't need to give
10 us your answers right now, but are there other ideas to
11 target other species, how to be more specific in some
12 of our management that works better for you in your
13 areas. We're always listening. Some things we can
14 implement right off the bat. Other things will take a
15 regulatory proposal and a whole process to get through
16 it. But that's always on the table. We always want to
17 hear what people have to say.

18
19 Stephanie also said the second question
20 there, are there other ideas of ways to reduce
21 mortality of the large females. Some of you may not be
22 aware, but she's mentioned the four-year-olds and the
23 six-year-olds. Last year we had a really strong
24 five-year-old age component. Those tend to be a lot of
25 males. This year the six-year-olds should come back
26 strong based on the five-year-olds last year.
27 Six-year-olds tend to be strong on females. So, yeah,
28 the run might be a little better or pretty good. You
29 know, it's still well below average, but how do we want
30 to take care of those fish. It's a balancing act.

31
32 Then the third question is the difference
33 between State and Federal management. This is why we
34 come to the RAC and ask you if there's -- in a large
35 river system, say it's a patchwork of State and Federal
36 waters and I do have the ability to give a preference
37 for restricting waters adjacent to Federal management
38 units to Federally qualified users only. What that
39 means is people from outside the area without customary
40 and traditional use determination cannot participate.
41 Nonrural people cannot participate.

42
43 We did this in 2009 and it was in the
44 preseason planning meeting we worked with the fish
45 stakeholders up and down the river. We gave it a try.
46 Post-season we got quite a bit of response that the
47 people did not like that. The problem or where this
48 discussion was, it wasn't unanimous, but there were a
49 lot of people in rural areas that rely on some of their
50 family members that work in the cities, they work on

1 the Slope and so they technically may be no longer
2 Federally qualified because of where they live, but the
3 family members in the communities rely on them to come
4 back and help them with their harvest.

5
6 So after that a difficult situation made more
7 difficult because they're not able to use their family
8 members to help them in their harvest. Subsistence is
9 a big part of it. It's about economics and those
10 people are -- we had elder single ladies that had a
11 really difficult time in that case.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Under that question, I
14 personally don't
15 feel that that's an advantage if we take management
16 actions to reduce fishing time, gear types, all that
17 kind of stuff. Having family members come from
18 nonrural to rural to help out, there's not going to be
19 that great of a harvest. I don't think that's a big
20 problem.

21
22 Pollock, you wanted to say something.

23
24 MR. SIMON: Thanks, Jack. I have some
25 comments on gear sizes, like fish net. If you
26 remember, 8" nets, 7.5" was outlawed, so we had to use
27 6". Most villages didn't have 6". We surrendered the
28 8", 7.5" to get 6" net. Now if you outlaw 6" net and
29 go to 4", most people in Allakaket don't have 4", they
30 have 6". So this is a hardship. Where are we going to
31 get money to go buy another net if 6" is outlawed.
32 They can't afford to buy another net.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Pollock. Ray.

35
36 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. With 4" gear we found on
37 the Kuskokwim that some people were able to catch all
38 the kings they wanted with the 4" when they were
39 drifting. They figured a way to hang them or something
40 loose, so they'd get wrapped in there, so you really
41 have to work to get by. I think what we're going to do
42 this year is they can only use them in setnets on the
43 shore and not be able to drift with 4". I don't know
44 that's an issue on the Yukon. Subsistence users are
45 pretty creative when they want fish, so you need to
46 watch that.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You have discretionary
49 authority we were told when we reviewed the driftnet
50 proposal Eastern had to close drift, so 4" mesh -- as

1 far as I'm concerned, 4" mesh should be in a side stem.
2 It shouldn't even be in the main stem. And it
3 shouldn't be drifted at all. So you have discretionary
4 authority to avoid -- you don't want to overregulate,
5 but you don't want to let stuff like that happen on the
6 Kuskokwim where they're drifting gear down the middle
7 of the river with 4" net. That's not the objective.
8 That's supposed to be for whitefish.

9
10 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, that's what it's intended
11 for.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: And some people got
14 restricted on the Upper Yukon because they were abusing
15 it and people were legitimately trying to get some
16 whitefish for dog food were starving. Everybody's got
17 to be on the same sheet of music.

18
19 MR. R. WALKER: Jack, are they done yet?

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, they're almost done.
22 Go ahead. Robert's getting hungry.

23
24 MR. BUE: There's a lot of questions. I'm
25 sure people could talk all afternoon on fish.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right.

28
29 MR. BUE: That's pretty near and dear to
30 people's hearts. I think Western Interior, it sounds
31 like you're not really in favor of the Federal
32 superceding or making it Federally qualified. I guess
33 the point is that it almost -- in that case, because
34 it's discontinuous, it may be more restrictive on
35 Federal waters, adjacent Federal management unit, than
36 it would be outside those areas and that's partly why
37 we hadn't done it in the past. Also, it's partly
38 because it didn't seem like it was a measurable,
39 meaningful difference because you remove one and it's
40 difficult to manage.

41
42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The WIRAC has Kuskokwim
43 and Yukon waters. What happens on the Kuskokwim is
44 much disparate to what happens on the Yukon. The
45 Bethel, major fishing capacity. Yukon River, way small
46 communities. So those are apples and oranges.

47
48 MR. COLLINS: Yeah.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I personally am not in

1 favor of an .804 restriction to nonrural people.
2 That's my personal opinion. What does the Council feel
3 about that?

4

5 MR. R. WALKER: About what?

6

7 (Laughter)

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: About having family
10 members come from Anchorage or Fairbanks to help out
11 fishing. Is it all right or not? Just shake your head
12 yes or no.

13

14 (Council nods affirmatively)

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's what I'm looking
17 for. It's been a long day. So everybody's good with
18 it. Eastern Interior? Andy.

19

20 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I just wanted to make the
21 comment. I do think that that could be an appropriate
22 tool if you were going to have king directed fisheries
23 in this time of low abundance. So just for the record.
24 If we're not going to plan on directed king fishing,
25 then I would agree with what the Western RAC is saying,
26 but if there is going to be any directed chinook salmon
27 fisheries during times of low abundance, I think that's
28 a tool that should be considered to be used.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Andy. Go ahead,
31 Don.

32

33 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like
34 to just make a quick comment and maybe it's to the
35 State. Pollock brings up a very good idea, they're
36 very good conversations, that we cannot just -- I don't
37 like the idea of -- you know, maybe we'll have fishing
38 or not, but I don't like the idea of giving us net
39 restrictions one week before the fish arrive or
40 something. I mean if there was a way that we would
41 know what we were limited to. If we got 6.5-7" mesh
42 that we purchased and it went down to 5 or something,
43 so maybe all I'm saying is maybe the State could give
44 us a heads-up.

45

46 Thank you.

47

48 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you for that comment and
49 that is why we're trying to get information out now
50 about what to expect for 2015. I think what you can

1 take from this handout is that we do not anticipate
2 having king gear in the water. So that means no 7.5"
3 gear in the water in 2015. We anticipate we will go
4 ahead with those closures to start out the season and
5 if there is openings with gillnets, it would be
6 restricted to 6" or smaller.

7
8 In terms of what Mr. Simon here mentioned, I
9 do believe that TCC through the chinook salmon Federal
10 Disaster Relief money, they may have some money. I
11 don't want to make any promises on behalf of them, but
12 you should definitely touch base with TCC. They may
13 have some money for gear alternatives for 2015 and we
14 are working with them to identify what gear would be
15 best available for them to help get out to fishermen.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I want to get to the fall
18 season, but Robert wanted to make one final comment
19 here and I'll take one off of this side if I have one.
20 Robert.

21
22 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
23 day starts at 4:00 o'clock in the morning, so I get a
24 little antsy about this time, so I apologize.

25
26 (Laughter)

27
28 MR. R. WALKER: You know, where you're
29 sitting, Fred used to sit there and I used to really
30 give Fred a hard time all the time. Since he's moved
31 over to Feds he's such a happy guy I don't bother him
32 anymore.

33
34 (Laughter)

35
36 MR. R. WALKER: So, Stephanie, you're in the
37 hot seat. You said it, I didn't. Anyway, if you go to
38 Page 3 on your paper here it says -- the top one that
39 says Pilot Station sonar chinook passage estimate is
40 roughly 140,000 passed Pilot Station. You look at the
41 second part, your Eagle River sonar passage estimated
42 at 42,500-55,000 kings, right? I've talked to some
43 people that just had -- the Yukon Panel had their
44 meeting a couple weeks ago and the percent of males
45 that went through the weir there and the percent of
46 females was a little hard to understand. I mean 70
47 percent males and 30 percent females passed the weir.
48 I mean this is almost like a surplus of kings and what
49 I understand is that the majority at 70 percent were
50 jack salmon. Correct me here.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Stephanie.

2

3 MS. SCHMIDT: Sure. Through the Chair.
4 Actually what ended up passing the sonar project at
5 Eagle was 65 percent male, 35 percent female and that
6 was predominately because of that strong return of age
7 5 fish that we had come back last year and a lot of
8 them are males. Now this year we are expecting a lot
9 of age 6 fish, so that will hopefully be flip-flopped.

10

11 The one thing to look at though is we did
12 have nearly 64,000 chinook salmon pass the sonar
13 project at Eagle. If you take the proportion of
14 females, 35 percent, and apply it to that 64,000, we
15 got more females across the border this past year than
16 we did in 2013 when the percent of females was 50
17 percent. So you have to look at both the number of
18 fish that are passing as well as the proportion. I
19 think that trend that we saw last year was primarily
20 driven by that strong return of age 5 fish.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

23

24 MR. R. WALKER: Thank you. And also
25 congratulations on your new position.

26

27 (Laughter)

28

29 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you, I think.

30

31 (Laughter)

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Rhonda had her hand up a
34 while ago. Did you want to say something?

35

36 MS. PITKA: No. I just wanted to thank you
37 for your report. I had a question during the State RAC
38 about the determination of the salmon and I think that
39 you answered it during your report.

40

41 MS. SCHMIDT: Okay.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. So we'll go to fall
44 season. The fall chums are getting more and more
45 important all the time, so go ahead.

46

47 MR. ESTENSEN: Mr. Chair, I can make this
48 very quick. Mr. Chair, members of the Council. For
49 the record, my name is Jeff Estensen, Alaska Department
50 of Fish and Game fall season manager. What we're

1 looking at for the 2015 season, a very preliminary
2 projection right now, we're looking at about one
3 million fish with a range of about 950 to 1.2 million.
4 This would be just a little bit better than what it was
5 last year. However, looking at it over the years, this
6 would be a slightly below average for an odd number
7 year.

8
9 With that said, as most of you know, we have
10 the advantage of being able to see how the summer chum
11 do and we have a very good relationship between the
12 summer and fall chum. As Stephanie just mentioned a
13 little bit earlier, we're anticipating another good
14 summer chum run this year, so obviously that bodes well
15 for the fall chum.

16
17 If this all holds water and pans out the way
18 we expect it to, we can see management being similar to
19 what it has been in the last three years. Trying to
20 get people on the subsistence schedule as quick as
21 possible transitioning from the summer to fall. We'll
22 probably start off with a little bit of commercial
23 fishing in the Lower River, but doing it with the
24 standard two period a week schedule and just kind of
25 keep an eye on things and see how it goes.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: A coho run?

28
29 MR. ESTENSEN: We anticipate the coho run
30 this year to be somewhat above average. We had a good
31 run this year it appears and we expect it could
32 potentially be the same next year too.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any questions. Go
35 ahead, Tim.

36
37 MR. GERVAIS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Jeff,
38 I'm looking at the Pilot Station sonar graph from Page
39 7. You have these two big spikes for fall chum on
40 August 15th and August 20th and somewhat of one on
41 August 2nd. Are those spikes due to closures
42 downriver? I mean that's a pretty dramatic passage
43 difference.

44
45 MR. ESTENSEN: Through the Chair. No, those
46 are actually pulses coming in. The first pulse that we
47 saw around the 2nd of August was a pulse. You don't
48 see much between that and the one we saw on the 14th
49 and that's when we kind of had the lull where we had
50 very hot and dry and really no wind whatsoever in the

1 Lower River. I should back up and just say that when
2 fish come in, when fall chum enter the river, it's
3 typically with southwest winds that are 15, 20 knots,
4 when you get a good blow off the coast. We went
5 through a lull period between the 2nd and the 14th,
6 which is why you don't see anything there, and then we
7 had some weather. We had a very large percentage of
8 our total run come in somewhere between over the course
9 of like 10 days. So those two spikes you're seeing on
10 the 14th and the 21st are actually two very large
11 pulses of fall chum.

12

13 MR. GERVAIS: Is there any commercial harvest
14 data on the chum in this packet?

15

16 MR. ESTENSEN: Tim, there isn't any
17 commercial harvest data in this packet, but our overall
18 harvest for fall chum, the majority of it coming in
19 Districts 1 and 2, was about 157,776 fall chum -- oh,
20 I'm sorry. I take that back. 115,500 is what the
21 commercial harvest of fall chum was. That was the
22 lowest harvest that we've had since 2010 for the
23 commercial harvest. Matter of fact, it was almost 50
24 percent less than what we've seen in the last previous
25 three years.

26

27 I will tell you this, and we'll probably do
28 similar, is this year in 2014 in particular, we were
29 really trying to -- we were going with the normal
30 schedule for the commercial fishing and sometimes we
31 try to tailor or adjust the commercial periods to get
32 on top of these pulses when they're coming in to try to
33 get a little bit more harvest. I think we were kind of
34 doing the opposite this year a little bit where we were
35 kind of trying to move the commercial periods around a
36 little bit to try to get more fish upriver for
37 subsistence. We're well aware that the early run fall
38 chum or the silvers are very important to folks for
39 people food.

40

41 MR. J. WALKER: Jack.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead.

44

45 MR. J. WALKER: I have a quick question.
46 What type of gear and what was the length of the
47 fishing periods?

48

49 MR. ESTENSEN: In the Lower River? There's a
50 setnet only area, which is in the very mouth of the

1 river, for set gillnets and it's 6" or less for the
2 commercial gear and then in Districts 1 and 2 there is
3 drift gillnet and people could setnet if they wanted
4 to. Then there is a fishwheel fishery, a very small
5 one, that occurs up in Subdistricts 5B and C at the
6 bridge there.

7

8 MR. J. WALKER: What was the length of time?
9

10 MR. ESTENSEN: The commercial periods vary by
11 -- depending on where we're at. In the early part of
12 the season we try to keep them to shorter periods, like
13 maybe six hours in District 1, potentially four hours
14 in District 2. As we progress in the season and we get
15 more comfortable with our in-season assessment and we
16 feel like we've got enough fish upriver for subsistence
17 and escapement, then we might go with longer periods
18 and we're trying to get more harvest. That would be
19 potentially nine hours in District 1 and maybe a six-
20 hour period in District 2. When we fish in
21 Subdistricts 5B and C it's a very small number of fish
22 and we just leave it open for five days.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. That kind of covers
25 it. Go ahead, Andy.

26

27 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, briefly. Just
28 informational. Something I wanted to share with those
29 of you on the Western RAC. These fall chum are pretty
30 much the only thing we have left in the Upper Yukon
31 basically from about Tanana on up to the border. We're
32 not harvesting king salmon. We haven't been in a long
33 time. I've been doing quite a bit of experimentation
34 in trying to catch non-salmon species with very little
35 luck. The fish that we are catching, the non-salmon
36 species fish, the flesh is very soft so you can eat
37 them, but it's very hard to put them up.

38

39 So the only resource we really have left from
40 the Yukon River is fall chum and, as many of you know,
41 we're needing these for human consumption and we're
42 also needing these because we're one of the few places
43 left on the Yukon River where dog teams are still
44 really prevalent in Fort Yukon and Eagle, Tanana.

45

46 So I just wanted to share that information
47 with you. I think we'll probably be putting together
48 some strategies for long-term protection for fall chum
49 in the future. It's not to try to reallocate, but it's
50 an attempt to try and make sure that that resource will

1 be available to those of us in the Upper Yukon because,
2 honestly, it's the only thing we have left in the
3 river. There's virtually nothing else that we can feed
4 ourselves with in the river anymore.

5
6 So I just wanted to share that with you
7 because you will be probably seeing some proposals from
8 us and I think this is the forum that I'd really like
9 to share that with you firsthand and if you have any
10 questions I think Don or myself or Bill could speak to
11 it as far as the lack of abundance of fish in the river
12 through most of the summer up in our region.

13
14 Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've also stated on the
17 record that we wanted to see additional passage of fall
18 chum for subsistence needs because everybody's
19 foregoing the summer king run, so they need to have the
20 fall run and the managers are trying to do that.
21 They're trying to miss the pulse with the commercial
22 harvest and I appreciate all you're doing to provide
23 for subsistence needs, Jeff.

24
25 Thank you.

26
27 Any other comments. Don.

28
29 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now
30 that we have the three in-season managers here, I'm
31 curious if we don't do a 20-year assessment of how we
32 got where we are and what we did right and what we did
33 wrong and maybe we won't repeat this in the near
34 future. I think that may be a paper or something to
35 show us where we made some serious errors in the past
36 and that we can move forward and not make those again.

37
38 We talk about numbers and numbers and numbers
39 and I want to sort of talk a little bit about
40 quantitative numbers as a chemist. When you're
41 sticking molecules together, you're talking about
42 quantitative and estimates don't seem to be actually
43 working for us and so I think a white paper of some
44 kind to show where some serious errors were made and
45 where we cannot make those again in the future.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks, Don. So we have
50 two very tired Councils. I think we've covered the

1 Yukon River fishery thoroughly and made our points to
2 the managers face to face. I appreciate you coming
3 here and all the work that's being done. I think the
4 managers are getting used to managing for low returns
5 and are starting to get pretty good or better about
6 getting fish on the spawning grounds. There's room for
7 improvements here and there, a little tweaking.

8

9 (Laughter)

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I stated this fall I was
12 real happy with the management the last couple years.
13 It's been real good management. Especially this last
14 year getting that many chinook on the spawning grounds.
15 That was a big deal. It's not just those male salmon.
16 Oh, they don't have eggs. No, they die and they feed
17 the baby salmon. That's a very important thing. Dead
18 salmon on the spawning grounds are necessary too.

19

20 I don't have time to go around this room for
21 final comments. I think we had a real good joint
22 meeting. There's some bison stuff here on this thing.
23 They're releasing the bison in the Western Interior by
24 Shageluk, so it's informational for Eastern Interior.

25

26 Your final comments, Sue. Go ahead.

27

28 MS. ENTSMINGER: Well, it's been a full
29 meeting and probably could have been two days, but I
30 really appreciate meeting with all the people and
31 meeting everybody that's on the Western Interior. It's
32 really great to get to know a lot of you guys and see
33 you again from the last meeting.

34

35 Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, there is a hearing
38 at 7:00 o'clock. What do they call it, Melinda?

39

40 MS. BURKE: It's not a hearing. It's just a
41 public meeting.

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Public meeting at 7:00
44 o'clock. I intend to attend just to see what happens
45 there, but it's not mandatory for the Councils to
46 attend.

47

48 MS. BURKE: No. Mr. Chair. And the Western
49 Interior Council did a really great job the last time
50 we did meet here in Fairbanks. Everybody attended and

1 had really good dialogue. You're definitely welcome to
2 come if there's any additional comments to present
3 about rural determination from your communities and I
4 believe the TCC students have also been practicing
5 their testimonies. I know it's been a long day, but
6 I'm sure that they would really appreciate a few
7 Council members being here this evening. And we have
8 cake.

9

(Laughter)

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'll entertain a motion to
12 adjourn the joint meeting.

13

14 MS. PITKA: So moved.

15

16 MR. J. WALKER: Second.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So moved and seconded by
19 multiple people. Those in favor of adjournment signify
20 by saying aye.

21

22 IN UNISON: Aye.

23

24 (No opposing votes)

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you.

27

28 (Off record)

29

30 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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