

1 WESTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 PUBLIC MEETING

5
6 VOLUME II

7
8 Ruby, Alaska
9 October, 12, 2006
10 9:00 o'clock a.m.

11
12
13 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

14
15 Jack Reakoff, Acting Chair
16 Ray Collins
17 Donald Honea
18 Benedict Jones
19 Mickey Stickman

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25 Regional Council Coordinator, Vince Mathews

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Ruby, Alaska - 10/12/2006)

(On record)

CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's a beautiful morning and we had great conversations with the public here in Ruby last night for those who couldn't attend and we've formulated some proposals. We're going to start day two of the Western Interior Regional Advisory Council meeting to the Federal Subsistence Board. I'm acting chair. I'm vice chair of the Regional Council. Do you have something for us here, Vince.

MR. MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. If I remember correctly, what you've all covered -- the only thing we have left and I don't have the information on it, hopefully someone else does, the update on the Unit 18 moratoriums, I'm not sure where that's at right now. I was hoping Don would be here, so hopefully he'll show up. The moratorium issue, the reason you're related to it is you have one community, Kalskag, that has a positive C&T down in Unit 18. I'm not sure why the one is on there for the Yukon. I'd have to look at the C&T. I don't think you have one that goes down in that area. So I think we're going to have to wait until someone else shows up on that issue.

Basically, the bottom line that I do remember is they were looking at a representative from Western Interior to attend this meeting in Emmonak and St. Mary's, that they were looking at lifting the closure in that area. My advice back to them is generally this Council respects the neighboring regions and let's them work out what they want to do. Again, it was suggested it be on your agenda, so we'll see when Don shows up if he has an update on that. But it does have an effect in your area because the one on the Kuskokwim -- Geoff, that is still in effect and that has and continues to displace hunting pressure up into Carl Morgan's area.

Then the next issue we'll get to further, it has to be done because of biology, I'm not ignoring that, is pushing hunting pressure upriver and across drainages.

The following one Polly was going to present to you an update on the .804 process. For those that aren't familiar with that, that's the Federal

1 process similar to the State Tier II.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Say, Vince.

4

5 MR. MATHEWS: Yes.

6

7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this point, myself,
8 I would prefer to hold those Items C and the .804 process
9 and move the organization and reports, the Native
10 corporation, the Department of Fish and Game, BLM, those
11 agency reports, I would prefer to go to those now so we
12 have input on those agencies so we can work further
13 through this agenda. What would be the feelings of the
14 Council.

15

16 MR. MATHEWS: Real quickly, on Polly's, I
17 was going to ask that you guys defer that to your next
18 meeting. I'm not saying Polly will be here for sure, but
19 I think there will be more of an update. And that's it
20 for that part.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. So we're
23 dropping down to Item 11 on our agenda, organization
24 reports, briefings on timely concerns and issues relating
25 to subsistence. A is Native corporations, regional and
26 village, tribal councils, etcetera. Do we have any input
27 from the Ruby Tribal Council or any TCC or any
28 organization that would like to speak at this time.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We can take that one
33 out of order if people show up later on. That doesn't
34 matter. You'll speak? So Jackie Wholecheese is going to
35 speak for Huslia. Go ahead, Don.

36

37 MR. HONEA: Good morning. For those of
38 you who are leaving today or have to make some phone
39 calls, let me know and I'll go ahead and open this church
40 building up.

41

42 MR. WHOLECHEESE: Good morning, Mr.
43 Chairman, Western Interior Council. My name is Jack
44 Wholecheese. I'm the Huslia wildlife manager. This
45 program started last year, but I just got on permanently
46 two months ago. Through this program we're working with
47 Fish and Wildlife Service in Galena studying moose.
48 Originally, the way this program started, was the Koyukuk
49 River AC had a meeting and they were concerned about the
50 lack of funding for meetings. We only had one meeting.

1 We're only allowed one meeting a year.

2

3 It was brought up by some members why not
4 allow for a grant. There's money out there for grants
5 for additional meetings. So we did and through this
6 grant we have an additional two meetings a year. That's
7 including the State's. Also with this grant we'll be
8 working with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Galena on
9 moose trend counts. It's never been done for about 10
10 years from Huslia to Hughes on moose trend counts and
11 we're going to hopefully do that this winter, providing
12 there's enough snow. Also with this grant we have an
13 incentive for every village along the Koyukuk River,
14 that's Allakaket, Hughes and Huslia, of \$1,500 to help
15 the trappers and the hunters buy traps and snares or even
16 trapping clinics so that we could rid the Koyukuk River
17 of predators.

18

19 It was brought up by Jack that we
20 maintain our moose by going out and getting predators.
21 We actually eat the bear meat. The Huslia people and the
22 Koyukuk River people call that their pig. Really, if you
23 cook beans, you always use pork, the Koyukuk River uses
24 bear meat.

25

26 Also in this grant we really are going to
27 study traditional ecological knowledge. I mean to do
28 studies like this is really hard work. I have an
29 assistant that's working with me. We're going to the
30 villages and interviewing the elders. We're trying to
31 pinpoint when they first saw the moose and what it's like
32 to not have moose meat on your table. Yesterday I stated
33 that a lot of people we interviewed we asked what percent
34 of their annual income do they spend on store-bought meat
35 and a lot of them spend 90 percent almost.

36

37 In a village that we interviewed, they
38 had to go to Fairbanks because they didn't have no moose
39 meat on their table. We asked what else do they subsist
40 on. Grouse, rabbits, but there's no more rabbits.
41 Further up the Koyukuk River they go sheep hunting, but
42 sometimes not as lucky as the other people. What's good
43 about the people is they stick together. If one family
44 gets a moose and the rest of the family don't, they
45 share. So that cuts down on the budget.

46

47 Also, I said I'll be flying in this
48 program. We're going to eventually take a load off the
49 Fish and Wildlife Service because we'll be doing our own
50 trend counts. It's a three-year program and I think it's

1 a stepping stone for the Alaska Native to start managing
2 his own resources. I wouldn't try to step on anybody's
3 feet, but I'll work with them just as long as their
4 thoughts are equal with mine and my thoughts are to the
5 betterment of the Native people and to the betterment of
6 the other people that subsist on our natural resources.

7
8 There's a whole bunch more that I could
9 go into. I just want to thank my tribal council and Fish
10 and Wildlife for having me over and the Western Interior
11 for inviting me. Vince, it was really great to hear from
12 Vince and let me know they were having this meeting.
13 This is a meeting that brings the concerns of the people.

14
15
16 I don't want to put anybody down. I
17 never did. We have to have representation from Tanana
18 Chiefs. We should have a person from Tanana Chiefs. If
19 they say that they're representing 42 villages and
20 they're not here, it makes me feel kind of sad. He
21 should have heard the 42 villages concerns and brought it
22 to this meeting. I'll tell you, there's a lot of
23 concerns along the Yukon River concerning moose.

24
25 I'm not one to brag, but I encourage
26 people to go out and start trapping again. A lot of
27 people say we're just killing bear for nothing, but our
28 elders, they know, the best time to get a bear is in the
29 fall. That's when their meat is sweet. They're eating
30 berries. They get that fish taste out. Sometimes you
31 shoot a bear too early, believe it or not, their fat is
32 blue. That sweetness goes right into their fat and then
33 it goes into the meat.

34
35 There's a lot of things that could be
36 learned from our elders and I encourage all Fish and
37 Wildlife Service people to talk with the elders. That's
38 one goal that I'm looking to. I want to learn the
39 western biological ways and try to teach them what I
40 know, what I learned from our elders. Believe it or not,
41 I'm almost 60 years old. So I saw a lot in my life. I
42 lived on the Yukon. I know the hardships they're going
43 through.

44
45 Fishing. I worked with YRDFA this
46 summer. I was their surveyor in Huslia. Every week my
47 report was water is too high, water is too high, water is
48 too high. Sometimes I just want to turn off the mike
49 because all the people on the Yukon are catching their
50 fish and Lower Yukon they already put away their

1 subsistence fish and we never even get one king yet.
2 Luckily the Koyukon Athabaskan have relatives along the
3 Yukon and hey send up their fish.

4

5 With that, if anybody has any questions.
6 I'd like to thank you for your time and inviting me.
7 It's been a great two days listening. I'd like to thank
8 my niece, Brenda McCarty, for putting me up, Chief Don
9 Honea for a good hospitality here, all the cooks and
10 everybody else. It's been really great. The Ruby
11 people, your testimonies, it's what the Board needs.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does the Council have
16 any questions for Jack. Don.

17

18 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
19 thank you, Jack, for your testimony this morning. I
20 think it goes without saying that you talked to the
21 elders here, you talked to people who have lived here a
22 long time. The reason why Huslia has so much moose today
23 is exactly what Jack is talking about. When I went to
24 high school in the late '60s in Mt. Edgecumbe and there
25 was an article in Alaska Magazine about Huslia
26 Wholehunters, it was called, something like that, and it
27 was exactly on the taking of bears and stuff like that.
28 That's been a long-standing understanding of why their
29 moose population is so high.

30

31 I went over there with Don Ernst, he's a
32 preacher over in Huslia. We were on our way to Shungnak
33 one summer, and this is a different story, coming from
34 the Kokrines Hills Bible Camp, we left there and as soon
35 as we got towards Huslia there was a lot of -- there
36 wasn't just one moose in the lake, there might have been
37 two or three. I know where he's coming from and I think
38 that's exactly what Jack mentioned here last night to Mr.
39 Titus about, hey, we've got to take some of these
40 problems into our own hands.

41

42 I guess my question to you is, are you
43 guys doing anything? I know as an incentive the tribal
44 council paid so much per wolf or something and I think
45 that we have to have incentives like that. We have to
46 initiate that within our own community, be it the tribal
47 council or whoever. I just know that we -- Allen
48 mentioned it last night and it's a concern. I've talked
49 to people who were supposed to testify but didn't appear
50 last night, but they had concerns about the wolf

1 population along our road system and along the Yuki and
2 the Anobi. Is that somehow in this plan of yours or do
3 you guys have an incentive to reduce those numbers
4 somehow. I appreciate your answer.

5
6 MR. WHOLECHEESE: Every village has a
7 wildlife and parks grant from Tanana Chiefs. It's money
8 that they could do what they want with. Under my program
9 we cannot pay bounty. What incentive is for is to
10 encourage people, trappers, to do away with predators.
11 We'll pay for the gas or we'll have a snaring clinic or
12 we'll get snares, but we'll equip the trappers, but it's
13 not a bounty. I think we did it with our wildlife and
14 parks grant. I wish somebody was here from TCC to answer
15 this. I know we utilize our wildlife and parks grant.
16 That's where I'm getting paid from.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Another peripheral to
19 that or maybe the primary would be when you have an
20 incentive for fuel or snares or trapping schools, it's
21 fostering the continuance of customary and traditional
22 trapping and harvesting predators. So it's my feeling
23 that in many villages those customary and traditional
24 practices have been lost because there's a break in the
25 traditions of going out and learning from elders on how
26 to trap and so forth. I've been to villages where they
27 say, oh, you trap wolves, come down here and trap wolves
28 for us. It's like we don't know how to trap wolves
29 anymore. All the old-timers died.

30
31 The incentive programs do several
32 different things. They maintain the customary and
33 traditional practices of harvesting wolves, reintroducing
34 those knowledges and maintaining those. I'm a proponent
35 of harvesting on both sides of the spectrum and equaling.
36 So when the statistical data shows when you trap one
37 wolf, it's seven to 10 moose per wolf per year, you just
38 took seven to 10 moose back. So if you shoot a moose in
39 the fall, you should kill one wolf, one bear. Everybody
40 should be doing that. So those incentive programs are
41 going to help maintaining customary and traditional
42 practices of trapping.

43
44 MR. WHOLECHEESE: In the long run, you
45 get -- I don't know how much each village gets from their
46 wildlife and parks, but when you pay bounty I think you
47 lose -- it's better if you give incentives because you
48 could buy the gas or state it in their budget form, but
49 buy the gas and traps.

50

1 Believe it or not, I forgot to mention
2 this, I'm sorry. In our predator control situation, I
3 didn't think that we had a problem with beavers as being
4 a predator, but one elder told me that you know those
5 beavers, there's so many that they're eating all the food
6 off the bars for the moose. He asked can't you include
7 that as a predator and I said I don't know, I've got to
8 ask some more other elders, you know. But, you know, I
9 looked at it really close on the Koyukuk River and then
10 the sloughs, you see almost every beaver house and along
11 the bar you see all the willows cut down to where it's
12 covered up with snow. I thought about it for a little
13 while and then, gee, I know what that old man is talking
14 about because that's the moose food right there and the
15 beavers are putting it in the water. So, gee, that old
16 man must have something. It's just a thought I wanted to
17 bring up.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions
20 from the Council, statements.

21
22 (No comments)

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Jackie.

25
26 MR. WHOLECHEESE: Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other village or
29 council comments from Ruby. We heard from Ruby last
30 night.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right. Next on
35 the list here is Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Is
36 ADF&G going to make a statement other than what we went
37 over yesterday? I had one question for Randy that came
38 to mind and the question was what is the status of the
39 Planning Group? Is it continued or on hold for the
40 Koyukuk River?

41
42 MR. ROGERS: I was wondering if you'd ask
43 that question. As we went through in the meeting we had
44 last year, the Koyukuk River Moose Hunter Working Group
45 does not officially exist anymore. We have occasionally
46 got together former members and other new representatives
47 that are interested to review the plan. Most recently
48 with the recommendation to keep the plan in place for
49 another few years. We're aware that there's significant
50 interest and I think legitimate need for doing an update

1 of that plan.

2

3 We had received a suggested proposal for
4 OSM funding for updating the Koyukuk plan. The problem
5 is we just don't have the staff and resources to
6 undertake that right now. It is something that's high up
7 in the list of considerations within the division. We do
8 want to continue to work with the Council, the involved
9 AC's on the plan and Koyukuk issues and look towards an
10 update in the future. Whether an update would require a
11 full process through a working group or we might be able
12 to do it with a little more expedited approach, I'm not
13 sure. I would like to keep it simpler if possible but it
14 may turn out, you know, we need to do that again.

15

16 I guess, in summary, that's the status of
17 it. I'm assigned to some other projects right now in
18 addition to the wood bison project. I've been asked to
19 work on trying to improve our intensive management
20 planning processes. We need to put some effort into that
21 and hopefully become a little bit more resistant to
22 litigation and have a more open public process also.
23 Anyhow, that's probably enough to answer your question.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for that,
26 Randy. I don't know if everybody here is aware there was
27 a Koyukuk River Moose Hunter Working Group worked through
28 a plan, was adopted by the Board of Game and sanctioned
29 by the Federal Subsistence Board. The Western Interior
30 Regional Council was instrumental in helping to augment
31 that plan and have input into it along with the AC's.

32

33 The plan has very important harvest
34 percentages that allow harvest of the moose in the
35 Koyukuk River but not overharvest the moose. It has
36 several different things and I feel strongly that the
37 basics of the plan should be set in stone almost and some
38 peripheral issues on the plan should be changed slightly.
39 But the plan is very instrumental in maintaining the
40 hunting structure. That's why those flat lines that
41 Glenn presented yesterday, the numbers of hunters and so
42 forth, those numbers are flat-lined because that's the
43 parameters of what the moose population can support and
44 that's why the moose population is being maintained with
45 the help of people that hunt wolves and hunt bears up
46 there. So that's why I'm bringing up that issue.

47

48 Jack, you got something to say on that
49 one.

50

1 MR. WHOLECHEESE: Yes. I'm sorry, Mr.
2 Chair, but I forgot to mention that part of this plan is
3 to ensure that tribal participation is continued with the
4 Koyukuk River Moose Hunters Working Group. We'll be
5 probably funding meetings with them. This will hopefully
6 be done in 2008. We don't want to see this plan go away.
7 It really helped the Koyukuk River. So with this grant
8 we included the Koyukuk River Moose Hunters Working
9 Group.

10
11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. Any
12 questions from the Council on that. Ben.

13
14 MR. JONES: Yeah, Randy, on the Koyukuk
15 River Moose Management Working Group when we first
16 brought up the drawing permit about five years ago it was
17 450 drawing permits for controlled use area. At that
18 time when we drew, if you draw a permit for this year,
19 the same hunter couldn't get another permit for three
20 years after. We worked that through the Middle Yukon AC.
21 We draft the same thing. Is that still in effect, the
22 same person can't get a drawing permit next year?

23
24 MR. ROGERS: Yes, Member Jones. I
25 believe the way it applies is they're not eligible the
26 following year, not three years. But they can't year
27 after year get the same drawing permit. I'm not aware of
28 any change being made to that. Of course, Glenn is the
29 one that follows all the details of all the regs. One
30 thing I'm not sure of is whether that provision has been
31 applied in the new drawing hunts around the Koyukuk
32 controlled use area. I'm pretty sure there's been no
33 change made to that basic provision. I can verify that
34 and get back to you to confirm that after the meeting
35 though.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Any other
38 questions. Don.

39
40 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Randy,
41 I don't know if I should be directing this question to
42 you or not. It's not on here, but maybe somebody out of
43 Galena. They had a working group, I believe it's Friends
44 of Moose, and I guess the intention -- it's not really
45 Middle Yukon, but I was just wondering if anybody in the
46 audience could address that or do you know what the
47 intent there is? Are they still functional?

48
49 MR. ROGERS: I can take a shot at that
50 question and someone else may have better information.

1 I'm aware of a group that P.J. Simon was primarily
2 spearheading there in Galena. As far as I understand
3 now, P.J. moved to Fairbanks and I'm not sure what the
4 status of that group is. I don't know if it's called
5 Friends of Moose but it's some folks based out of Wasilla
6 that have been really active in trying to advocate taking
7 what's perceived to be excess or nuisance moose from the
8 Anchorage area and transporting them out into rural areas
9 where there's a need for more moose. I think, in
10 general, our Department has not been very enthusiastic
11 about that because of the cost, the handling of the
12 animals and the fact that where you're going to put these
13 moose there's probably loads of predators there waiting
14 for them anyhow. If someone else can add to that.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think they could
17 dump them off on the beach out here in hunting season.
18 That would be a good place for them.

19

20 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Randy. I just
21 wanted to know if this particular group was a policy-
22 making group, whether they submitted proposals, what the
23 intent there. I realize pollock is no longer in Galena,
24 but I was just wondering if somebody had carried that on
25 and their policy making as opposed to the Middle Yukon.
26 I mean it's just interesting all these groups, what their
27 intent was.

28

29 MR. SCOTTON: Mr. Chairman, Member Honea.
30 The Friends of Moose Group, I was at the original meeting
31 when the idea was conceived. There were like 45 people
32 that came to the meeting just concerned about mainly
33 predator issues and that's what got talked about. The
34 group was formed, there were some money-raising efforts.
35 The first year the group gave out brand-new wolf traps to
36 everybody who had legally caught and sealed a wolf in
37 Game Management Unit 21(D). So they spent several
38 thousand dollars on traps and passed out 80 or 90 of
39 those as an incentive basically.

40

41 P.J. spearheaded it, Tommy Huntington was
42 really involved. He moved to town. The group is still
43 technically there. There is a bank account, a board of
44 directors, still a few traps that somehow ended up in my
45 house that are to be distributed somehow. So the group
46 is still out there. It wasn't a policy-making group.
47 Its focus was on education of youth, continuing the
48 tradition of trapping, passing on that information. We
49 did help out with one snaring/trapping clinic in Galena
50 that was joint with Fish and Wildlife Service.

1 And then their other goal was to provide
2 larger incentives in the future if money-raising had
3 panned out, but the group hasn't been real active for two
4 years, since P.J. left basically.
5 That's what I know about it.

6
7 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
8 think one of the reasons that we in the past have gone to
9 the December hunt, which we really didn't want to at the
10 time, was the fact that we were told that most moose
11 still have antlers on in December. I think maybe on
12 their agenda, we were discussing this last night after
13 the meeting, if some of these clinics and such had -- and
14 we could take advice from the elders, you know. If we
15 had some kind of clinics and stuff like that to know the
16 difference between cow moose and bull moose in March and
17 February. And just talking to Mr. Jones here on the
18 Council, I just realized that there's a lot of things we
19 can do to prepare younger people. Like the color of the
20 skin on the cow moose there's a white patch behind them
21 or something like that. I just thought, hey, why don't
22 we use this as a tool. I don't know what the Friends of
23 Moose has to do with this, but stuff like that, if
24 they're still in existence, maybe this is something for
25 the State, for Glenn to know that we can put up clinics
26 like this.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Did you want to
29 address that Brad or Mike.

30
31 MR. SCOTTON: I think what you're talking
32 about we made up some handouts explaining the physical
33 characteristics that are kind of subtle but they aren't
34 noticeable particularly with binoculars and looking for
35 the pedestals on the bulls and the shape of the neck and
36 the patch on the rump that's a different color. There
37 are things we can pass on. I think your idea of
38 involving some of the elders. So that when permits are
39 issued the people that are going out hunting are the most
40 knowledgeable and the most likely to succeed in
41 harvesting that bull. Because that is a concern as
42 managers that if it's a bull only season, we don't want
43 to get people in trouble, we don't want them shooting
44 cows and we don't want them hunting on State land where
45 it's closed and there will be some patrolling going on,
46 I'm sure, on the State side to make sure that people are
47 not hunting there.

48
49 If we can get some education together
50 during the permit issuing or right before the hunt

1 starts, at least for the first few years to get things
2 going, I think it's a great idea. An ounce of prevention
3 is worth a pound of cure. We don't need the big fines
4 and the hassles. We just need people to understand the
5 rules and the land status and go out there and do what
6 they need to do legally. So I'm all for it and we'll,
7 for our part, do what we can to make it happen.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think the Fish and
10 Wildlife Service could work with the tribal councils for
11 bull moose and cow moose identification and that would be
12 a very good idea to have a clinic for the permittees, to
13 come a couple day, three days before the hunt and talk
14 about what moose look like. So that would be beneficial,
15 especially for younger hunters.

16

17 Ben, go ahead.

18

19 MR. JONES: Yeah, I just want to -- when
20 I was a kid about five years old my dad taught me how to
21 tell the difference between a bull moose and a cow moose,
22 especially March when the snow is about two feet deep.
23 The cow moose, because they're pregnant, they walk like
24 this. The bull moose is straight strides like this. The
25 direction they're going, the moose stride this way, when
26 they pull their leg up, the snow falls back like this, so
27 that way you know the direction the moose is going.

28

29 Thank you.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Randy. Go
32 ahead.

33

34 MR. ROGERS: Just one quick comment as we
35 wrap up the discussion there. Thanks for bringing up the
36 topic of the Koyukuk Moose Plan. Actually yesterday I
37 was kind of happy to hear that there weren't a lot of
38 contentious issues raised about it. We have had a few
39 difficult discussions about the detailed implementation,
40 in particular the winter harvest around Huslia and some
41 of those issues. I think that I'm happy to at least have
42 the impression that the basic components of the plan are
43 still working good. But I do want to emphasize that
44 we're aware that changes have been going on. Probably
45 the biggest change has been the number of new permit
46 hunts around the Koyukuk controlled use area, but
47 emphasize the fact that we're watching this closely. We
48 have a lot of priorities for different planning efforts,
49 but we are always very interested in hearing what the
50 Western Council says about what you feel the needs are

1 out there. So don't hesitate to advocate to us, because I
2 know you won't, what you think we ought to be doing and
3 we will do our best to respond.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I very much appreciate
6 that. Thank you. So that kind of covers the State of
7 Alaska as far as I know. Did Subsistence Division have
8 anything? No. We'll go to the Bureau of Land
9 Management. We've got Tim and Jeff.

10
11 Tim.

12
13 MR. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, Council
14 Members. First of all, my name is Tim Craig, I'm a
15 wildlife biologist in the Fairbanks District Office. The
16 administrative unit that overlaps most of the interior
17 now is the Central Yukon Field Office. We administer
18 about 27 million acres out of that field office. BLM has
19 hired three new field office manager and assistants this
20 year.

21
22 One of the field office managers and
23 assistants is for the Central Yukon. Tim Hammond, my
24 boss, on the end here to my left, is the assistant field
25 manager for the Central Yukon Field Office. Immediately
26 to my left is Jason Post, who is a fish biologist, who I
27 think is going to assume the responsibilities of briefing
28 the Western Interior at least at this meeting and maybe
29 future meetings as well. He'll give a presentation after
30 I finish mine. Of course, to my right, is Jeff Denton
31 from the Anchorage Field Office.

32
33 With the Council's indulgence, I'll just
34 go right into my briefing about things that I think have
35 happened that you might be interested in since the last
36 meeting. I mentioned in the past the Challenge Cost
37 Share Agreement that we have with the Alaska Department
38 of Fish and Game. The Council was instrumental in
39 getting money for that. This fall we planned to use that
40 money to survey moose in the new 24(A) and also perhaps
41 in 24(C). The only problem is, we probably have the
42 money, it's whether we can come up with the pilots to do
43 the work we have planned.

44
45 In July the Fish and Game, along with
46 funding from BLM, conducted a sheep survey in GMU 24 and
47 25. It's the fifth year of sheep surveys. Vince just
48 passed out a handout. If you look at Table 1, I draw
49 your attention to the right-hand column under totals.
50 You'll see that between 2002 and this year the total

1 number sheep counted in the identical same survey unit
2 with the same pilot and the same observer has fluctuated
3 over 500 animals, 30 to 40 percent every year. We're
4 kind of at a loss to explain what's happening up there.

5
6 At least in part as a result of that Fish
7 and Game and I have put together a proposal to the
8 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and we have applied
9 for monies to do a four-year study with GPS collars to do
10 a mortality study and a movement study in that area. The
11 deadline for that submission is October. They make the
12 decision in November. We should know by Christmas
13 whether we'll get the money or not. So that may be
14 something that's going to happen in the future. The
15 study area that we've selected is in the Snowden Mountain
16 area. There's a big BLM ACEC. If you remember, I've
17 described what that means in the past. It's area of
18 critical environmental concern. That's one of the areas
19 we're going to work in. And perhaps Poss Mountain,
20 another ACEC.

21
22 Another thing I thought you might be
23 interested in is several of us are real concerned about
24 the spread of white sweet clover. It's an introduced
25 plant that has kind of taken over certain parts of Alaska
26 and in some parts of Alaska it's gone onto the river
27 systems and completely covered gravel bars. We don't
28 know exactly what the ecological effects are, but it
29 makes some of us that are more conservative about things
30 real nervous to see big chunks of country completely
31 covered with a plant that was never here historically.

32
33 This year BLM sponsored what we call a
34 weed pull. We had eight tribal civilian community corps
35 youths help us, eight people from Friends of Alaska's
36 Refuges, four BLM employees and one National Park Service
37 employee and we were up there for about a week and we
38 started at 98 Mile, which is the hydrologic divide
39 between the Koyukuk and things that flow into -- other
40 stream that flow into the Yukon. And the whole goal was
41 to try to keep it out of the Koyukuk Basin. In that week
42 we pulled about 100 plastic bags full. About 1,500
43 pounds of weeds that we pulled by hand along the road
44 edge there.

45
46 Anyway, we're going to repeat that next
47 year. If you want more information, I've given you a
48 contact name and number there on that handout.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have a comment. I

1 drove down that road the end of September, a month and a
2 half after you guys were up there. There's a whole bunch
3 of weeds that have sprouted back up in the interim. You
4 might have to layer your efforts. Down around Rosey
5 Creek there's that purple batch, the stuff that grows
6 around Fairbanks. That's gotten up there somehow. That
7 stuff is highly invasive. With this climatic change,
8 there's some really weird weeds up around Wiseman. I've
9 seen it growing back behind Wiseman in sphagnum moss. So
10 it's a highly invasive species that seems to be able to
11 move out and grow in any kind of habitat. Go ahead.

12

13 MR. CRAIG: Well, we're concerned about
14 it, too. In the Recreation Program we currently have 37
15 hunting guides, eight tour operators under permit within
16 the Western regional boundary. That's two less than we
17 reported at last meeting. I've given a contact number
18 there if you're more interested in that.

19

20 In the Mining Program, I've got two
21 different things that you're probably interested in. In
22 the Hughes Mining District, Tiaga Mine has indicated
23 they're moving their operations from their patented
24 property along Aloha Creek to their patented property
25 along Clear Creek. They are also considering proposing
26 mining in the future in their Federal mining claims
27 within Clear Creek. The BLM's involvement there would
28 start the NEPA process and would have to do with both the
29 access to their patented property and also any of the
30 proposed mining on Federal claims. We notified the
31 applicant that a mineral examination would be required
32 prior to the start of doing any NEPA because the land is
33 withdrawn. To date they have not scheduled an exam, but
34 we understand in the fall 2006, right now, or maybe this
35 winter they're going to come in with a mining plan. I've
36 given a contact number there for the man you would
37 contact to find out more information there.

38

39 In the Koyukuk Mining District, last
40 spring we've talked about this at the meeting, BLM
41 granted an application to Ralph Hamm to build a road into
42 Marion Creek to access his claims. The road isn't quite
43 complete but he's made it all the way up to his mining
44 claims. It's a placer claim. Then he's also made
45 application in Nugget Creek. The NEPA is complete on
46 that, but he has not started any work there yet.

47

48 Then the last thing in the Koyukuk Mining
49 District I thought you might be interested in is the
50 Chapman Creek Road that goes into Chapman Creek Mine has

1 been improved greatly. As part of the stipulations there
2 I stipulated that the gate be moved out to the highway
3 because it has been my experience, because you couldn't
4 see that gate from the highway because of the gravel pit,
5 that people were perhaps violating the road closure
6 there. So law enforcement people or anybody going by
7 could see if anybody that was not affiliated with the
8 mine were parked there. So that will be coming up.

9
10 Then in realty actions, if you read the
11 Fairbanks paper before we left, there were two fellows
12 that shot some caribou off the road within the Toolik
13 Lake Research Natural Area on the north side and then
14 decided that it was too much trouble to carry those
15 caribou out. They decided to take their pickups into the
16 area in violation of State law and Federal regulation and
17 one got in four and a half miles and buried his pickup.
18 So they walked back, got the other pickup and they drove
19 the other one in about a mile before they buried it. As
20 far as I know, they're still there. This week they're
21 supposed to be going in, jacking the pickups up. Our law
22 enforcement people are involved now. There may be fines
23 levied against them. Anyway, the stipulation is that
24 they have to jack the vehicles up, block them up until it
25 freezes and then they'll be allowed to drive them back
26 out once there's six inches of frost and six inches of
27 snow, but that hasn't happened up there yet. That's one
28 of the topics that has come up recently at the office.

29
30 With that, I could answer questions or we
31 could go on.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, this area is
34 kind of where I live, so I'd like to comment on some of
35 these things. I heard there was a wanton waste case
36 associated to that. The heads came out before the meat.
37 So I'm very concerned about early hunting with no
38 enforcement on the North Slope. We have no game warden
39 in Cold Foot. A cool year. The caribou came back off
40 the coast and came up against the mountains right away
41 the end of July, first part of August and there's
42 normally an enforcement program right before the sheep
43 season. There was truckloads of caribou heads going down
44 the road. They were shooting them in the ditches with
45 rifles, whacking their heads off. There was a lady that
46 drives a tour van that got her guests to sign an
47 affidavit that there was one guy in a pickup with six
48 bull caribou heads in the back of it and no meat. So
49 that guy, as far as I know, was arrested.

50

1 But there was really a need for BLM to
2 have more enforcement presence earlier, stay on track
3 with the movements of the caribou. We had a very
4 efficient game warden there. He had a medical issue and
5 he left. The door was wide open. It's a 78,000 square
6 mile coverage, the State Troopers coverage area. Without
7 any enforcement there the door was wide open. It doesn't
8 take those guys very long to figure that out. Hundreds
9 of caribou got killed over there. I really hate to see
10 wanton waste. I'm not beating you up or anything.
11 That's just what happened.

12
13 On this Marion Creek mining road, I
14 talked to Tim Hammond here. Permitting that year round
15 road access to these mining claims that have really no
16 validity to them, they're basically prospecting back
17 there. There's mechanisms for access to these mining
18 claims off the road and that doesn't necessarily entail
19 building a highway back there or a Cat trail. It can be
20 winter access. There's stipulations with winter access.

21
22 So those are my comments. I very much
23 enjoy the BLM's funding the wildlife studies and all of
24 the activities. It's a night and day situation on the
25 Dalton Highway. The proactive management the BLM is
26 doing surveys on the game populations, especially when
27 we're looking right down the barrel of a natural gas
28 pipeline and several thousand people that are going to
29 show up and the impacts to those resources. I'm very
30 pleased with the BLM's activities to document these
31 subsistence resources and I highly appreciate that. Any
32 questions from the Council on Tim's presentation.

33
34 MR. COLLINS: Putting a checkpoint in on
35 that road, it would seem that that would catch a lot of
36 that, like you've done on the Koyukuk River where they go
37 in and out. The other comment is, when somebody uses a
38 vehicle illegally, isn't there any way to confiscate that
39 vehicle? I mean if somebody lost a pickup truck or
40 something, I think that would quickly get around and stop
41 some of that.

42
43 MR. HAMMOND: Mr. Chair, Council. The
44 investigation in that incident is still ongoing, so
45 there's a lot we can't talk about right now, but just to
46 clarify some points, these folks were contacted by a
47 State Trooper, both before they went in to hunt and when
48 they came out, so whether there was wanton waste or not I
49 don't know. As far as a checkpoint, frankly, I don't
50 think anyone has the staff to staff something like that.

1 We have two BLM law enforcement rangers for the entire
2 northern half of Alaska. We do coordinate efforts.
3 Right now this investigation being coordinated with our
4 law enforcement, the State Troopers and the North Slope
5 Borough Police Department. So there is a lot of
6 coordination going on and we're very aware of the
7 enforcement issues up there. We do make an effort, even
8 if it's not a BLM ranger, make sure we know when there's
9 going to be law enforcement in an area and that they're
10 present during hunting season in particular. Does that
11 answer your question?

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I can speak to that.
14 The State of Alaska and some agencies had a checkpoint at
15 the Yukon River a few years back, mainly the State of
16 Alaska, and they documented basically harvests, but the
17 checkpoint was only open on the weekends. I was
18 estimating about a third of the guys were actually
19 checking through that checkpoint. It wasn't a mandatory
20 stop. It was very expensive to maintain. The department
21 is highly underbudgeted. The Legislature doesn't give
22 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game any money to a
23 large degree.

24

25 I did appreciate your enforcement officer
26 -- I did call your enforcement when those violations were
27 occurring and she showed up in a timely manner, but
28 caught everybody off guard. The caribou came up and
29 those guys were on the internet, boom, they're there
30 right now. I've seen caribou show up and in six hours --
31 those guys travel the road at 75 miles an hour because
32 they want to get there right now.

33

34 It would be warranted to really pay
35 attention to what Fish and Game -- staying more in
36 coordination with Fish and Game's enforcement on what's
37 their presence, where are they going to be. When these
38 caribou start to move off the coast on these cool years,
39 those hunters show up in droves.

40

41 Any other comments from the Council.

42 Ben.

43

44 MR. JONES: On management out there,
45 Western Arctic Caribou Herd, the satellite caribou, they
46 delay the information to the internet by two weeks, so
47 that gives the caribou migration to where they're going,
48 so that way the guides and sports hunters are not aware
49 where they're at until two weeks later.

50

1 MR. CRAIG: Mr. Chairman, Member Jones.
2 I think Jack was talking about these internet hunting
3 websites. There's so much travel on the Dalton Highway
4 that when the caribou show up on the highway then
5 somebody that day knows about it in Fairbanks and then
6 the information goes out over the internet to websites
7 that people that like to hunt just visit and the
8 information gets out that way.

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Continue with your
15 presentation.

16
17 MR. POST: Mr. Chairman, Council. My
18 name is Jason Post, fisheries biologist at BLM. I'll
19 speak on behalf of my fellow fish biologist who work in
20 the Hogatza River drainage and the Clear Creek drainage
21 of the Hogatza River. The Bureau of Land Management
22 operated a partial weir with a video recorder on Clear
23 Creek from June 27th to August 4th, 2006. The video will
24 be reviewed this winter in order to determine the
25 escapement and the sex composition of the summer chum
26 run. The 10-year average for that escapement was 38,000
27 summer chum. A report on this year's monitoring efforts
28 will be written in 2007.

29
30 We also have videography projects on
31 Caribou Creek. This is the third year this project has
32 been in operation. We're always like almost a year
33 behind on the data because we review the video in the
34 winter. The 2006 run, we'll be reviewing that data this
35 fall and winter and the results will be available next
36 year. But for 2004, a little over 15,000 summer chum
37 migrated through out videography project on Caribou
38 Creek. In 2005, there was a little over 14,000 summer
39 chum migrated through the project. Those escapements are
40 pretty close mirror images of what goes on in Clear
41 Creek, which is just up the river, so that's good
42 information to know.

43
44 On Page 2 of the handout you'll see
45 there's quite a lot of information about the status of
46 the mining in the Clear Creek watershed. That's just
47 simply not my area of expertise. I don't really work out
48 there, but the information is there in the handout, so go
49 through it at your own pleasure. If you have any
50 questions, you can certainly get back to the Fairbanks

1 District Office and we can direct you to the person who
2 can answer questions for that.

3

4 Now my project, my area of expertise, is
5 the Tozitna River, which is just below the village of
6 Tanana. That's where I work. We operate a resistance
7 board weir on the Tozitna River from June 24th to August
8 9th, 2006. We counted 533 chinook and a little over
9 22,000 summer chum migrating through the weir this year.
10 However, due to high stream discharge and flooding, we
11 lost about nine days of counts in July. Unfortunately
12 that was during the peak of the run, the historical peak
13 of the run, so that was unfortunate.

14

15 Preliminary estimates for the days missed
16 due to flooding indicate an additional 379 chinook and a
17 little over 12,000 summer chum migrated through the weir
18 during that time, bringing the total estimated run to 915
19 chinook and a little over 35,000 summer chum. The
20 estimated escapement for 2006 would be the lowest return
21 of chinook salmon and the second highest return of summer
22 chum on the Tozitna River since the project started in
23 2001.

24

25 We also perform an aerial survey to
26 document spawning areas. This is the second year we've
27 been able to do that. It's usually a problem of high
28 water and visibility, so this year we had good
29 conditions. We were able to count from the weir upstream
30 where most of the chinook spawning takes place and we
31 counted 844 chinook and 3,970 summer chum.

32

33 The Tozitna River weir is located about
34 50 miles up the Tozitna River, which is known to be where
35 the historical spawning takes place. Every year we try
36 to perform an aerial survey below the weir to see what
37 fish might be spawning before they reach our project.
38 Again, this year the conditions were poor, so we weren't
39 able to perform that survey below the weir.

40

41 The estimated sex ratio for chinook
42 salmon this year was 10 percent female; however, our
43 sample size is only 77 fish. We simply were blown out of
44 the water too many days during the peak of the run, so
45 really the sex ratio for chinook salmon is really
46 insignificant. We just didn't get enough fish to sample.
47 But the age, sex and length composition data will be
48 tabulated by the ADF&G and should be available in early
49 2007 and incorporated into our annual report.

50

1 The estimated sex ration for summer chum
2 was 43 percent female. Again, ASL composition data is
3 being tabulated by Fish and Game. That's more on par
4 with what we've seen in the Tozitna River for summer
5 chum. It's usually about 45-50 percent female. We were
6 able to gather more samples for summer chum because the
7 run was steel strong after we got back into operation
8 after the flooding. We got 682 samples. Any questions?
9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Might I comment. I
11 was wondering, even if you were surveying early in the
12 chinook run, isn't 10 percent awfully low? They're
13 catching 65 percent males in the first part of the run
14 downriver. Shouldn't it be in the approximate range to
15 that?
16

17 MR. POST: Well, our average sex ratio
18 for chinook has been about 18 percent, so it's pretty
19 low. It did bump up last year in 2005 at around 23-25
20 percent female. Traditionally, the females show up in
21 big numbers right about the time we flooded out this
22 year. The first part of the run for the last five years
23 has mostly been males. So I would say we missed a lot of
24 female.
25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Another question. Do
27 you do a carcass survey to see if there's any
28 Ichthyophonus in any of the fish or any idea on the
29 Ichthyophonus issue?
30

31 MR. POST: No.
32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any questions from the
34 Council.
35

36 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. These
37 are interesting numbers. When you lose a week or six
38 days or whatever you lost there, how do you come up with
39 the numbers? Is that a guesstimate? And how far up the
40 Tozitna are you? Is this kind of reflective of a lot of
41 the tributaries?
42

43 MR. POST: Mr. Chairman, Member Honea.
44 The days missed, we had a statistician perform what we
45 call a run timing curve. He takes the escapement for the
46 days we counted fish, he puts those numbers in a computer
47 and it will show what the run timing curve would likely
48 have been during those missed days. So what I did was
49 take our actual counts and then just plugged in those
50 nine missing days and that's where I came up with these

1 numbers. So, yes, it's a best estimated guess based on a
2 run timing curve.

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My question there is,
5 did you calculate the five to seven day delayed run
6 timing in the Yukon River?

7
8 MR. POST: Well, we didn't really.....

9
10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You just took the
11 average run timing.

12
13 MR. POST: Well, what the statistician
14 did is just took the data we had.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, then you're
17 skewered because the Yukon run is about five to seven
18 days late, so you're not actually in sequence with what
19 the norms have been. You're actually using data for the
20 average when in reality it's protracted forward because
21 of the delay in run timing. Also I was wondering by
22 telemetry do you have any telemetry that showed the rate
23 of movement up the Yukon River for the Tozitna fish? Did
24 you ever have one of those telemetry fish end up in the
25 river?

26
27 MR. POST: No this year. In years past
28 we've had radio tagged fish, but I don't believe there
29 were any this year.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It would be my
32 suggestion that if you took the rate of movement in the
33 Yukon and tabulated the time frame that it would take to
34 get from the lower river, if they're running five to
35 seven days late, then you could come up with a more
36 accurate estimate of what the missed passage point would
37 be for your data.

38
39 MR. POST: It fluctuates a lot. Last
40 year in one day we had 443 chinook migrate through the
41 weir, which was 23 percent of the run. Any further
42 questions.

43
44 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I had a question. I
45 mean I guess what I asked a while ago, is this reflective
46 of a lot of tributaries? I don't know what all these
47 counts lead to. That seems like a high number for
48 spawning in just one particular river. How do you find
49 out where a lot of them do spawn? Take the Nowitna,
50 which is on the south side here as opposed to Tozi on the

1 north side. Are other tributaries to be considered for
2 the same count?

3

4 MR. POST: I guess the reason we're on
5 the Tozitna River is because in 2000, if I've got this
6 right, Congress set aside some money to study the Yukon
7 River chinook runs and very little was known about the
8 Middle Yukon chinook returns. BLM has a chunk of land up
9 on the Tozitna River which falls in the Middle Yukon, so
10 that's why we're there on the Middle Yukon. I'm sure
11 there's other places that escapement projects would
12 probably benefit. ADF&G has been doing aerial surveys on
13 the Tozi for quite some time. I think it's a pretty
14 significant contributor in the Middle Yukon River.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have a comment. You
17 said that these chinook numbers were one of your lowest,
18 even with your calculation, which I feel is high, your
19 calculation would actually be high if the run timing was
20 later and you're peaking them when they're not in data
21 for estimation, then your estimate would be high. So
22 this would be a significantly low return with a very low
23 number of females.

24

25 MR. POST: Mr. Chairman. The female
26 ratio this year, we can't say anything about the percent
27 female this year.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But I mean the
30 historical data showed fairly low numbers of females
31 there.

32

33 MR. POST: Yes, that's correct.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm concerned that
36 what's happening is they're passing the fishery on the
37 quarter point. That particular run is subject to high
38 harvest in the down river, would show that straining
39 number of females and high numbers of small males getting
40 through and impacting that system. That's what I'm
41 concerned about. Seeing the returns dropping off, just
42 drying up this run of fish when other systems are doing
43 well. If you look at your telemetry data when those fish
44 would have been in the lower river, if you've had fish
45 show up and what time they showed up. I'm concerned that
46 these extrapolations under high harvest with the
47 commercial harvest would actually be impacting certain
48 systems and it would appear that maybe that's what's
49 happening, so I would be looking at that.

50

1 MR. POST: Yes, I agree.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So I just wanted to
4 make that comment. Any other comments here from the
5 Council on fisheries, BLM.

6

7 (No comments)

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you very much.
10 Jeff.

11

12 MR. DENTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair,
13 Council members. I'm going to miss Winchell's and Robert
14 Walker's and Carl's presence. Their feedback for the area
15 I cover is pretty important, but Ray is here. I'm going
16 to actually call those folks personally and kind of go
17 over the things that are affecting their area as well
18 just to touch base with those folks.

19

20 First off, when Jackie mentioned bear
21 hunting as their hogs, where I grew up two bears a year
22 in the fall were our pork for the year. Bacon and ham,
23 that's what we always ate was bear bacon and ham. And
24 that was in western Montana and that was longer ago than
25 -- you know, he's almost 60. Well, I'm almost 60. I
26 look almost 80, so he must be doing something better than
27 me. I'm not sure what.

28

29 We do have some introductions. They're
30 not here, but we have some Staff changes in our office.
31 Our fisheries biologist retired and Tim Sundlove, who was
32 in Fairbanks, in fact he attended a meeting or two, I
33 believe, in past years kind of in passing, he's our new
34 fisheries biologist in the Anchorage Field Office. I'm
35 hoping to get him much more engaged in Kuskokwim and
36 Yukon fisheries in our field office areas, which really
37 hasn't occurred over the last 15 years that I've been
38 here.

39

40 We also have a new enforcement officer.
41 His name is Jeff Derson. He's a pilot. I know the
42 meeting last spring it was mentioned that 21(E) winter
43 hunt for moose, there was enforcement concerns about the
44 Federal hunt and the harvest occurring on State lands and
45 the tremendous burden on the State Troopers. We're
46 hoping to engage him much more intensively in enforcement
47 efforts, simply because he's a pilot, he's a young guy,
48 got a lot of energy. There's been kind of a change in
49 policy towards subsistence and guide and outfitter
50 enforcement issues in our field office. We've had

1 several changes of leadership.

2

3 Another thing to be aware of, we now have
4 a new State director, Henri Bisson has been reassigned,
5 so a fellow by the name of Tom Lonnie will be our new
6 State director. I worked with Tom many, many years ago
7 in Wyoming. Then he was an oil and gas specialist
8 running a program there. He's gone and done many things
9 since then. A real easy guy to work with. I strongly
10 urge you to get to know him at the get-go and let him
11 know what your concerns are and get him into the
12 subsistence understanding.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What was the name of
15 your new director?

16

17 MR. DENTON: His name is Tom Lonnie.

18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Will he be the seated
20 Federal Subsistence Board member or will he have a
21 designee?

22

23 MR. DENTON: It's his seat, but how he
24 chooses to handle it is yet to be seen.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's very
27 instrumental in our Regional Council business here
28 because they are the Federal Subsistence Board. I was
29 very unaware of that change.

30

31 Thank you. Continue.

32

33 MR. DENTON: Now I'd like to update you
34 on -- you know, Lime Village has been with us ever since
35 the beginning. I guess several of us have been here
36 since the beginning of this thing. We've watched that
37 harvest now. That's in 19(A). That's the area that was
38 left open. I just talked to Fred Bobby last week. The
39 last 12 months they've killed one moose and 14 caribou.
40 Their quota, of course, had been 40 prior to last year.
41 We made some adjustments last year. The quota was
42 dropped to 28. They haven't come close to it for years.
43 They've been less than 10 moose for several years now.
44 Now they're down to one is what he reported.

45

46 In 1992, when Jack Whitman was still the
47 Fish and Game biologist in McGrath, we actually did the
48 Gasaway density estimate in the Lime Village area and we
49 were close to 1,000. The estimate was 923 moose plus or
50 minus. We flew that two years ago and not a track. We

1 saw a total of five moose in a very large area around
2 Lime Village. There's a serious depletion of moose there
3 and has been for some time. It's more than serious.
4 I just want to update you on what I've seen and the
5 problems the folks in Lime Village are encountering
6 getting meat.

7
8 The Mulchatna Caribou Herd will be
9 another issue I'll cover right now. It is also in a
10 rapid decline. We had six years ago 200,000 or close to
11 200,000. Two years ago we were down to 85,000. The
12 photo estimate this year, the analysis hasn't been made,
13 but the biologist in Dillingham is looking that we may be
14 as low as 50,000. The bull/cow ratio is extremely low.
15 The last time around last fall was 14 bulls per 100 cows.
16 It's very evident when you fly over these big bunches of
17 caribou there are very few bulls. Of course, they're
18 being targeted. They're highly accessed by transporters.
19 We are currently, just like Tim was doing, we put in for
20 a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to
21 investigate basically ecology recruitment and things with
22 the bull component to get a handle on what is the cause
23 of this because it's a pretty serious decline. If we get
24 those grants, that's hard to say. That decision is made
25 at much higher levels than we are. We're competing
26 against every project in the United States, so we're
27 keeping our fingers crossed.

28
29 We heard about the 19(A) moose permit
30 hunt yesterday. The Federal permits, of which there was
31 20, there's been six harvested. The history of 19(A),
32 the harvest has been in the four to five to six hundred
33 range and we're down to 30. Pretty serious moose
34 situation there as well. I flew some of that this fall
35 in the latter part of October to define if there was any
36 rutting concentration areas. Didn't get enough for even
37 a sample size and we flew a lot of hours. Very few
38 moose, very few tracks along riverbanks. It's real
39 obvious there's a low moose population in that area.

40
41 I did 21(E) which we've talked about for
42 the past several years doing the same thing for rutting
43 concentrations as well as get a bull age ratio. Had to
44 fly hard in 21(E) of all places to get decent sample
45 sizes. Usually you could fly half a day and get four or
46 five hundred moose pretty easily. I flew nearly 30 hours
47 and picked up a little over 200. Again, sightability was
48 a problem.

49
50 Calf/cow ratio was about 31 this fall,

1 which is not really too bad. We picked up a bull/cow
2 ratio of 25.5 bulls per 100 cows. A fairly large
3 proportion of those are mature bulls, 17 per 100 cows,
4 then the two-year-old about 7.3 and yearlings 6.3. So a
5 fairly good representation of bulls, but I would expect
6 more yearling bulls than that.

7
8 We're going to coordinate this data with
9 Roger Savoy. He's the biologist now in McGrath. He's
10 going to do some work a little later this fall when the
11 snow hits, when some move out of the mountains more.
12 Also there's planned work later in the winter, so we're
13 going to try to get a handle on summer survival as well
14 as winter survival of calves. That gives a better handle
15 on seasonal mortality because probably bears are taking
16 the summer ones and wolves are taking the winter ones
17 more. To see what we have for recruitment relative to
18 predation.

19
20 Other things that are going on, the
21 Donlin Creek Mine, which we kind of reported on to keep
22 you updated on some of the things going on up there.
23 We've had applications and actually approved wind farm
24 feasibility studies. Those folks for power up there are
25 now looking at a wind farm up there of 63 hundred foot
26 towers for wind power to power that mining operation if
27 it gets going. A very significant, large impact for this
28 kind of technology. There biggest problem is icing up of
29 the props on those big things, so they're trying to lower
30 elevation and see if they still get the wind direction
31 and speed to generate that kind of power. More to come
32 on that as time goes on.

33
34 Plus there will be a road go into that.
35 That's 40 miles of road. This mining activity and the
36 roading, like you say, is a precursor to the indirect
37 effects of access of many other users. Something we need
38 to cumulatively analyze.

39
40 MR. COLLINS: Jeff, on that wind farm, do
41 you know what the projection is on lowering the barge
42 traffic? Because the other route was to be barging the
43 fuel and they were talking about a large number of barges
44 and we were really concerned with the fisheries
45 management impact. Will this take most of their power or
46 half their power?

47
48 MR. DENTON: Of course things are quite
49 preliminary now, but each of these towers costs about \$1
50 million to construct. Within a year they would have

1 saved the money of barging diesel up there for
2 generators. They were talking in terms of millions of
3 barrels a year. So it would reduce that barge traffic to
4 move that fuel and of course you've got potential spills,
5 you've got a lot of other things associated with moving
6 that kind of fuel. As a backup, they will still have a
7 need and still provide some of their energy with diesel
8 power. They're in preliminary testing feasibility stages
9 on how to do this. It's probably too early to draw any
10 conclusions on how things are really going to end up.

11
12 We've done some preliminary evaluations
13 of some of these big burns that we've had relative to
14 moose habitat, especially in last year's fire in the
15 Anvik drainage, the Goblet Creek burn and the Analok
16 burn, which is now about nine years old. In that part of
17 Alaska does not recover nearly at the rates that we're
18 seeing in other parts of Alaska. Some of these that are
19 two and three years old look like they burned yesterday.
20 I mean there is hardly anything coming back on those.
21 The Innoko Refuge has noticed the same thing on the burns
22 they've had over the last 10 years too. The vegetation
23 is not recovering as fast. The moose response to that is
24 concurrently much much slower. The Analok burn, I've
25 been on it and watched it since it burned. We still have
26 virtually no moose in there. Actually there's now some
27 reasonable habitat in there after nine years, at least
28 for bulls.

29 With that, I will end and answer any
30 questions you might have.

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've gone quite a
33 while here and it's about 10:52 and I would like to go to
34 a break and I'd like to come back to you guys again
35 because I'm extremely concerned about that bull/cow ratio
36 on caribou down there. We're down to our critical
37 minimum on moose and now we're driving these caribou
38 right into a hole and I want to get a handle on who's
39 proposing a closure on this air taxi shooting the tar out
40 of these caribou. Who's going to fix this problem. The
41 State of Alaska is taxed to the limit on these planning
42 groups. I'm extremely concerned from the Western
43 Interior perspective that this caribou herd has not been
44 arrested, they've not reduced the hunting pressure, the
45 bull/cow ratios are reflecting an extreme scenario where
46 we're going to go into a completely depleted population
47 in a very short time frame. The migratory abilities of
48 those herds reduce, they get hard to access in recessive
49 areas. I'm extremely concerned about this Mulchatna
50 Herd.

1 We're going to a break right now and
2 we'll come back in 10, 15 minutes.

3
4 (Off record)

5
6 (On record)

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'd like to reconvene
9 the Western Interior Advisory Council after our morning
10 break. We were just informed about the Mulchatna Caribou
11 Herd by Jeff Denton and those were very concerning
12 numbers about the population decline, the numbers of
13 bulls in the population. It's very apparent there's
14 inadequate large bull component. Is anybody looking at
15 the sizes of these calves and cow/calf ratios?

16
17 MR. DENTON: Yeah, actually we've been
18 very aware of these changes. The Mulchatna Caribou Herd,
19 similar to the Western Arctic, we have an interagency
20 working group that pool money, personnel, resources to
21 manage that herd each year. BLM is a fairly small
22 player. We represent about 10 percent of the range of
23 the Mulchatna Herd, but we contribute what we can. We
24 weigh calves every spring, we have a large number of
25 radioed animals as well as satellite radios to monitor
26 movements and seasonal habitat use areas, calving areas,
27 so on and so forth. Calf weights a few years ago were
28 the highest in the state and now they are lower than the
29 average in the state, which may indicate we have some
30 nutritional problems. I don't know if you're aware, but
31 in Bristol Bay the northern and southern peninsula herds
32 have very serious nutrition problems, very low calf
33 survivorship, very low populations. Those are becoming
34 at-risk populations actually. There's no feed basically.

35
36
37 The Mulchatna Herd has not been like
38 other caribou herds in the state. They're not a
39 predictable herd where they're going to show up to
40 winter, where they calve. They seem to shift those
41 critical habitats every few years, sometimes every year.
42 They seem to be quite flexible in finding areas where
43 they did pretty well, but the areas they've been and the
44 numbers that they were, they really ate it out. There's
45 no lichens in some of the areas they were in the early
46 '90s yet.

47
48 So we've got to look at a wide array of
49 potential problems to get a real handle on this, but,
50 like you say, it's declining rapidly and it's a very

1 accessible herd and tremendous numbers of bulls were
2 removed from that herd in the '90s. Every year it was
3 targeted for every non-resident coming to Alaska. Huge
4 numbers of the railbelt folks were hunting there. I was
5 one of them myself. I killed a lot of caribou there.
6 You'd see herds of three and four hundred bulls. You
7 don't see that anymore. So I haven't hunted in several
8 years because it's not a situation where there's a lot of
9 bulls available. Through regulations we've decreased the
10 potential harvest. You're allowed only one bull prior to
11 November 1 now. When we first started, you could kill
12 three and there was a five caribou limit. We've cut it
13 back to three caribou total.

14
15 Subsistence-wise, folks are still meeting
16 their needs because these animals move all over. Still,
17 with 50,000 animals, when they're in big bunches, people
18 can meet their needs. There's going to be a lag period
19 before we suddenly realize we're out of caribou.

20
21 They're unpredictable, they're in serious
22 decline and they're still getting a pretty good measure
23 of pressure. Part of the problem is a lot of the folks,
24 even if there's a one bull quota, everybody is going to
25 go out and kill one bull. Back then you had the option
26 of killing two or three, but a lot of these folks are
27 coming up to get one anyway. I haven't seen how that
28 bull segment of the harvest if it's increased, declined,
29 but it's taken a large component of the bulls every year
30 because they're very accessible. If we have 100 and some
31 transporters working that country, plus guides, plus the
32 subsistence users, so it's a heavily harvested herd.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm very concerned
35 with those numbers. I've got to get some caribou, but on
36 moose you've got to have 30 bulls per 100 cows and you
37 have to have some large bull component for proper
38 breeding and insemination and large calf weight, higher
39 predator evasion rates with heavier weight calves. I'm
40 extremely concerned about the situation. I think it's
41 going to have a huge bearing on the moose recovery in
42 Unit 19(A) and the people can direct their hunting
43 activities towards caribou. If we drive the caribou out,
44 people are going to be in a world of hurt. Our job here
45 is to identify subsistence needs.

46
47 Refresh my memory and enlighten me, the
48 Council, what's the minimum threshold for large bull
49 component and bull/cow ratios on caribou?
50

1 MR. DENTON: I would have to defer to
2 some of the Fish and Game folks. They have some
3 standards that they've established over the years with
4 the research that Fish and Game has done, so I'm assuming
5 that there's some folks who are probably more
6 knowledgeable than me on the current ratios.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have any U.S.
9 Fish and Wildlife Staff present who are familiar with
10 caribou bull/cow ratios?
11 Brad.

12
13 MR. SCOTTON: Like moose, caribou have
14 management objectives for different herds around the
15 state. The one I'm most familiar with where I worked
16 most is the Nelchina Caribou Herd, which numbered between
17 30 and 50,000 for all the years I worked in Glennallen.
18 We did age/sex composition counts every fall to look at
19 just that, to get calf/cow ratios, yearling bull ratios,
20 just so we can get recruitment, just like we do for
21 moose. My memory is not perfect, but it seems like our
22 management objective for that herd was 25 to 30 bulls per
23 100 cows. It was a heavily hunted herd. Sometimes we
24 were below that. I know we had a few years with a low
25 large bull component, like five large bulls per 100 cows
26 with a total ratio of 20 or 25, but a very small
27 component were large bulls and that's partly because they
28 were heavily hunted.

29
30 There's not been a lot of research on
31 what's the low biological objective, just like moose.
32 We've hunted moose down to nine bulls per 100 in some
33 areas with very few mature bulls in the population. But
34 very little research on that topic to find out what are
35 the major impacts. People have hypotheses and theories
36 about how that affects them. The low bull/cow ratios
37 with caribou we still saw relatively high pregnancy rates
38 just like we do with moose, below 20 bulls per 100. The
39 cows still seem to get pregnant. But those minimum
40 objectives might vary from herd to herd. For caribou
41 it's 20, but a lot of objectives are for 30 or more just
42 to have more variety in the bulls, some large, medium,
43 some small. In a herd like that where it's declining,
44 it's still being hunted. Without recruitment of calves,
45 without good recruitment to replace the bulls being shot,
46 you're going to continue to see a bull/cow ratio decline
47 until you start having good calf production and survival.

48
49 The Nelchina Herd we had a problem with
50 calf production and survival, survival mostly. In the

1 fall we'd have 15, 20 calves per 100 some years and that
2 wasn't enough to replace what we were shooting and what
3 the predators were taking. Years when we had 35 calves
4 per 100, that was enough and the next year we'd see a
5 bump up in the bull/cow ratio. So, with caribou, it
6 seems like it only takes a year or two sometimes of good
7 recruitment to get a bunch of bulls back in the
8 population. Moose seem to take a little longer in some
9 cases. That's just my thoughts on it.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those are very
12 informative. What the Council would probably like to
13 hear is what's the harvest on this Mulchatna Herd in
14 general?

15

16 MR. DENTON: Well, we've changed the
17 harvest regs for the last several years. Along with this
18 decline, we've cut back the bull harvest numbers for a
19 period of the year. I didn't come prepared with the
20 Mulchatna analysis. That's usually the Bristol Bay
21 meeting that's the major focus because Jim Woolington
22 with Fish and Game in Dillingham is the major management
23 entity there. I can't tell you off the top of my head
24 here.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It would appear that
27 harvest is outstripping production. With those low
28 bull/cow ratios it's my experience working on moose any
29 time you get into these low bull/cow ratios stuff hits
30 the fan, things start flying all apart. You start to get
31 higher mortalities on calves, the population starts to
32 regress when you drop below these critical minimum
33 bull/cow ratios and I consider that bull/cow ratio 14
34 bulls per 100 cows completely inadequate. Without very
35 many large bulls you get into poor genetic makeup of the
36 population.

37

38 I feel strongly that we need to write a
39 letter to the Federal Subsistence Board highlighting the
40 extreme situation of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and the
41 impacts to the subsistence users within the lower portion
42 of the Western Interior Region. This is a critical
43 issue.

44

45 The Federal Subsistence Board should be
46 thinking about a planning group on this caribou
47 population and those managers have to recover these
48 bull/cow ratios and arrest this decline. It takes
49 decades to get these caribou back. I was a little kid
50 and I watched that Nelchina Herd get shot out. It took

1 decades to get it back. It took decades to get the Forty
2 Mile Herd back.

3

4 I think it's within the purview of the
5 Western Interior Council to become very concerned. I've
6 been concerned since I've been hearing about these as
7 this population is basically -- if you graph it, it's
8 going like that, like a cliff. I'm hearing no planning
9 group, nothing going on. Reduce the harvest. Yeah,
10 those trophy hunters coming out of the states, they only
11 wanted one bull caribou anyway. Iliamna is a beehive of
12 flying activity going out to shoot these caribou.
13 There's an unending supply of hunters.

14

15 The Department is reluctant to reduce
16 that hunting pressure. That's because the major funding
17 source is from non-resident tags and Pittman-Roberts
18 funds into the infusion and I don't fault the Department
19 for that. That's just the facts of life with the State
20 management. That's the fault of the Legislature and the
21 governor.

22

23 So I am very concerned about this
24 situation and feel that a letter of transmittal -- it
25 should almost be one of our highest priorities, is to
26 request a planning group for this Mulchatna Caribou Herd
27 that will be interregional with the Bristol Bay Region
28 and Western Interior Region. The Advisory Committees,
29 the Department is telling us they don't have any more
30 funding for planning groups. I feel there's some
31 management structuring that needs to be addressed.

32

33 I would also like to see a letter
34 transmitted to the Board of Game with the same issue.
35 Short and sweet. We're very concerned about this decline
36 in this caribou herd. Do you have something else, Jeff?

37

38 MR. DENTON: Yeah, also include the Y-K
39 Delta there. They actually have large numbers in recent
40 years. The Y-K Delta out of Bethel, Goodnews Bay areas
41 have wintered large numbers and provided a resource for
42 those folks out there.

43

44 There is an interagency working group,
45 like I said, that pools all the monitoring, gathering the
46 data and so on. That's a Federal/State joint group and
47 we meet every year to discuss these things and cut back
48 harvests and see what more needs to be done. Like you
49 say, there's economic concerns. Bristol Bay is far
50 different than the Interior because the Mulchatna Herd is

1 a major
2 portion of their economic base as well for services and
3 that sort of thing.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This is a Subsistence
6 Resource Advisory Council. We're concerned about the
7 resource and we're concerned about the subsistence users.
8 I have compassion for the economics of that, but that's
9 not a priority of the State or the land managers.

10

11 If you have a forum, I would feel that
12 the Western Interior should make a transmittal to the
13 Board of Game, the Federal Subsistence Board, stating our
14 extreme distress at this situation. It's going to be
15 instrumental in the recovery of moose in Unit 19(A) and
16 (B) to maintaining a subsistence resource to our
17 subsistence users in the interim while they're enduring
18 these moratoriums.

19

20 The Board of Game and the Federal
21 Subsistence Board should be aware of our concerns,
22 proposals that come forward to reduce those hunting
23 opportunities are warranted. I feel that the primary
24 user group that's affecting this caribou population is
25 the sport user group because it's a high inundation and
26 has air accessibility.

27

28 So I feel that the Federal Subsistence
29 Board should be leveraging the State Board of Game to
30 further reduce and recover these bull/cow -- the things
31 that need to be done is arrest the harvest to stay within
32 sustained yield, to address this bull/cow ratio, to
33 recover this bull/cow ratio. There's some major things.
34 If I was sitting on a planning group, I'd be jumping
35 upside down and sideways about some of these management
36 issues. There's some real strong management issues.
37 Extirpation of the stronger genetics by full extirpation.
38 This caribou herd is in big trouble and I want to be an
39 advocate for the resource, the caribou and the people
40 that utilize that.

41

42 Are there other comments from the
43 Council.

44

45 MR. JONES: Mr. Chair. What's the
46 vegetation habitat on the Kuskokwim River or Lime
47 Village? The willows, are they recovering just as fast
48 as they do on the Koyukuk River regrowths? You said it's
49 taking longer to recover in the forest fire area. What's
50 the condition of permafrost and stuff like that? Is it a

1 dry area or moist area?

2

3 MR. DENTON: The habitats in and around
4 Lime Village, there's basically two components. One is
5 basically wetlands sphagnum moss, lichen type in the low,
6 wet tundra country. And then in the wintertime there's a
7 lichen underneath the spruce forest. I know in the early
8 '90s that's where they were concentrated, in both the
9 forest types where there was a lot of lichen understory.
10 We haven't had any fires in that Lime Village area in the
11 recent decade, so that habitat has stayed in pretty good
12 shape.

13

14 For moose habitat, willow wise, along the
15 rivers, these are river bottom, ice scoured type bottoms.
16 There hasn't been enough moose in there to keep knocking
17 the willows down to a level where it keeps growing back
18 and stays available. Some of it is actually growing
19 height-wise out of reach for moose use due to lack of use
20 because there's no moose there.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments on
23 this.

24

25 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I have a comment.
26 There again I guess the absence of Winchell and Walker
27 and Mr. Morgan are certainly evident here because they
28 know their area and what's lacking or what is -- I was
29 just wondering -- you brought up so many different
30 subjects here I don't know where to start. There's a lot
31 of questions. I guess I'm going to see if you guys have
32 some kind of wolf control that falls within the
33 parameters of the one near McGrath.

34

35 It was just interesting on TV this fall
36 during the hunting season and I think they traveled to
37 Lower Kalskag, somewhere in that particular area you're
38 talking about, Lime Village, and the local hunters were
39 saying the moose numbers were way down and they were
40 going to do anything, even if it was illegal, to put food
41 on their table. I could feel for them and some of us
42 have to go through the same thing.

43

44 I was just wondering if they have any
45 kind of -- what do you attribute that to, the low decline
46 in moose? I see 140 transporters. That seems
47 overwhelming to me. Do they have any plans to try to
48 boost the moose population back up? There again, I say I
49 miss the other Board members because this is their area.
50 If they have any proposals or any concerns, we are

1 lacking that.

2

3 MR. DENTON: There's several points here.
4 In Bristol Bay, moose are doing very, very well.
5 Nushagak River has a very abundant population. The
6 Goodnews Bay, Togiak Refuge. They've actually done
7 moratoriums on harvest and moose populations have
8 increased exponentially on the Togiak Refuge, Goodnews
9 Bay drainage. Caribou are, like I say, declining
10 throughout that region. Hunt unit 19(A) and (B),
11 however, are in your region. Those areas have been
12 identified for intensive management and active wolf
13 control is going on there now. 19(A) met their objective
14 for wolf harvest last year via that program.

15

16 And bear harvest is being highly
17 encouraged. There are lots of black bears. Even in
18 19(A) work that I did this fall, I saw more black bears
19 than I did moose. Part of it is they were all along the
20 ridge eating berries and the moose were on the timber.
21 But, again, that's an area where there's large numbers of
22 black bears. We're seeing a shift from brown bears to
23 black bears in a lot of these areas, too. Seeing major
24 increases in black bears in some of these regions.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions.
27 I just jotted down a little letter while I was listening
28 to your comments and I would like to read that to the
29 Council at this time.

30

31 This would be from the Western Interior
32 Regional Advisory Council to the Federal Subsistence
33 Board and Board of Game. The Western Interior Regional
34 Advisory Council has watched the decline of the Mulchatna
35 Caribou Herd to date. We feel the precipitous decline
36 must be proactively arrested. Regulations currently are
37 not addressing the extremely low bull/cow ratios and
38 harvests that are beyond sustainability of this herd and
39 rapid decline. The decline of this herd will contribute
40 to the hardship of our region's residents who are
41 enduring moose moratoriums in Unit 19(A) and 19(B).

42

43 I think this letter should be transmitted to both Boards
44 because both regulatory bodies have to come on the same
45 page and work together to arrest this decline. It's
46 within their -- it's an absolute red alert point. This
47 can't keep going. They've got to stop this. They've got
48 to stop the hunt. They have to go on a caribou drawing
49 system or something. They've got to get something on the
50 road here. This Council is not going to sit here and

1 watch this keep going. We've been waiting for the
2 managers to arrest this. Too much politics involved.
3 The Federal system has the authority to make closures to
4 protect populations. This is a serious situation.

5
6 So I'll entertain a motion to transmit
7 this letter to the Federal Subsistence Board and Board of
8 Game.

9
10 MR. STICKMAN: So moved.

11
12 MR. COLLINS: Second.

13
14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Discussion. Any
15 insertions. Vince.

16
17 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. I think
18 we'll also have to transmit that letter to the chairs of
19 the Yukon-Kuskokwim Regional Council as well as the chair
20 of Bristol Bay. You may want to put some language in
21 there, and we can work on that later. You're crossing
22 boundaries. I don't know where Bristol Bay is at on
23 this. So some kind of thing that you want to keep the
24 door open to communications between the regions,
25 etcetera. We may need to down the road possibly have a
26 little teleconference with the three chairs to work some
27 of this knowledge through. I don't know where Bristol
28 Bay is at. I don't monitor Bristol Bay like I do Y-K.

29
30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's totally fine.
31 I'm willing to work with those other regions. Ron and I
32 can do that. I should have heard voices of concern from
33 their Councils also and nothing is in our record of any
34 kind of concern from the Y-K Delta. I'm very concerned
35 about this situation. I've been watching this for the
36 past three years and I'm getting very afraid of what's
37 going to happen. We could drop down to such low numbers
38 we're not going to have caribou harvest. I don't want to
39 see that for our region's resource or our users. So I'm
40 willing to work with those other Regional Councils. That
41 should go to the top of the docket as far as formulation
42 of proposals by the Department. I want that transmitted
43 back to -- what region would that be down there for the
44 Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Randy?

45
46 MR. ROGERS: That would be Region 2.

47
48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I want Region 2 to be
49 informed of this also. I feel that they're far behind
50 the power curve on this and they're completely out of

1 line on sustained yield management as far as State
2 constitutional mandate. So I don't see where the current
3 regulatory process has helped this caribou herd at all.
4 It's on the same line of decline, so the current
5 regulations are not helping them. Do you have one more
6 comment there, Jeff.

7
8 MR. DENTON: This doesn't pertain to
9 this. The new State director, I wanted to mention his
10 date on the job will be, I think, two months from now or
11 thereabouts. He's not here yet, but he's on his way. I
12 think these other two fellows might have a comment or two
13 not with this issue.

14
15 MR. CRAIG: Tim Craig again, just real
16 quickly. All of us neglected to tell you we have a new
17 program lead in Subsistence in BLM. Taylor Brelsford has
18 moved on to other jobs. It is Chuck Ardizzone. He used
19 to be with OSM. The other thing is I requested that the
20 Western Interior receive scoping letters. You all showed
21 a strong interest in any mining activity that was going
22 on in the Central Yukon and I wanted to make sure you
23 were receiving scoping letters on any EA's that come up.

24
25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have received some
26 of those. Thank you. Any other comments on this letter
27 of transmittal to the Board of Game, Federal Subsistence
28 Board, RAC Chairs for Bristol Bay and the Y-K Delta,
29 Region 2, possibly the Commissioner of Fish and Game.
30 What's his name, Matt Robus? Not the commissioner, but
31 the Director of Wildlife is Matt Robus?

32
33 MR. ROGERS: Yes, Director of Wildlife is
34 Matt Robus. I could help provide any addresses you need.
35 The Regional Supervisor in Region 2 is Grant Hildebrand.
36 The one thing I would comment -- this is Randy Rogers.
37 You guys know me. I think the Dillingham area biologist,
38 Jim Woolington, probably has a pretty good handle on
39 what's going on with this. I know Roger Savoy is
40 spending time coming up to speed and is somewhat familiar
41 from working in Bethel and I would really encourage you
42 request a report to get a full picture of what they do
43 know and what may be in place.

44
45 There is also another wildlife planner in
46 Southcentral Region and I'm not sure what her workload is
47 or her priorities are, but maybe there's more potential
48 for addressing this if, in fact, that's what's needed at
49 this time.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was going to state
2 that after the passage of this letter that I would like
3 much more data and report on this Mulchatna Herd status.
4 Any kind of trend count information that may be available
5 and so forth. Any other comments on the letter to be
6 transmitted.

7
8 (No comments)

9
10 MR. STICKMAN: Call the question.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question has been
13 called. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

14
15 IN UNISON: Aye.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed.

18
19 (No opposing votes)

20
21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: None. Unanimous vote.
22 Oh, you have something else there, Tim.

23
24 MR. HAMMOND: Mr. Chair. Just one more
25 comment. I got word just before we headed out here that
26 a big chunk of the BLM land along the Melozitna River is
27 going to be TA's to the State this month. It's pretty
28 remote. I don't know how much it's used for subsistence
29 use, but it won't be Federal land anymore.

30
31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you.
32 Back to the agenda. We're on agency reports. Fred
33 Anderson was talking about he had to leave. Where is
34 Fred? Oh, he left. Yeah, he said he didn't really have
35 too much to say. So, we've got Fish and Wildlife
36 Service, Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge report. There
37 must be other wildlife refuge reports also. How are you
38 doing, Mike?

39
40 MR. SPINDLER: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
41 fellow Council members. For the record, my name is Mike
42 Spindler. I'm a refuge manager at Kanuti National
43 Wildlife Refuge. I'd like to extend my thanks to the
44 WIRAC and to the village of Ruby for hosting this
45 meeting. It's been a very productive and informative
46 meeting.

47
48 I'll just give you a report on how the
49 moose season went just recently. We had Steven Bergman,
50 Allakaket resident, a license vendor up there, he was

1 also the Federal permit issuer because we had that
2 September 26th to October 1 Federal hunt. Steven issued
3 47 Federal permits in that last five days beyond the
4 State general hunt. He estimates there were between
5 three and six moose harvested in that Federal hunt on
6 Federal lands. I just talked to him this morning. He
7 said it was very important to have that opportunity
8 because of the way the season went this year. He was
9 very appreciative of it and he would like to see it
10 continue in the future.

11
12 In the State general hunt which ended
13 September 25th, he estimated there were between 10 and 20
14 moose harvested. So we're looking at somewhere between
15 13 to 26 moose for Allakaket. These are very preliminary
16 numbers. Normally they harvest 40 moose, so they're way
17 down.

18
19 We did some law enforcement work, two
20 patrols. One early in the season, one late in the season
21 in response to concerns and complaints about air boat and
22 jet boat use coming off the Dalton Highway. We found
23 none of that. We patrolled pretty hard and we found no
24 evidence of that at all. There were some air boats that
25 went down the Middle Fork and up the Wild River, which
26 upset some people in Bettles quite a bit. We made two
27 waste cases of non-local hunters going down the Kanuti
28 River. Both groups had 60-inch bulls and wasted meat.
29 We cited them. We had one case of a DUI boat driver near
30 Old Bettles. Other than that, there was very little non-
31 local use on the Kanuti. It was essentially a
32 subsistence hunting area this fall except for those cases
33 I mentioned.

34
35 We do have a written report. I'd like to
36 turn your attention to Page 114 in your meeting book.
37 I'll just highlight some of the things in there. You can
38 read the report in detail later. As concerns some of the
39 issues we've been discussing during this meeting, I would
40 like to call your attention to Table 2 on Page 118. We
41 were able to accomplish a good moose census in fall of
42 2005 and a pretty good wolf census in March of 2006.
43 When you combine the results of the wolf survey and the
44 moose survey, you get what's called the wolf/moose ratio.
45 In 2004, we figured the wolf/moose ratio was 18 moose per
46 wolf and in 2005 we figured it was 13 moose per wolf. So
47 when that number goes down, that means there's less moose
48 available per wolf and that means the predation pressure
49 on each moose is higher than it has been.

50 If you look at Figure 4 on Page 121, the

1 results of the wolf survey. For this wolf survey we hire
2 an expert wolf tracker, Harley McMahan from Gakona, and
3 he's done this wolf survey two years in a row now. We're
4 pretty confident that the numbers he's getting are real
5 numbers. I do caution that there could also be, just due
6 to chance, that there was more wolves that were seen on
7 the refuge within the count area in '06 than were seen on
8 the refuge in '05 due to chance. Those wolf packs might
9 have been off the refuge and beyond the count area.
10 You'll notice the map on Page 120. We have a large
11 square buffering around the refuge boundary to kind of
12 take into account those wolf pack movements. You'll
13 notice there's even some observations beyond the
14 boundary. Harley is a very thorough tracker and you'll
15 see observations 1, 2 and 6 beyond the boundary. I'm not
16 thinking that increase in number of wolves is related to
17 variability or noise in means of getting data. It
18 probably reflects what's going on in the field pretty
19 closely.

20

21 The other caution that I do have about
22 this data, if you would turn to the moose graph, which is
23 on Page 115, and look on that far right-hand column for
24 2005. You'll notice the dark bar shows the relative
25 number of moose went up slightly over 2004 but was very
26 similar to the values in 1999. That dark bar generally
27 reflects stability in the moose population since 1999.
28 However, in 2005 you'll notice that thin line that goes
29 above and below the dark bar, that's the precision line.
30 The precision of the survey in 2005 was not where we
31 wanted it to be and that was because we didn't have
32 enough money to stratify it prior to doing the survey.
33 We used the 2004 stratification, which according to
34 recommendations from Fish and Game you can do, but in
35 this case it didn't work very well. So our plans for
36 2006 are to do a complete moose census again and
37 restratify. So we're hoping we can get a more reliable
38 number on that moose census figure for 2006.

39

40 If you'd turn to Page 124, there's a
41 picture of a little meeting we had in Alatna and we're
42 calling it the Allakaket/Alatna Traditional Placenames
43 Study. I'll have Wennona Brown report on that since she
44 was more directly involved in it than I was and then I'll
45 follow up after that with a few more items.

46

47 MS. BROWN: Good morning, Mr. Chair,
48 Council members. For the record, Wennona Brown,
49 subsistence coordinator for the Kanuti National Wildlife
50 Refuge. I also want to add my thanks to the village of

1 Ruby for hosting this meeting and all their hospitality
2 for our time here.

3

4 As Mike mentioned, we went up to
5 Allakaket August 15th and 16th and we had two purposes.
6 One was to go over the placenames map compiled from data
7 from the Eliza Jones study back in the '70s.

8

9 MR. SPINDLER: Late '70's.

10

11 MS. BROWN: Late '70s, early '80s. We're
12 compiling that all into a GIS database with the hopes
13 that we can, with the permission of the communities, use
14 some of those traditional placenames on our refuge maps
15 to help local people readily identify where they are in
16 relation to regulations.

17

18 Also while we were at that meeting I had
19 worked with our GIS person at the time to prepare some
20 new moose hunting maps. We took the refuge map and
21 surrounding areas where the people from Allakaket and
22 Alatna most likely hunt, overlaid that with new GMU 24
23 subunit boundaries, then overlaid over that the new moose
24 hunting regulations and permit requirements and color-
25 coded it also. If you just looked at the map and knew
26 where you generally hunt by color code, you could go down
27 and see whose land it is and what you would be required
28 as far as permits. I presented that to two tribal
29 councils while we were up there. We made a large map to
30 post on the wall in the tribal offices and a bunch of
31 small maps that Steve Burbitt could hand out with the
32 permits when he issued those in the fall.

33

34 Thank you.

35

36 MR. SPINDLER: Following up on the
37 placenames study, what we're finding with these Federal
38 permits it's very important to convey information on land
39 status to the hunters. In helping us convey that
40 information, it's good to have the traditional placenames
41 on there because then you can describe, oh, that land
42 boundary is kind of near such and such. The elders pick
43 up on that and know about that better than just following
44 contour lines or other things on the map and they are
45 certainly not using GPS's.

46

47 In all honesty, with these Federal hunt
48 boundaries, the GPS is a pretty important tool to have.
49 That may be something we might want to consider, is
50 teaching people how to use them. I'm just afraid there's

1 going to be violations of people hunting not on Federal
2 lands. We're doing everything we can in terms of having
3 handouts and maps available so that people can consult
4 those, but I do think there's still difficulty in the
5 field locating actual places on the map.

6
7 The placenames map kind of arose this
8 spring at the last RAC meeting in Koyukuk when Eliza
9 Jones approached Wennona and I about resurrecting this
10 study information. So we were pretty excited to use it,
11 but it was fairly delicate in terms of getting permission
12 from the tribal council to use the information. They do
13 support us completely. They just want to have the last
14 say-so on which names may or may not appear on the map,
15 so we're working closely with them on that. Once that's
16 established, we would like to use that as the new refuge
17 base map that will be in our land management plan and in
18 all our brochures and handouts.

19
20 We are close to publishing a draft
21 comprehensive conservation plan. We expect it to be
22 published and released to the public early next year,
23 perhaps January, maybe a few months later. That
24 comprehensive plan outlines how the refuge land
25 management units will be managed for the next 15 and
26 perhaps 20 years. We would invite the Council to review
27 that draft plan and provide comments on it. We did
28 conduct scoping meetings in spring and summer and fall of
29 2004. Scoping is where you try and identify issues.
30 That plan then identifies those issues and tells the
31 public how we're going to deal with those issues.

32
33 One of the things that's arisen to our
34 attention recently is the concern over predator numbers,
35 so we have made the decision in the plan -- the plan will
36 not specifically address predator numbers, but it will
37 include a road map that indicates the steps that are
38 necessary for any predator type management to occur on
39 Federal lands. It will outline those steps and then at a
40 later time, should that become an issue that we need to
41 deal with, we would then do what's called in the State an
42 intensive management plan. We would probably call it a
43 predator or pre-management plan. But that is called a
44 step-down plan. I just wanted to advise you the draft
45 comprehensive plan will be coming out soon. I would like
46 you to comment on all the issue that affect members in
47 your regions that you're representing.

48
49 We've had a few changes in our staff.
50 Joanna Fox replaced Mary Maxwell as deputy refuge

1 manager. Joanna previously worked in Galena as
2 subsistence coordinator. She was involved in the Koyukuk
3 River Moose Hunter Working Group as a technical advisor
4 from the Koyukuk/Nowitna Refuge. She worked in Kotzebue
5 as an outreach specialist doing outreach work and then
6 for Arctic Refuge in public use. She started with us in
7 March.

8
9 Later on in the spring we hired Kristin
10 Lyle as a park ranger to replace Jodi DeMeyere as the
11 Fish and Wildlife Services representative to the Arctic
12 Interagency Visitors Center at Cold Foot. For some
13 reason her name changed in June. Her last name is now
14 Kristin Reakoff. So we appreciated her services,
15 especially in terms of bringing local knowledge to the
16 visiting public along the Dalton Highway and look forward
17 to a productive career that she might aspire to have with
18 the Fish and Wildlife Service as a ranger and
19 interpreter.

20
21 On Page 122 in our report is a summary of
22 what was done this year in terms of follow-up studies
23 from the Old Dummy Burn. It was a very large burn, about
24 a quarter of a million acres, of which about 200,000
25 acres was on Kanuti Refuge. It was a late summer burn
26 during very dry conditions in 2005.

27
28 Some of the activities that we got
29 special funding for related to this burn was to look at
30 fire intensity, fire severity, look at the effects on
31 habitat. Also look at some of these recently burned
32 areas for possible moving in of invasive plant species.
33 We provided some funding to the village of Allakaket to
34 restore the Allakaket to Kanuti Trail, which was impacted
35 pretty heavily by blow-down following the burn.

36
37 Some of the studies that our biologist,
38 Lisa Saperstein, has been involved in show that moose
39 tend to prefer burns that are between 10 and 30 years old
40 in the Kanuti area. What's impressed me is having had
41 worked both on the Lower Koyukuk River for all those
42 years out of Galena and now working on the Upper Koyukuk
43 River is that the riparian habitats along the river don't
44 seem to be used nearly as intensively by moose as these
45 burns are, so it's really important in our future
46 understanding of what moose are doing is to look at fire
47 succession and habitat use by moose on these burns.

48
49 The Henshaw Creek burn, for example, was
50 in the early '90s. It's now 15, 16 years old and it's

1 right at its prime for moose and it is one of the areas
2 that has the larger number of moose on the Kanuti.

3

4 We will be completing the waterfall
5 harvest survey for subsistence users in Allakaket,
6 Alatna, Bettles and Evansville. We hired a former
7 Allakaket person, P.J. Simon, to go up there. He did the
8 early part of the survey and completed that and will
9 shortly be going up to complete the latter part of the
10 survey once all the open water is gone, no more waterfall
11 around to hunt.

12

13 Finally, White-fronted Goose aerial
14 survey was accomplished this year in July. The adult
15 numbers appear to be stable and that's a good sign for
16 us. However, I'm still concerned that the continental
17 population is still low. It's under a million birds.
18 This year the survey showed about 750,000 birds and the
19 management goal is above that, so the flyway states will
20 be looking at conservative management strategies to try
21 to bring that number back up.

22

23 That concludes the official report from
24 Kanuti Refuge. I'll entertain any questions or
25 discussion the Council may have.

26

27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ben.

28

29 MR. JONES: Mike, last summer I was
30 reading in a paper where there's more fire in the
31 Bettles/Allakaket area in the last 10 years. Every two
32 years it seems like there's more forest fires. Is that
33 because more tinder in that area because of the mountains
34 or what?

35

36 MR. SPINDLER: That seems to be the case,
37 Mr. Jones. What happens is moisture works its way up
38 from the southwest, up the Yukon and up the Koyukuk
39 River. That Kanuti Basin, Upper Koyukuk Basin, has the
40 same amount of sunshine as the Yukon Flats does, but
41 quite a bit more moisture, therefore more thunderhead
42 buildups and more lightening. The Kanuti area has one of
43 the most active lightening strike rates in the whole
44 state usually and it also has one of the most active fire
45 history areas. Since 1990, probably two-thirds of the
46 refuge has burned in various fire years. The early '90s
47 were a couple big years and then of course 2004 there was
48 the Evansville Burn and the Kolavenka (ph) Lake Burn,
49 both of which are 200,000 acre fires. Then in 2005 we
50 had the Old Dummy fire.

1 So we did quite a bit of fire severity
2 work on those '04 burns during the summer of '05 and then
3 actually got smoked out from a bit of that work because
4 of the active fire on the south end of the refuge of Old
5 Dummy. But we're looking real closely at vegetation
6 succession as related to fire severity to see actually
7 what kind of fire conditions produce what kind of
8 vegetation and how that will translate into potential
9 moose habitat.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other questions
12 for the Kanuti Refuge.

13

14 MR. HONEA: Yeah, I guess mine is more of
15 a comment because we were supposed to -- in WP-034 we
16 were included if we didn't get that earlier date, so I
17 was just wondering the outcome of it and people were
18 pretty happy with the extension. How many days was that
19 and what was the numbers you said, that final numbers?

20

21 MR. SPINDLER: Yes, Mr. Honea and Mr.
22 Chairman. In response to that question, the dates were
23 September 26th through October 1. A total of 47 permits
24 was issued. Steven Bergman was pretty thorough about
25 issuing permits. He made sure everybody that got a State
26 permit also got a Federal permit just in case they had to
27 hunt way late into the season. So the number of Federal
28 permits was really high because he wanted to do a good
29 job and make sure no one got in trouble hunting in the
30 wrong place afterwards.

31

32 He handed out the maps that we produced.
33 Wennona talked about the color maps. It's color-coded,
34 so it shows, depending on the land status, each area that
35 has a different land status or a different moose season
36 date is a different color. So you pick the area where
37 you want to hunt, then you look on the legend of the map
38 and you see what the season dates are and whether it's
39 State or Federal.

40

41 Mr. Steven Bergman reported to me just
42 this morning that he estimates about three to six moose
43 were taken during that last week of Federal season. He
44 said that that was very valuable and important for the
45 people to have because moose weren't moving around
46 earlier in the fall because of the warm weather. He,
47 himself, is a good hunter and he did not get a moose and
48 there's quite a number of people in Allakaket who
49 reported also not getting moose this year.

50

1 MR. HONEA: Yeah, just one more question
2 or comment or whatever. I guess you guys have your
3 designated area up there and I was kind of glad to hear
4 about the map thing. If our proposal gets anywhere and
5 this is hunting on Federal lands, we're certainly going
6 to have to use some kind of maps. As it is now, the road
7 here has always been our boundary between 21(B) and 21(D)
8 and our winter hunt was always in 21(D) to the west of
9 us, there's going to be some confusion, so I kind of like
10 the maps idea. With that I will close and appreciate
11 your presentation.

12

13 Thank you.

14

15 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Honea, one more
16 comment. We are trying to improve that map. One thing
17 that we self-criticized ourselves about the map is we
18 tried to get a lot of information on one large page of
19 paper and you need to sacrifice detail for a small area,
20 so we'll probably revisit that before next hunting season
21 and try and improve the detail. Maybe make it four pages
22 with greater detail and better resolution. That's one of
23 the problems we did notice. It's hard for hunters to
24 know exactly where they are. We hope that the
25 traditional placenames and a larger scale will help the
26 hunters.

27

28 Thank you.

29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments.
31 My comments would be I really enjoy your innovation in
32 developing that map and I feel that should be a template
33 for the maps we would have to use for the Kaiyuh and the
34 Nowitna March 1 to March 5 hunt. I've enjoyed Kanuti's
35 resource work, looking at the resources there on the
36 Kanuti Flats. Of course, Mike brings a lot of experience
37 from the Koyukuk/Nowitna Refuge and I've always enjoyed
38 his biological perspective.

39

40 My primary comments will revolve around
41 the data and so forth presented by Kanuti. I'm very
42 concerned about those wolf/moose ratios. Those are
43 critically low. My recollection of wolf/moose ratios is
44 that's a suppressing number of wolves per moose and it's
45 very concerning. The burden on the moose population is
46 excessive. That's what people have been saying.

47

48 I'm not one to jump at intensive
49 management. I think all other avenues should be
50 expended, but I know the people in Allakaket went out on

1 a concerted effort the year before last to get some
2 wolves, but this last year the gas prices went through
3 the roof, so that was constraining. Too bad Tanana
4 Chiefs isn't here. We could be talking about some kind
5 of a fuel incentive like they have down in Huslia.

6

7 But I do feel that this wolf/moose ratio
8 is critical and I feel this Council should make the
9 Federal Subsistence Board aware and the Regional Office
10 aware that this is coming to a critical point and this
11 may be leaning towards an intensive management on the
12 Kanuti Wildlife Refuge. I would like to know what the
13 comments are from the Council on that.

14

15 MR. SPINDLER: If I could, Mr. Chair.
16 There will be a later presentation with Mr. Bos from the
17 Regional Office discussing policy ramifications of
18 intensive management on Federal refuge lands. So I would
19 urge you, before taking action, to listen to that
20 presentation.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: All right.

23

24 MR. SPINDLER: I would agree with you
25 that the numbers are concerning. As I mentioned, there
26 are some cautions to the data. The precision of the moose
27 survey, for example, and the fact that this was not
28 what's called a SUP wolf estimator, it was a traditional
29 trend index survey estimator based on tracks. So there
30 are those two sideboards that I would caution you about.

31

32 Secondly, there is a lot of interest in
33 Allakaket for doing just as you've said, so I would
34 encourage the Council to explore ways to support those
35 efforts on lands that are next to the refuge and off the
36 refuge.

37

38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I wasn't specifically
39 asking for an intensive management on the refuge, but I
40 want the Federal Subsistence Board and the Regional
41 Office to become aware that these numbers are becoming
42 very concerning to the Western Interior Council.
43 Residents of that area have been stating that for many
44 years and these numbers are reflecting that their
45 sentiments are actually true. Even if these numbers are
46 off plus or minus 25 percent, these are still very
47 concerning numbers. So I feel the Federal Board and the
48 Regional Office should become aware we're becoming
49 concerned about this wolf/moose ratio aspect.

50

1 The Kanuti has some very significant chum
2 salmon spawning areas, which bolsters the productivities
3 of those wolf pups around the Jim River and South Fork
4 drainages, even to the south of there. So I do feel the
5 Federal Board should become aware of that. Do you have a
6 comment there, Ray.

7
8 MR. COLLINS: I'd just like to compliment
9 you on the work you've done. I think it's really
10 important. I know it's difficult for you to get into
11 actual predator control programs, but the clearer the
12 picture we have of what actually happens and the
13 relationship between those populations, the better to
14 fuel that. To define things like what is natural and
15 healthy populations of game and so on. You're talking
16 about collaring some of the wolves and tracking. Is that
17 going to be part of yours? What I'm wondering is if we
18 had more detailed information about how often they kill
19 moose and what their actual diet is because we have
20 information about approximately, but if there were more
21 specifics about the interaction and how often a pack is
22 killing and how many, some of that would be interesting
23 to see, I think.

24
25 MR. SPINDLER: Member Collins, Chairman
26 Reakoff. If you would turn to Page 120, Figure 3 in our
27 report, that figure is an overlay of the 2005 and 2006
28 tracking data from Harley McMahan, the survey pilot.
29 You'll also see there's line polygons drawn in several
30 areas. Those are historic wolf ranges obtained from
31 radio telemetry from 1998 to 2001, so we had pretty good
32 delineation of the wolf pack ranges. Indeed, we tend to
33 find these observations in subsequent years correspond to
34 where those telemetry defined ranges were.

35
36 Don't really see a major need to repeat a
37 wolf telemetry study there. The predation rates, numbers
38 of animals eaten per wolf tend to be fairly consistent
39 statewide. I would be more interested in pursuing a
40 moose collaring project because when we do these moose
41 censuses, we're not certain what the population
42 delineation is of that moose population.

43
44 I'm familiar with the Lower Koyukuk where
45 some work was done in the mid to late '80s and about half
46 the moose were migratory and the other half were
47 resident. So we don't know if we're dealing with any
48 migratory component here. We need to know that first
49 before we even consider the effects of the wolf predation
50 that we think is going on. We need to know what the

1 moose population is doing in terms of movements.

2

3 The other part of the equation is we're
4 working on but we don't have it lined out very well as of
5 yet is the habitat part of the equation. I did mention
6 my familiarity with the Lower Koyukuk compared to the
7 Upper Koyukuk. The riparian habitats in the Upper
8 Koyukuk are not nearly as extensive. They don't seem to
9 be used as much by moose as they are in the Lower
10 Koyukuk. I mentioned that burns are much more important.
11 What we don't know is the difference in nutritional
12 quality between the two areas. Are we at a carrying
13 capacity already? We don't know that. I would suspect
14 we're probably not based on the lack of use along the
15 rivers I've seen.

16

17 Those are some of the burdens of proof
18 that are required to do intensive management on a Federal
19 refuge land. We are incorporating those needs into our
20 long-term planning for inventory and monitoring work on
21 Kanuti and we hope to be cooperating with the State of
22 Alaska on a regional moose habitat survey that they're
23 planning for this next year. We've requested money and
24 budgeted some money for participating in that. I know
25 Glenn is planning some habitat work west of the Kanuti
26 and we'll just standardize with his methods and pursue
27 the same methods, probably with the same survey crew on
28 the Kanuti as well. So we're starting to fill in the
29 habitat question as well.

30

31 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

34

35 MR. COLLINS: Just to follow up on that.
36 I know in the McGrath area what became critical in
37 answering some of those questions was looking at the
38 actual calf mortality, tagging some calves and seeing
39 what was happening to them after they were born and their
40 birth weight and things like that. If the birth weight
41 is up, it's a good indication the nutritional value of
42 the cows was good. So having some information maybe on
43 those populations, too, would add to that equation of
44 actually looking at calf and yearling survival and so on.

45

46 MR. SPINDLER: Member Collins, Chairman
47 Reakoff. Moose calf mortality studies have been done on
48 the Lower Koyukuk and on the Nowitna and on the Yukon
49 Flats. They're extremely expensive. They require daily
50 tracking. You're looking probably at \$50-100,000 per

1 summer. Kanuti Refuge is a very small staff. We have
2 four people on our staff that are permanent. The trend
3 in our budgets is the other way right now. With all the
4 interest in refining our inventory monitoring data, we're
5 trying to move resources into that that will help address
6 this. We also don't want to lose sight of some of the
7 other work that we're doing as well with birds, for
8 example, with habitat studies. So it's a delicate
9 balance.

10
11 I would not support at the time moving
12 all our work into monitoring just wolves and moose
13 because I don't think that's the only mission of Kanuti.
14 I have already asked for more funding to pursue this type
15 of work. There was a budget initiative aimed at
16 identifying other critical needs and I did apply for some
17 money for that. I'm hoping that that does pan out.

18
19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I've been a proponent
20 of this telemetry project on moose for several years and
21 I'm happy to hear -- again, I've realized long ago that
22 there's a data lack on understanding of moose movements
23 in that area, so there's just speculation about where
24 these moose are going to and where their habitats are and
25 so forth, so we need actual documentation. This wolf
26 issue should be included in our annual report to the
27 Board and the need for further documentation funding for
28 moose telemetry project. I wanted that to be a
29 collaborative project between ADF&G, Fish and Wildlife
30 and the Park Service to get some regional moose movement.
31 I would like to include browse inventory, the telemetry
32 project, concern about this wolf/moose ratio.

33
34 I feel that the Board and the Regional
35 Office should become very aware these are biologically
36 critical thresholds and further documentation and
37 possible implementation of an intensive management
38 program in that portion of 24(B) may be warranted. It's
39 within the Council's purview to assess what we're hearing
40 from the public and from Staff and to make transmittals
41 to the Board. Any further comments on this wolf issue at
42 this time. Ben.

43
44 MR. JONES: Mike, you were talking about
45 moose habitat. I flew in that area up in Kanuti quite a
46 bit when I was doing work for the State. I think your
47 moose habitat is a little different from the Lower Yukon
48 because by the lakes I don't see no young birch trees,
49 what we have plentiful down in the lower end. Willows, I
50 don't know. The vegetation, too, like the grass in the

1 winter the moose eat on in the lakes, the water lilies in
2 the summers in the lakes. I don't know if you have that
3 up in that area. I know we do in our area. So the moose
4 tend to stay in the lakes in the summer.

5

6 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Jones, Chairman
7 Reakoff. I share your observations with the use of the
8 wetlands. I think on the Kanuti it's equally important,
9 especially late in the fall when everything else has
10 turned brown, we see a lot of moose -- probably the only
11 places we see a lot of moose are in the aquatic zones in
12 the lakes because they're trying to eat that last bit of
13 green stuff before freeze-up occurs.

14

15 Again, I alluded to earlier some of
16 Lisa's work looking at distribution of moose in
17 relationship to burns. That seems to be the most
18 important pattern that we've been able to discern so far.
19 Again, we have looked at that only at a very gross scale
20 doing aerial transects five miles apart across the whole
21 width of the refuge and then overlaying those moose
22 observations onto fire history maps. What we have not
23 looked at in detail is browse productivity in each of the
24 habitats and browse utilization in each of the habitats.
25 We are intending to do that this spring if everything
26 works out.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments on
29 the wolf/moose issue, Kanuti. We're coming close to
30 lunch right now. I do have one more issue that I would
31 like to cover with this Kanuti Wildlife Refuge. I do
32 feel because of the extremely low harvest for
33 Allakaket/Alatna that we do have on the books the March 1
34 to March 5 hunt in Unit 24(B) north of the Koyukuk River
35 in place, as we've done down here, I'd like to see one
36 bull harvest -- an analysis for one bull harvest by the
37 refuge for this next spring March 1 to March 5 season and
38 I would like to know what the Council feels about that.

39

40 MR. STICKMAN: Did you need a motion?

41

42 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I want a little
43 discussion with Mike about that first. Ron is not here,
44 but I'm cognitive from being on the Koyukuk River
45 Advisory Committee that people there have been having a
46 hardship trying to obtain subsistence needs. The data
47 from the Subsistence Division has shown that people there
48 hunt for 15 days on average years and this year it was
49 like everybody else. Everybody had to beat their head
50 against the wall to try to come up with a moose. So I

1 feel that the map delineation for this extension will be
2 instrumental. You've already laid down a good groundwork
3 for that.

4
5 If we had a one bull harvest in March,
6 the hunt area would have a certain amount of moose near
7 the Henshaw where we have a good population of moose in
8 the refuge. The elders are saying we're going to have a
9 low snowfall year. We won't get very many moose
10 harvested. They're not going to come down by the river
11 that much. That Henshaw country is hard to hunt. I
12 don't think there's going to be a high harvest, but I do
13 want to provide opportunity and I would like the Refuge
14 Staff to make an analysis for publication of a bull
15 harvest in March. What would you say about that, Mike?

16
17 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Chair. That is
18 something we can look at, especially if we accomplish a
19 moose census this fall. The snow conditions allow good
20 surveying, we'll have a good feel for what we have there.
21 You do have a March 1 to 5 season on the books. However,
22 there is an area that avoids Henshaw Creek, so we need to
23 look at those boundaries very closely. If you read the
24 language as to where that hunt applies to.....

25
26 (Whispered discussion)

27
28 MR. SPINDLER: I misspoke. It is the
29 Henshaw area. It's not the rest of the refuge. I got
30 that wrong. So we'll need to look real closely at the
31 language in there of what's included and what's not, put
32 that on a map, see what it looks like, see if it will
33 provide meaningful opportunity and I can dialogue back
34 with yourself and Mr. Sam at a later time.

35
36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Go ahead, Ray.

37
38 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. I'm
39 wondering, wouldn't it also be appropriate looking ahead,
40 asking for an extended season next year. I know they
41 petitioned that once before to extend the season.
42 Wouldn't the same thing apply? They were cut off on the
43 25th this year, were they, up there?

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, no. They got a
46 season extension for Unit 24(B) and 24(A) and that's on
47 the books, so that's set in stone now and we have that
48 and that's been helpful. So the hunt area is Unit 24(B),
49 which is that area around Allakaket. It would be north
50 of the Koyukuk River. So most of the refuge is to the

1 south of the Koyukuk River. So the refuge areas that
2 would be just upriver of the village and up almost to
3 Bettles would be subject to the hunt area. Like Mike
4 says, the moose don't like to come down by the river
5 unless they have to, unless the snow is like five feet
6 deep. So there's a lot of moose up there in those hills.
7 There's a trail between Bettles and Allakaket, so the
8 access point would be to get into the Henshaw and use the
9 Henshaw area a little bit. It has some real hunt
10 downsides to it, but it's all we got right now and I
11 would like to provide that if we could.

12

13 So I would like to entertain a motion to
14 -- I guess we didn't go that way if we had it on the
15 books. What does the Council feel is appropriate? Just
16 as advisement to the Refuge that we would like to see a
17 bull hunt in March 1 to March 5. Is that appropriate?

18

19 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Chair and members of
20 the Council. We'll certainly take a look at that.
21 We'll, as I said, create a map that shows the area that
22 would be available. I can fax that to you and Ron and
23 you could provide some input to me if you feel that is a
24 meaningful hunting opportunity.

25

26 I have two concerns. One is, again,
27 identification of bulls that time of year. The other is
28 land status because that northwestern portion of Kanuti
29 is checkerboard, so there's quite a bit of non-Federal
30 land there that's involved, so people will have to really
31 know where they are. In the Henshaw burn there's not
32 good landmarks, so that would be a classic case of using
33 a GPS, I think.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm looking at the
36 little Unit 24 map in our reg book here. We have almost
37 contiguous refuge lands from just above the Alatna along
38 the river, including the Henshaw. Way up in there
39 there's some State land, but it goes almost all along the
40 whole riparian area where the guys would run along the
41 river and hunt. It doesn't look like it would be a huge
42 problem on setting the boundary marker right above the
43 village and then one at the other end as far as the river
44 frontage. That would really help, no more than these
45 range markers on the beach for fishing. So I do feel
46 this would be a valuable opportunity for people to hunt.

47

48 Should we vote on this issue or is
49 everybody in agreement here among the Council.

50

1 MR. HONEA: Mr. Chair. Are we doing this
2 in the form of a motion for a proposal?

3
4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's not a proposal.
5 The reg is on the book. We have a March 1 to March 5
6 antlerless season. We're doing basically what we did
7 down there at the Innoko down there by Nulato, which is
8 basically to assess the viability of a one bull season
9 hunt from March 1 to March 5. It would be the same thing
10 that we proposed up here in the Nowitna Wildlife Refuge.
11 It would just be basically an announcement, a permitting
12 system, all of the parameters of harvest, the
13 identification publications, the maps, the whole thing.
14 But I consider 17 moose in Allakaket is really low. We
15 had a lot of high water, fishing was bad. So I feel it's
16 a viable option for people. So I'd like to entertain a
17 motion to make that proposal to the Kanuti Wildlife
18 Refuge manager.

19
20 MR. STICKMAN: So moved.

21
22 MR. HONEA: Second.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any further
25 discussion.

26
27 MR. STICKMAN: Call for the question.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question is
30 called. All those in favor say aye.

31
32 IN UNISON: Aye.

33
34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed same
35 sign.

36
37 (No opposing votes)

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Unanimous vote for a
40 continuance of that hunt with one bull provision by
41 permitting or however you'd like to administer that.

42
43 MR. SPINDLER: Mr. Chair. The regulation
44 does require that I consult with the Chair of the Western
45 RAC with the State area biologist and with the adjacent
46 landowners, which in this case will be the National Park
47 Service and with BLM. So I'll certainly do that and I'll
48 produce a map showing what area could be hunted. Once we
49 receive the fall moose survey data, we can look at trying
50 to make a decision sometime in January, hopefully.

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. I appreciate
2 that. I think we've kind of covered everything with
3 Kanuti now. I really appreciate your presentation and
4 all the good work down there. It's looking like lunch
5 time and I hear some tummies rumbling here, so we'll
6 adjourn for about a one-hour period and come back around
7 1:40 or so. We're off the record.

8
9 (Off record)

10
11 (On record)

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It's 1:44 by my watch.
14 So we're going to start this meeting again. We've got
15 airplanes that are going to show up here. We're on U.S.
16 Fish and Wildlife reports. We did Kanuti, so we're back
17 on record again with the Western Interior Regional
18 Advisory Council. We broke for lunch. We're back here
19 and it's a beautiful day, so the flying is good. The
20 next refuge report coming up would be Koyukuk.

21
22 Okay, Mickey is saying that the Frontier
23 plane is going to come by here and pick people up at
24 2:30, 3:00, going back to Fairbanks. So we're going to
25 do Koyukuk's presentation.

26
27 MR. MOOS: Thank you, Mr. Chair, Council
28 members. Again, my name is Kenton Moos. I'm the refuge
29 manager for Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge out
30 of Galena. We're going to make this real short so people
31 can catch their planes.

32
33 First, I want to introduce the Staff
34 members here from Galena. To my left is Geoff
35 Beyersdorf, who is our subsistence biologist. We have
36 Brad Scotton, who is our supervisory wildlife biologist
37 and Boomer or Jenny Bryant, who is a wildlife biologist
38 for us as well. I'm going to have Geoff give a quick
39 overview as far as a summary of what's happened in the
40 last year on the refuge and a few things that are going
41 to be occurring in the future.

42
43 MR. BEYERSDORF: Again, for the record,
44 Geoff Beyersdorf, subsistence biologist and pilot for the
45 Koyukuk Refuge. What I first wanted to start off with
46 and people have stated this, but I really appreciated the
47 public comments we had last night. Like Huslia, what
48 we've seen there, that was very helpful to hear what
49 their issues and concerns were and if there were any
50 means to try and address those or answer questions as

1 they came up. Also thanks to the people, I don't know
2 everybody involved, but for the food and lodging and all
3 the arrangements that have been made. It makes it easier
4 for us to be able to come into town.

5
6 The most important thing, I guess, that
7 we've just come off from, the Nowitna check station. The
8 season ran from August 22nd to September 25th. As
9 several of you are probably aware, there was some changes
10 in the permits there. There's a new drawing permit for
11 the upper part of the Nowitna and the upper part of the
12 Nowitna also went to a registration permit.

13
14 The early season August 22nd to 31st, I
15 did fly that area a couple times during that time period.
16 There was only one hunter that was in the area. He was a
17 non-local hunter from Fairbanks and took only one moose.
18 So we only had one moose taken out that I'm aware of from
19 the mouth of the Novi all the way up to the Big Mud. We
20 had a total of 133 hunters through the check station and
21 33 moose were harvested. That compares to the 18-year
22 average of 143 hunters and 44 moose being taken out. I
23 think, as some people here have already stated, people
24 who did get a moose had to work harder to get their moose
25 this year. And we did have extremely warm weather
26 throughout the season.

27
28 The one thing I did want to point out
29 that I noticed, I just got back on Monday, the number of
30 non-resident hunters this year is the lowest it's ever
31 been in the last 18 years. Non-resident hunters did not
32 take out any moose this year.

33
34 Moving on from there, with the avian
35 influenza, Robert Walker last year made a request as far
36 as putting something together and getting out to the
37 villages, getting information out on avian influenza.
38 Jenny Bryant and myself and Wennona Brown ended up
39 putting together a presentation, which we consulted with
40 the Louden Tribal Council, got their input on it and then
41 went out to the different villages and gave presentations
42 this year.

43
44 Also, and Jack was involved with this a
45 little bit, we did some sampling for avian influenza
46 locally. We did get a cryo freezer, which we sent up to
47 Huslia for Jack to sample subsistence harvested birds
48 this spring, and then also on the Kaiyuh Flats we were
49 able to rent John Summers cabin at Willow Lake. We set
50 up camps this year and captured birds and did avian

1 influenza sampling from there. I think we did 400 and
2 some samples. To this point, I know statewide there's
3 been 15,000 birds that have been sampled and they have
4 found cases of avian influenza, but not the H5N1
5 influenza. That has not been documented to this point.
6

7 The other thing I was going to mention is
8 that Brad and Boomer did go out and do beaver cache
9 surveys this last year and I think they're going to be
10 continuing those next year. I got a nod there, so I'm
11 taking that as a yes.
12

13 As far as wolf surveys go, there were
14 wolf surveys done on the Nowitna back in winter/spring of
15 2005. I know that Brad and Boomer, as they incidently
16 fly over areas doing different work, like during moose
17 surveys and such, they are keeping a map and records of
18 wolf pack sizes and locations.
19

20 In regards to other predators, bears, we
21 do have Ron's project in requesting funding to do a
22 grizzly population dynamics study on the refuge.
23

24 Another thing we did this past year,
25 which is a continuance from 2005, Cliff Schleusner came
26 up here and presented some of the 2007 fisheries projects
27 that they'd like to have done. Back in 2005 there was a
28 study presented to you to do in-season salmon harvest
29 surveys, which you guys were supportive of. I guess I
30 wanted to give you kind of a physical example of where
31 that went to. The funding for that was approved this
32 last year. I worked with Jack from the Huslia Tribal
33 Council, with William Solomon from the Kaltag Tribal
34 Council and with Teresa Burley from the Loudon Tribal
35 Council. They did the salmon surveys in their villages
36 and they participated during the weekly YRDFA
37 teleconferences.
38

39 I wanted to bring that out just as far as
40 showing you that we have been trying to work with the
41 different councils and doing different wildlife studies
42 and helping them to develop an infrastructure within the
43 different tribal councils. Brad and Boomer have been
44 working with a Ph.D. student on a moose calf habitat
45 study. I think October 24th they're going to be going
46 back out. They've got some radio collared calves out
47 there. They will be recapturing them and weighing them
48 and they're looking at habitat. This is done on a
49 statewide basis to look at survivability and habitat
50 relationships.

1 We will be doing moose surveys this
2 November, weather permitting. As Jack has stated, he's
3 probably going to be going out with Brad to do surveys
4 and the Huslia Tribal Council, through that tribal grant
5 that Jack was explaining to you, has hired another pilot,
6 which Boomer is probably going to be going out with that
7 person to survey the area northeast, up towards Hughes.
8

9 The only other thing I guess I was going
10 to pass along here is that we have been doing the pike
11 mercury sampling. Jack has been helpful in that also for
12 the Huslia area. He's going to be getting pick samples.
13 We also got pike samples from the Kaiyuh Flats and from
14 the Nowitna.
15

16 At this point that's all I have. I don't
17 know if there's some questions for us.
18

19 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Does the Council have
20 any questions for Koyukuk/Nowitna. Go ahead, Don.
21

22 MR. HONEA: Yeah. I'm kind of interested
23 in your wolf survey. Was it up and down -- I mean was it
24 consistent with years past or have you seen a much higher
25 count because actually on the Nowitna I've seen -- and
26 that brings me to the grizzly count also. If there's
27 money for the study, I'd sure advocate for that program.
28 A few years back we were up there and we seen a grizzly
29 with three cubs. That's kind of unusual and this was
30 late in the fall. I've seen presence of it near the
31 village of Kokrines this fall and pretty much in the past
32 few years there's been grizzly signs quite a bit in Novi.
33 The moose I've taken out, incidently, I've seen there was
34 a lot that weren't very big at all and I'm all in favor
35 of the intention to keep big breeders around. I heard
36 testimony last night about the smaller moose being
37 produced and I've seen evidence of that.
38

39 So I was just wondering, getting back to
40 the wolf population, do you feel it's getting to the
41 point where we'd have to take some measures?
42

43 MR. SCOTTON: Member Honea. Brad Scotton
44 again. The wolf surveys that have been conducted on the
45 Nowitna, there was a pretty major estimate in all Game
46 Management Unit 21(B) in 1999 and then I duplicated that.
47 It was actually in the spring of 2004 on the Nowitna, all
48 of 21(B). The estimates were remarkably similar. I
49 think it was 62 wolves in nine packs, I believe, in '99
50 and then 68 wolves and nine packs in 2004. The locations

1 of those packs were remarkably similar as well. In the
2 moose population on the Nowitna, from what we can tell,
3 appears to be stable over the long term, so I think we've
4 got a more or less stable moose population with some
5 bumps here and there and a more or less stable wolf
6 population. It's not an incredibly high number of wolves
7 on the Nowitna. Their only food source really is
8 consistently moose. There's no caribou, so it's kind of
9 a standard system. I think there's very little harvest
10 of wolves in 21(B) from what I've gathered in Glenn's
11 data and what I've seen, so people just aren't really
12 trapping or hunting the wolves much in 21(B).

13

14 I do keep track of wolves every winter
15 incidentally wherever I fly. Try to keep tabs on packs.
16 I can give you details on what I do know. Ruby Slough
17 has consistently had a pack of eight to 10 wolves right
18 down the river. I find kills all the time in the island
19 that's created by Ruby Slough. There's a pack straight
20 across the river from town that I've seen twice so far
21 this summer already on the gravel bars at the mouth of
22 the Melozi with black wolves in it. I think there's four
23 pups in there right now.

24

25 Then in regards to your grizzly question,
26 the proposal we put in, they asked for our pie-in-the-sky
27 dreams on various projects that we'd like to see funded
28 and we put in four projects that they said have a decent
29 chance and one of those was a grizzly study. I put that
30 in mostly because of local concerns of an increasing
31 grizzly population. From my perspective of working in
32 various parts of the state, this is still low density
33 grizzly country. There aren't that many grizzlies and
34 there are a lot of black bears. But that doesn't
35 discount that grizzlies may be increasing. I've only
36 been here four years. I don't see many flying. Maybe 15
37 or 20 a year. The unit I used to work in I'd see 200 a
38 year flying.

39

40 So we are interested in what the bears
41 are doing. If we can get the money, we'll certainly
42 start some projects that will educate us because we don't
43 know a whole lot about what bears are doing in this area.
44 But feel free to call any time and ask questions about
45 what we do know. All that information is public
46 information.

47

48 I did include that in the biological
49 overview that I gave at the last meeting in March, and I
50 know you weren't able to attend that meeting, but I'll

1 try to periodically do that at these meetings if you guys
2 are interested in the gory details.

3

4 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I was talking with you
5 about these breeding aggregates up in the Huslia Flats
6 and what you were seeing up there. I was wondering what
7 you were seeing with big bulls with cows. Have you flown
8 in the Novi in this post hunt to see what kind of
9 breeding aggregates up here?

10

11 MR. SCOTTON: Every year I've done a
12 little bit of flying post hunting season. This year I
13 probably did more than normal. Because there's a fair
14 amount of hunting pressure in this area, our bull/cow
15 ratios overall for 21(D) are around 20, 25, sometimes 30
16 bulls per 100. The large bull component was fairly low
17 for several years, particularly in places like Three Day
18 Slough because of the hunting pressure and that's
19 recovering now apparently. We had a three or four year
20 period with really low calf recruitment in a lot of
21 places and that hurt us. Those calves that were born in
22 those years should be the adult bulls right now, but
23 those are small cohorts. But there are big breeding
24 bulls out there. I've seen right around Huslia several
25 large harems with multiple 65-inch-plus bulls with the
26 same breeding harems.

27

28 I did fly a little bit on the Nowitna.
29 We were doing beaver cache surveys and saw one good
30 aggregation harem with a 65-inch bull and a 55-inch bull
31 and I think 14 cows. I was encouraged by that. I didn't
32 see a lot of other moose on that survey. They are in the
33 timber and kind of hard to see this time of year. I'm
34 encouraged to see that, particularly on the Novi where we
35 have a bull/cow ratio that's recovering. It was down
36 below 20 per 100 and last year it was at 24 per 100.
37 We're hoping to see another increase in that this year.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's exactly what I
40 like to hear, in the post hunt are there big bulls
41 breeding cows. So that's what I wanted to know. So I
42 know good calf production will come from that and that's
43 what we want to have. I'm very happy to hear about these
44 post season overflights to see after hunting has occurred
45 what kind of big bulls we have left in the population.
46 That's very critical when our bull/cow ratios get close
47 to the minimums.

48

49 Any other questions about the
50 presentation. I always appreciate all the work you're

1 doing. I think you're doing great biology work here in
2 Koyukuk/Nowitna. I highly enjoy our Staff. These
3 refuges and parks have been around quite a few years now,
4 25, 26 years, so we're getting a more thorough
5 understanding of the resources since a lot of funding has
6 been cut with ADF&G, so thank you for all your input into
7 this meeting and all the information you brang us.

8

9 Thank you.

10

11 Vince.

12

13 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I just got a fax
14 before lunch from the Innoko Refuge. Obviously they
15 weren't able to fly in. There is a report here from
16 Clara Demientieff, but I don't know if you want me to
17 summarize it or just make copies available. She does
18 this usually at the meeting, goes over what she's
19 involved with in the refuge.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Maybe you could give
22 us a quick overview. Not the whole text, but a quick
23 overview of what she's got there for us.

24

25 MR. MATHEWS: They did conduct a spring
26 season 2005 waterfall survey through phone contacts and
27 visits to wildlife harvesters in the Yukon/Innoko
28 villages. This will be conducted during the second week
29 of November 2006. I should say it's continuing.

30

31 I didn't really understand what she meant
32 by this Earth Week Project, but they have a challenge
33 grant and they'll be working with the Iditarod School
34 District, McGrath school and the Grayling school and some
35 other schools in the area to present programs for this
36 Earth Week project. Ray may know more about this.
37 They're bringing in a bird presentation to the village
38 from some raptor rehab in Anchorage.

39

40 They had an environmental camp program.
41 It took place the last week of July. It worked out very
42 well. Two students from McGrath completed the second
43 session and another on the first session. One student
44 from Anchorage and one student from China. I gather
45 projects associated with this camp were bear safety, boat
46 safety, camp logistics, orienteering with GPS and
47 compass, hikes, basic first aid, things like that, fire
48 building.

49

50 This one is about the summer season and

1 it was confusing to me as I read it. They didn't have
2 the season harvest assessment, but they are reviewing the
3 questions that are used for that assessment. Later on
4 she says this past summer season most fishers -- this is
5 for Holy Cross where she was hubbed out of, most fishers
6 began preparing for fish for the salmon season on or
7 about mid June. This year's breakup was late. Most
8 fishers only during the king salmon. Anyway, her bottom
9 line is all households were satisfied with their catches.
10

11 Then she's gone to fishery tech training.
12 She attended three weeks of that. The training was
13 sponsored by YRDFA. Other performances I believe on her
14 part in the village is they continue to maintain close
15 working relationships with the GASH villages. Facilitate
16 communication between the GASH villages and the Service.
17 And obtained a variety of information from village
18 residents and leaders for use by Refuge Staff in
19 developing and implementing refuge programs. Provides
20 visitor services to the public, so she's reiterating the
21 goals that she's involved with associated with the
22 refuge.
23

24 Then she concludes that there will be a
25 refuge information technicians booth at the AFN
26 convention in October and the booth will have a history
27 of the RIT program, refuge brochures and that's pretty
28 much it.
29

30 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. That sounds
31 like a good presentation. You've got a comment there,
32 Ray.
33

34 MR. COLLINS: Yeah. The Earth Week
35 Program, they bring out biologists. And this raptor,
36 they've done a number of times. They bring out various
37 raptors, owls and hawks, and go in and do presentations
38 in the school and talk about them. And the science camp
39 is a permanent building set up downriver from McGrath
40 that they cooperate with the school district and they
41 recruit students from schools throughout the area, both
42 the Yukon and throughout the Iditarod district.
43

44 My grandson was from Anchorage and the
45 student from China, his grandparents live in McGrath.
46 Their daughter is married to a Chinese fellow that was
47 educated here and has a computer business in China.
48 While he was here he joined in, so it was a good
49 opportunity for him to mix with the local kids.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments
2 from Council.

3
4 (No comments)

5
6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to have
7 Innoko present moose population status data for the
8 Innoko Refuge at our spring meeting. If they're going to
9 do a trend count this fall. I'm not sure if they got
10 funding for that trend count. So at our spring meeting I
11 would like to see that data on bull/cow ratios and
12 calf/cow ratios and so forth.

13
14 MR. COLLINS: I think they could also do
15 another count. They issue air taxi permits and track
16 those. I know Willow Air, which has been a big user of
17 the refuge, had 40 hunters out there, but they only got
18 four moose this year I think it was, so it was a very low
19 success ratio. And I don't know about the guides. Their
20 reports aren't in yet.

21
22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that should be in
23 their overview in the spring presentation. I just wanted
24 to alert them. So we don't have any other refuge reports
25 that I know of. Fred Anderson said he didn't really have
26 -- you know, we're up on our Regional Council
27 appointments to the SRC's, so he basically just wanted to
28 be here for the fishery presentation stuff.

29
30 So nothing from Park Service that I know
31 of. Is there any other agencies or groups that would
32 like to speak to the Council. I think we've heard from
33 most.

34
35 (No comments)

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So we'll jump back up
38 to the top of this agenda. We jumped down into the
39 agency reports, which are very instrumental I must say,
40 having these agency reports at that point in the meeting
41 so we can address issues instead of trying to compress
42 Mulchatna letters right in the end of our meeting when
43 everybody is leaving. So I would like to see the agency
44 reports moved up in the agenda. You can talk to Ron
45 about that. That would be my suggestion.

46
47 So we're back up here. I think you
48 covered this .804 State Criteria aspect. So we're at (D)
49 Federal call for 2007-2008 wildlife proposals and
50 drafting proposals for 19(A) and (B). Did you have

1 something specific on that? I think we've kind of gone
2 over the Mulchatna Caribou Herd and we've been addressing
3 these Federal proposals here at Ruby for the winter hunt
4 and the fall extension.

5
6 Are there any other Federal proposals
7 that the Council would like to submit to the Federal
8 Board. You have something there, Vince.

9
10 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. The reason we have
11 19(A) and 19(B) listed there, and Ray knows of this and
12 Jack knows of this, is that recent special actions
13 required that we actually implement an .804, actually
14 limit who can hunt in 19(A). Ray can correct me, there
15 was also portions of 19(A) that were closed to any type
16 of moose hunting. Those are special actions.

17
18 So everyone is wondering, to cut to the
19 chase, is anybody going to submit a proposal or proposals
20 to make those actions permanent so we don't have to do a
21 special action next year. So Pete DeMatteo wrote up a
22 draft proposal we can pass around and you can take a look
23 at.

24
25 I did talk to the State, Randy Rogers,
26 and he said if the Council doesn't submit a proposal, and
27 you don't have to, the State might submit a proposal. If
28 the State doesn't submit a proposal, my understanding is
29 the Office of Subsistence Management would submit a
30 proposal. These are controversial proposals. There's no
31 doubt about it. This is what you're trying to avoid in
32 different situations is getting into you can hunt and you
33 can't hunt and all these restrictions. It's up to the
34 Council. I can pass the draft proposal around and you
35 can see it, decide to author it or decide to look at it
36 when someone else authors it.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would like to know
39 what you think about that, Ray. It's more down in your
40 neck of the woods so to speak.

41
42 MR. COLLINS: Well, I know the moose
43 population really collapsed downriver and they had to
44 close hunting this year, except for a few permits down
45 there. I'm not aware of the local discussions though and
46 I wish Carl was here because I don't know what the
47 discussions going on down there as how best to approach
48 this, whether they went into an .804 or not. But I know
49 they're really going to have to limit hunting. I would
50 suggest putting it in as a proposal would be at least a

1 holding and then we can look for input from those areas.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Let's take a quick
4 look at this proposal. We may want to get it on the
5 table. I don't think this moose thing is going to go
6 away overnight, so I think we're going to be stuck in
7 this situation for a while. If Pete's proposal looks
8 good as a place-holder or it might just look good in
9 general. Pete does good work.

10

11 (Pause)

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would say offhand,
14 for me, this proposal looks good. I don't like four brow
15 tine restrictions, especially at this population status.
16 I think it would be counter-productive to rebuilding the
17 moose population. That's not in the proposal and that
18 other aspect was rescinded. I feel that this proposal
19 should be submitted from the Western Interior Regional
20 Council to get it on the table as a place-marker. After
21 analysis, we can review public comment and so forth. I
22 would like to hear comment from the Council on this
23 proposal. Vince.

24

25 MR. MATHEWS: Well, I didn't get a chance
26 to review this. It came in on the plane before me. The
27 language that concerns me here is the customary and
28 traditional use determination number 5. If I read that
29 correctly, it says in accordance with .804 of ANILCA the
30 proposed regulations will limit the number of communities
31 who currently have a C&T use determination for moose in
32 Unit 19(A).

33

34 I wasn't in the middle of this, so I'm on
35 the periphery, but the action that happened this summer
36 was to limit it to Tuluksak, Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Crooked
37 Creek. So I'm a little concerned about the language in
38 this proposal because the current C&T, unless I'm reading
39 the book wrong, which is possible, it's rural residents
40 of Unit 18. That would be Bethel on up. I suppose, if
41 Jeff can confirm that, we can work on this with your
42 concurrence that it would reflect the current .804
43 actions. Maybe Jeff can shed some light on this.

44

45 MR. DENTON: Yeah, this had come up
46 several times. Basically, when we had to determine how
47 many permits go to which villages, it went back to
48 historical harvest over the longer term. Quite a bit of
49 analysis went into shutting the Bethel end off and part
50 of that also is to get an equitable distribution.

1 There's only 20 Federal permits of the 60 permits.
2 You've got to divvy 20 permits amongst a number of
3 villages and we wanted to make sure with the application
4 process and so on we didn't totally eliminate some
5 villages upstream, the smaller villages, Crooked Creek,
6 so we wanted them to be able to participate. So we
7 allocated a certain number of permits per village and
8 based upon historical harvest patterns, the longer term
9 harvest pattern, and actually distribution of Federal
10 lands and the distribution of where the actual hunt was
11 going to take place. These are river hunts, not upland
12 type hunts.

13
14 Quite an analysis went into what permits
15 went where. It actually allowed the more local hunters
16 that are closer to the moose to have the first
17 opportunity. The Bethel folks are far away and they
18 would have totally inundated in terms of applications the
19 number of permits that would have been available to the
20 people who are closer to the resource. So we had to make
21 a cut based on that.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince.

24
25 MR. MATHEWS: Well, the instructions to
26 me was to align with the recent special actions, so if
27 that is incorporated in your motion. If the language on
28 the paper I hand out doesn't match that, then that will
29 give us latitude to match the special action request. I
30 don't think the moose population has changed that would
31 open it up for hunters from Bethel on up.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, that is not our
34 intention. I was looking at the harvest dates and the
35 parameters of the hunt. Being unfamiliar with what the
36 special action was, I thought this was mirroring that
37 special action. The intention of this Council is to
38 mirror that special action with a proposal as a permanent
39 implementation because there's going to be a long term
40 need for restriction. So that's the intention of the
41 Council. Ray.

42
43 MR. COLLINS: Yeah, this confirms with
44 the discussions I've had. Also, the villages that are in
45 our area are in this. The ones from 18 down below are
46 more recent hunters that have been coming upriver, clear
47 up to McGrath in various years and they're the ones that
48 are paying the price the most. They do have, as I
49 mentioned, the heaviest king salmon harvest in the state,
50 is this lower part. They catch about 80 percent of the

1 kings, so they meet their subsistence needs through fish.
2 They also have a growing moose population. They have a
3 moose moratorium down there and they've been building it
4 up. It's increasing, so they're going to have local
5 moose population they can hunt down there before this
6 recovers probably.

7
8 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The effluency of the
9 villages in our region -- we're not supposed to consider
10 that to a large degree, but the people on the left
11 portion of our region are very economically suppressed
12 and if they have to buy alternate resource, that is very
13 expensive to buy in those places. So that's instrumental
14 in my deliberation on this .804.

15
16 MR. COLLINS: I notice that Stoney River
17 and Georgetown is left out. Do you know why these
18 weren't mentioned in there?

19
20 MR. DENTON: Basically they are within
21 the closed area of 19(A). Again, it was based on the
22 folks that are closest to the resource. Lime Village was
23 left open. I mean that's a de facto closed area anyway
24 because there's so few moose in there. On both ends, we
25 kind of had to make that cut in terms of those that are
26 closest and in most need of the Federal land resource
27 there.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: At this time I would
30 entertain a motion to submit this proposal with the
31 understanding that it's for the villages that were
32 included under the special action .804 request.

33
34 MR. COLLINS: I so move.

35
36 MR. STICKMAN: Second.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've got a motion and
39 a second. Any further discussion on the proposal. We'll
40 be discussing it in depth this spring. Any further
41 discussion.

42
43 MR. HONEA: I call for the question.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question has been
46 called. All those in favor of the motion signify by
47 saying aye.

48
49 IN UNISON: Aye.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed.

2

3 (No opposing votes)

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: None. So that will be
6 submitted in our packet of proposals. Is there any other
7 proposals that may come to mind. I had a person up north
8 that feels when we hunt bears, if we get a hold of a bad
9 bear that's killing moose, you should be able to utilize
10 the bear for domestic animal food and under current
11 regulations you have to eat the bear, for human
12 consumption. I requested that person to submit that as a
13 proposal, but I don't feel that I want to submit that
14 myself.

15

16 I wanted the Council to be aware that
17 that's an issue. When you get a hold of these brown
18 bears, grizzlies, and they're eating something bad --
19 bears that are digging roots or eating berries, they're
20 good meat. They can be better than a black bear. You
21 get a hold of a bad grizzly that's been killing moose, it
22 can be pretty tough to gag that bear down. That was an
23 issue that came up, so I just wanted to bring that to the
24 attention of the Council. Ben.

25

26 MR. JONES: Yeah, I talked to the
27 biologist when I was at Ellis Cabin when I was hunting
28 and I asked him if any permits were going out to kill
29 grizzlies and he said no, you don't need no ticket. The
30 only requirement is -- do I have to salvage the meat, he
31 said no, just salvage the head and the hide, that's all.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, under Federal
34 regulations you're required to salvage the meat and the
35 hide for human consumption. The area that I'm at, we're
36 completely on Federal land. State lands you wouldn't
37 have to do that.

38

39 If there's no other proposals the Council
40 can think of -- Vince, go ahead.

41

42 MR. MATHEWS: I just think at this time
43 the amount of time you guys spent with the Nowitna that
44 maybe the tribe or the advisory council would like to be
45 online when you discuss this proposal next March,
46 assuming you're still going to be in Aniak. I don't know
47 if you'd like to hear their concerns when you deliberate
48 on the proposals you're submitting. You may want to plug
49 in the community. I'm just kind of throwing out seeds if
50 you guys want to plant them or not. Maybe the tribe

1 could set up a phone here, tribal council, and people can
2 listen in to your deliberations. I say that, when I
3 program these meetings, sometimes getting a location
4 where there's a phone in the meeting room is difficult.

5
6 MR. HONEA: Can I respond to that? Thank
7 you. What we did with our particular proposal supposedly
8 was submitted by a tribal member through the tribe, so
9 what we're going to do is give that back to the author
10 and we just came to a conclusion that we, as a tribe, may
11 just offer up an amendment or a petition or a motion to
12 support our proposal, RAC's proposal, and just give it
13 back and if they want to present it to the Ruby Advisory
14 Committee and if they want to be online for that, then I
15 would notify them.

16
17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: You can contact Ruby
18 Tribal Council prior to -- when we're making publication
19 for our agenda and see if they would like to be online.
20 So I don't know of any other proposals to draft at this
21 time.

22
23 We have next on the agenda global warming
24 presentation.

25
26 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Global
27 warming or climatic changes have been part of your annual
28 report as well as Eastern Interior and I was charged to
29 see if we could get some presenters. I did contact some
30 and they didn't get back to me and there's a funding
31 question on travel. So there are no presenters at this
32 time. If the Council would like to have presenters for
33 the next meeting, then charge me to pursue that, but
34 right now my understanding is that unless they fund
35 themselves to attend -- we're inviting them but not
36 providing travel cost. I did contact the University and
37 a couple other groups, but they never responded.

38
39 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. I can make a
40 few comments on that if I may. I was at the Science
41 Symposium at Denali Park and part of the presentations
42 there were on that. One of the things that came out that
43 impacts probably this northern area is the receding of
44 the permafrost. What's happening is that's one of the
45 things that's leading to the drying up of a lot of these
46 lakes in our areas. I don't know if there's tracking by
47 the refuges of what's going on with their lakes in that
48 regard or not.

49
50 If the permafrost goes out under these

1 lakes because of the nature of the soil, often that lake
2 just completely drains away now. It's only that
3 permafrost that's keeping the water up there. So that's
4 one of the things that's going to change in our area.
5 And there's going to be a general drying out of the lands
6 long term, but it's all starting to happen now. And that
7 means more fires.

8
9 The other thing that came out on global
10 warming is that they're expecting more precipitation even
11 though the land is going to be dryer, there will be more
12 in terms of rain and snow, like we've seen this summer.
13 I think it's good to track this issue, especially how it
14 will affect habitat and so on. Maybe some of the refuges
15 want to be looking at what's happening with their
16 wetlands in there, is it affecting them or not.

17
18 Thank you.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, I've been
21 hearing this all over our region. The water dropping off
22 and all the wetlands, numbers of muskrats declining and
23 so forth. There is a habitat change, shrubbery changes
24 going up in the Brooks Range, the whole tundra sections
25 are changing because of that. There's lots of climatic
26 studies being done in the North Slope of the Brooks Range
27 at the Toolik Research Area, just on the north side of
28 the Brooks Range. So everybody is seeing effects of
29 those changes. One of the old-timers told us that the
30 marten never went north of the bottom of the mountains.
31 Now I've got marten going about 25 miles into the
32 mountains and they're responding to the thaw depth. The
33 voles can dig deeper into the ground, so the martens are
34 responding to that.

35
36 We're responding to these changes in the
37 moose regulations. You know, it's affecting how the
38 moose move around. So this Council deals with these
39 various species changes and some of that is population
40 status and how people hunt is going to have to be able to
41 adjust. So this system does provide for that dynamic, so
42 I feel we'll stay on top of it and probably come up with
43 additional proposals to address various issues.

44
45 So any further comment on the climatic
46 change or global warming. Mickey.

47
48 MR. STICKMAN: The only comment I have is
49 the proposals we talked about the last couple nights with
50 having the moose seasons open later and later, I believe

1 that's all from the effects of global warming. We talked
2 about how some of the setnet sites, especially below
3 Nulato and even around Galena, didn't do that great, not
4 like in the years past, because we had a lot more rain.
5 The river was higher throughout the whole fishing. It
6 did drop down for the fall chum so people were able to do
7 pretty good on fall chum. Fishing for fall chum,
8 Benedict will probably concur that you had to fish
9 further out and the fish just had a different swimming
10 pattern this summer it seemed like because the water was
11 a lot higher. We were not driftnetting right against the
12 bank like we normally do and we were getting most of our
13 fish out further and getting it all at the very bottom of
14 the fish net.

15

16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think we've covered
21 that. Item F, Forestry products and Federal Subsistence
22 Priority. Vince is going to make a presentation on an
23 issue that has arisen this summer in the interpretation
24 of Title VIII of ANILCA involving what ANILCA says about
25 subsistence harvest of forestry products or plant
26 materials. The law says other renewable resources
27 besides fish and game, so it would be other renewable
28 resources other than fish and game. So Vince is going to
29 make a statement here.

30

31 I wanted this on the agenda and I've
32 written also -- I went through the ANILCA law and the
33 House and Senate record and thoroughly researched this
34 issue. This whole decision that's being made is on what
35 the solicitor has said. So we're going to talk about
36 this issue. I think it's a very important issue for this
37 Council and all 10 Regional Councils in Alaska.

38

39 So go ahead, Vince.

40

41 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I'll try to capture
42 this. This has taken up a lot of time with this topic
43 over the summer, but basically here's the issue as I
44 understand it from talking to Jack, talking to the Bureau
45 of Land Management and consulting with our solicitor.
46 The issue is Council leadership believes that the
47 subsistence priority and protection of Title VIII of
48 ANILCA applies to forestry products, like house logs and
49 firewood.

50

1 The topic is on the agenda here because
2 of recent actions to take house logs from Bureau of Land
3 Management lands around the Wiseman area. What I
4 understood from talking to Jack, his reasoning on this
5 was a reading of Section 802, which it says the Congress
6 declares that non-wasteful subsistence uses of fish and
7 wildlife and then particularly other renewable resources
8 shall be priority consumptive use on such resources on
9 public lands in Alaska.

10
11 The other reasoning given, saying that
12 forestry products should fall under that protection is
13 the definition under 803 of subsistence uses means
14 customary and traditional uses by rural Alaskan residents
15 of wild renewable resources for direct personal and
16 family consumption as food and emphasizing shelter, fuel,
17 which I failed to emphasize here, but that would also be
18 another one, clothing, tools or transportation.

19
20 Based on conversations with Jack,
21 forestry products, like house logs and firewood, are
22 essential to a subsistence lifestyle and if the intent of
23 ANILCA was to allow a continuation for the opportunity of
24 subsistence uses by rural Alaskans, then these essential
25 forestry products would fall underneath the protective
26 umbrella of ANILCA.

27
28 The final reasoning that I understood was
29 that if there's no subsistence priority, then the
30 villages within Federal Public lands could have nearby
31 important forestry resources harvested by commercial
32 interests via an agency permit from the Federal agencies
33 that would allow commercial forestry operations. The
34 loss would result in additional time and resources spent
35 by subsistence users traveling greater distance to obtain
36 their forestry needs.

37
38 I did consult with the Forest Service on
39 that, but they basically gave me the same response that
40 Bureau of Land Management did, that a permit could be
41 issued. My understanding is the permit is not the issue,
42 it's the intent of ANILCA.

43
44 The response that I worked out with the
45 solicitor is that even though these sections I listed
46 above, 802, 803 of ANILCA reference other renewable
47 resources and shelter. Section .804 only grants the
48 subsistence priority for the non-wasteful taking of fish
49 and wildlife resources. The Federal Subsistence Board
50 was not granted via Section .804 the authority over other

1 renewable resources.

2

3 I discussed with the solicitor and others
4 some options to address this issue and I need to say
5 those now. One is a special use permit. BLM has already
6 done that. That is available. Limit access and use of
7 surrounding village corporation lands for harvesting of
8 forestry products to corporation members and others by
9 permit. Wiseman area, those lands do not exist to my
10 knowledge around the village. There may be other
11 villages in the same situation, but I didn't have time to
12 research that.

13

14 Finally, a third option would be to
15 obtain a conservation easement if possible from Federal
16 land agencies to protect necessary forest close to the
17 villages for local harvest.

18

19 That's the presentation.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: So that's kind of the
22 issue. My primary concern is I don't care whether the
23 Subsistence Board has authority. I wrote a response. My
24 very severe and very deep concern is that a solicitor,
25 without issuing any publication, a letter on the issue,
26 randomly said that ANILCA does not entail forestry
27 products or other renewable resources. That's my
28 concern. That's a very, very deep concern. Katie John
29 also was very concerned with fishery for subsistence and
30 that interpretation did not entail fisheries on Federal
31 public waters. Well, Katie John went to court and, no, it
32 does. That's because the law says fish and wildlife and
33 other renewable resources. That's why the ruling
34 entailed fisheries and that's why we have a meeting today
35 about fisheries is because of that Title VIII of ANILCA.

36

37 Title VIII of ANILCA was written by
38 Congress to protect primarily a rural Alaskan subsistence
39 priority, but primarily Native Alaskan subsistence
40 priority. That's where ANILCA Title VIII was written. I
41 went through the ANILCA law and I've spent three days in
42 response to this. I took my time and I went through the
43 ANILCA law and the House and Senate record and I've
44 written a letter that I'd like to have submitted to the
45 agencies, the land managing agencies, the U.S. Fish and
46 Wildlife, Park Service, the Department of Agriculture,
47 the Forest Service, the BLM solicitor and the OSM
48 solicitor and the Federal Subsistence Board to become
49 aware because Title VIII in ANILCA does say that there
50 needs to be a platform for local input on renewable

1 resources, so this Council would seem to be the only
2 platform for concern about subsistence resources.

3

4 So I'll read this letter into the record.
5 I've titled it Subsistence Use of Plants Covered Under
6 Title VIII of Public Law 96.87, which is the ANILCA law.
7 This letter is to address the recent question regarding
8 whether rural subsistence uses of resources other than
9 fish and wildlife are protected under title VIII of
10 ANILCA, Public Law F96.487. It is clear in the review of
11 the law and congressional reports Title VIII does include
12 other renewable resources and the policy of Congress
13 8022, non-wasteful subsistence uses of fish and wildlife
14 and other renewable resources shall be the priority
15 consumptive use. Senate Report 96.413 explains this
16 language. The non-wasteful subsistence use of fish and
17 wildlife and other renewable resources, e.g. berries,
18 timber, grasses, shall be the first prior consumptive
19 use.

20

21 The House Congressional Report 95.1045-I
22 also includes this clarification and the definition for
23 subsistence uses. This definition speaks to all wild,
24 renewable resources. I'm quoting plants as well as
25 animals used for personal or family consumption in the
26 manner specified. Although no State authority is granted
27 except as regarding the taking of fish and wildlife.
28 Congress only intended fish and wildlife to be managed by
29 the State. It is also clear that Congress's original
30 intent was to maintain a delicate balance of granting the
31 State of Alaska subsistence management of fish and
32 wildlife only and only if in compliance with Title VIII.
33 Federal land managing agencies in managing subsistence
34 activities on the public lands and in protecting the
35 continued viability of all wild renewable resources in
36 Alaska shall cooperate with adjacent landowners.
37 Apparently Congress intended, and rightfully, that the
38 agencies manage subsistence uses of the other renewable
39 resources, plants, with a priority for rural consumptive
40 uses.

41

42 No other conclusion can be drawn. The
43 law and the reports agree on Congress's conception, all
44 wild renewable resources have a priority for custom and
45 traditional subsistence uses on the public lands as
46 defined in Title VIII in ANILCA. Sound management
47 principals and conservation of healthy populations of
48 fish and wildlife, the utilization of the public lands in
49 Alaska caused the least adverse impact on rural
50 residents. Current subsistence management must enable

1 rural residents to have a meaningful role in the
2 management of subsistence uses other than fish and
3 wildlife.

4
5 The mechanism for implementing a
6 subsistence priority for other renewable resources is in
7 Section 810(a) of Title VIII, not .804. In determining
8 whether to draw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit use,
9 occupancy or disposition, the head of the Federal agency
10 having primary jurisdiction over such lands or his
11 designee shall evaluate the effects of such use,
12 occupancy and disposition on subsistence uses and needs.

13
14 The three sections of 810 steps for
15 mitigation are to minimize adverse impacts to subsistence
16 uses and resources inclusive of other renewable
17 resources. 810 says other renewable resources, e.g.
18 plants, timber, berries, grasses, as Congress had stated.
19 This section differs from the Section .804 that only
20 deals with fish and wildlife allocation. Congress was
21 clear. Fish and game allocation was to be dealt with
22 under .804. Other resources are to be dealt with under
23 .810.

24
25 Subsistence uses of renewable resources
26 other than fish and wildlife is essential importance to
27 the viability of rural Alaskan economies. The volume of
28 biomass is commonly the largest of all subsistence
29 harvest; firewood, building materials, berries. These
30 biomasses, many times, people who burn wood, you might
31 get 800 pounds of moose, but you got thousands of pounds
32 of firewood because this is Alaska and Congress realized
33 that these were very important resources to the economies
34 of Alaska.

35
36 The continued opportunity to harvest on
37 the public lands for subsistence uses of these resources
38 is critical to rural residents' physical, economic,
39 traditional and cultural and social existence. As
40 Congress recognized the importance of subsistence use of
41 all wild renewable resources to rural Alaskans, it is the
42 law on Federal lands and shall be maintained by Federal
43 agency land managers.

44
45 So that's my letter that I would like to
46 submit to the above aforementioned land managing
47 agencies, to that solicitor. My mom would talk to me
48 when I was six months old and I remember her talking to
49 me. I couldn't talk. I spoke in English my entire life
50 for 49 years. I think that it's fairly appalling that a

1 solicitor can misinterpret the ANILCA law to this degree,
2 to discount a very important subsistence resource. This
3 Council is the only platform for advocacy for subsistence
4 that I know of in Alaska. These Councils. I feel it's
5 in the purview of this Council to submit this letter to
6 the land managing agencies, to the solicitor's office and
7 to the Federal Subsistence Board. I would entertain a
8 motion to submit this very important issue with a
9 possible cover letter from our Council.

10

11 MR. STICKMAN: So moved.

12

13 MR. HONEA: Second.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We've got a motion and
16 second to submit this letter to those aforementioned
17 entities. Any further discussion by the Council.

18

19 MR. COLLINS: Well, this related issue
20 came up I know in the Park Service with the cabin permits
21 and I know we had to fight for a long time before they
22 worked out regulations and they're doing it by permit
23 now. My reading of this, it was somebody out there in a
24 trapping cabin and it eroded away or collapsed, should
25 have been able to replace it quicker and not have to wait
26 for a permitting process, but they did that. I don't
27 know what is required in the permitting process, but
28 maybe we need to re-examine those to see if they're in
29 compliance with the law or whether they can say no or if
30 there's an appeal process in there that would refer it to
31 some of the Councils or something.

32

33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My assertion is that
34 you can't read ANILCA or the House and Senate Record
35 without seeing crystal clear under full magnification
36 that the other renewable resources Congress was clear
37 about timber, grasses, plant materials in general, that
38 those are covered under a priority consumptive use.

39

40 My primary concern is that a timber
41 resource -- maybe Ruby cuts birch and green timber right
42 up the river here and floats them down or cabin logs and
43 brings them down to the village or they harvest berries
44 in this area on Federal public lands. The price for
45 berries goes to 50 bucks a quart and becomes all these
46 Asian pickers that get all these permits to harvest under
47 no subsistence priority but the land managing agencies
48 would not have to prioritize for customary and
49 traditional uses. The land managing agencies would be
50 able to issue an unending amount of permits. We would

1 get a permit also, but we would have no subsistence
2 priority whether for berries or timber. It doesn't
3 matter what it is. The land managing agencies might like
4 in the future issuing timber permits. They want to
5 maintain the forest in an old growth fashion. Without a
6 subsistence priority, you have no consumptive use
7 priority.

8
9 These are my concerns about this. This
10 is a far-reaching issue. I am very concerned about a
11 solicitor making a verbal opinion and the land managing
12 agencies managing on that opinion, an incorrect opinion I
13 might add. So that's why I'm writing this letter and
14 that's why I'm very concerned about that.

15
16 The Park Service review of cabin cutting
17 permits, the Park Service is under the same subsistence
18 priority under Title VIII. You should review that with
19 your SRC. Any other discussion on this motion on the
20 table. Vince.

21
22 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. Just so the
23 Council is aware, a response from the solicitor, if it's
24 going to be a written opinion, is going to take quite
25 some time, so I don't want the Council to think -- it
26 could be a rapid response on it or it could take a long
27 time. There may need to be a more thorough review of the
28 law and that requires -- I'm sure refuge managers know
29 this better than I, but it does require, I think, a
30 review by the Washington level. So I don't want the
31 Council to think that you may be getting a response in a
32 month or two or it could be a year or so on this issue.
33 I have no idea. The solicitor did indicate it would be
34 fairly rapid. Written opinions, if that's where this is
35 going to go, are carried forward into history.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm very aware of
38 that. I'm prepared to wait for that opinion. Where my
39 concerns arose were where the solicitor decided to make a
40 statement and the managers, because they adhere to what
41 the solicitor says, began managing upon that opinion, a
42 verbal opinion. I'm very concerned about that. This is
43 a very precious law to rural Alaskans. I consider that
44 as a frivolous statement rashly made that managers were
45 managing upon and I'm very concerned about that. I want
46 to express that in our cover letter.

47
48 Go ahead, Mike.

49
50 MR. SPINDLER: For the record, Mike

1 Spindler, manager of Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.
2 Having just reviewed and rewritten the compatibility
3 determination for our comprehensive plan on harvest of
4 subsistence house logs, it is in Federal regulations that
5 we are to issue permits for subsistence house logs.
6 There's criteria on diameter and local need. Refuges
7 along the river routinely do issue permits for logging.

8

9 While I was at Galena, the forester
10 there, the fire management officer is a forester and he
11 did some research into sustainability because that was
12 one of our concerns, the sustainable harvest of logs.
13 The guidance that he came forward with was something we
14 were fairly comfortable with and that's the harvest of
15 one log for every two and a half acres per year on some
16 of the best habitats.

17

18 A word of caution in there. There is a
19 sustainability factor that managers need to have and that
20 is given in the Code of Federal Regulations right now.
21 So I think in practice what you're seeing is people are
22 still getting the permits and it is in the Code of
23 Federal Regulations for priority use for subsistence.

24

25 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's not what the
26 solicitor told the BLM.

27

28 MR. SPINDLER: Well, that decision hasn't
29 filtered down to Fish and Wildlife because we're still
30 issuing permits.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's why we're
33 nipping this in the bud.

34

35 MR. SPINDLER: Okay.

36

37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I understand the
38 managers have management authority. My heartburn
39 revolves around discarding the subsistence priority.

40

41 MR. SPINDLER: I understand that. I just
42 wanted to clarify the whole issue of sustainability.
43 There does need to be discretion given to the field
44 managers because obviously we wouldn't want to harvest
45 trees above the Arctic Circle at the same rate that you
46 would be able to harvest them down on the Kenai Peninsula
47 or further south in Alaska. The reason the permits are
48 there is to direct that harvest of logs in a manner that
49 is sustainable.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Congress has allowed
2 customary and traditional use practices and timber
3 resources have been being harvested around many
4 communities for many, many generations with
5 sustainability. So customary and traditional use
6 practices enter in to the subsistence uses. So that has
7 to be -- this is a subsistence use issue, so that's where
8 Congress has allowed customary and traditional uses to
9 occur.

10
11 I'm happy to hear that there's some
12 documentation of subsistence uses being in a refuge
13 management system. But when a solicitor makes a 90-
14 degree turn on what my understanding of subsistence is,
15 having read this law many years ago when it was written
16 and being on these Subsistence Resource Commissions and
17 Councils, I became very concerned about that 90-degree
18 turn and wanted to kink that back in the right direction.
19 So that's where we're going here.

20
21 Any further discussion on the motion on
22 the floor. Go ahead, Tim.

23
24 MR. HAMMOND: Mr. Chair and Council. I'd
25 just like to make a point of clarification. Tim Hammond
26 with the Bureau of Land Management. There is no question
27 that the BLM can meet needs for personal use, forest
28 products, under FLPMA permitting without ever bringing
29 ANILCA into the picture. So I just want to make sure --
30 yes, this question needs to be resolved, but in the
31 meantime that doesn't mean we can't allow any harvest of
32 house logs and firewood. We have that authority without
33 ever bringing ANILCA into the picture. I understand that
34 doesn't address your concern about subsistence priority.
35 I just want to make sure no one is left with the
36 impression that we're telling them they can't harvest
37 forest products.

38
39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I appreciate that
40 clarification. Thank you.

41
42 MR. HONEA: I call for the question.

43
44 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The question is
45 called. All those in favor of the motion signify by
46 saying aye.

47
48 IN UNISON: Aye.

49
50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed.

1 (No opposing votes)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: None. So unanimous
4 vote to submit this letter. Onto our next agenda items
5 here. Into the annual report. I think we highlighted a
6 couple issues here for the annual report at this meeting.

7

8

9 MR. MATHEWS: Not to say there isn't
10 others, but I only captured one.

11

12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. I was
13 referring to our annual report highlighting this
14 moose/wolf ratio. That was in the possible need for
15 intensive management and telemetry and browse inventories
16 for the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge. That was one of
17 them. We're transmitting a letter about the Mulchatna
18 Caribou Herd, but if that letter -- would it also be
19 necessary to include it in our annual report?

20

21 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. When we did
22 that the last round, that caused a lot of confusion when
23 we submitted a letter to the agency and then also in the
24 annual report. It caused confusion because the
25 individual agency, I believe BLM, did respond to your
26 letter and then it comes up in the annual report. So it's
27 not necessary to have it in both. If your issue is
28 closer monitoring in general of caribou herds or the
29 issues you brought up on that, that is a more global
30 issue than the specifics of the Mulchatna. I suppose the
31 bottom line is it's best just to keep it in one letter
32 and go that way.

33

34 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have something
35 to say, Ray.

36

37 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. Another
38 issue I think that we should start addressing in our
39 letter is this idea that the current management system
40 does not provide the flexibility needed to adequately
41 manage subsistence harvest. For instance, look at how
42 many people fell short this year. The resource was
43 there, but because of the current season -- ANILCA says
44 you have to provide an opportunity and it's for the
45 continuation of this use in a sustainable manner.

46

47 What's happening now is people are,
48 because of weather, delaying, or having to go out when
49 it's not appropriate culturally. I mean normally you
50 don't go out there and start and hunt every day of the

1 season if the moose are not moving and you can't see
2 them. So somehow we need to make that issue that we need
3 to build in flexibility. So I guess it's starting to
4 happen with the managers being able to get a special
5 action on it that they can initiate each year. But I
6 think we ought to alert them it's not meeting current
7 subsistence needs as it's managed right now without
8 special action. So that needs to be examined. I don't
9 know how we approach that, but just to state it as an
10 issue that needs to be addressed for long term.

11
12 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I kind of think you're
13 right there, Ray. Maybe we've been thinking too much
14 inside of a box and maybe there needs to be A, B and C
15 hunts and if subsistence needs are not being set,
16 subsistence use amounts for each community within our
17 region, if they're not meeting those needs, going to an
18 alternate -- the land managers go to an alternate season
19 to try to meet those needs. That would lend more
20 flexibility.

21
22 MR. COLLINS: Or a permit system of so
23 many that's within the sustainable harvest after the
24 regular season.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: But I mean that would
27 be within the B hunt parameter. We would have to have
28 discussion with the Federal Board on that about providing
29 multiple hunts and management authorities and more
30 flexibility. That might be an issue to put in the annual
31 report, a need for more flexibility with alternate
32 hunts.....

33
34 MR. COLLINS: To respond to changing
35 weather conditions.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF:responding to
38 weather conditions or changing events. If there's a
39 resource to harvest, then we can have trigger points of
40 use and triggering alternate hunts. That's becoming
41 pretty apparent. We're getting into special actions
42 virtually every year. It's getting to be the way it is,
43 so we need maybe several hunts lined up, a little
44 bandolier of hunts to allow people to meet their
45 subsistence needs. I would like to see that inserted
46 into our annual report.

47
48 Any further discussion about that one.

49
50 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. On that I

1 got the ideas on it. Just so everyone is clear, I draft
2 those up over winter. If any other additional items come
3 up, it would be best to get them to me before January 1
4 or whatever and then we could present them to the
5 Council.

6
7 What we're trying to do, and we can still
8 squeeze it in, but it would be best not to bring up new
9 issues at the spring meeting to add to the annual report.
10 We can, but it becomes a real work load issue. But the
11 best would be if you go back home and you think of
12 something else that should be in the annual report, get
13 those to myself and I'll run them by Ron and Jack and
14 most likely they'll say put them in there because you
15 look at them again in your next meeting in March and you
16 say you like that or, no, let's take it out.

17
18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other ideas for
19 insertion into the annual report at this time.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none. That
24 might be good for now. So we're down to OSM reports,
25 call for comments on the proposed rule for rural
26 determinations, action item.

27
28 MR. MATHEWS: Tom will be covering those.
29 He's mainly going to focus on the ones called action
30 items. If you have questions about the other ones that
31 just say informational or handout, don't hesitate to ask.
32 For example, the avian flu one or whatever. But the main
33 ones he's going to focus on are the action items. We're
34 trying to use that term so you can budget your time as
35 well as focus your energies.

36
37 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. The first
38 issue, Item A under Section 10 from your agenda, relates
39 to rural determinations. If you choose to, it's up to
40 you, it's your prerogative, this could be something you'd
41 want to take action on. The description on this is
42 starting on Page 92 in your books. I'll give you a very
43 brief description of the issue. Just for your
44 information from the get-go, there are no changes in
45 rural/non-rural status for communities being proposed for
46 the Western Interior Alaska region.

47
48 This is an action item for all of the
49 Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The
50 Federal Subsistence Board is seeking Council

1 recommendations and public comments through October 27,
2 2006 on a proposed rule that would change the rural or
3 nonrural status of several Alaska communities and areas.

4
5 If you wish to comment, you may. Now is
6 the time. There will be a meeting in December 12th and
7 13th and all the Council Chairs are invited from all 10
8 Councils to that meeting.

9
10 But you can see there some general
11 history on the rural determinations process and then
12 there's a list over there on Page 93 and 94 of some of
13 the places where the status change is being considered
14 and it's enclosed in the proposed rules. Those include
15 Prudhoe Bay, some areas in Southcentral Region, Wasilla,
16 Palmer, Homer, Kenai area and then Kodiak Aleutians and
17 Southeast. So that's where they're looking at some
18 changes based on what's happened with populations levels
19 in those areas.

20 So if you want to make a comment, you may
21 do so now and include it in the process, but again we'll
22 plan to have the Council Chair at the meeting on the 12
23 and 13th.

24
25 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: This is a very
28 important issue to the Councils. Our region does not
29 have a large population basis within the region, so we're
30 not approaching any of these trigger points, but I do
31 like to keep track of how these occur. These large
32 mining projects could have an instantaneous Gold Rush
33 community so to speak and those kinds of things, as far
34 as I'm concerned, would be very concerning. Even below
35 the threshold I would be concerned because of the
36 characteristic of their makeup. So I always like to keep
37 track of what the Federal Subsistence Board is doing on
38 these rural determinations.

39
40 My comment would be that Prudhoe Bay is
41 an industrial complex and I've been up there and you
42 can't tell where the oil field stops and the community
43 begins. It's just one big oil complex. So I don't think
44 you can characterize it as a subsistence community in any
45 way, shape or form. I don't think I want to comment on
46 any other of these communities.

47
48 Does the Council have any comment they
49 would like to make on this.

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: It doesn't seem
4 otherwise. So, further presentation.

5

6 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. I guess what I
7 heard for a comment then was on the Prudhoe Bay part of
8 this and then in agreement with what's being proposed.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would personally
11 agree with what's being proposed for the Prudhoe Bay. I
12 said I would not comment on the other communities. I
13 feel that their evaluation process is taking in the
14 deliberation all the aspects of that and trying to stay
15 within the purview of the law, so I think they're doing a
16 good job down there at the Federal Board. That would be
17 my comment.

18

19 MR. MATHEWS: Would that be the wishes of
20 the full Council? We can carry forth your personal
21 comments, but is that the wishes of the full Council just
22 for the record to make it clear; that you agree with Jack
23 on the Prudhoe Bay and that the process has good criteria
24 and standards.

25

26 MR. COLLINS: Well, I don't know.
27 Prudhoe Bay is actually within our area. I mean it
28 touches on it. We've got the same issue on the Kuskokwim
29 in that Bethel could be approaching it, but it's the
30 largest community in our part of the state that has a
31 population, many of which are new arrivals in there and
32 they immediately become subsistence users and they're
33 taking a large portion of the king salmon under that. We
34 hear stories about them sending it to relatives in town,
35 the Asian community or others. It does impact resources
36 and there's no way we can differentiate and yet there is
37 in Bethel a large population of the local area that's
38 always lived there and you certainly don't want to
39 exclude them, but it's something that's going to have to
40 be managed long term because of the impact it can have on
41 the resources.

42

43 I wouldn't raise it as an issue now.
44 It's not nonrural, but we're going to face it in the
45 future with some of these communities.

46

47 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, good thing you
48 brought that up, Ray. I think it is an important issue
49 because there's a customary and traditional use in an
50 adjacent region. I agree with you, Bethel is a concern

1 to our region. I would go so far to say personally
2 Bethel should be scrutinized for possible .804. It's
3 getting to the point that that community is getting so
4 large. Not right now, but in the future if our regions
5 true subsistence users are not meeting their subsistence
6 needs for salmon, then I would be looking to scrutinize
7 Bethel's use as impacting true subsistence users. I
8 would comment to the Board about highlighting Bethel's
9 use and impacts on our region also. Would you say that,
10 Ray?

11
12 MR. COLLINS: Right now in the fishery
13 we've restored the king salmon and there's not a problem
14 there, but if you look at the moose just upriver and ever
15 one that community was excluded, but at some point
16 they're going to be included in, so that's a lot of
17 people that are going to be dependant on that moose
18 resource. So that factor comes in at some point.
19 Without any discussion with the Western Council, I don't
20 want to be saying they ought to investigate that
21 community.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm not saying we want
24 them under a rural determination process. I just want to
25 highlight the largeness of that community. We do have
26 concerns about the largeness of that community and the
27 demographics of that community changing to the point
28 where impacts on the resource in the future could be
29 affecting subsistence users in our region. I would like
30 the Board to be aware that I would be concerned in the
31 future about the growth of that community and whether it
32 has the rural characteristic. Vince.

33
34 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. We all
35 understand the concerns you've expressed there, but the
36 issue of the rural status of Bethel is not on the table
37 right now. It would be 2010. The other thing is it
38 won't help at this point.

39
40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We'll just keep that
41 under our hat here.

42
43 MR. MATHEWS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I am still concerned
46 about that community. I got off track, sorry. So we
47 won't submit that language to the Board. We're on record
48 here with inter-Council discussion and that is a concern
49 to our Council. That's all the comment I would like to
50 see is I do feel that Prudhoe Bay is an industrial area.

1 That area up there would affect our region and I would
2 like to comment on that. As far as I can tell, that's
3 the extent of the Council's comment.

4
5 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. The next item
6 is for your information and it's on Page 103 in the book.
7 As those of you that have been on the Council for a
8 number of years are aware, there's been litigation about
9 the Council composition and how the Councils are made up.
10 We had a court decision this past summer and basically
11 what they wanted was better administrative record on
12 Council composition issue.

13
14 In response to that again, we're
15 compelled to respond to the court. So we're putting out
16 a Federal Register notice that we're asking for
17 recommendations and comments on Council composition. The
18 intent would be to compile that information and bring it
19 back to all the Councils to consider at your winter
20 meetings. We don't have anything more than what you've
21 seen before at the present time, but we just wanted to
22 let you know that that's brewing again and it will be on
23 the agenda this winter.

24
25 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
26 Council composition. Are you talking about the RAC
27 councils or the regular Subsistence Board itself?

28
29 MR. KRON: What we're referring to is the
30 Regional Advisory Councils. According to the Federal
31 Advisory Committee Act, FACA, which is normally the way
32 it's described, there's a requirement we include
33 essentially the interests that are affected by decisions
34 in the process.

35
36 I think a number of years ago that in
37 response to that requirement there was a decision to go
38 with the percentage distribution that essentially Senator
39 Stevens had suggested, which was around the order of 70
40 percent subsistence and then 30 percent for commercial
41 and sport. In some regions it's difficult to get the
42 commercial and sport representation from the region. The
43 intent was to strive for that kind with the majority
44 being subsistence but then have the other interests
45 represented as well. So that was kind of what we went
46 with and there was controversy around that on both sides.

47
48 But again now we've got a court ruling
49 and they want us to go through the steps here and that's
50 what we're doing. You'll get a chance to see it this

1 winter, but it is the Council composition, your Council
2 along with the other Councils.

3

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5

6 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for the heads-
7 up on that. We're always interested in who's going to be
8 on the Council. I'm anxious to see a full body here.
9 I've always stated the region is so huge, the
10 representation is -- each person that misses a meeting is
11 critical to how the Council operates. It's going to be
12 interesting the kind of representation the Safari Club
13 would like to see on our Councils. Maybe more vocal
14 advocacy for sport use of resource. We've had some
15 pretty nice guys, George Savalas and stuff. They didn't
16 rock the boat too bad. Maybe they need more vocal guys
17 like Virgil to be on our Council.

18

19 Thanks for the update on that. We're on
20 to Item C there.

21

22 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, the next updates
23 are all on Page 104 and we just wanted to let you know
24 about a number of things that we talked about to you
25 before and we wanted to give you an update on them. Last
26 winter we looked at a number of closure reviews. These
27 were long-term closures. Did we have closure reviews for
28 this region as well, Vince?

29

30 MR. MATHEWS: I'm drawing a blank. I
31 know Eastern we did. The Interior was all done last
32 year. Kanuti must have been reviewed last year.

33

34 MR. KRON: Anyway, Mr. Chairman.
35 Basically the intent was to have a systematic process in
36 place whereby if you had a closure you'd look at it
37 periodically on some schedule and determine if it's still
38 necessary based on changes in population status and use
39 for example. In any case, that policy is still being
40 reviewed by the Board. The Board, on August 25th, looked
41 at a proposal and essentially after all the Councils
42 looked at it, the Staff Committee worked hard on it and
43 brought back their thoughts to the Board. After hearing
44 that, the Board decided they wanted a subcommittee to
45 look at the issue and that's currently where it's at. We
46 essentially don't have anything for you at this time, but
47 wanted to let you know that people are still looking at
48 the issue and they've taken the comments from the
49 Councils last winter and they're working to address
50 those.

1 On the subsistence use amounts protocol,
2 this was intended to provide guidance for State and
3 Federal managers for coordinated subsistence management.
4 Again, this was before you last winter. We got comments
5 from a number of the Councils. They were fairly negative
6 about some of the State's amounts necessary for
7 subsistence and essentially there's been no work on this
8 protocol since that time. Again, there's another one
9 that's currently on hold and we're not sure which
10 direction it's going to go.

11
12 The final one on Page 104 is the draft
13 customary and traditional use policy. Polly Wheeler is
14 working on that. She gave the Board an update here this
15 past summer. Again, the hope is to have a draft for you
16 to look at at your winter meetings. Again, knowing what
17 Polly has for a schedule, I'm wondering if that's going
18 to be possible now. That's the intent is to have
19 something for you to look at.

20
21 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

22
23 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you, Tom. I
24 always like to know what's going on down at the Federal
25 Board. The Council membership doesn't attend, so if you
26 attend the meeting you're in the loop. Ron and I will
27 alternate attending those meetings sometimes. You get
28 out of the loop again, so it's good to hear what's going
29 on.

30
31 We're on D here, I guess.

32
33 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. Again, this is
34 an informational piece. We wanted to make sure you were
35 aware. Jack has come down to quite a few Board meetings
36 and he's sitting there with Council Chairs and vice
37 chairs from nine other Councils. I don't know how many
38 people have been aware of this, but the Board is
39 currently considering the possibility of forming an 11th
40 Region. Essentially looking at the Kenai Upper Cook
41 Inlet as a region and splitting it off from the
42 Southcentral Region. So that's being considered right
43 now. There are public meetings scheduled down on the
44 Kenai Peninsula first part of November. We just wanted
45 to make you aware of what's going on.

46
47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48
49 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have a question on
50 that. Who proposed that? Did the Southcentral Regional

1 Council propose that or OSM or how did that occur?

2

3 MR. KRON: I'm not aware of all the
4 history on it. The Federal Board is looking at the issue
5 right now. I guess I'd have to say that I think the
6 thinking behind it is coming from the Board. Essentially
7 a lot of the fisheries issues in Cook Inlet have been
8 deferred and deferred and deferred. I think there's
9 concern that things have really piled up. What I've
10 heard in the Board discussions is that having a group of
11 representatives from the Kenai Peninsula that are really
12 familiar with the issues right there might be an
13 efficient way to help address that.

14

15 The Southcentral Council is not at all
16 enthusiastic about this issue. They've opposed it.

17

18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19

20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you want a comment
21 on that? I, myself, would be fairly concerned that you
22 would begin dividing the regions apart. I would be
23 concerned about maintaining the cohesiveness of the area
24 and region. The Regional Council concept revolves around
25 a regional interpretation of subsistence. So if you go
26 into basically a fairly finite group basically dealing
27 with all within their -- it doesn't lend to a larger
28 perspective. I can see maybe adding members to the
29 Southcentral Council from that lower portion of their
30 region. I would also be concerned with dividing the
31 region and making the more populated areas as one region,
32 so I would be more inclined to have it as -- but that
33 would be my own opinion.

34

35 Are there other Council members that
36 would like to comment on that.

37

38 MR. COLLINS: I know there's communities
39 like -- I don't know where Tyonek comes into that and
40 across from Homer there's Seldovia and Goodnews Bay, I
41 think, and some of those around there. The smaller
42 communities may feel left out of this process in that
43 bigger context. I know Ninilchik has argued for a long
44 time and the Kenaitze down in Kenai have been pushing for
45 subsistence recognition of their needs. They're long-
46 term residents that are mixed in those larger
47 populations. So I don't know how this would address
48 that.

49

50 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. It's obvious

1 where you draw the lines for this new region if it were
2 created are definitely part of the issue. My
3 understanding was that English Bay, Port Graham,
4 Ninilchik, Tyonek would all be included. The other one
5 that they were talking about including in the region is
6 Anchorage. You've got to put Anchorage someplace and
7 apparently more people from Anchorage go down to the
8 Kenai than just about anyplace else, so they thought that
9 was the logical place to put Anchorage rather than leave
10 it in the remainder of the Southcentral region. That's
11 part of the discussion as well.

12

13 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Personally, I think
16 adding membership to the lower portion of the region just
17 bolstering the membership. Look at that Y-K Council.
18 They've got a huge membership down there. What's the
19 membership of the Southcentral Council?

20

21 MR. KRON: Maybe Vince can help me. I
22 guess my understanding is we've got several regions with
23 13 members if we can get all the positions filled. And
24 Y-K is one, Interior is one, I think Southcentral is one.

25

26 MR. MATHEWS: No, they used to have a
27 smaller number, but I don't know if there were seats
28 added. I thought it was seven or so or nine they had.
29 Y-K has 13.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: My feeling is dividing
32 the region you begin thinking pretty small then. You
33 don't hear the issues from the whole area, what's going
34 on around you and different perspectives. I like to hear
35 what people do in the lower portion of our region. I
36 think you'd be breaking the cohesiveness. I think just
37 adding membership would be better than breaking the
38 region up. That would be my comment. Any other comments
39 on that. Don.

40

41 MR. HONEA: I guess I'm kind of
42 questioning, the Borough of Kenai is considered rural as
43 it is. My question is, if the Federal Subsistence Board
44 is considering the formation of an 11th Subsistence
45 Region, is it at the prompting of the Kenai itself or is
46 it a united front from these villages.

47

48 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Honea. I
49 guess first on who's rural in this area, Ninilchik is
50 rural, Cooper Landing is rural, Kenai and Soldotna are in

1 there with Anchorage as being urban, as is Homer. There
2 are some outlying areas that are rural.

3

4 Relative to support on it, basically
5 they've asked for comments from the various user groups.
6 My understanding is there's a letter now from the Kenai
7 Peninsula Borough essentially saying it's good to have
8 representation from the area. Basically they're in the
9 process of gathering comments on it.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thank you. Any other
14 comments. Don.

15

16 MR. HONEA: Just one more. The reason
17 for asking you if it was a united front, I mean I don't
18 see on this paper the justification for an 11th region.
19 That was all.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Vince.

22

23 MR. MATHEWS: Jack, we missed something
24 on the earlier part of the agenda. Greg Bos was here to
25 give a presentation on guidelines on intensive management
26 and that was under annual report and we kind of walked
27 over it. Do you want to take predators now or do you
28 want to take not having a State hunting license, which
29 are the two big issues before you?

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Oh, well, let's hear
32 about the State hunting license.

33

34 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. That one is
35 Item 10-F. It's on Page 105. The Federal Subsistence
36 Board approved distribution of the petition that came in
37 from the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
38 Council to each of the other nine Regional Advisory
39 Councils for review and recommendations. Again, this is
40 listed as an action item for you. You can make a
41 recommendation if you choose and I think the Southeast
42 Council would like to see your recommendation. This
43 petition is included in all Fall 2006 books.

44

45 The petition requests the Secretaries to
46 issue a Federal hunting license to Federally qualified
47 subsistence users hunting on Federal public lands,
48 instead of the current requirement in Federal subsistence
49 management regulations that Federally qualified
50 subsistence users must have a State issued hunting

1 license when hunting on Federal public lands. Any
2 Council comments and recommendations should be forwarded
3 -- basically what we're doing is having Dan LaPlant
4 consolidate all the comments and then he'll be providing
5 them to the Southeast Council.

6
7 I think their intent is to include the
8 comments along with the petition when they send it in to
9 the Secretary. The Secretary makes a determination on an
10 issue like this. So that's the issue in a nutshell.
11 Their letter is attached to it. To try to encapsulate
12 things for you, the State hunting license would still be
13 required on corporation lands, on State lands, which are
14 big chunks of land across the state. What is being
15 proposed is that if you were just hunting on Federal
16 lands that you wouldn't have to have a State license.

17
18 In Southeast, a big chunk of the lands
19 that people hunt on down there are U.S. Forest Service
20 lands. So it probably makes a lot more sense there than
21 in other parts of the State where you've got
22 checkerboards and you don't know exactly where you're at.

23
24 Thank you.

25
26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any comments on that.
27 My comment would be that I hunt in an area where we have
28 a small subsistence component hunting in among a whole
29 bunch of non-local hunters and I've always said it would
30 be advantageous -- we have Federal permits for moose and
31 sheep. We don't have Federal permits for bears and
32 caribou and animals like that. It's hard for the
33 enforcement to figure out who's what. If you're hunting
34 caribou, which starts July 1 or year round, the Federal
35 permits have not come out yet, no documentation to show
36 -- you know, anybody can issue hunting licenses to
37 addresses in rural Alaska. I don't feel that's a
38 criteria. A Federal enforcement officer would not know
39 who's rural and who's not.

40
41 I feel a Federal license issued
42 throughout the regulatory year would be -- a calendar
43 year would be better, at the same time as the State
44 licenses, would be easier for the enforcement to make
45 documentation of who's rural and who's not when they're
46 in the field. We get new enforcement officers, they
47 don't know me from anybody. Somebody can go down and say
48 I want to get my license, I live in Wiseman, so they're
49 up there hunting on the North Slope and the enforcement
50 officer goes, oh, you just shot a caribou, I guess you

1 live in Wiseman, have a good day.

2

3 This is an issue we talked about many
4 years ago, back around '93, so I do think that a Federal
5 license or Federal documentation would be a good thing.
6 BLM has permitting for the permits. You have to sign an
7 affidavit during this license process. I think the
8 Federal license would be a positive thing for the
9 enforcement officers. Go ahead.

10

11 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. I think what
12 the Southeast Council was hoping for was a vote or some
13 kind of wording or a resolution. It's your call what you
14 want to do. If you want to just talk about it, in which
15 case we'd have to work with Vince to extract a summary of
16 your discussion. I think they were looking for some kind
17 of action on behalf of the Council, but it's your call.

18

19 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20

21 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I feel for
22 administrative purposes and for the benefit of the
23 subsistence users that it would be beneficial to have a
24 Federal hunting license. I'd like the Council to
25 transmit a letter of support to the Southeastern Council
26 from the Western Interior Advisory Council.

27

28 MR. COLLINS: I so move.

29

30 MR. STICKMAN: Second for discussion.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Discussion.

33

34 MR. COLLINS: As you stated, I think it
35 would simplify management things when you go to issue
36 this permit. They'd already have a license when they
37 come to get a permit for special hunts or something. So
38 it should be a permanent record of their recognition for
39 now. I don't know what happens when they move in and
40 out. What happens if they go to Anchorage? Is there
41 going to be problems with it as well as solutions?

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: What do you think,
44 Vince.

45

46 MR. MATHEWS: Well, one of my roles is to
47 play devil's advocate. When you set up a whole new
48 licensing system, there's a possibility there's going to
49 be additional cost. Is it fair to say the wishes of the
50 Council is not to get rid of the State hunting license

1 but to have an additional Federal ID or license?
2 Southeast is mixing this up, but they're basically saying
3 you don't need a State hunting license on Federal lands.
4 Are you in agreement with that or is your movement here
5 that there be some kind of ID so when one of the refuge
6 law enforcement officers pulls somebody over, they show
7 this ID, it's a Federal hunt, you're cool to go.

8

9 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Tom.

10

11 MR. KRON: Again, I guess a couple more
12 issues kind of following on what Vince was getting to.
13 There are a lot of issues here. The receipts from the
14 State hunting licenses are used to match Pittman-
15 Robertson monies, the 25/75 percent match. Those are used
16 for wildlife surveys and other things. So there would be
17 a financial impact on those issues. A lot of that is
18 addressed in the letter.

19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21

22 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We would have to have
23 a State license because the regulation says you have to
24 have a State of Alaska license to hunt. Go ahead, Tom.

25

26 MR. KRON: That's exactly what they're
27 proposing to change. The regulations currently say you
28 have to have a State of Alaska hunting license and they
29 are proposing to change that. In order to change that
30 part of the regulation requires Secretarial approval.

31

32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: They would still have
33 to maintain their residence for 12 consecutive months.
34 We want to have Alaskan residents that live here,
35 maintaining a household and all the criteria of the State
36 license included. We still have to have State licenses
37 to hunt on State lands, so I don't want to do away
38 completely with the State license. The State has
39 jurisdiction in certain areas.

40

41 I would rather see a stamp affixed to the
42 State license enabling you to hunt on Federal lands. I
43 do want to see more of a documentation process for
44 subsistence users, but I don't want to see subsistence
45 users get in a bind because they don't have a State
46 hunting license. It gets into quite a quandary the more
47 you think about this issue. The concept in general has
48 merits, but there's some parameters. Go ahead.

49

50 MR. KRON: I guess another part of the

1 issue is that essentially there isn't a subsistence
2 fishing license, as you know, but to subsistence hunt you
3 have to have a State hunting license. So that's part of
4 the issue as well. Those are addressed in the letter,
5 just to complicate things even more.

6
7 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The proposal has
8 merits, but there's some parameters. The jurisdictional
9 boundaries, especially here in the Interior, that's
10 something the Board will have to wrestle with in terms of
11 this proposal. The concept has some validity to it. Do
12 you have a comment, Vince.

13
14 MR. MATHEWS: I think what you're
15 striving at is you would like to have some way of
16 identifying that a person is qualified for a Federal
17 user. You're not signaling to the State that you want
18 the State license to disappear because you said
19 repeatedly their budget is not looking very well and you
20 even indicated the Legislature is not doing that. So you
21 do support the State hunting license aspect and you would
22 like an additional identification mechanism.

23
24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Right. That's
25 basically the parameters of the discussion. Any further
26 discussion. Mickey.

27
28 MR. STICKMAN: Mr. Chair. I wonder if
29 this would be beneficial for the Kaiyuh Flats. Right now
30 we have a guide up there who takes non-local users up
31 there and there's no law enforcement all through the
32 Kaiyuh Flats, and this is the second year he's done that.
33 So this would be helpful in stopping something like that
34 from happening. It's all Federal public land up there.
35 It's all in the Northern Innoko. It would stop that.

36
37 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do you have something,
38 Don.

39
40 MR. HONEA: Reading the letter, I just
41 don't see justification for this. As you mentioned,
42 maybe a stamp or something. It just doesn't make sense
43 for me to be wandering around having another piece of ID
44 when we don't really need it. I don't know if you pass
45 something like this whether you would have to be
46 mandatory to show up -- say you have your State hunting
47 license on the refuge but you don't have your Federal
48 card. I just don't see enough justification. If so,
49 make it as simplified as possible by probably issuing out
50 lifetime cards or something like that instead of a yearly

1 thing. That's all my comments.

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, the lifetime
4 cards, if the person moves off to an urban area, they're
5 holding a Federal permit for the rest of their life,
6 which would not be legal, so I don't think that can
7 happen. Yeah, this opens up more worms than anticipated.
8 Whether we want to go to complete abolishment of State
9 licenses, I don't think so. At this time, I'm not even
10 sure if I want to vote for our endorsement. I don't want
11 to do away with State licenses. So, as we've
12 contemplated this issue, I don't think it would be
13 advantageous for the people of our region to have this
14 additional requirement. I think I would vote against our
15 motion.

16

17 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. I think I
18 would concur, although I see the issue now. I have a
19 permanent State license as an elder, 65 and so on. If I
20 just had a stamp on that now, then I would become a
21 permanent Federal one, too, unless I had to go get a
22 stamp every year.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's the issue. You
25 can't be issued a permanent -- as a State user you can
26 hunt on State lands for the rest of your life. As a
27 rural subsistence priority, you have to maintain a rural
28 residency, so we can't be issuing a permanent Federal
29 stamp, no way. So we have to keep moving along here.
30 Any further discussion.

31

32 MR. HONEA: Before you call for the
33 question, my question was this an action item. If it is,
34 can we defer it to the home region?

35

36 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, I would prefer to
37 vote this motion down and transmit that to the
38 Southeastern Council. With no further discussion, those
39 in favor of the proposal signify by saying aye.

40

41 (One vote)

42

43 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Those opposed same
44 sign.

45

46 IN UNISON: Aye.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Motion fails.

49

50 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. That brings

1 us up to the topic that I apologized to Greg that we
2 walked over. This was added onto the agenda under the
3 feelings that this was a major concern in Eastern
4 Interior. I believe it was added onto this agenda to
5 keep you informed of the policies, et cetera, on predator
6 management.

7

8 MR. BOS: Mr. Chair. The first thing I'd
9 like to do is echo the appreciation expressed by others
10 to the community of Ruby for their hospitality, the good
11 food, the assistance with transportation to and fro.
12 It's been a pleasure to be here and I also thank the
13 Council for its interest in hearing this topic.

14

15 As Vince mentioned, this was a specific
16 request by the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council
17 to have the Federal agencies explain the guidelines they
18 each have regarding predator control. In this region, I
19 think the Fish and Wildlife Service's position and
20 guidelines are the most complicated in relation to this
21 issue. I think the Park Service is pretty cut and dried.
22 They just don't allow it with the possible exception of
23 the need for predator control to recover listed
24 threatened endangered species.

25

26 Jeff Denton is here to relate what BLM's
27 position is on this issue. You mentioned earlier in this
28 meeting that you want the Federal Board to be aware of
29 the concerns of this Council and this Council has
30 expressed concerns in the past, as have other Councils.
31 As you recall, the Board established a policy on predator
32 management which essentially says predator management is
33 outside the scope of the Federal Subsistence Program.
34 It's really under the authority and responsibility of the
35 individual land managing agencies and the State. So
36 requests or concerns regarding predator management should
37 go to those agencies directly.

38

39 The question can be boiled down to
40 whether the Fish and Wildlife Service would allow or
41 conduct predator control on refuges. The answer I think
42 can be yes if there's a sound biological justification
43 and such control would be consistent with the legal
44 requirements that the Fish and Wildlife Service operates
45 under.

46

47 I'd like to briefly explain what the
48 legal framework is. It's complicated. I know it's going
49 to seem to you overly bureaucratic, but it's the way
50 things are, the nature of the beast. The Fish and

1 Wildlife Service manages national wildlife refuges in
2 conformance with statutory requirement of a number of
3 laws. One being the Refuge Administration Act, which was
4 amended in 1997 by the Refuge Improvement Act. Taken
5 together, the Refuge Administration Act as amended is
6 really the organic or enabling legislation for the
7 National Wildlife Refuge system. ANILCA established or
8 expanded 16 refuges in Alaska and there are a number of
9 mandates in that law under which the Fish and Wildlife
10 Service operates. In addition, there's NEPA and,
11 finally, some refuges have designated wilderness areas,
12 so there's provisions in the Wilderness Act in those
13 areas that need to be managed.

14
15 ANILCA established or expanded 16 refuges
16 and mandated the purposes for which those refuges were to
17 be managed. One of the primary purposes is to conserve
18 fish and wildlife in their habitats and their natural
19 diversity. A secondary objective is to provide the
20 opportunity for continued subsistence uses consistent
21 with that purpose of maintaining natural diversity in
22 fish and wildlife resources.

23
24 The Refuge Administration Act requires
25 refuges be managed to fulfill those purposes, in this
26 case mandated by ANILCA, to maintain the biological
27 integrity, diversity and environmental health of the
28 refuge system and to ensure that uses of refuge resources
29 or other activities on refuges are compatible with the
30 purposes of the refuge.

31
32 In 2001, the Fish and Wildlife Service
33 established its biological integrity, diversity and
34 environmental health policy to describe the relationship
35 among the purposes of the refuges, the conservation
36 mission of the refuge system and for maintaining
37 biological integrity. Biological integrity is defined as
38 having the species composition, abundance, and
39 interrelationships with each other and their environment
40 comparable with historic conditions. This is a key
41 threshold or measure that the refuges would consider when
42 contemplating whether predator control should be
43 conducted on a refuge. Under the policy, wildlife
44 populations, including predators and prey, are to be
45 managed for natural densities and levels of variation
46 based on historical conditions as the frame of reference.

47
48 In wilderness areas, Wilderness Act
49 provisions are to preserve the interaction of natural
50 forces with the land. So it provides another layer of

1 conditions under which predator control would be
2 considered.

3
4 Predator control, as I said, needs to
5 have a sound biological justification, consistent with
6 refuge purposes and conform to the guidelines in the
7 Biological Integrity Policy. So active management of
8 predator populations would not likely be authorized
9 unless prey population densities are determined to be
10 below historical levels of variation as a result of
11 predation, and reduction of predators would be expected
12 to restore prey abundance to historical conditions. We
13 would need to evaluate whether habitat conditions have
14 been or would be a limiting factor on ungulate prey
15 populations.

16
17 The requests from Regional Advisory
18 Councils and subsistence users for predator control on
19 refuges that have been received by the Service assert
20 that predation has reduced prey populations on which
21 subsistence users depend, to the extent that it is
22 difficult for subsistence users to provide for their
23 nutritional and cultural needs. That not enough moose
24 and caribou are available to subsistence users and,
25 therefore, the refuge purpose of providing for continued
26 subsistence uses justifies predator control.

27
28 Again, to be authorized, the predator
29 control would first and foremost need to be consistent
30 with the refuge purposes, would be justified by comparing
31 predator/prey population densities to historical
32 conditions and would have the objective of restoring
33 those populations to historical levels. The Service will
34 not reduce predator populations solely to provide more
35 moose and caribou for subsistence uses.

36
37 Where control is authorized, if it's to
38 be conducted by agencies or others who are not operating
39 as agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the refuges
40 would need to determine those activities to be compatible
41 with the mission of the national wildlife refuge system
42 and the purposes of the affected refuges. The refuge
43 manager is the primary agency representative that would
44 make that determination and he or she would need to
45 evaluate the current status of predators and prey and
46 habitat and compare it to historical conditions. Where
47 there is insufficient information available, additional
48 studies would need to be conducted.

49
50 So the request from the Eastern Interior

1 Council to the Fish and Wildlife Service is to begin
2 those monitoring and research studies that are needed
3 that would lead to predator control on those refuges.
4 Currently the refuge managers of those three refuges,
5 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Yukon Flats Refuge and
6 the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge are preparing
7 responses to the Eastern Council.

8
9 If predator control is determined to be
10 justifiable and consistent with the Biological Integrity
11 Policy, then the Service would need to conduct a NEPA
12 assessment of the control programs environmental effects.
13 Predator control involving wolves and bears is a very
14 contentious issue that attracts broad and intense public
15 scrutiny. For that reason we anticipate that it would
16 require an environmental impact statement with full
17 opportunity for public review and comment.

18
19 Finally, ANILCA requires a Section 810
20 evaluation on the effects of the control program on
21 subsistence uses and needs. Page 4 of the briefing
22 summaries what I've said. So to just reiterate in an
23 abbreviated fashion, to be authorized, predator control
24 on National Wildlife Refuges needs to be biologically
25 justified in conformance with the Service's Biological
26 Integrity Policy and consistent with refuge purposes and,
27 where applicable, with provisions of the Wilderness Act.
28 The Biological Integrity Policy considers natural
29 diversity to be fish and wildlife populations and habitat
30 present in composition and numbers and relationships that
31 are representative of historical population level,
32 including historical fluctuations in abundance.

33
34 We do not reduce predators solely to
35 increase hunter success and that's a big difference from
36 the State's programs, as you well recognize. If a
37 proposed control program meets these requirements, a NEPA
38 evaluation and an 810 evaluation, then it would be
39 conducted and monitored by the Service and adjusted as
40 appropriate to meet the program's objectives.

41
42 In short, it's not going to be quick or
43 easy to establish predator control on natural wildlife
44 refuges. I think the best chance for more immediate
45 control efforts that you're looking for, for control
46 efforts on State private lands through the State control
47 programs.

48
49 I'll be happy to try to answer questions.
50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray.

2

3 MR. COLLINS: Yes, Mr. Chair. I was at
4 the Federal Board meeting last spring and I heard
5 something there that immediately raised alarms with me
6 that one of the refuges was going to close the
7 subsistence hunt out on the peninsula because the caribou
8 herd had zero recruitment and there was nothing there.
9 To my mind, that should trigger at least an action to
10 find out why is there no recruitment of calves. Have
11 environmental situation changes or is it predator. Yet I
12 don't think any action was precipitated by that. To my
13 mind, it should be. If there's a situation like that
14 where you have to close a subsistence hunt, whereas
15 you've been able to maintain it before, it should trigger
16 at least a study to see what's happening to this
17 population.

18

19 MR. BOS: Mr. Chair, Mr. Collins. The
20 needs for closure were discussed in reviewing a proposal
21 for the Southern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd. There
22 was not a closure imposed. There have been studies of
23 that population, surveys. Indications are that there are
24 a number of factors involved. Very poor production and
25 survival of calves. We think there's nutritional
26 problems, poor range and the adults are exhibiting fairly
27 high mortality rates.

28

29 So we think there's some predation as a
30 factor there. There will be some radio collaring to try
31 to get a handle on what's going on there. In the
32 meantime, we're approaching this next year looking at
33 more conservative management regulations on both the
34 State and Federal sides to try to establish a harvest
35 strategy that will allow for subsistence uses. If there
36 is a closure required, we would be closing Federal lands
37 to non-subsistence uses before we restrict subsistence
38 users.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Any other comments on
41 the predator control on National Wildlife Refuge paper
42 presented. It's apparent it would be highly unlikely,
43 with some extreme expenditure of revenues to document
44 what the browse and all the interactions of the resource
45 would be to get a predator control on wildlife refuge.
46 It's good to know what these parameters are if these
47 moose continue to decline to levels that would trigger
48 that, we would have all our ducks in a row to initiate a
49 program.

50

1 I do feel it's in our annual report to
2 highlight that to the Board that this is declining to the
3 point where we may meet those thresholds for entering
4 into a program. So I appreciate the briefing. Do you
5 have another comment.

6
7 MR. BOS: Yes. I think among the refuges
8 in Alaska the Kanuti and the Yukon Flats are the two
9 refuges where moose population densities are at such low
10 levels and predation is a major factor in maintaining low
11 densities. They're probably the most likely candidates.
12 As I've indicated, the request for predator control need
13 to go to the specific refuges. The Federal Board will
14 not take action on a predator control request.

15
16 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That brings up a
17 point. The annual report highlight to the Federal Board
18 is not really going to do us a lot of good. We should
19 actually direct that same highlight to the regional
20 director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The Kanuti is
21 approaching levels of concern, the wolf/moose ratios and
22 so forth and may need to be scrutinized for possible
23 predator control project with funding for browse
24 inventories and telemetry and those aspects.

25
26 MR. MATHEWS: So I understand correctly,
27 remove that section from the annual report and then
28 direct it to the refuge manager or to the refuge --
29 that's where I start losing it. To Regional Office or
30 to.....

31
32 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I would reiterate it
33 to the Federal Subsistence Board and to the Regional
34 Director and down to Kanuti. I want the director to be
35 aware of this Council's actions. I would like to see it
36 cross the Regional Director's desk on the way down to
37 Mike over at Kanuti. Do you have another comment there,
38 Greg.

39
40 MR. BOS: There are a variety of ways you
41 can accomplish that, Mr. Chair. I think you could direct
42 the correspondence directly to the refuge manager with a
43 CC to the Regional Director and to the Federal Board so
44 they're aware of the issues you're raising. Whichever
45 way you direct that letter, it's going to come down to
46 the refuge manager to prepare the response.

47
48 MR. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman. I'd like to
49 keep it positive and commend them for what they're doing
50 and maybe somehow the one to the Federal level should

1 encourage them to provide the funds needed to continue
2 monitoring this situation so the refuge manager could use
3 that maybe for their funding proposals that we recognize.

4
5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, the letter
6 should include language applauding Kanuti's monitoring
7 efforts. We would be completely unaware of this issue
8 other than TEK from the local people and it's being
9 documented that the local people are actually again
10 correct, that there is a problem. So it will go directly
11 to the refuge manager with a CC to the Regional Director
12 and the Federal Subsistence Board inclusive of language
13 requesting additional monitoring funding for browse
14 inventories and telemetry on the moose population there.

15
16
17 So I think that covers that issue and I
18 appreciate your briefing. We've got to keep moving on
19 our agenda here.

20
21 MR. MATHEWS: That brings us back to two
22 issues really. We bounced around. I think there's only
23 one possible action item and I don't know if it is an
24 action item. You deferred review of the Board of
25 Fisheries proposals to later in the agenda. Beyond that
26 there's the avian flu presentation that was offered.

27
28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I feel the avian flu
29 handout, without Robert being here, it would be more
30 timely to have that at our spring meeting when the birds
31 are eminent of return. So I would like to put that on
32 hold until we get full Council participation. Do you have
33 something, Jeff.

34
35 MR. DENTON: I was curious if you wanted
36 BLM's policy on predator control.

37
38 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, you can give us
39 an update on that.

40
41 MR. DENTON: My name is Jeff Denton. I'm
42 with the Anchorage Field Office of the BLM. The BLM's
43 policy and basic legal mandates relative to predator
44 control are quite different than Park Service and Fish
45 and Wildlife service. We view predator control as a
46 State wildlife population management issue. On BLM
47 lands, whether it's Federal public lands or unencumbered
48 selected lands in the state, whatever is administered by
49 BLM, on those lands if the State program meets -- there's
50 several exceptions that have to be met in the Airborne

1 Hunting Act. If the State meets those exceptions, if the
2 potential program doesn't actually threaten subsistence
3 use of those resources, then we allow the State program
4 to actually occur on BLM land, which it does currently in
5 19(A).

6

7 So BLM is considerably different. Of
8 course, we have no wilderness areas in BLM in Alaska
9 either, so that's not an issue. I'd be willing to answer
10 any further questions, but that's in a nutshell what our
11 current policy is.

12

13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Okay. Thank you. It
14 sounds quite a bit different than Fish and Wildlife. So
15 we're back to the agenda here. We just kind of tabled
16 that avian flu until spring. So what point are we on the
17 agenda.

18

19 MR. MATHEWS: On your agenda, which
20 normally is there, is the possibility if you want to
21 comment on any Board of Fish proposals. There was
22 another reason why we put it in there. The proposals
23 that you would have reviewed on the Federal side were
24 also submitted to the State side. They'll be taken up by
25 the Board of Fisheries in January. So you don't have to
26 comment. It was just to make you aware of that
27 situation.

28

29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, it's getting
30 late in the day here. I feel we should defer those.
31 What does the Council think.

32

33 MR. COLLINS: I concur.

34

35 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I think we're getting
36 a little tired, so we need to move down this agenda.
37 We've done some very good work today and productive work
38 for the Council and the resource and the users.

39

40 MR. MATHEWS: I can help you through the
41 next topic. Each two years your charter comes up.
42 You've never really asked to change anything in there.
43 Just for the record you could request a name change. I
44 would highly not recommend doing that. You can request a
45 boundary change. You can request to change the size of
46 your Council membership and specifics of Subsistence
47 Resource Commission appointments. That's an issue from
48 the past. We can do it now and analyze it and get back
49 to you in the spring.

50

1 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I have no problems
2 with our charter. It will be interesting to see what OSM
3 comes up with for representation on the 30/70 split or
4 some other kind of a split. But as far as changing our
5 charter, I don't see any need to be doing that at all.
6 What's the feelings of the Council. Ray.

7
8 MR. COLLINS: We're at 10 now?

9
10 MR. MATHEWS: We're at 10 seats with one
11 vacant due to resignation.

12
13 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah. If we do have
14 to add other seats, I'd hate to see us diminish the
15 geographic representation. I'd rather see us at 11
16 because we're a huge area. That's the only reason I can
17 think for doing it, but we don't know what's going to
18 happen yet.

19
20 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: We're unsure what's
21 going to happen with that. After new appointment
22 policies are implemented, if we don't like that, we can
23 address this on an annual basis -- is this every year or
24 every two years?

25
26 MR. MATHEWS: It's every two years and
27 then I'd have to caution you the budgets are -- so
28 additional seats would have to have a justification. The
29 other side of the coin is average applications for your
30 area might make it difficult to fill the additional
31 seats.

32
33 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, I don't want to
34 go there. If I don't see any additional comments on the
35 charter, I don't think we need to address anything on the
36 charter right now.

37
38 So we're on the other side of the.....

39
40 MR. MATHEWS: Yes. Fred Anderson told me
41 that we're current and I believe you guys recently
42 reappointed Pollack Simon to the Gates of the Arctic.
43 You don't have an appointment to Denali. On the
44 Coordinating Fisheries Committees, I don't think you need
45 to spend any time on that because of the fact that
46 they're not active right now because of the way the
47 fisheries have laid out. Your current membership is
48 Benedict and Robert Walker. This is Benedict's last
49 meeting, so it may be at the next meeting you want to
50 look at that.

1 The Kuskokwim you have Carl and Ray and
2 they're both very active, so I don't know if you really
3 need to go anything with that.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No.

6

7 MR. MATHEWS: I don't remember the other
8 appointments. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd, that's
9 Benedict. I don't know if that needs to be re-upped.
10 Maybe Benedict can -- I know he's going to say he serves
11 for as long as he lives, but how long is his appointment.
12 I think he's current.

13

14 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: The Caribou Working
15 Group completed their plan. I don't know if they're that
16 active anymore. We'll just move on.

17

18 MR. MATHEWS: Correspondence received and
19 sent is just for your knowledge. It's just a listing you
20 can look at it on Page 129. If you have any questions,
21 we can deal with that. If there is no questions --
22 unless other Staff can give me a reason, I don't know why
23 you would send a representative to the January Board
24 meeting. There are no fishery proposals from this region
25 that you're carrying forth, but I don't know the agenda
26 for the January Board meeting if something else is added
27 on. I apologize. I forgot about the rural determination
28 one December 11th and 12th or whatever date it is. Is
29 there a need, Tom and others, for Western Interior to go
30 to that rural determination one?

31

32 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman. I think what I
33 said was that your Chair would be invited. You can
34 decline the invitation if you chose to. There's always
35 issues that come up, so I recommend that you have a
36 representative there, but it's your call on these.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I wouldn't want to
41 attend myself. I won't speak for Ron. Ron is the Chair
42 of the Council. We may want to send a representative to
43 that meeting. Is that December 9th?

44

45 MR. MATHEWS: It's in December, the first
46 week.

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Do we have anybody
49 here at the table, if Ron doesn't want to go, that would
50 attend that meeting?

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If Ron would like to
4 go, he's welcome to go, but I see no one at the table
5 that's willing to go to that meeting. It entails quite a
6 bit of effort and loss of subsistence activities at home.

7

8 So we're down to Council topics for
9 January 2006 Board meeting. Oh, the correspondence
10 received and sent, I reviewed that. Everybody's reviewed
11 that. Any comments on any correspondence.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don't see any interest
16 in addressing that, so we'll move down to Council topics
17 for January '06 Board meeting. Is that the Federal
18 Subsistence Board?

19

20 MR. MATHEWS: Yeah, that's a topic that
21 Ron has had difficulty with. It's basically if you guys
22 have topics you want to share with all the other 10
23 Regional Councils, it happens at the end of the Board
24 meeting. The reason we're asked for it now, if you asked
25 for some major topic, then it would give time for not
26 only Staff but contact other regions to discuss it.

27

28 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Well, the only thing
29 that I can think of for the Regional Council commonality
30 would be the other renewable resource issue in our
31 letter. I feel the other Councils should be aware of
32 that issue. I don't know if it's appropriate or that
33 issue may be resolved by then, but if not, if the
34 solicitor is holding to their interpretation, then I feel
35 that the other Councils should be aware of the Western
36 Interior's position on that.

37

38 Any other Council topics that holds a
39 commonality with the entire state of Alaska, all 10
40 regions.

41

42 MR. COLLINS: Building in more
43 flexibility in the management system. It's a long-term
44 issue, but I think it's going to be more and more an
45 issue in the future if resources fall short to make sure
46 that subsistence needs are met in a timely manner. More
47 flexibility than special actions. To hear what they have
48 to say.

49

50 MR. MATHEWS: Just so you understand,

1 these topics are ones that may be brought up. Someone
2 has to come there. If there's no representation from the
3 Council, the topics disappear.

4

5 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: That's understood.
6 Any other topics you would like the Chair to bring up
7 with other Councils.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Seeing none, that's
12 probably sufficient. Future meeting plans and dates for
13 the winter 2007 wildlife meeting.

14

15 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. You need to
16 look at Page 130. We plan these six months and a year
17 ahead. The last meeting said March 6th and 7th in Aniak.
18 You've already gotten an invitation from -- I don't know
19 if it was KNA or the tribal council, but one of the
20 consortiums there invited the Western Council to meet in
21 Aniak on March 6th and 7th. So you need to confirm that
22 and then you need to look at the fall of 2007.

23

24 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I just assumed we were
25 going to Aniak.

26

27 MR. MATHEWS: Oh, yeah. We just
28 reconfirm these in case someone says, whoops, those dates
29 don't work for me because of whatever.

30

31 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: As far as I know those
32 are good for me. Is the 6th and 7th good for everybody
33 else? All right. That looks good. We'll stay with that
34 one. The fall of '07.

35

36 MR. MATHEWS: We try to avoid overlap
37 with Y-K because it's the same Council Staff. October
38 4th and 5th is what they're looking at. I don't remember
39 where. That would be a week to avoid. Now that you have
40 an October 1 moose season in part of your region, that
41 may be difficult. Other than that there may be other
42 Staff that attended other meetings. We try to avoid
43 three Council meetings in a week because of staffing and
44 logistics.

45

46 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm more inclined to
47 prefer the first week in October because I'm doing some
48 other -- and having a RAC meeting in the middle of
49 October is not so conducive to my activities that I'd be
50 preferring to do at that time. What were those time

1 frames in the first of October.

2

3 MR. MATHEWS: Right now Y-K is October
4 4th and 5th if I remember correctly. So that pretty much
5 gives you the beginning of the week, which overlaps your
6 hunting season. So it looks more favorable to look at
7 the second week, like you did this week. And I don't
8 know when AFN is. I usually try to capture that before I
9 get here, but I did not. It's probably the same time.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Is the Council more
12 inclined again to stay with this October 10th and 11th
13 time frame or approximately in there. We've got the
14 holiday that Monday the 8th. I guess we'll go with that.
15 Hopefully we'll have some guys still out with the
16 opportunity to be hunting through the first of October
17 and that might be me also if you're hammering to the end
18 of the season on moose. So it's looking like 10th and
19 11th. I'm more inclined to have that fall meeting
20 possibly in McGrath or over in the Kusko. We're going to
21 Aniak. Where's the Council thinking about going. Where
22 would be a good place. We'd like to be in the hot spot
23 area. That's why we picked Ruby. We figured it was a
24 hot zone here, so we came here.

25

26 MR. MATHEWS: Well, it is a fisheries
27 meeting. Kuskokwim tends not to be hot on fish issues.
28 It's been suggested, but it does get into logistics
29 problems, you haven't met in Galena for a while. That's
30 just been floated to me. We'd have to work close with
31 the refuge. You don't have a Council member there that I
32 can really lean on to do some of the leg work. You
33 haven't met there. Your policy is generally to meet on
34 the river. Even though this turned into a real moose
35 meeting despite Russ and everyone else being here to talk
36 fish, it is a fish meeting. So you may want to meet on
37 the Yukon somewhere or Koyukuk River, but I don't know.

38

39 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Yeah, Galena might be
40 a good one. It is a fisheries meeting, so Galena might
41 be a good spot. It's a hub community, easier to get
42 there. Look at Galena for that October 10th and 11th in
43 '07.

44

45 MR. MATHEWS: Just to make it easier,
46 your alternate for Galena would be in case that fails?

47

48 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Alternate for Galena
49 would be -- I would be more inclined to go to McGrath
50 myself.

1 MR. MATHEWS: Does the McGrath member
2 have any comment?

3

4 MR. COLLINS: That's fine.

5

6 MR. MATHEWS: I don't think we're going
7 to need it, but if the 10th and 11th doesn't work out,
8 then we would go to the 17th and 18th as an alternate.
9 It's for planning purposes that we need this.

10

11 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: If people are
12 concerned about AFN, it would be better to push it. 15
13 and 16 we'd have to travel on Sunday. There's a lot of
14 carriers don't fly to a very high degree. So maybe 16
15 and 17 as an alternate date. We can go 3rd and 4th, you
16 know. The season would end on the 1st. You could come
17 in, wash the blood off and hang your meat and leave. So
18 we could go the 3rd and 4th of October.

19

20 Then we've got topics.

21

22 MR. MATHEWS: That's if you have specific
23 topics for those meetings that you want us to start
24 working on.

25

26 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: No, not that I know of
27 right now. Not that I know of. Go ahead, Vince.

28

29 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, I forgot something and
30 I'll need Tom Kron's help on this. This has taken a year
31 to get done. Your Council has been blessed with two
32 members that are chartered members and the Fish and
33 Wildlife Service does have a national award and I need to
34 read it on the record because I think it captures what
35 your two Council members have done. That would be Ray
36 Collins and Jack Reakoff.

37

38 The reason I want to read this, this is signed by
39 the National Nirector, Dale Hall, so this is a major
40 award. Anyway, this is dated June 30, 2006. Dear Mr.
41 Reakoff, Dear Mr. Collins, on behalf of the U.S. Fish and
42 Wildlife Service it gives me great pleasure to present
43 you with the Service Citizen's Award. The award
44 officially recognizes private citizens and organizations
45 for their significant contributions to the missions and
46 goals of the Service. In the 12 years you have served on
47 the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory
48 Council, you have freely shared your insights to the
49 benefit of the Federal Subsistence Program. Your
50 insights and experience were critical components in the

1 development of subsistence hunting regulations for the
2 Western Interior Region and with incorporating
3 traditional ecological knowledge into Fish and Wildlife
4 management on Federal lands. While providing insight
5 into living off the land and practicing a traditional
6 subsistence lifestyle you made an extra effort to
7 understand our western science world of statistics,
8 graphs and technical writing. Your efforts and
9 dedication provided an invaluable bridge between two
10 worlds of western science and traditional ecological
11 knowledge.

12

13 There's slight differences in here, so I'll try
14 to cover both at the same time. Your active
15 participation in the Gates of the Arctic National Park
16 Subsistence Resource Commission, for Ray it would be the
17 Denali National Park and Preserve Subsistence Resource
18 Commission. For Mr. Reakoff, in addition, it's the
19 Koyukuk River State Fish and Game Advisory Committee.
20 For Mr. Collins, I think you've been the chair since day
21 one for the McGrath Local Advisory Committee. For Jack,
22 correct me if I'm wrong, you're one of the founding
23 members of the Friends of the Alaska National Wildlife
24 Refuges, so that's another one for Jack.

25 Their involvement in all these different advisory
26 groups have helped build bridges between agencies and has
27 provided consistent guidance on issues related to
28 subsistence in Western Interior Alaska. Experience has
29 shown that many complex fish and wildlife subsistence
30 management issues cannot be resolved in one arena and may
31 require working through multiple arenas of National Park
32 Service regulations and policy development and/or through
33 State regulatory and planning processes, through your
34 tireless volunteer participation in the different arenas
35 of fish and wildlife management, the Federal Subsistence
36 Program has expanded its bridges within these different
37 arenas and helped it discover solutions that are more
38 comprehensive and expansive.

39

40 This award is an expression of deep appreciation
41 for your contributions to the Federal Subsistence
42 Management Program. It gives me great pleasure to
43 present you the Service Citizen's Award. Sincerely, H.
44 Dale Hall, Director for Fish and Wildlife Service.

45

(Applause)

47

(Taking photos)

49

50 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I'm very appreciative to the

1 Director of Fish and Wildlife for this award. I have to
2 acknowledge that I just have the gift of gab and that
3 there are many subsistence users in this region that have
4 contributed to my knowledge base and are much more
5 learned in the subsistence traditional and ecological
6 knowledge than I. But I do appreciate the award.
7 Without a working relationship with the U.S. Fish and
8 Wildlife Staff, OSM and Refuge Staff this system wouldn't
9 work at all and I highly appreciate the support that the
10 Council has received for promoting proper management and
11 allowing us to have a meaningful role in fish and
12 wildlife and other renewable resource management. I
13 would like to transmit my thanks to the Service and to
14 the Director of Fish and Wildlife. Thank you.

15
16 MR. COLLINS: I'd like to ditto that in terms of
17 my thanks and appreciation to the Director and the
18 Service. I've appreciated working with all the many
19 people that have come up to serve in the refuges. I have
20 a special appreciation for the people of Nikolai and
21 Tolida that introduced me to the subsistence lifestyle
22 and shared their wisdom and knowledge with me that
23 enabled me to do what I'm doing and I'm really
24 appreciative of all those elders, many of whom are now
25 gone, who shared their life and language with me.

26
27 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: I also have known many elders.
28 When I was a kid, there was some old-timers that lived in
29 our village that came from the pre-contact times. They
30 lived in the Stone Age. They hunted with stone and bone
31 tools and didn't even meet the white culture until they
32 were about 20 years old. Those people have imparted a
33 lot of knowledge. We didn't have TV. We'd sit around
34 and listen to old-timers tell stories about how to catch
35 animals and stuff. Those old-timers -- the respect for
36 the elders is apparent in the villages. Those old-timers
37 knew what they were doing. They were still alive to tell
38 us these stories. That's because of their adeptness at
39 maintaining a subsistence lifestyle. So those are the
40 ones that should be receiving the award posthumously.
41 But I appreciate this award and the thoughtfulness
42 involved in it.

43
44 So we'll move on to the next item here. We're
45 almost in closure. I see Council member closing comments
46 and then the adjournment is our last item. Do Council
47 members have any closing comments. This is Ben's last
48 meeting and I wanted to express first off my appreciation
49 for Ben's involvement in this Council. He's brought
50 tremendous amounts of knowledge to the Council, so I

1 highly appreciate that, Ben, and appreciate you coming up
2 for this one. And wish you many happy days on the river
3 and a good fish rack full and a good meat rack full at
4 all times. I thank you for that. Ben.

5

6 (Applause)

7

8 MR. JONES: Thank you, Jack. This is my last
9 term. I enjoyed working for the last nine years with the
10 Council throughout Alaska. I really appreciate all the
11 recognition what I have contributed to the Council. As
12 I'm the last generation that knows the history of all
13 Alaska Native traditional lifestyle, what has been passed
14 on from generation to generation, I try to pass it on to
15 the next generation of mine, but they don't seem to
16 understand the traditional value of life, but I keep in
17 trying. The next generation behind me are starting to
18 understand what I try to pass on to them.

19

20 So, with that, I know I contributed quite a bit
21 to the Council about wildlife management and fish. Just
22 recently, after I retired from the State in 1990, I have
23 learned quite a bit about subsistence fish and I try to
24 pass on all my knowledge to my people and to the Council
25 about the fishery issue.

26

27 Just the other day as I was fishing for chinook
28 salmon and whitefish and pikes, I noticed the difference
29 between the two species of whitefish, the Yukon whitefish
30 and the Koyukuk whitefish and also the northern pike.
31 The Yukon whitefish are little, skinnier than the Yukon.
32 That's because the Yukon River has smaller tributaries.
33 The Koyukuk River has the big tributaries to the Koyukuk
34 River and has more lakes, so vegetation is more nutrition
35 for the whitefish and the pikes on the Koyukuk River.
36 The Koyukuk River pikes are a lot larger, average three
37 to four feet in length, while the Yukon River pikes are
38 only 30 inches.

39

40 So, with that, I really appreciate Ruby for the
41 hospitality of this meeting and all the good food and I
42 want to thank Don and his wife for the hospitality here.
43 I'll try to continue to pass my knowledge to whoever
44 represent our area as I did contribute quite a bit to the
45 caribou management in the Western Interior of my
46 knowledge and also the Koyukuk River moose controlled use
47 area. I was the one that fought many years for the
48 drawing permits. With my success, the Board of Game has
49 adopted it and accepted my proposals. I'm still trying
50 to work on the extension of the driftnetting. Got it

1 through the Federal waters, but now I'm trying to get it
2 through the State waters.

3

4 As of right now my term is up with the Middle
5 Yukon Advisory Board this coming December, but I'll try
6 to keep on going on that. Right now I'm the chairman.
7 So, with that, I want to thank you for allowing me to
8 serve with you people. Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Ray, do you have a closing
11 comment.

12

13 MR. COLLINS: I'd like to send my appreciation to
14 the people of Ruby for their hospitality and the food and
15 the meals and the lodging. It's been a good meeting. I
16 think that's it for now. Thank you.

17

18 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Don.

19

20 MR. HONEA: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There's a guy
21 over there, his name is Tim Craig, thank the people for
22 their hospitality and the food and I'm just going to
23 bring it up right now. I'd like to thank you guys for
24 coming here for the meeting. We're glad to host this.
25 We haven't done this for quite a few years. I'd like to
26 thank Jack for doing a good job. I always feel
27 comfortable as he co-chairs these meetings along with Ron
28 that we have good representation. I want to thank
29 Benedict for the work over the years. When we, as Ruby
30 Advisory Committee submitted proposal to do the
31 driftnetting, it was on our behalf the Western Interior
32 took up this proposal and they represented us. We didn't
33 really know that until later. So we have quite a bit to
34 do in owing the Western Interior for their help in
35 submitting proposals on our behalf. Whether it's for
36 fishing or the upcoming proposals for hunting. Whether
37 we get them or not, they go to bat for us. I want to
38 thank them.

39

40 I want to thank the people who have been cooking
41 every night. Sometimes when we host these things you get
42 the same people who are doing this day after day. I want
43 to commend those people who do this day after day.
44 That's why when we had this pot of money here I suggested
45 we use it and we don't have a purpose for it at the
46 tribal council, a fund or anything, so it just goes right
47 back into the food that's coming here. Hopefully that
48 got spent well.

49

50 I want to thank you guys and I want to thank

1 these guys here over the years for Benedict and Ray and
2 Carl and them, whoever that we appointed on the fisheries
3 board. We send these guys down there and some of these
4 guys have been on there years and years. We're real
5 proud or I am particularly of them and I feel comfortable
6 knowing that they're representing us. There's two seats
7 coming up here. I know Tommy Kriska was the one we lost
8 and then Benedict, I believe this is his last day on this
9 particular Council. I like the way Ray put it, not to
10 lose these 10 seats that we have on there. As you can
11 see, even to get a forum for this meeting it was a
12 struggle. You had to have at least four or five. Anyone
13 want to get on these things please consider that. With
14 that, I'm going to turn it over. I appreciate you guys
15 and hope everyone had a good time here.

16

17 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Mickey.

18

19 MR. STICKMAN: I just want to first of all say
20 thank you to Ben for all the knowledge that he brought to
21 the Regional Advisory Council here. He lives only 18
22 miles away from me in Nulato, so I know I can always just
23 go up there because I always go up there anyway. We fish
24 right across from Koyukuk. Whenever they have
25 fundraisers or carnivals we head up there. A lot of
26 times I'll go to Ben's house and that's where I have
27 lunch or drink some tea or get a chance to pick Ben's
28 brains. He pays real close attention to what's happening
29 out there because he spends every day out there. I do a
30 lot of traveling, so I don't spend every day out there
31 like Ben does, so it's my primary source of firsthand
32 information of what's going on out there.

33

34 I wanted to congratulate Jack and Ray on their
35 award. I've been on the Regional Advisory Council for
36 nine years now and it's a learning process. You learn
37 something new all the time. Especially with the global
38 warming, with the resources declining. You don't do the
39 same thing year after year because the resource
40 population you saw was changing.

41

42 Mike Spindler was the refuge manager for the area
43 before he moved to Kanuti and he actually went out there
44 in the villages and talked to our elders. I just want
45 Mike to know that his replacement at the Northern Innoko
46 and Nowitna already asked me to be invited to the Nulato
47 Tribal Council meeting. So he's going to be continuing
48 the process that you started by going out there and
49 getting firsthand information from the people who
50 actually used the refuge.

1 It's great with Jeff being there because I think
2 he's the refuge connection to the elders. He supports
3 the elders. I think a lot of elders have personal
4 respect for him. You can rest assured that the work you
5 began will continue and that connection will continue to
6 grow.

7
8 And I wanted to thank the rest of the Council
9 here for the support for the hunters in Nulato and Kaltag
10 and here in Ruby. Even though we don't get exactly what
11 we have in our petitions, I think we do exactly what the
12 Federal law mandates and that's to give added
13 opportunity. Even though we don't get exactly what we
14 want, we still get added opportunity. With that, I want
15 to thank the Ruby Tribe for the hospitality, good food
16 every day. I wanted to thank Lorraine Honea. She's
17 always real hospitable. This is my second time staying
18 with her and it's just a great place to stay.

19
20 I think we had a good meeting here. I've
21 actually never had a bad meeting yet. Maybe we did when
22 we had the Tri-Council meeting. I just wanted to thank
23 everybody and thank all the staff people. Even though we
24 live out here every day, you guys are out there crunching
25 the numbers and getting firsthand information too, so I
26 definitely wanted to thank you for your efforts and your
27 contributions. Thank you.

28
29 CHAIRMAN REAKOFF: Thanks for your comments. I
30 wanted to thank all our Staff and say goodbye to all the
31 ADF&G personnel and OSM Staff that's leaving, catching
32 the last ride out. I very much appreciated all of the
33 cooks, the beautiful food that they provided here. I
34 know when I see moose meat over there on that table and I
35 see the level of harvest here at Ruby, that's a real
36 sacrifice and I really appreciate that, putting that meat
37 up and that's really nice of you folks.

38
39 I really enjoyed all of the comments by the local
40 people coming out, elders telling us their ideas on fish
41 and game management. That's what this Council is
42 supposed to do, have local participation, and I really
43 appreciate everybody coming out to talk to us and Jackie
44 coming down from Huslia to speak to us from their
45 perspective upriver.

46
47 The State participation is always appreciated and
48 they lend a little different angle on things. I like to
49 hear all sides of the story. I appreciate the Agency
50 Staff and OSM support that we get. We have hundreds of

