

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

EASTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE  
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

VOLUME II

Fairbanks, Alaska  
March 3, 2005

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Craig Fleener, Chairman
- Andrew Bassich
- Sue Entsminger
- James Nathaniel, Sr.
- Philip Titus
- Virgil Umphenour
- Larry Williams
- Donald Woodruff
- Regional Coordinator, Vince Mathews

Recorded and transcribed by:

Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC  
3522 West 27th Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99517  
907-243-0668  
jpk@gci.net

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2  
3 (Fairbanks, Alaska - 3/3/2005)

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I'd like to bring the  
6 meeting back to order, please. The first thing we'll be  
7 talking about is Proposal 08, but Vince has some  
8 housekeeping things he wants to do.

9  
10 MR. MATHEWS: For the Council members,  
11 somehow or other you didn't get a return envelope to send  
12 your travel stuff in, so I'll pass that out. The reason  
13 I'm late I had to take Philip to the clinic. He's been  
14 having problems with his knees. He was in quite a bit of  
15 pain yesterday. So that's why I'm a little late this  
16 morning.

17  
18 I'm also going to pass out some material,  
19 but I need to caution you on this material. Wennona and  
20 I tried to get some people to talk about the West Nile  
21 Virus, but we weren't able to on such short notice, so I  
22 pulled up an article from Alaska Department of Fish and  
23 Game and then from the National Disease Control Center.  
24 Again, we've not reviewed this. We're not experts on  
25 this or anything, so this material is there for you to  
26 read, but if you have further questions I recommend you  
27 get back to us or ADF&G or National Disease Control  
28 Center.

29  
30 And yesterday you were interested in a  
31 copy of the information on the snow levels in Alaska.  
32 The printer did have my copies I left yesterday, but then  
33 it would not work today, so that's another reason why I  
34 was late.

35  
36 There's two items I'll be passing around.  
37 One is a letter that was put together by Kanuti National  
38 Wildlife Refuge by Lisa Saperstein in response to Western  
39 Interior and snow levels. So she gives kind of a summary  
40 for Western Interior. Then there's the full report from  
41 the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Alaska Snow  
42 Depth Survey. That's about my full extent of the  
43 knowledge of it. Again, if you do have questions on it,  
44 we can connect you with Lisa Saperstein on her part and  
45 then we can work with you on the NRCS. I'll pass those  
46 around.

47  
48 The only other thing is this morning I  
49 didn't get a chance to meet with Staff. I drafted up  
50 real quickly some language for the proposal you would

1 like to have on Unit 12 moose, so I'll need to meet with  
2 Sue and others to see if this matches with what desires  
3 you want. Again, as we talked yesterday, this is out of  
4 cycle, so we'll have to hold onto it and then bring it  
5 back up at your next meeting. It's not a big deal, but  
6 you're not going to see it published for quite a while.

7  
8 With that, are there any other  
9 housekeeping concerns from Staff that I may need to know?  
10 Any from the Council? I know once we get later in the  
11 afternoon things start moving really quickly. If you  
12 have any travel concerns or anything like that, get a  
13 hold of myself or Don or others and we can address that.

14  
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair. That's all the  
16 housekeeping items I have. I appreciate your efforts to  
17 follow the green and pink instructions. That's helped.  
18 We'll keep working on getting those questions answered on  
19 the end, but I'm pretty sure you guys provided us enough  
20 information for us to understand your justifications for  
21 actions and empower your representative to go before the  
22 Board. That's all I have. Thanks.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Vince. I  
25 spoke with each member of the Council and the last two  
26 proposals we don't think are going to be difficult for us  
27 to make a decision on. Can you hear me, Pete?

28  
29 (No response)

30  
31 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anyway, I was going to  
32 ask the Staff if they could give us abbreviated versions  
33 of the presentation just so we can speed along on these  
34 last two proposals and then we'll quickly go through the  
35 well-known pink and green sheets to allow for public  
36 comments so we can get right to taking action. Are you  
37 there, Pete?

38  
39 (No response)

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That's fine. Vince  
42 can probably just read through it.

43  
44 MR. MATHEWS: Sorry. We'll get up to  
45 speed. These are overlap proposals. We talked about  
46 that yesterday. So we're dealing with Proposal 08. It  
47 was submitted by Jack Champod of Nelchina to allow the  
48 harvest of either sex animals for caribou in Unit 13A and  
49 B.

50

1 MR. RIVARD: Mr. Chair. I was prepared  
2 to speak on these two proposals if Pete was not  
3 available.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That's perfectly fine  
6 and probably a great relief to Vince. Sorry to put you  
7 on the spot, Vince.

8  
9 MR. RIVARD: My name is Don Rivard. I'm  
10 with the Office of Subsistence Management. Proposal 08  
11 is on Page 91 of your book. This proposal was submitted  
12 by Jack Champod of Nelchina and requests a change in the  
13 Unit 13A and B caribou harvest limit to allow the harvest  
14 of two caribou of any sex.

15  
16 The proponent states the costs of meat  
17 and gas are too high for people on a limited income to  
18 spend gas money on multiple unsuccessful trips. The  
19 people who need the meat most cannot afford to spend \$50-  
20 plus per trip and see only cow caribou. Currently, the  
21 herd is above the ADF&G population goal of 35,000 and the  
22 proponent believes harvest of any caribou should be  
23 allowed.

24  
25 The proponent argues that the proposal  
26 would have a positive effect on the Nelchina caribou  
27 herd. A Federal cow harvest would allow the State to  
28 meet their bull:cow ratio target and still keep the herd  
29 above 35,000 animals.

30  
31 Overall, the proponent believes the  
32 proposal would help out on the food bill for the local  
33 rural residents who need it the most. It should make it  
34 easier for all subsistence users to meet their  
35 subsistence needs.

36  
37 You can see the proposed regulation there  
38 on the bottom of Page 91 and a map of the area on Page  
39 92. The customary and traditional use determination for  
40 caribou in Unit 13A is residents of Units 11, 12 along  
41 the Nabesna Road, 13, and the residents of Chickaloon;  
42 for Unit 13B, residents of Units 11, 12 along the Nabesna  
43 Road, 13, 20D except Fort Greely, and the residents of  
44 Chickaloon.

45  
46 In 2003, Proposal WP03-14 requested that  
47 the harvest limit for caribou in Unit 13 be changed from  
48 two bulls to two caribou and that the late season be  
49 changed from October 21 to March 30 to December 1 to  
50 April 20. In an effort to allow more flexibility in the

1 harvest, the Board adopted proposal WP03-14 with  
2 modification at its May 2003 meeting.

3  
4 The August 10 to September 30 season was  
5 limited to a bull only harvest, while the sex of the  
6 animals that may be taken during the winter season,  
7 October 21 to March 31, is to be announced by the  
8 Glennallen Field Office Manager of the BLM in  
9 consultation with the ADF&G area biologist and Chairs of  
10 the Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council and the  
11 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council. The  
12 understanding was that if the population survey results  
13 indicate that the Nelchina herd had grown to over 35,000  
14 animals, then the winter season would be open to the  
15 harvest of any caribou.

16  
17 In 2004, based on results of population  
18 surveys, the Nelchina caribou herd had grown to over  
19 36,000 animals, therefore the October 21 to March 31  
20 portion of the harvest season was opened to the harvest  
21 of any caribou, although there was a delay in opening the  
22 winter season to cows until November 10 because some cows  
23 had just been radio-collared. During the collaring  
24 process, the animals were darted with a drug that is  
25 unsafe for humans. A buffer period was allowed so that  
26 the drug would be out of their system in order to make  
27 them safe for human consumption. The BLM and the State  
28 agreed to maintain a close watch on the harvest numbers  
29 to ensure there were no significant impacts to the health  
30 of the herd as a result of the cow harvest.

31  
32 Current management strategies dealing  
33 with harvest rates and predation appear to be working,  
34 the goal being to increase calf recruitment and maintain  
35 the herd at a sustainable level.

36  
37 The Nelchina caribou herd was last before  
38 the Board in 2003 as proposal WP03-14. At that time, the  
39 regulations were changed to the current regulation, which  
40 gives the BLM Glennallen Field Office Manager the  
41 authority to open the season to cow caribou once the  
42 ADF&G fall population estimate reaches 35,000.

43  
44 The preliminary conclusion is to support  
45 with modification, to allow BLM, in consultation with  
46 ADF&G, to announce the sex of the animals that may be  
47 harvested for both the fall and the winter season. This  
48 would maintain a flexible management strategy, which  
49 would allow for conservation measures to be implemented  
50 if the herd drops below the State's management

1 objectives.

2

3 Again, you can see the proposed  
4 regulations on Page 98 in your book.

5

6 The modification language would be  
7 consistent with the proponent's request and would allow  
8 additional subsistence opportunities. The modification  
9 would also allow for adaptive management of the herd, if  
10 the herd drops below the ADF&G management objective of  
11 35,000 animals, conservation concerns could be addressed  
12 without a special action or proposal. Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chair.

14

15 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Don.  
16 ADF&G. Good morning, Terry.

17

18 MR. HAYNES: Good morning, Mr. Chairman,  
19 Council members. Terry Haynes, Department of Fish and  
20 Game. Before I give my comments on this proposal, which  
21 are on Page 99, I'd like to, for the record, correct the  
22 misstatement I made to you yesterday on Proposal 05-02 to  
23 change the wolf seasons. The Seward Peninsula Regional  
24 Council did not support that proposal. In fact, they  
25 took no action on that proposal because Unit 22 is not  
26 covered within the scope of that proposal and Unit 22 is  
27 basically their area. So I apologize for that error and  
28 hope that didn't influence your action.

29

30 The Department supports the proposal 05-  
31 08 as modified in the preliminary conclusion, which would  
32 authorize the BLM in Glennallen, in consultation with  
33 others, to announce the sex of Nelchina caribou that may  
34 be taken during both the fall and winter seasons in Units  
35 13A and 13B.

36

37 We don't support the proposal to  
38 authorize any caribou harvest limits without this safety  
39 valve since it provides the flexibility needed to adjust  
40 harvest limits in season if necessary for conservation  
41 purposes. Given the current health of that herd, we  
42 anticipate that cow harvest will be authorized in State  
43 regulations and Federal regulations next year. Thank  
44 you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Terry.  
47 Federal Agencies.

48

49 MR. BRELSFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
50 members. I'm Taylor Brelsford. I work with the BLM.

1 I'd like to emphasize what a significant breakthrough and  
2 opportunity to do the right thing we have before us here.  
3 This has been a herd management and a subsistence  
4 harvest management issue that has come before the Council  
5 and the Board repeatedly over the last four or five  
6 years. We've had the problem of a traditional practice  
7 among the Ahtna communities in particular of harvesting  
8 any sex caribou challenged by a population problem in the  
9 Nelchina caribou herd, so we've been working together to  
10 bring the Nelchina herd back up to the minimum population  
11 and to re-establish the traditional harvest opportunity  
12 for the local communities.

13  
14 Two years ago we were close and adopted  
15 this approach of in-season flexibility of decision-making  
16 by the manager watching the herd, the most recent herd  
17 numbers and providing that opportunity for local  
18 communities just as soon as the herd status would permit  
19 that. We were able to achieve that kind of in-season  
20 flexibility for the winter hunt two years ago and  
21 actually implement that this last hunting season. What's  
22 before you today would be to extend the same management  
23 approach to the fall harvest opportunity.

24  
25 So we're all hoping that this herd is  
26 going to continue to grow and that we will go back to the  
27 standing management structure that would allow for the  
28 any sex caribou since we're just right at the line of  
29 this population objective, the 35,000 animals. We have  
30 all kind of agreed, ADF&G supports, all of us are sort of  
31 focused on the idea that we want to watch this fairly  
32 closely and when the population status is adequate, we  
33 would provide the flexibility in the fall as well as in  
34 the winter.

35  
36 So I just want to underscore that I think  
37 we're solving a problem that's been dogging the  
38 Southcentral and the Eastern Interior Council over a  
39 number of years and I want to very strongly endorse the  
40 proposed solution and to say that the BLM field office in  
41 Glennallen is very anxious to see this solution work out  
42 on the ground. We will do the work in terms of  
43 population monitoring and working with the communities  
44 for the in-season decision to provide for that  
45 traditional hunting opportunity. Thank you.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor.  
48 Other Federal Agencies.

49  
50 (No comments)

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Tribal or others.

2

3 (No comments)

4

5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Interagency Staff  
6 Committee.

7

8 (No comments)

9

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any advisory groups.  
11 Vince.

12

13 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, I don't  
14 believe the Delta Junction Regional Advisory Committee  
15 took this up. The neighboring regional council,  
16 Southcentral, has not met yet, so we don't have input  
17 from them.

18

19 Then the Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence  
20 Resource Commission took up this proposal and they  
21 support it as modified in staff analysis. As modified,  
22 this proposal would allow harvest of any caribou when  
23 biologically supported and would provide BLM oversight in  
24 case the herd cannot allow a cow hunt harvest. So they  
25 do support it.

26

27 Do you want me to go into written  
28 comments?

29

30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Please.

31

32 MR. MATHEWS: You have two written  
33 comments that were submitted. The AHTNA Subsistence  
34 Committee supports the proposal. They support the  
35 proposal which allows taking of two caribou by Federal  
36 registration permit. As the proposal states, the State's  
37 objective of 35,000 caribou has been met. The caribou  
38 population is now at 36,000 and it can sustain the taking  
39 of any two caribou. Taking two caribou will increase the  
40 opportunity to harvest the caribou in Units 13A and B and  
41 thus to have our subsistence needs met. This is  
42 important because it is rather difficult to harvest a  
43 moose in Unit 13.

44

45 The other written comment was from Don  
46 Quarberg of Delta Junction. He opposes this proposal.  
47 This population cannot support this Federal slaughter.

48

49 Those are the two comments that were  
50 submitted that I'm aware of.

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Vince. Any  
2 public testimony.

3  
4 (No comments)

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Regional Council  
7 recommendations.

8  
9 MR. UMPHENOUR: Move to adopt Proposal  
10 No. 08 as modified on Page 98 of our meeting booklet.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion to  
13 adopt. Is there a second.

14  
15 MR. NATHANIEL: Second.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: It's been seconded.  
18 Discussion. Virgil.

19  
20 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
21 would like to refer to the justification on Page 98 of  
22 our proposal booklet and also the Alaska Department of  
23 Fish and Game's comments on Page 99. I feel that this is  
24 the appropriate thing to do. Whenever the population  
25 objective of caribou is over that objective, then  
26 biologically there's no reason not to allow the harvest  
27 of the cow caribou and this would allow people to meet  
28 their subsistence needs much easier. Also, it addresses  
29 the bull:cow ratio and the goals that the Department  
30 managers have. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
33 More comments, discussion.

34  
35 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The question has been  
38 called on the motion. All in favor signify by saying  
39 aye.

40  
41 IN UNISON: Aye.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.

44  
45 (No opposing votes)

46  
47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Motion carries.

48  
49 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, this brings  
50 us up to Proposal 09, which is on Page 100 in your book,

1 again submitted by the same individual of Nelchina. This  
2 would allow the harvest of either sex animals by those  
3 having a permanent physical disability.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Please remember to  
6 abbreviate as much as possible with still keeping some of  
7 the integrity of the analysis. Virgil.

8  
9 MR. UMPHENOUR: Mr. Chair, I move we take  
10 no action on Proposal No. 09 based on the action taken on  
11 Proposal No. 08.

12  
13 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion and a  
16 second on the table. Discussion.

17  
18 MR. BASSICH: Question.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a question on  
21 the motion. All in favor signify by saying aye.

22  
23 IN UNISON: Aye.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.

26  
27 (No opposing votes)

28  
29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Motion carries. Do  
30 you think we should allow for the reading of the public  
31 comments into the record or is that not necessary?

32  
33 MR. UMPHENOUR: I don't feel that's  
34 necessary because Proposal No. 08 that we just passed  
35 addressed the concerns expressed in Proposal No. 09. Mr.  
36 Chair.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I agree, Virgil.  
39 Thank you. Let's move on then. BLM.

40  
41 MR. BRELSFORD: Mr. Chairman and Council  
42 members. While we're organizing getting papers in front  
43 of us and so on, let me say that this was a presentation  
44 requested by your Council of the Fairbanks field office  
45 and my colleague Ruth Gronquist prepared the  
46 presentation. It's fairly brief in light of the other  
47 agenda items, so we will end by identifying how to pursue  
48 more information if you'd like to go into more detail on  
49 it.

50

1                   Again, I'm Taylor Brelsford on behalf of  
2 the Bureau of Land Management. The presentation topic is  
3 the 2004 wildfires and potential impacts on wildlife.  
4 I'm basically going to offer two topics to you. One is a  
5 very preliminary assessment of impacts and, secondly, to  
6 talk about ongoing work in restoration. We'll talk about  
7 a program or national effort following major wildfires.  
8 The Federal agencies cooperate in something that's called  
9 a BAER Team. This slide actually just gives you a quick  
10 visual of the number of fires and the geographic  
11 distribution. I think everybody realizes this has been  
12 one of the largest volume and acreage affected fire  
13 seasons in recent history.

14  
15                   So the BAER Team refers to Burned Area  
16 Emergency Response Team. This is a national interagency  
17 effort that is mobilized within days of a major fire  
18 event in the western states. In the case of Alaska, this  
19 was the largest acreage and geographic distribution and  
20 ecological diversity where a BAER Team was trying to  
21 figure out what happened and what kind of agency  
22 interventions to stabilize banks or structures and then  
23 look at restoration. This has been sort of unprecedented  
24 for the interagency team that gathered together in  
25 Fairbanks last August and September.

26  
27                   There were a set of village meetings held  
28 very quick. Just after the fire season these BAER Teams  
29 try to go out to communities and get input. It's kind of  
30 an emergency response. So village meetings were actually  
31 held in Northway, Eagle, Tanacross, Stevens Village,  
32 Evansville, Circle and Fort Yukon. This was last fall  
33 when the quick write-up was being prepared.

34  
35                   There is an upcoming set of follow-up  
36 village meetings and I'd like to emphasize this. This is  
37 a situation that if you on the Regional Council want to  
38 highlight the importance of a meeting in the upcoming  
39 year in a particular community, this is the time to  
40 provide that input.

41  
42                   So the villages that are under  
43 consideration for June of 2005 for meetings starting this  
44 early summer would be Northway, Bettles, Venetie, Delta,  
45 Central, Tetlin and Dot Lake. This is essentially trying  
46 to get to some of the communities that were not consulted  
47 in the first round of community meetings. As I say, when  
48 we get to comments, if you see gaps in this or you would  
49 prioritize some communities over others, that would be  
50 very important input today.

1                   So some of the input from the community  
2 meetings last fall on fire effects, these are in a sense  
3 questions or concerns that people raised and they looked  
4 at the cumulative effects, the cumulative impacts on  
5 subsistence was the main thing that people emphasized  
6 again and again. Then some specific things about  
7 particular species was raised. So there's concern about  
8 displacement of caribou herds as a result of fire impacts  
9 on lichen and forage, questions about the impact of moose  
10 habitat, fire related runoff sedimentation and impacts on  
11 fisheries on the Yukon River and tributaries. A lot of  
12 folks are interested in a longer-term research approach  
13 to looking at what happens over time to caribou herds and  
14 the effect on habitat.

15  
16                   Moving down the list, a concern about  
17 whether the fire would detract from access and  
18 opportunity to take house logs, impacts on trapping  
19 species, lynx and marten in particular, and then finally  
20 kind of an interaction, will the commercial fishery cause  
21 more trouble when spawning grounds have been affected by  
22 fire. So are we going to get a compounding impact as a  
23 result of sedimentation and damage to spawning habitat.

24  
25                   I think the BAER Team, the folks that  
26 work together in these village outreach meetings, about  
27 half the group was from Outside. They are experts in fire  
28 effects in the western states, if you will, and about  
29 half the team was from Alaska. I heard repeated comments  
30 from people, particularly the folks from Outside, about  
31 how impressed they were of the ecological knowledge that  
32 they heard in these village meetings. So some of the key  
33 points that folks in the communities raised about  
34 ecosystem dynamics, this sort of close-grained awareness  
35 of what happens in the area -- people have watched fires  
36 for many, many years and have a pretty strong  
37 understanding about ecological dynamics out of it.

38  
39                   So some of the points that we summarized  
40 out of that conversation from local hunters were that  
41 moose populations are unlikely to be disturbed after a  
42 short period. That, in fact, browse for moose improves  
43 over time as a result of a fire. It resets the  
44 successional cycle as folks certainly know.

45  
46                   The winter movements and distribution of  
47 caribou can change depending on the extent, the intensity  
48 of fire impact on lichen range. And, finally, the  
49 blockage of trails has a lot of consequence for  
50 communities for access to subsistence use areas.

1                   Looking at preliminary points about  
2 impacts on the wildlife and ecosystems directly, the key  
3 points are that the boreal forest is a fire-dependent  
4 ecosystem. It is part of the natural trend and dynamic  
5 of boreal forests. That severely burned areas with  
6 exposed soil when the fire intensity exposes the  
7 substrate, then there's a potential for quite a lot of  
8 change in vegetation types. When the burn intensity is  
9 low or moderate, those typically come back with the same  
10 set of vegetative species, the same array of vegetation.

11  
12                   Again, on moose, after the initial period  
13 in the 11 to 30 years following a fire, there's actually  
14 an improvement in browse and in moose abundance, so we  
15 conclude that moose generally benefit from that post-fire  
16 increase in forage quantity.

17  
18                   Continuing points, moose populations in  
19 much of the Interior are at low densities in general.  
20 Predators can be hampered in their effectiveness as a  
21 result of downed trees. What's referred to as jack straw  
22 when the trees kind of fall in a way and it closes up the  
23 forest system. It's not as easy for predators to hunt.

24  
25                   Lichen availability can be reduced. This  
26 is now saying that the impacts on caribou can be quite  
27 different. Fire effects on lichen are longer lasting, so  
28 lichen availability for caribou can be reduced for  
29 decades following a fire. As a consequence, the winter  
30 distribution and movement of caribou can change over long  
31 periods of time. High-quality summer range or alternate  
32 areas in the winter can compensate for the effects of  
33 fire in specific areas. It's possible that small herds  
34 can be more adversely affected by the impacts on habitat.  
35 Periodic burning of lichen does, in fact, contribute to  
36 healthy lichen ranges.

37  
38                   So the sort of broad picture is that the  
39 impacts are generally positive in terms of habitat  
40 quality for moose, but if they are at a sufficient level  
41 of fire intensity, there's a potential for long-term  
42 adverse impacts on caribou.

43  
44                   The next slide shows ongoing study by the  
45 U.S. Geological Survey and the Alaska Department of Fish  
46 and Game concerning impacts on the Nelchina herd of fire  
47 episodes over a fairly long period of time. This current  
48 winter the Nelchina caribou have been spending very  
49 little time within the 2004 Taylor Fire Complex. This is  
50 a place name used to refer to a fire that's depicted in

1 the brown here. Since the new year Federal subsistence  
2 hunters have harvested 12 caribou within this stretch  
3 being used by the Nelchina caribou, four of which were  
4 from the Fortymile herd and eight from the Nelchina. The  
5 season closed on February 28th and we estimate that 60  
6 caribou have been harvested by the Federally-qualified  
7 subsistence hunters in the winter hunt.

8

9 The joint ADF&G USGS study on current  
10 fire effects has been extended for an additional year.  
11 Generally speaking, the Fortymile caribou herd winter  
12 range was unaffected by the 2004 fires and there's been  
13 very little effect on the Fortymile caribou herd as a  
14 result.

15

16 The next several slides look at  
17 individuals fires and generally give you a visual  
18 indication of the fire intensity. So this is a set of  
19 fires referred to as the Dall City and the Fort Hamlin  
20 Hills. What you see at a glance is that this is at the  
21 lowest level of intensity. So the potential for severe  
22 impact to lichen is basically absent in these two fire  
23 areas. Craig.

24

25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Taylor, I notice in  
26 the printout that the yellow is moderate and you may not  
27 be seeing that up on the slide.

28

29 MR. BRELSFORD: And I have my prints in  
30 black and white. Sorry.

31

32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So it's actually about  
33 a 60/40 or a 70/30 moderate as compared to low or  
34 unburned.

35

36 MR. BRELSFORD: Thanks for the  
37 clarification. These are fire boundaries referred to as  
38 the Wolf Creek Tors fires and the same general point  
39 applies, that there was very little in the intensely  
40 affected quality.

41

42 This is from the Chicken and Billy Creek,  
43 Porcupine fire. Same general point. Broad areas  
44 affected by fire, but fairly narrow portions of that  
45 affected at the greatest intensity or the greatest  
46 severity. This is the Bolgen Creek fire. Same broad  
47 point and same general point for these three fires.

48

49 To conclude, I want to emphasize again  
50 that this BAER is an ongoing program. They have sort of

1 an initial response very shortly after a fire ends and  
2 they do an initial field assessment and village meetings  
3 focused on emergency stabilization. So some of the  
4 efforts that came out of the quick response last fall  
5 include a contract with Tanana Chiefs to clear some  
6 inter-village trails as well as some emergency work on  
7 bank stabilization to avoid sedimentation effects this  
8 coming spring. There was a case where a historic mining  
9 site had a water pipeline that supports it burned out  
10 from under it. They get back on the ground and  
11 re-establish.

12  
13 So those are the emergency response or  
14 stabilization efforts. Then over the next two years the  
15 legislation provides for an additional two years of  
16 funding for ongoing rehabilitation work or restoration  
17 work. The upcoming two years projects will be the focus  
18 of the village meetings and the BAER Team meetings this  
19 coming spring. So they will reconvene, get out to the  
20 communities as I mentioned, and the purpose of that is to  
21 look at what they would do over the next two-year period.

22  
23 Finally, if folks do have a question, the  
24 primary contact at the BLM office in Anchorage, Jeanne  
25 Standley. Her phone number is offered there. So that's  
26 the quick overview that Ruth prepared for me to offer.  
27 Are there key questions that I can try and answer?

28  
29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor. Any  
30 questions.

31  
32 (No comments)

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I don't necessarily  
35 have a question, but I'm a little bit confused with your  
36 comments saying that some of the -- just because it  
37 doesn't jive with a few of the pictures that I have where  
38 you said that the majority of these appear to be  
39 relatively low to moderate intensity. The boundary on  
40 Wolf Creek I'd say that's about 80 percent in red, if  
41 everybody can see that, and red is supposed to be high  
42 intensity, vegetation mortality it's called.

43  
44 Also, if you take a look at the  
45 Pingo/Winter Trail fires, there's probably maybe 60  
46 percent red in this fire and maybe 40 percent in the  
47 Winter Trail and this is fairly low in the lower mouth  
48 fire. I don't think I would classify these as low fire  
49 damage. Just for clarification, if the pictures are  
50 right and if my nose was right this summer living by one

1 of these fires or several of these fires, I think they  
2 were fairly intense.

3

4 MR. BRELSFORD: I think Ruth has selected  
5 a set of fires that are closer to communities that are  
6 more likely of interest to the Council. The note she  
7 wrote to me, broadly speaking, when we look at the total  
8 acreage that burned this summer, the severely affected or  
9 intense fire was actually a fairly restricted portion of  
10 that. I believe we've selected for your closer attention  
11 a set of fires where the intensity proportion was higher,  
12 but I do know that overall when you look at the total  
13 acreage affected by fire in 2004 the portion subject to  
14 intense fires with severe damage to vegetation was a  
15 fairly small part overall.

16

17 So I take your point concerning the maps  
18 that I've put up. I wish Ruth were here. She knows this  
19 a little more.

20

21 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That's okay. That's a  
22 good clarification. Thank you, Taylor. Andy.

23

24 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
25 On your slide village issues, the final bullet at the  
26 bottom says commercial harvest of salmon could compound  
27 reduced fish harvest for villagers if fire adversely  
28 affects spawning habitat. I wondered if you could  
29 elaborate on that.

30

31 MR. BRELSFORD: I believe the point is  
32 that people are concerned about the fact that Yukon  
33 fisheries are fully allocated and that any effect on  
34 population levels, spawning habitat damage could tip  
35 downwards the Yukon fisheries and that sets this  
36 allocation struggle back on the table. So if numbers are  
37 reduced or if the current improvements in fish runs on  
38 the Yukon falter as a result of habitat damage, then  
39 we're back in the allocation problems of how do you  
40 protect enough fish getting through the early portion of  
41 the run, early in time, low in the river, to ensure that  
42 an adequate upriver escapement is provided for  
43 subsistence uses in the middle and upper portions of the  
44 Yukon River. I think that's kind of the point.

45

46 The upriver communities, the communities  
47 surveyed in these village meetings have had a lot of  
48 trouble meeting basic subsistence needs over the last  
49 decade roughly and a lot of work has gone into the  
50 windows management approach to ensure a little bit better

1 escapement through the lower river through the portion  
2 where the commercial fisheries occur and I think folks  
3 are kind of emphasizing how important it is to continue  
4 providing upriver escapement for subsistence and for  
5 spawning.

6

7 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman.

8

9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Yes.

10

11 MR. BASSICH: I guess what I was hoping  
12 to find out of this presentation is there any evidence  
13 that severely burned spawning grounds are impacted. Has  
14 there been any studies in the past, whether it be in  
15 Alaska or anywhere else, that has looked at the effects  
16 of fire on actual spawning grounds, I guess is what I'm  
17 looking for.

18

19 MR. BRELSFORD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
20 Andy. The broad principal that I've understood is that  
21 when fire effects go to bare ground and the vegetation  
22 can no longer hold precipitation, that you do get  
23 sedimentation, that's a potential impact of relatively  
24 severe fires in broad. I don't think they have the site-  
25 specific knowledge at this point to identify areas in  
26 particular that are being affected. The quick assessment  
27 that was done in August and September was not at that  
28 level of intensity throughout the drainage.

29

30 I think site-specific investigations are  
31 the sort of thing that they want to examine, they want to  
32 ground truth a little more this coming spring and figure  
33 out which areas are at highest risk and whether they can  
34 do bank stabilization projects in particular areas. I  
35 think this is the kind of question that moves from  
36 general assessment last year to more site-specific stuff  
37 that they're going to try and do this coming summer.  
38 They don't have results at that level at this point.

39

40 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Taylor. Andy.

41

42 MR. BASSICH: One more. This is more of  
43 a comment. Maybe this is something that this Council  
44 ought to look into as a recommendation for some of the  
45 partner programs, something to look at since we have had  
46 a heavy fire year. The effects are out there.  
47 Conditions would be right to maybe get a little bit of  
48 groundwork done in this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

49

50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy. I'm

1 actually kind of  
2 surprised. I would have thought that something like this  
3 would have been considered during the appropriation of  
4 emergency funds. If there is a problem in the spawning  
5 grounds, this could just continue to exacerbate the  
6 already low salmon numbers. If we haven't looked at it  
7 already, it's probably too late to get emergency funds to  
8 do that, but it seems as if it would have been a good  
9 place to allocate some of the emergency money that comes  
10 after disasters. I'm really kind of surprised that  
11 hasn't taken place, but I think Andy's idea is a really  
12 good one. We have a really good mechanism that is  
13 distributed all along the Yukon River system that can  
14 work with Fish and Wildlife Service to accomplish some of  
15 those goals. Larry.

16  
17 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
18 During these emergency meetings that you have in these  
19 villages -- I don't know quite how to frame my question,  
20 but here goes. I read that the fire that was here in  
21 Fairbanks either to the east or to the north, that they  
22 have a fire commission that's appointed by the mayor. Is  
23 there anything like that going on in the villages or  
24 anything being planned to talk about why these fires  
25 started in the first place or where people from the  
26 particular area can have a say on why these fires started  
27 and ask those kind of questions and where do they get  
28 those answers? If you can give me a brief rundown on  
29 what can be done after the model of the Fairbanks area.  
30 Thank you.

31  
32 MR. BRELSFORD: Mr. Chairman, Mr.  
33 Williams. I do know that the Alaska Fire Service, which  
34 is an interagency consortium of the Alaska Department of  
35 Fish and Game, Department of Natural Resources, BLM and  
36 other Federal agencies, they have a set of criteria for  
37 the level of attack, the level of response back to fires  
38 and there's been a lot of conversation in the village  
39 communities about the need to attack more aggressively  
40 fires in proximity to the villages and to pre-position  
41 equipment so that the communities can respond themselves.  
42 I know that conversation, the sort of ability for  
43 villages to look out for their own interests more  
44 quickly, that discussion is going on between the Alaska  
45 Fire Service and several of the villages that were  
46 affected and saw delayed responses. Because of the  
47 smoke, the teams couldn't get into some areas. I believe  
48 that's where the dialogue is going on to improve the  
49 quality of village protection and a responsiveness to  
50 fires near villages.

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor.  
2 Any more questions. Go ahead, Larry.

3  
4 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
5 The reason I asked that question is there was quite a bit  
6 of concern among the Venetie and Arctic Village about the  
7 huge fire north of Venetie last summer. They were saying  
8 that BLM was very slow in responding and that fire  
9 shouldn't be allowed to get away like that. It burned  
10 thousands and thousands of acres. It burned our winter  
11 trails and generally it did a lot of damage. We haven't  
12 had any chance at all to ask BLM in a formal meeting like  
13 this why that was allowed to happen and nobody is giving  
14 the villagers any kind of satisfactory answer to those  
15 kind of questions. Thank you.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Actually, to add to  
18 that a little bit, I was at the public meeting in Fort  
19 Yukon and they said that over the last couple years more  
20 than 50 percent of Venetie reservation lands have burned.  
21 The community certainly hasn't supported allowing that  
22 large percentage of their land to burn. On the Venetie  
23 reservation they actually have some of the best, largest,  
24 longest lived timber stands around and I think the  
25 majority have actually burned now. Some very productive  
26 timber stands that, of course, will return, but they're  
27 not there now and timber that could have been used for  
28 multiple purposes. The community of Venetie is just not  
29 satisfied at all with how the fire season progressed with  
30 really slow or delayed reaction time. I don't remember  
31 the size of the fires. I think the two fires near  
32 Venetie nearly added up to a million acres. So, over the  
33 last couple of years more than half of the Venetie  
34 reservation burning up -- how many acres is that, Larry?

35  
36 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I don't have  
37 the figures right off the top of my head.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: What I was actually  
40 asking for was the size of the Venetie reservation.

41  
42 MR. WILLIAMS: Oh, the size is 1.8  
43 million acres.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So over the last  
46 couple years nearly half of that is burned primarily  
47 because of the inaction or the slow action time of BLM  
48 and Alaska Fire Services. Did you have a comment,  
49 Taylor?  
50

1 MR. BRELSFORD: Let me take the point as  
2 feedback that needs to be passed back up the chain. I  
3 actually did hear a briefing to the state director  
4 following the fire season in which the frustration of  
5 Venetie and several communities about this point was  
6 made. I understood that Scott Billingsly, the fire  
7 service director for the BLM was in consultation with  
8 Venetie in particular and a couple other communities  
9 about revisiting the classification of response in  
10 proximity to those communities and improving training and  
11 pre-positioning equipment. So, if I'm mistaken and he  
12 hasn't really gotten started on those meetings with the  
13 communities, I will go back and emphasize to him how  
14 strongly you've made that point today. I'm going to take  
15 notes and carry it back to Scott Billingsly to ensure  
16 that we move forward in consultation with the communities  
17 and improve the response time and the capacity in the  
18 communities to respond on their own behalf.

19  
20 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor. If  
21 there's no more comments, I'd like to move on to the next  
22 agenda item.

23  
24 MR. BRELSFORD: Mr. Chairman, I actually  
25 have one agenda item for homework or input if you would  
26 like to provide it. Jeanne Standley asked me to hand out  
27 a questionnaire. If you guys know site-specific problems  
28 in the regions where additional stabilization or rehab  
29 work should be done, this is a chance to provide that in  
30 writing. This is the same sort of question that will  
31 come up in the community meetings. In case some of you  
32 might not be at those meetings, this would be a chance to  
33 put that in writing and I will bring it back to her. So  
34 I think some of the key questions that people have raised  
35 are follow-up items and that could be noted on the  
36 questionnaire or called in to Jeanne directly.

37  
38 I appreciate your interest and I think we  
39 all want to work hard on this. This was a very  
40 significant ecological event this summer and if climate  
41 change continues, we may be facing more of this, not  
42 less, so we all need to focus in and try to work together  
43 on it. Thank you very much.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor.  
46 Vince.

47  
48 MR. MATHEWS: While we're switching  
49 presenters here, I do have one housekeeping item. We  
50 need people to sign in on the sign-in sheets so we

1 capture for the record all that are here. So they're up  
2 at the front table there and you can sign it. Thank you.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The next item up for  
5 bid is the recordable disclaimer of interest.

6

7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Chairman. This is Taylor Brelsford again for the BLM and  
9 I'm joined by my colleague Carolyn Spoon. I'll offer an  
10 introductory comment. Carolyn will spend a few minutes  
11 on some of the key information regarding recordable  
12 disclaimers and I will then focus on the question of what  
13 are the impacts of recordable disclaimers for subsistence  
14 uses.

15

16 The basic question that we understood the  
17 Council has asked is when the BLM issues a recordable  
18 disclaimer of interest, does it adversely affect, does it  
19 take subsistence waters out of Federal subsistence  
20 management. The key point of our presentation is to say  
21 that recordable disclaimers do not diminish Federal  
22 subsistence management jurisdiction in fisheries. There  
23 is no effect on the subsistence jurisdiction and we  
24 wanted to explain a little more fully how that is so.

25

26 Broadly speaking, we're in the area of  
27 land conveyances, following through on the land  
28 entitlements under the Statehood Act and under ANCSA and  
29 under ANILCA. Recordable disclaimers are a sort of fine-  
30 print step involved in transferring lands to the State,  
31 to the Native corporations and under the establishment of  
32 the conservation units in ANILCA.

33

34 So, broadly, what we're doing is wrapping  
35 up the details of land transfers that came as a result of  
36 those major land statutes. With that, I'm going to ask  
37 Carolyn to talk a little more specifically about what  
38 recordable disclaimers are.

39

40 MS. SPOON: Thank you, Taylor. Thank  
41 you, Mr. Chairman, Council members. For the record, my  
42 name is Carolyn Spoon. I'm the branch chief for Lands  
43 End Realty for BLM Alaska State office in Anchorage.  
44 Just a point of clarification on your agenda, we had  
45 identified Callie Webber to give this presentation.  
46 Callie is a member of my staff. She's the project lead  
47 for the RDI's but she couldn't be here today, so I'm  
48 doing this presentation for her.

49

50 Just very basically what an RDI,

1 recordable disclaimer of interest, is, it's a legal  
2 document that the United States can use to acknowledge  
3 that it doesn't claim any interest in certain lands. In  
4 the specific cases that we're dealing with, we're talking  
5 about submerged lands, lands underlying water bodies.

6  
7                   To break down the definition just for  
8 clarification, interest means if we have any ownership in  
9 the land to disclaim. We're just acknowledging or  
10 claiming that we don't have any interest. The recordable  
11 disclaimer, it is a legal document that's prepared in  
12 such a way that it can be recorded and it's similar to  
13 other legally-binding documents, such as mortgages or  
14 deeds. So, therefore, recordable disclaimers of  
15 interest.

16  
17                   Basically the document is used to lift  
18 any cloud on the State's title. When Alaska became a  
19 state and under the Equal Footing Doctrine, all states  
20 were allowed to receive submerged lands under navigable  
21 waters as equal jurisdiction as to the original states.

22  
23                   One of the things Taylor mentioned is  
24 that we were conveying land. It's actually not any kind  
25 of a land conveyance, but it's just acknowledging that we  
26 have no interest and the land is transferred  
27 automatically to the State under certain conditions. The  
28 only thing that isn't always clear is if a water body is  
29 navigable or not. We do have a two-part test on number  
30 two, how decisions are made. When the State applies for  
31 an RDI, we determine its validity in two ways. First we  
32 look at the land status to identify whether the water  
33 body was reserved.

34  
35                   The short answer is if there were  
36 military reservations like that that were pre-statehood,  
37 we would have reserved the water bodies. Things that  
38 when ANILCA was established and created some of the  
39 conservation units that was post-statehood. The long  
40 answer is each withdrawal is unique and you have to look  
41 at each application separately. Typically, a refuge  
42 always reserved a water body, whereas like the Federal  
43 aviation airport sites would not have, but each one  
44 definitely needs to be looked at. So the first part of  
45 our determination is to decide and see if the water  
46 bodies were reserved.

47  
48                   The second part we do the report is  
49 actually to determine if the water body was navigable at  
50 the time of statehood, January 3, 1959. The things we

1 look at, we go into some extensive research. We have some  
2 historians on staff. We need to identify if the water  
3 body was used for travel. Did it connect villages, was  
4 there trade between the villages, was it used to support  
5 that trade. The basic identifications are trade, travel  
6 and commerce that we're looking for. Could it have been,  
7 was it impassable most of the year. Any information we  
8 can gather to support or negate the finding of  
9 navigability. Whether it's oral. We talk to residents  
10 along the area. Oral or written history is used to  
11 determine the physical characteristics of the water body.  
12 If there's any travel logs, any kind of commercial use  
13 that we could confirm was used at the time of statehood  
14 is what we use to determine.

15  
16 If we determine those two answers, if the  
17 water body was not reserved for any purpose and if the  
18 water body was navigable, then the BLM will issue a  
19 recordable disclaimer of interest.

20  
21 What is the effect of an RDI? Actually,  
22 there is no effect other than the fact the Federal  
23 government is saying we have no interest in the land,  
24 we're not conveying any land, we're not taking any  
25 Federal action, we're simply acknowledging that we have  
26 no interest and we're identifying that the State does  
27 have interest.

28  
29 The example that you're probably most  
30 familiar with is the Black River where the State is  
31 recognized as the owner of the submerged lands. the  
32 Fish and Wildlife Service hold title to the uplands and  
33 there is no effect on that entitlement or on the ANCSA  
34 conveyed land. There's no ownership rights that were  
35 changed in any way.

36  
37 Taylor, on the next portion of this  
38 outline, is going to talk a little bit about the  
39 implications of subsistence unless anyone has any  
40 questions up to this point and then I will go through and  
41 talk about some of our process.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Larry.

44  
45 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
46 I'm the one who brought this RDI up in Eagle. One of the  
47 main reasons I brought it up is that people in my area  
48 were asking questions about the RDI. They didn't quite  
49 understand what was going on. This question and this  
50 explanation that you're doing now was mostly invented for

1 the villagers and I don't know how long we can sit here  
2 and listen to a long explanation about something that I,  
3 for one, understand. Like I said, it was meant to  
4 explain to the villagers who obviously are not here. So  
5 that's just a comment I'd like to make. Thank you.

6

7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Larry.  
8 Actually, I have a couple items. I know that being from  
9 the flats of the Black River, disclaimers was and is a  
10 fairly large issue for those of us who live in the area.  
11 It created an awful lot of concern because people didn't  
12 understand what it was. People having lived underneath a  
13 certain type of jurisdiction for so many years were  
14 either led to believe or just believed that there were  
15 going to be major changes coming down the road. We  
16 talked about this a little bit yesterday, but just for  
17 the benefit of the other folks, how did the BLM interact  
18 with tribes in actually coordinating this work and  
19 communicating the entire process to them during the  
20 process. Can you comment on that.

21

22 MS. SPOON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman,  
23 Council members. The Black River -- and I do have to say  
24 that myself and Callie have both only been here about 14  
25 months -- was the first RDI done in Alaska. It was  
26 actually the first RDI that's been done BLM-wide. So we  
27 were kind of paving new ground. We didn't have a defined  
28 process in place. I cannot speak specifically to the  
29 Black River. I think our process has improved, which I  
30 want to talk about, whereas we now, formally, communicate  
31 with the Native villages. I think at the time of Black  
32 River it was through the public process of the Federal  
33 Register.

34

35 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I was going to say  
36 maybe you can get into what you're going to do a little  
37 bit later, but actually talk about what was done or not  
38 done in the past. I guess I want to know from BLM's  
39 perspective, not necessarily yours if you weren't here.  
40 Of course, you can't give your perspective, but I want to  
41 know what BLM did to work with the communities at that  
42 time. Not the plans for the future because you're going  
43 to get into that in a minute.

44

45 MR. BRELSFORD: Mr. Chairman. Taylor  
46 Brelsford. I believe I can offer a couple comments here.  
47 I think it's fair to say that the BLM did not do a very  
48 good job of public outreach as this RDI preceded. This  
49 is a set of requests by the State. It's been a strategic  
50 initiative by the governor to clarify state's interests

1 in waters. There was some conversations in Washington  
2 about picking up the pace. I think the BLM stumbled a  
3 bit in outreach to the local communities. The kind of  
4 information we're talking about now should have come to  
5 you in the flats before the first decision and not after  
6 it.

7  
8 The BLM acknowledged that shortfall in  
9 the decision itself. The decision says the BLM will  
10 revise the public process in ways that Carolyn will talk  
11 about in a moment, but I think we basically have to  
12 accept the criticism that there was not careful outreach  
13 in advance on a matter that was complicated, could give  
14 alarm and worry to communities and we weren't  
15 communicating the basic legal standards. We weren't  
16 providing that background information very effectively.

17  
18 I do know that there was a community  
19 meeting in Fort Yukon. When Mike Haskins asked me, he  
20 said they're starting this process in the Yukon Flats. I  
21 said you have got to talk to CATG. I gave him a set of  
22 names. I know there was some conversation. My  
23 impression is that it was a little late and not as  
24 thorough, not as systematic as it needed to be. That was  
25 the criticism in the record of decision about Black  
26 River. The BLM assistant secretary said we commit to an  
27 improved public process based on the problems that arose  
28 in the Black River case.

29  
30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks for that,  
31 Taylor. To continue along that line, I actually called  
32 and I can't remember who, but I specifically called BLM  
33 and asked them about the public process because the  
34 tribes in the Yukon Flats who depend on the Black River,  
35 especially the ones on the Black River and closest to the  
36 Black River, were very concerned about this entire  
37 process and also felt as if they weren't involved enough.  
38 I specifically asked them don't you have a policy that  
39 says you're supposed to work with tribes, that you're  
40 supposed to consult with tribes, and you said that our  
41 only requirement in consultation with tribes is that we  
42 put it in the Federal Register and that was the end of  
43 the discussion.

44  
45 That really disappointed me tremendously  
46 because we feel as if the Federal government is supposed  
47 to have a much better relationship with tribes. There's  
48 project after project and idea after idea. A recordable  
49 disclaimer of interest is just one more thing in a long  
50 string of things that have happened and in a long string

1 of things, unfortunately, that will probably continue to  
2 happen where they always say, gee, we're sorry.

3  
4                   It's nothing necessarily angrily directed  
5 at you, Carolyn, but the statement that I really don't  
6 like to hear is I wasn't here then. I would recommend  
7 you don't use that anymore, especially towards me,  
8 because I just get mad. I usually don't get mad at  
9 people. I get mad at the agencies because these are  
10 agency decisions and you're just carrying it out. Now,  
11 if I need to get mad at you, I might, but I don't need to  
12 today.

13  
14                   Anyway, the point I'm trying to make is  
15 that there are these agency decisions that are being  
16 constantly made and they're supposed to be in close  
17 communication with tribes. Especially in a place like  
18 Black River where there's only one village left on that  
19 river. How easy would it have been to really work  
20 closely with that community so they weren't confused.

21  
22                   We at CATG got numerous calls, oh, my  
23 goodness, we're going to lose the river, subsistence is  
24 going to be damaged, the State is going to build roads  
25 and highways, they're going to go for gold and diamonds  
26 and oil and whatever else they can get. People were  
27 afraid. They were genuinely afraid because they believed  
28 the Federal government is giving up a piece of land and  
29 there's some conspiracy somewhere because the State wants  
30 access, they're going to be able to get that access to  
31 whatever it is that they're going to get.

32  
33                   I think that wouldn't have happened if  
34 things would have been done the right way and I hope you  
35 take that message forward and say we will not do a  
36 process. We will not go through any -- we won't make any  
37 decisions. There will be no backdoor bargaining until we  
38 work with the tribes on this issue. I realize you have  
39 to have a recordable disclaimer of interest before you  
40 can take that action, but I would encourage immediate  
41 involvement of the communities that are going to be  
42 impacted. Thank you.

43  
44                   MS. SPOON: Point taken, Mr. Chairman.  
45 Thank you. That is our process now. As Taylor  
46 mentioned, it shouldn't have happened. The conversation  
47 you had with whoever the individual was shouldn't have  
48 happened. I guess my only point of saying I wasn't here  
49 is I just wanted to let you know that I don't have the  
50 details of Black River because I wasn't involved with

1 that. The comments were taken. We have improved the  
2 process. I will speak to that and hopefully we will move  
3 forward and resolve the issues you're speaking of.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Larry.

6  
7 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I have a quick  
8 question. How do you determine if a river is navigable?  
9

10 MS. SPOON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr.  
11 Williams. It's a long process of basically a lot of  
12 research under question two that I just talked about we  
13 have people that research at the library, the local  
14 communities, word of mouth, wherever they can get  
15 information. The three primary things are to determine  
16 if it was navigable at the time of statehood for trade,  
17 travel or commerce. We go through a whole set of  
18 questions, we gather as much information as we can, and I  
19 will get into.....

20  
21 MR. WILLIAMS: Excuse me.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Larry.

24  
25 MR. WILLIAMS: Excuse me for  
26 interrupting, but you gave me the answer. As far as the  
27 Chandalar River goes, what's the status on that? As  
28 owners of 1.8 million acres, we claim half of the river  
29 bed. Is there anything ongoing on that?

30  
31 MS. SPOON: I'm not sure I understand.  
32 On the Black River?

33  
34 MR. WILLIAMS: Chandalar River.

35  
36 MS. SPOON: I don't believe we have any  
37 information here on that river or if the State has  
38 indicated that it will apply for that river. We may have  
39 some information that was done previously and I don't  
40 have that information in front of me.

41  
42  
43 MR. WILLIAMS: The reason I ask that  
44 question is we don't want to be surprised, caught off  
45 guard like the residents of Chalkyitsik. Thank you.

46  
47 MR. BRELSFORD: Mr. Chairman, Mr.  
48 Williams. To reassure on the specific question, there is  
49 no current application by the State for a recordable  
50 disclaimer of interest on the Chandalar River. That is

1 not a river on the agenda in the next three years. The  
2 Tanana River is. That's one we want to be sure you guys  
3 can focus on and get your input into. Under the three-  
4 year set of specific proposals or specific requests for  
5 RDI's, the Chandalar is not on the table at the present  
6 time.

7

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Mr. Chairman.

9

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Don.

11

12 MR. WOODRUFF: If I could ask just what  
13 is the list of rivers that you are interested in so we  
14 don't have to ask each time. Is just the Tanana you have  
15 interest in now?

16

17 MS. SPOON: Mr. Chairman, Council  
18 members. One of the things I was going to identify  
19 coming up is the one that will affect your region that  
20 you want to be looking out for is Tanana Basin. We do  
21 have a list primarily right now in Southcentral and  
22 Southeast that we're working on. The one that will be  
23 coming up that will affect you is the Tanana Basin  
24 probably sometime this fall and I'll speak a little bit  
25 to that in a few minutes. Thank you.

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead and continue  
28 with your presentation.

29

30 MR. BRELSFORD: We'll hurry. I take Mr.  
31 William's point that actually the Council itself is more  
32 familiar with the legal questions. I think we wanted to  
33 ensure that people realize this is a legal entitlement  
34 for the State. The BLM doesn't have the option of  
35 saying no if the facts square, if it's not withdrawn, if  
36 it is navigable based on the history of us, then it is  
37 not optional. It is mandatory for the BLM to acknowledge  
38 the State's interest.

39

40 I've mentioned that RDI affects submerged  
41 lands. It does not affect Federal subsistence fishing  
42 regulations. The jurisdiction of the Federal Subsistence  
43 Board continues unchanged as a result of an RDI. The  
44 Federal Subsistence Board's jurisdiction over fisheries  
45 is established under the Katie John case, which looked at  
46 the definition of Federal public lands for the  
47 application of ANILCA. It is a separate legal doctrine.  
48 It is completely unaffected by the issuance of a  
49 recordable disclaimer of interest.

50

1                   So Carolyn wanted to outline what the  
2 steps are upcoming for RDI's, the new process that  
3 includes a bit more in the way of public outreach and,  
4 finally, to mention which rivers are on the table in the  
5 Interior to finalize on Don's question.

6  
7                   MS. SPOON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Just  
8 real quickly. The process has been improved and it is an  
9 ongoing process. During the year we've tried to make as  
10 many improvements as we can based on the comments and  
11 concerns expressed that occurred during Black River.

12  
13                   Primarily what the process is, is we  
14 receive the application from the State. There's a lot of  
15 steps involved, but just basically we receive the  
16 application and then we do the study, which is the  
17 longest amount of time where we have to do the  
18 navigability determination, then we have the preliminary  
19 determination for public review. This is step three and  
20 this is the point in the process where you will be  
21 involved. Then, of course, we make the final  
22 determination.

23  
24                   What this means to you is during the  
25 improved process we've allowed more time to allow you to  
26 provide comments to the BLM. We have 90 days that you  
27 can comment on the State's application and 60 days on the  
28 BLM report concurrently. What does the BLM want? As  
29 mentioned before, we must determine whether or not the  
30 submerged lands were reserved and if the water body was  
31 navigable at the time of statehood. So any information  
32 that could either support or negate our finding of  
33 navigability or any information that you have that would  
34 either support or negate our findings is the kinds of  
35 things we're looking for. Copies of the draft  
36 navigability report will be sent to the village councils,  
37 Native corporations and Federal agencies, as well as  
38 being published in the Federal Register.

39  
40                   Also, later it's published in the  
41 Anchorage Daily News and the local newspapers that are  
42 affected. It will either direct you to contact BLM or  
43 the BLM website. As I said, specific letters are now  
44 being sent out before the notice goes to the Federal  
45 Register to the Native villages so that they have a lot  
46 more time and notification.

47  
48                   The last point I want to make is we just  
49 want to reiterate that the RDI is not a NEPA process,  
50 it's not an action that BLM is taking, there are no

1 alternatives, it does not authorize the State to do  
2 anything. It simply acknowledges that they have the  
3 ownership or the interest in the land.

4  
5 Any activity that the State were to  
6 propose on those specific areas would have to go through  
7 any normal environmental or planning process at the same  
8 level of public participation. So this does not  
9 authorize them to do anything. If the State were to  
10 propose developmental unsubmerged lands that were in a  
11 refuge, it still would have to be compatible and would  
12 still have to go through any of the standard processes  
13 that are in place by those entities.

14  
15 As I mentioned, the Tanana River  
16 application right now is still a pre-application. It's  
17 in the very beginning stages, but it has been submitted  
18 by the State. We look for the public process to be out  
19 sometime between late summer and this fall where you'll  
20 have the opportunity to participate in the public review.  
21 The specific rivers, water bodies, located south of the  
22 Tanana are the Nabesna, Chisana, the Kantishna, Muddy  
23 Rivers and Lake Menchumina will be out next year most  
24 likely. So those are things you want to put on your  
25 radar screen that will be coming out that will affect  
26 you. Thank you.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Taylor.

29  
30 MR. BRELSFORD: One additional point on  
31 current applications. Black River you're very familiar  
32 with. The Porcupine River is actually advanced to the  
33 decision stage. The review of the draft report, that  
34 period has closed, so it's actually under review by the  
35 secretary for the State director for the final decision.

36  
37 MS. SPOON: It has gone to the Secretary.

38  
39 MR. BRELSFORD: So we expect a final  
40 decision on Porcupine in the near term. Tanana River is  
41 the one where the opportunity for public input is  
42 upcoming and we wanted to emphasize so that you'll be  
43 able to participate in that one. Thank you.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Taylor.  
46 Any questions.

47  
48 MR. WOODRUFF: Yeah, I have one question.

49  
50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Don.

1 MR. WOODRUFF: Say you make a  
2 determination on the Porcupine. Is that drainage  
3 considered hundreds of miles in determination or just  
4 where you find record of navigability? If you don't go  
5 into the village and interview the elders that went 80  
6 miles up the Black River, where do you draw the line that  
7 the river is no longer navigable?

8  
9 MS. SPOON: Mr. Chairman. They try and  
10 do the whole water body as much as possible. I mean it's  
11 not just a very specific. They will go into the village  
12 and interview and we look at the upland owners. We go as  
13 far as possible on that.

14  
15 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anymore questions.  
16 Yes, Sue.

17  
18 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
19 This is just a suggestion. I'd like to see more  
20 interaction between us and a lot of these agencies.  
21 We're overwhelmed with paperwork that gets sent to us.  
22 If something you think is close to us and we have an  
23 impact to it, like the Tanana, and you don't hear from  
24 someone like myself, I mean I'd like to have a phone call  
25 from someone. I think all the agencies should look at  
26 that. Sometimes people have a life besides -- you guys  
27 have these full-time jobs doing all this work and we're  
28 trying to follow this agency and that agency and pretty  
29 soon you just want to throw up your hands sometimes. A  
30 little bit of communication by email or phone would be  
31 really appreciated.

32  
33 MS. SPOON: I will take that back.  
34 Thanks.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. If you're done,  
37 we're going to take a 10-minute break.

38  
39 (Off record)

40  
41 (On record)

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Is there anyone that  
44 would like to comment on agenda item 11 which says Yukon  
45 Flats Area Fish and Wildlife Subsistence Issues.  
46 Anything in particular.

47  
48 (No comments)

49  
50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Seeing no

1 hands, let's move to fisheries topics. Cliff.

2

3 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Mr. Chairman, we have  
4 four topics we're going to be talking about this morning.  
5 For the record, my name is Cliff Schleusner. Dr. Polly  
6 Wheeler is up here with me from the Office of Subsistence  
7 Management.

8

9 The first topic, and all of these are  
10 informational items only. There are no actions required.  
11 The first topic is just a strategic planning and  
12 information needs update. Currently FIS is undertaking  
13 to complete strategic planning efforts in the Bristol Bay  
14 and the Southcentral regions. Additional regions we'll  
15 begin planning as soon as the current plans are  
16 completed.

17

18 For the Yukon we have several salmon  
19 planning efforts that are near completion. We've got the  
20 U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Joint Technical Committee  
21 Strategic Plan that's currently being finalized. The  
22 focus of that plan is the management, protection,  
23 restoration and sustainable use of Yukon River Drainage  
24 salmon stocks and their habitats.

25

26 There's also an additional planning  
27 effort, the Arctic/Yukon/Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon  
28 Initiative in concert with the Natural Resource Council.  
29 They're putting together an over-arching plan for the  
30 Arctic, Yukon and Kuskokwim. The goal of that plan is to  
31 understand the trends and causes of variation in salmon  
32 abundance. Timeline for completion of that plan is a  
33 draft completed in June of '05. June through September  
34 of '05 would be public comment period on the AYK plan.  
35 The final plan is scheduled to be completed in January of  
36 '06. Then they're planning on holding a symposium that  
37 following spring to discuss the plan, current state of  
38 knowledge and management implications.

39

40 The reason why I'm providing this update  
41 for you, at OSM we're hoping to use these plans to help  
42 us identify and direct salmon research for the Fisheries  
43 Resource Monitoring Program in the future. So that was  
44 just a brief update on where those are at. Do you have  
45 any questions?

46

47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any questions. Yes,  
48 Virgil.

49

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

1 Cliff, this research plan that you just mentioned in  
2 Western Alaska, that AYK region, I attended the first  
3 meeting or the only meeting I think they've had in  
4 Anchorage about a year and a half ago, but what I'm  
5 getting ready to ask you is I don't know when this  
6 started, but allegedly National Marine Fishery Service  
7 were supposedly doing some work on the effects of  
8 hatchery chum salmon on the wild chum salmon in the  
9 marine environment. Do you know the status of that or  
10 have any idea of it? Are the people that are doing that  
11 coordinated with the Western Alaska initiative people?  
12

13 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Short answer, I don't  
14 have any idea on whether or not Healy is actively  
15 participating in the AYK assignment. I know he's not on  
16 the committee and he isn't participating in the drafting  
17 committee for the plan. One of the things that's unique  
18 about this is that it's not just in the fresh water, they  
19 are looking in the marine environment and it is more of a  
20 comprehensive plan looking at the trends in salmon  
21 abundance, explaining the trends in salmon abundance  
22 specifically. So that certainly would come under the  
23 purview of this plan.  
24

25 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, but that  
26 addresses part of what I asked about. To be specific,  
27 the work that is being done on the competition in the  
28 marine environment and the effects on wild chum salmon  
29 stocks by the hatchery chum salmon stocks, do you know  
30 what the status of that is?  
31

32 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Mr. Chair, Virgil. No,  
33 I don't.  
34

35 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. Mr. Chair.  
36

37 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
38 Any more questions. Polly, are you next?  
39

40 DR. WHEELER: (Shakes head negatively)  
41

42 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Oh, still with Cliff.  
43 Go ahead.  
44

45 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Mr. Chairman, Council.  
46 I'd like to draw your attention to the report that I  
47 passed out earlier today with the two king salmon on the  
48 front. This is a report giving you an update on the 2000  
49 through 2005 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. I'd  
50 like to take a few minutes to familiarize the Council

1 with information contained in the report.

2

3

4 Page 2 provides some background  
5 information on the program, states the monitoring  
6 program, which is to identify and provide information  
7 needed to sustain subsistence fisheries for rural  
8 Alaskans on Federal public lands.

8

9

10 Currently, we're in the sixth year of our  
11 program and we've funded a total of 67 projects in the  
12 Yukon Region. These projects are a combination of stock  
13 status and trends, harvest monitoring and traditional  
14 ecological knowledge studies. Of the 67 studies that  
15 have been funded, 37 of the studies are completed or near  
16 completion. That list is provided for you on Page 3 and  
17 4 of the report.

17

18

19 The reports from completed projects are  
20 available for the Council members upon request and we  
21 also try to facilitate requests for presentations from  
22 investigators if there's topics specifically that this  
23 Council would like to be briefed on. The case in point  
24 is the presentation following our discussion here of the  
25 sex ratios of juvenile and adult chinook salmon from the  
26 Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers. This is Project 02097. Jeff  
27 Olsen is here from the conservation genetics lab and  
28 he'll be giving you a presentation on that subject as  
29 requested in your fall meeting.

29

30

31 Every year we receive progress reports on  
32 the ongoing projects in December. We have provided you  
33 an update on the 20 active projects that are still  
34 ongoing under the Yukon River Fisheries Resource  
35 Monitoring Program. Those summaries are provided for you  
36 on Pages 5 through 12.

36

37

38 Finally, on Page 12, we have the list of  
39 the five projects that were funded under the 2005  
40 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. These were the  
41 projects that the Council made funding recommendations on  
42 at your last fall meeting. There are four stock status  
43 and trends and one harvest monitoring project.

43

44

45 For 2006 cycle, which we're currently in,  
46 OSM has received proposals and FIS staff is currently  
47 reviewing those in preparation for the Technical Review  
48 Committee meeting, which is scheduled mid-March, at which  
49 time the TRC will formulate recommendations for  
50 advancement for investigative plans. There will be a  
51 follow-up meeting in July to make funding recommendations

1 and that is the foundation for the plan that will be  
2 presented to you this fall at your fall Council meetings.

3  
4 With that, I'll be glad to entertain any  
5 questions on the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Cliff. Any  
8 questions.

9  
10 (No comments)

11  
12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Polly.

13  
14 DR. WHEELER: For the record, my name is  
15 Polly Wheeler with the Office of Subsistence Management.  
16 Some of this material in the Fisheries Resource  
17 Monitoring Program I had covered yesterday in the  
18 training session, but I just wanted to reiterate a couple  
19 of points.

20  
21 Number one is that for each region in the  
22 state there's a biologist assigned and also an  
23 anthropologist. Cliff is the biologist for the Yukon  
24 River and I'm the anthropologist. We respectively have  
25 responsibility for overseeing the projects. Up until last  
26 April I was the only anthropologist on staff, so I  
27 actually had statewide responsibilities. But the good  
28 news with that is that I've had opportunity in the three  
29 years since I've been with this program to really kind of  
30 see some good results out of the harvest monitoring  
31 projects.

32  
33 As I mentioned yesterday, this is a  
34 unique element of this program. A lot of research  
35 programs focus on the biology and they don't necessarily  
36 focus on the human side of things. The people that built  
37 this program ought to be commended for having the  
38 foresight to see that the harvest monitoring and the  
39 traditional knowledge projects were really a critical  
40 component of any fisheries research program.

41  
42 With that said, a lot of these harvest  
43 monitoring, traditional knowledge projects are oftentimes  
44 more difficult to do in my mind than the standard  
45 biological projects partly because you're dealing with  
46 people and people are sometimes unpredictable, but also  
47 because the research is still developing in that area.

48  
49 We've had some real successes. We're  
50 starting to see some really great projects in this realm.

1 We've also got some really exciting projects that are  
2 starting up in this region. We've got the Fort Yukon  
3 Science Camp which was originally supposed to start last  
4 summer but because of some logistical issues it didn't.  
5 It will be going on in Craig's area this summer and Kim  
6 Elkin and Gretchen Sideroff will be talking about that in  
7 a little bit.

8

9 We've got a couple other projects that  
10 people will be talking about probably next year at this  
11 meeting. There's a salmon project in the Circle and  
12 Eagle area. It's the traditional knowledge of Upper  
13 Yukon River salmon fishery. I'd like to have Dave  
14 probably come and talk to you in a year and give you an  
15 update on that project.

16

17 There's the YRDFA weekly teleconferences  
18 to talk about Yukon River salmon management. The goal  
19 there is to involve local people to get as many people as  
20 possible involved in the management.

21

22 There's a customary trade project going  
23 on in the Yukon River. YRDFA is the investigator on  
24 that. There's a possibility we could have come and talk  
25 to you a year from now. I'm only saying this to kind of  
26 give you some familiarity with the kinds of projects that  
27 we're funding under this program and it's a neat  
28 opportunity now because we're starting to see some really  
29 good projects that involve a lot of people.

30

31 I would also say that the one harvest  
32 monitoring project that's going to be starting this  
33 summer is a collaborative project. Russ Holder is the  
34 investigator on that and it's working with the resource  
35 information technicians and seven villages to get them  
36 involved and work with local people in these different  
37 villages to get a thumbnail sketch of what's going on  
38 with the fishery in that area.

39

40 We've received three traditional  
41 knowledge proposals for consideration in the 2006 call.  
42 Like Cliff said, the TRC is meeting the week after next  
43 to begin review of those. We will keep you posted. I  
44 will try to call you, but I would also encourage you to  
45 contact me if you do have concerns, issues, copies of  
46 reports.

47

48 With that, Mr. Chair, I'd be happy to  
49 answer questions or anything else.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly.  
2 Questions. Andy.

3  
4 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
5 Polly, over the last four or five years there's been a  
6 lot of work done collecting TEK and I'm just wondering  
7 what the vision is for using that and how that may be  
8 implemented into the management plans. And then I do  
9 have another follow-up after that.

10  
11 DR. WHEELER: Mr. Chair, Member Bassich.  
12 That is the question of the day. As I mentioned  
13 yesterday in the training session, that's been a big  
14 issue for the program. So you've collected all this  
15 information, now what. That's an excellent question.  
16 Collecting it is one thing, but using it, putting it into  
17 a format or doing some analysis of it is absolutely  
18 critical. I would say that we've got a lot of  
19 investigators that are thinking about that. I put the  
20 question back on the Council in some ways. If you have  
21 ideas about how this can be used in management.

22  
23 So I think social scientists in this  
24 state have a big responsibility to figure out ways this  
25 stuff can be used in management. I think one of the  
26 promising venues is a project we funded in '04 of doing a  
27 combined study of Western scientific knowledge and  
28 traditional knowledge. Stanley and Dave interview  
29 knowledgeable experts and then Randy kind of uses that  
30 information.

31  
32 I think the key is recognizing that  
33 there's different ways of looking at the world, there's  
34 different ways of understanding information and trying to  
35 figure out where those ways overlap or where they might  
36 overlap is real useful. So that's a long answer to an  
37 excellent question and I think probably one of the  
38 fundamental questions within the parameters of this  
39 program.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

42  
43 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
44 Well, that leads us into a suggestion I'd like to make  
45 and that is, as we discussed a little earlier, there is a  
46 need to study what the fire effects are in the spawning  
47 grounds. It's also come to my attention that in the Fort  
48 Yukon region they have collected a tremendous amount of  
49 data on known spawning grounds from the elders and they  
50 have at times requested that projects be done utilizing

1 that information. I think that region is a very  
2 understudied and poorly understood area.

3  
4 I think it's an area we need to focus on  
5 because it does affect a lot of subsistence use, probably  
6 more so there than many other regions for what I call  
7 truly subsistence livers. Those are the people that I  
8 really feel need our protection. Those are the people  
9 that are being hurt the most by poor fishing practices or  
10 poor runs I should say. What they're asking for is  
11 consistency. That's the job of this Council and the  
12 Federal Board to protect these people. I see them being  
13 swept under the rug and that's really beginning to bother  
14 me and I see it happening very quickly and I think that's  
15 a direction that needs a little bit more attention.

16  
17 So spawning grounds and incorporating  
18 where these different spawning grounds are, the  
19 information may already be there and I'd like to see some  
20 projects done along that line. Once again, I think the  
21 focus needs to be on providing a consistent source for  
22 the subsistence people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: A follow up to that, I  
25 guess, it seems now with some of the discussions we've  
26 had and the way we were thinking about the possibility of  
27 fire damage to some of the spawning grounds, it might be  
28 timely. If we have some small population spawning areas  
29 that could, in fact, be impacted by current management  
30 practices, I believe that collectively there's quite a  
31 few salmon that we don't know anything about, and with  
32 our current fishing practices we could really wipe those  
33 out in one allowable window of fishing in a specific area  
34 and you wouldn't even know about it because we know so  
35 little about these areas. It seems like it's a timely  
36 issue to discuss. Virgil.

37  
38 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
39 What Andy asked a while ago is how do we use this TEK in  
40 management. The way we use TEK in management is most of  
41 the time ignored by the regulators. When I say the  
42 regulators, I mean the two Boards that are actually going  
43 to make the decisions. The Federal Subsistence Board and  
44 the State Board of Fisheries.

45  
46 One of the things you brought out  
47 yesterday I think is pertinent in that you were talking  
48 about the change from the use of salmon to the use of  
49 whitefish. The use of salmon has decreased by around 90  
50 percent and the use of whitefish has increased by 900

1 percent. Would that be roughly correct?

2

3

4 DR. WHEELER: I don't have the exact  
5 numbers in front of me, Virgil. I think the harvests of  
6 salmon are declining and the harvest of whitefish are  
7 increasing between the study that was done in 1982 and  
8 the study that was done in 2002.

8

9

10 MR. UMPHENOUR: Correct. So I'm going to  
11 make some motions for proposals pretty soon in this  
12 meeting. That information right there is extremely  
13 important because this change took place between 1982 and  
14 2002 for a number of reasons, but this information is  
15 never presented or not presented very effectively to the  
16 people that are going to make the regulatory decisions,  
17 so that is an extremely good example right there that  
18 could be used in the proposals I want to make.

18

19

20 Then what we have is a dichotomy of this  
21 TEK and that comes about because of the specific personal  
22 interests of different regions. I'm going to use the  
23 Lower Yukon RAC and the Western Interior RAC. The Lower  
24 Yukon RAC is dominated by commercial fishing interests.  
25 True, there's subsistence users as well, but they're also  
26 Lower Yukon commercial fishers.

26

27

28 We're getting ready to address two  
29 subjects here that bear directly on this and the big  
30 question is has the genetics of the king salmon in the  
31 Yukon River change. They're going to say it hasn't and  
32 their elders are going to say it hasn't, but you get to  
33 the Western and Eastern Interior Region and the elders  
34 there and the fishermen that have fished there for years  
35 are going to say, yes, it has changed. The big fish are  
36 gone. That's what they're going to say.

36

37

38 The reason I'm bringing this up and  
39 saying what I'm saying, I don't really have a specific  
40 question, is that the TEK of the people with the history  
41 of what's happened over time does not get presented to  
42 the regulators in a proper manner is what I'm trying to  
43 say so that they can use that information in the  
44 decision-making process. I'm hoping that we're making  
45 progress in that.

45

46

47 The next two items on the agenda are  
48 going to address that and, Mr. Chairman, I would like to  
49 make -- the Tozitna fish weir data is way down under Item  
50 15. I feel it should be thrown right into the mix with  
51 what's coming up next, which is 12(3)(A) and (B) because

1 it's right on point. It's just a different agency going  
2 to report it. I'd request doing that because it's one of  
3 the most important topics of this meeting. Thank you,  
4 Mr. Chair.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil. Is  
7 there any problem with moving that agenda item?

8  
9 (No comments)

10  
11 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No. So let's move it  
12 up as 12(A)(3)(c). To follow up on what Virgil was  
13 saying, I think my involvement with the Federal  
14 Subsistence Board I frequently experienced them being  
15 prone to taking Staff recommendations. So it seems as if  
16 the Federal Subsistence Board -- of course, they don't  
17 have the expertise that their Staff does, that's why they  
18 hire their Staff to provide them with those  
19 recommendations.

20  
21 So I think we sort of need a two-pronged  
22 approach and that is to make sure that the Staff  
23 recommendations incorporate the information that we think  
24 it needs to incorporate and it doesn't necessarily just  
25 take Staff recommendations as Gospel and that's been a  
26 problem a number of times when I've been to the Federal  
27 Subsistence Board meetings. Almost entirely they go  
28 along with the Staff recommendation and it's been to the  
29 dismay of a lot of Council members because the proposal  
30 will pass multiple Councils, go to the Federal  
31 Subsistence Board and they will, in turn, go along with  
32 Staff recommendations, which I think also goes along with  
33 the problem you're talking about. Polly.

34  
35 DR. WHEELER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
36 just wanted to respond to a couple things that Virgil  
37 said and also to what you just said too. I think Virgil  
38 hits the nail on the head. The value of information is  
39 not in the collection, it's in the actual use of the  
40 information. If the regulators aren't using the  
41 information, then we're not doing our jobs, quite  
42 frankly. I think that's a big issue for this part of the  
43 research program, how to make this information useful in  
44 management. I think it goes beyond just Staff  
45 incorporating these findings into analyses. I think it  
46 goes back to some of the investigators trying to figure  
47 out ways that we can both collect the information but  
48 then present the information in ways that are useful for  
49 you all, for people in the villages, but also for the  
50 people that are making the regulations.

1 I appreciate your frank comments on this  
2 and this has been a big issue for our program really  
3 since we started and I would again encourage you, if you  
4 have suggestions, by all means let me know.

5  
6 One other point. It goes along with what  
7 you were saying, Craig. This summer we've got the Fort  
8 Yukon Science Camp. The issues you raised with spawning  
9 grounds I think can be partially addressed. I'll be  
10 attending parts of that camp as a resource and that may  
11 be a start for figuring out approaches. TEK is a method.  
12 What are the research questions, how do we approach these  
13 research questions. With that, Mr. Chair, I've gotten  
14 some really good direction for our program and I really  
15 appreciate that, but I also really encourage you, if you  
16 have ideas and suggestions, to keep in touch. Mr. Chair.

17  
18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly.  
20 Andy.

21  
22 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
23 Along that line as well, one of the things that I noticed  
24 in these analyses is that might be an area that it would  
25 be very appropriate to start incorporating some of the  
26 TEK information collected in that area. I never see it  
27 written down. You know, we talk about it. But that's  
28 one of the things I think is really lacking and I think  
29 that's something that really could offer this change that  
30 Virgil talked about to the Board itself. They're not  
31 getting that information. Everything seems to be  
32 science, hard data. Not only is it dry, it doesn't  
33 represent what subsistence is about. To me it doesn't.  
34 To me subsistence means it's a choice, it's a philosophy,  
35 it's a way of living and that can't be represented very  
36 well through data. That's not reflected and that needs  
37 to be reflected more in my opinion.

38  
39 So it might be something to look into and  
40 I think it would probably be very appropriate to my mind  
41 anyway to be incorporated in some manner, whether it be  
42 another topic added in or put under written comments.  
43 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.  
46 Polly, go ahead.

47  
48 DR. WHEELER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That  
49 does raise an excellent point, Andy, and I think that if  
50 we can somehow work on incorporating not only the

1 biological information but also incorporate this kind of  
2 information, recognizing that it's different but it's no  
3 better or no worse than a lot of the information that we  
4 have and it might help to deflect some of the comments.  
5

6 I picked up the newspaper yesterday and  
7 there was a section in the paper, not to make this  
8 political, Mr. Chair, but there was an article about one  
9 of the legislators removing the money from the Division  
10 of Subsistence and putting it towards support of the  
11 shooting ranges and com fish. One of his comments was  
12 that this information is just anecdotal. I think we  
13 collectively need to get past that perception and one of  
14 the ways of getting past that perception is incorporating  
15 this kind of information into analyses alongside or in  
16 addition to the biological information and not just  
17 having the biological information and not just having the  
18 traditional knowledge information, but having all of the  
19 information out there. Face it, we've done a lot of  
20 research over the years and we still don't know a lot  
21 about most of the critters that are walking around and  
22 swimming around. So the more information we can include  
23 in these analyses and in management plans and whatever  
24 else, the better.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly. Go  
27 ahead, Cliff.

28  
29 MR. SCHLEUSNER: I just wanted to commend  
30 the Council that I really appreciated the discussions on  
31 the monitoring program. One of the things being involved  
32 in the monitoring program in the Regional Advisory  
33 Councils is we don't interact with you as often on the  
34 monitoring programs as you do with the regulatory side.  
35 Certainly the monitoring program is a major funding  
36 source for the Yukon River research, both salmon and non-  
37 salmon, and this report is a testament to the level of  
38 research that's being conducted under this program, both  
39 stock status and trends and harvest monitoring and TEK  
40 and I appreciate the attention you guys are giving to  
41 this.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Cliff. If  
44 there's no more comments or questions, how about the next  
45 agenda item. Will that be Cliff? Thank you.

46  
47 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Virgil gave us a great  
48 segue into this one. Unfortunately, there's not much  
49 wind in the sails. OSM completed a preliminary age, sex  
50 and length analysis on six escapement projects,

1 Andreafsky, Anvik, Gisasa, Chena, Salsa and the Big  
2 Salmon River. The draft report went out for external  
3 review January 28th this year and we received our last  
4 review comments back February 15th. Currently, the Staff  
5 are working to incorporate those review comments into the  
6 final report. There was some re-analysis that was  
7 suggested that's being taken seriously, so the report  
8 isn't completed. One of the main issues is how the data  
9 was collected and analyzing it separately, whether it was  
10 weir data or carcass survey data.

11  
12 So, right now Karen Hier is separating  
13 out the data set and she's going to re-analyze those data  
14 sets separately. We're hoping to get that finalized by  
15 May and out to the Councils as a final report.

16  
17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any questions. Yes,  
18 Virgil.

19  
20 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So  
21 the Tozitna was not included?

22  
23 MR. SCHLEUSNER: The Tozitna was not  
24 included. What we asked from the State is escapement  
25 data sets that were long-running. We had a time series  
26 and we were trying to get two generations, but we settled  
27 for 10 years as a minimum cut-off, which is a little less  
28 than two generations. Basically, we're looking for any  
29 sort of phenotypic expression of some sort of selective  
30 pressure, so you're going to have to have multiple  
31 generations to see that. The data sets we got, the  
32 longest data sets were the Salcha and Andreafsky.

33  
34 One of the things we incorporated in  
35 December we got nine years worth of data from Canada in  
36 the Big Salmon. This was given to us by ADF&G, some of  
37 the early work they did up there. Again, that was kind of  
38 the criteria for selecting what data sets we had. It was  
39 just how much data was available.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

42  
43 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. I have  
44 concerns about this, so I have two questions that will  
45 tell me whether I'm more concerned or less concerned.  
46 The first question is this, is the comparison going to be  
47 length at age or is the analysis going to be have the  
48 ages and the sexes changed over time?

49  
50 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Well, I can certainly

1 speak to that. There's four objectives to the report.  
2 The first one was the proportion of females. So we  
3 looked at the proportion of females that changes over  
4 time. The second was just the proportion of large fish  
5 and we used 900 millimeters as the definition of a large  
6 fish. Has that proportion in the escapement changed over  
7 time, gone up or down. Then we looked at the proportion  
8 of age, one four and one five fish, has that changed  
9 through time. Then we looked at the length of one four  
10 and one five fish, has that changed over time. So those  
11 were the four objectives to the study.

12

13 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. I feel a  
14 little bit better. Any more questions for Cliff.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay, Cliff.

19

20 MR. SCHLEUSNER: With that, Mr. Chairman,  
21 I'd like to introduce Jeff Olsen. He's with the Fish and  
22 Wildlife Service, Conservation Genetics Lab. He's going  
23 to be giving you a presentation on the skewed sex ratios  
24 in juvenile and adult salmon in the Yukon and Kuskokwim  
25 Rivers. This was a project funded under the Fisheries  
26 Resource Monitoring Program and requested by this Council  
27 at your fall meeting.

28

29 MR. BASSICH: Can we first get a  
30 definition of phenotype?

31

32 MR. OLSEN: Two terms that I'll use  
33 frequently here are phenotypic sex and genetic sex. The  
34 phenotypic sex refers to the appearance of the fish. You  
35 would characterize the fish as a male or female based on  
36 the size of the head, condition of the abdomen and  
37 whether or not it's producing eggs. It turns out that  
38 under certain conditions when the juveniles are  
39 developing, phenotypic sex reversal may occur. So the  
40 fish is genetically one sex, say a male, but that fish,  
41 as an adult, will appear as a female with all the  
42 secondary characteristics of a female. Some of the  
43 natural conditions that can cause that are actually used  
44 to control sex in aquaculture of various fish species to  
45 produce all female groups of fish if they're interested  
46 in producing eggs. The phenotype is basically the  
47 appearance of the fish and that differs from the  
48 genotype, which is its true genetic sex.

49

50 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chair, can I ask a

1 question?

2

3

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Andy.

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Go ahead,

Virgil.

MR. UMPHENOUR: In certain races or

stocks of salmon, wouldn't they exhibit different

phenotypic characteristics? I'll give an example. A

king salmon when it's ready to spawn in Southeast Alaska

looks almost silvery. A king salmon in the Yukon is

going to be bright red. That's a phenotypic

characteristic of a stock of salmon, is that not correct?

MR. OLSEN: That's correct.

MR. UMPHENOUR: So you're not going to

address the phenotypic characteristics say of some chum

salmon are going to be almost totally different color

even in the Yukon River when they're in the spawning

colors because some people speculate the type of gravel

or whatever the background is of the stream they're going

to spawn in.

MR. OLSEN: No. In this report I'm just

going to refer to the phenotypic sex of the gender of the

individual and those characteristics which are used in

the field by biologists to define that. So, in some

cases, it is based on color, but generally not. It's

usually, as you probably know, based on the shape of the

individual, whether it has a large head or small head,

whether its abdomen is rounded or squared, those sorts of

things.

MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Jeff.

1 MR. OLSEN: So, as most of you are  
2 probably aware, there are populations of chinook salmon  
3 in the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers that exhibit a sex  
4 ratio bias in the adult populations. That is to say  
5 there is more of one sex than the other. In particular,  
6 it's frequently more males than females.

7  
8 What I want to talk about this morning is  
9 results of a pilot study that we conducted at the  
10 conservation genetics lab using a genetic marker to  
11 evaluate possible causes of this sex ratio bias. I've  
12 provided you all a four-page copy of the slides you can  
13 refer to.

14  
15 Before I begin, I just want to  
16 acknowledge the co-participants in this study. Steve  
17 Miller and John Wenburg in the conservation genetics lab.  
18 Ken Harper, Kevin Van Hatten, Kelly Whitton of the Fish  
19 and Wildlife Service, and Jim Nagler from the University  
20 of Idaho. Jim Nagler has done a lot of work in  
21 developing sex-linked markers in celmonits (ph).

22  
23 So I'm going to talk about the sex ratio  
24 history in the streams that we studied. I'll give you a  
25 background on that and then talk about how we can apply  
26 these sex-linked markers to evaluate possible causes.  
27 Then talk about our objectives and the methods we used.  
28 I have four slides describing our results and then  
29 discuss our tentative conclusions and the implications  
30 these conclusions have for management and future study.

31  
32 This slide here is a histogram showing  
33 the sex ratio bias. We see four streams of chinook  
34 salmon populations over a 13-year period. The Y axis  
35 represents the percent of female in these populations.  
36 Of course, if the populations were typical, we would  
37 expect to see roughly a 50/50 ratio or one to one of  
38 males to females and those bars you see should be close  
39 to the 50 percent line.

40  
41 In fact, they're not. They tend to  
42 average over the course of the 13-year period somewhere  
43 on the order of 30 percent females. It is also important  
44 to note that there's quite a bit of variation.  
45 Nevertheless, despite the variation, they rarely get  
46 close to or above 50 percent at least during this period.

47  
48 I've already talked a little bit about  
49 distinguishing phenotypic sex from genetic sex. Now I  
50 want to talk about the causes of sex ratio distortion.

1 There are two primary categories. The first being the  
2 phenotypic sex reversal. As I said earlier, this  
3 typically occurs during early juvenile development in  
4 fresh water and is thought to be due mostly to  
5 environment factors. Things such as water temperature,  
6 pollutants and exogenous sex steroids, which includes so-  
7 called environmental estrogen that results in the  
8 feminization of males. Things such as detergents that are  
9 heavy in the water can cause this. This has been shown  
10 in some areas of the Columbia River.

11  
12 Another cause of sex ratio distortion in  
13 Pacific salmon is sex-biased marine survival. I should  
14 say up front that there's precedent in other species of  
15 salmon and in other populations of sex ratio bias,  
16 particularly in favor of males. This can be caused by  
17 life history differences between the gender, foraging  
18 behavior.

19  
20 So all the fish leave the stream, but in  
21 some cases it appears that the males and females may  
22 segregate in the open ocean and the females may opt for a  
23 more risky foraging strategy simply because their  
24 approach to this is they tend to benefit more by adopting  
25 this risky behavior in having larger and more eggs,  
26 whereas the males tend to be more risk averse and while  
27 they may not get as large, they don't benefit when they  
28 return to spawning grounds.

29  
30 Another one is age at maturation and this  
31 relates to the discussion I just made. Males oftentimes  
32 return earlier than females, jacks for instance, because  
33 they can be as successful on the spawning ground using  
34 various tactics such as sneaking.

35  
36 Finally, sex-biased harvest rates. There  
37 are indications in some fisheries the nature of the  
38 fishery may select more for one sex than the other.

39  
40 So as far as the genetic markers, the  
41 advantage of using sex-linked genetic markers is that we  
42 can identify the genetic sex at any life stage. This  
43 allows us to test hypotheses about the cause of sex ratio  
44 bias. For instance, we can test whether or not  
45 phenotypic sex reversal or sex-biased marine survival may  
46 be the possible general category of causes for the sex  
47 bias we see in the adults.

48  
49 If the phenotypic sex reversal is the  
50 cause, then we'd expect the genetic sex to be different

1 than the phenotypic sex for the reasons I described  
2 earlier. We'd expect, for instance, fish that would give  
3 the appearance of being female, but indeed they're  
4 genetically male. If sex-biased marine survival is the  
5 cause, then we would expect the genetic sex and  
6 phenotypic sex to be the same. So you can see these  
7 present as two simple hypotheses we can present using  
8 data from genetic screening of individuals and phenotypic  
9 assessment of the sex of individuals in the field by the  
10 biologist.

11

12                   There are presently two sex-linked  
13 genetic markers of chinook salmon. One is called growth  
14 hormone pseudogene or GHp and the other is Oty1. What  
15 you need to know about these really is that the first  
16 one, GHp, is more amenable to rapid screening. For that  
17 reason, we were recommended by Jim Nagler to use that one  
18 to sex these individuals genetically using the growth  
19 hormone pseudogene.

20

21                   So the two objectives were first to  
22 compare the genetic and phenotypic sex of chinook salmon  
23 returning to the Kwethlik, Tuluksak and Gisasa Rivers and  
24 Big Creek. The first three exhibit sex ratio bias I  
25 presented in the histogram. The Big Creek population was  
26 selected as a control. It represents a 50/50 or one-to-  
27 one sex ratio. The second objective was to estimate the  
28 genetic sex ratio of juveniles from the same drainages.

29

30                   In terms of the methods, we sample adult  
31 and juvenile chinook salmon. We use fin tissue samples  
32 for DNA analysis and we also collected age and phenotypic  
33 sex of adults. We determine genetic sex using the GHp  
34 marker, and then we used some simple genetic statistics  
35 to determine if the genetic sex ratios differ from one to  
36 one and test if adult phenotypic and genetic sex ratios  
37 differ.

38

39                   Finally, the two sexes may return at  
40 different ages and that may influence the phenotypic sex  
41 ratio. We wanted to test with at least the samples that  
42 we had whether or not there was an age difference between  
43 the sexes. Obviously, if one sex returns at an earlier  
44 age than the other, they're incurring less marine  
45 mortality and it's reasonable to expect that they may  
46 have a higher survival rate and return in greater  
47 abundance, all other things being equal.

48

49                   So now I've got four slides of the  
50 results of this study and I'll cover each and then talk

1 about how we interpreted this data and what our tentative  
2 conclusions are. This first here is another histogram  
3 with the percent of female chinook salmon on the Y axis.  
4 The horizontal bar represents the 50 percent mark. The  
5 expectation is that the sex ratio should be roughly  
6 50/50. What we're comparing here, the results for each of  
7 the streams we looked at, the genetic sex ratio in the  
8 adults versus the genetic sex ratio in the juveniles.

9  
10 So the black bars represent the genetic  
11 sex ratio of the adults. The open bars represent the  
12 genetic sex ratio of the juveniles. The two points to  
13 take home from this histogram is that in most instances  
14 the juvenile sex ratios do not differ significantly from  
15 the 50 percent bar. So, statistically, we could not  
16 eliminate the possibility that that population has a 50  
17 percent sex ratio. The one exception being the Tuluksak  
18 River 2003. That population of juveniles appears to  
19 exhibit a female bias sex ratio.

20  
21 So the general take-home here or the  
22 second message is that we see confirmation here using the  
23 genetic marker of what we saw with the phenotypic data,  
24 that is that the adults appear to exhibit a male bias,  
25 but on the other hand we see no evidence of sex ratio  
26 bias on the whole in the juveniles.

27  
28 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman.

29  
30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Yes, Andy.

31  
32 MR. BASSICH: Sorry for the interruption.  
33 Just something to clarify for me. This Big Creek, is  
34 that an area that is affected by commercial fisheries or  
35 significant subsistence fisheries?

36  
37 MR. OLSEN: I'm not aware of a  
38 subsistence fishery, but there is a commercial fishery  
39 that's part of the Naknek River system in Bristol Bay.

40  
41 MR. BASSICH: In river or just coastal?

42  
43 MR. OLSEN: I believe it's typically  
44 coastal, but it may be in river when they're trying to  
45 protect fish going to other drainages.

46  
47 MR. BASSICH: I guess the point I'm  
48 trying to make is I'm just wondering if we're not getting  
49 some bias just simply because of how the fish are being  
50 fished. If they're being fished in river, there is a

1 tendency to target female salmon, which would throw a  
2 bias in this, whereas if it's mostly being fished out in  
3 the marine environment there's a much better chance of  
4 just catching 50/50 in that type of fishing gear. I just  
5 wanted to bring that point up and clarify that. Thank  
6 you.

7  
8 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.  
9 Virgil.

10  
11 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
12 That fishery in the Kvichak River has been failing and I  
13 may be wrong, but I don't think I am. I believe in the  
14 years of the study for Big Creek they probably fished in  
15 river, but I do know one thing. When that fishery opens,  
16 they figure in excess of 95 percent of the fish in the  
17 fishing district are dead, period. They don't use large  
18 mesh gear that selects large king salmon. They're after  
19 sockeye salmon. In that fishery, more than likely, the  
20 sex ratios would not be altered by the commercial fishery  
21 because in excess of 95 percent of the fish are dead,  
22 period.

23  
24 So that brings me to the other point. In  
25 the Gisasa River in 2001, there was no commercial fishery  
26 directed on king salmon headed to the Gisasa River and  
27 the subsistence fishery went by the windows the way the  
28 Board of Fishery intended them, so that fishery as far as  
29 king salmon go was severely restricted over any other  
30 time in the last 20 or 30 years. So my question is this,  
31 on the Gisasa River was any consideration given to the  
32 fact that they had less than 25 percent fishing time over  
33 what they had in all other years?

34  
35 MR. OLSEN: Interpreting the results, I  
36 didn't consider that. Keep in mind that the one thing  
37 we're looking for here is whether or not there's a  
38 difference between the phenotypic sex and the genetic  
39 sex. So if those two are not different, then that's  
40 probably going to indicate that there's something else  
41 happening other than those issues I was talking about in  
42 the fresh water and the juveniles.

43  
44 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. One other  
45 small question and that is the Big Creek was used, did I  
46 hear you say, as the control?

47  
48 MR. OLSEN: Yeah. Simply because we were  
49 told that that typically exhibits a one-to-one sex ratio,  
50 so we used that as an indication of whether or not our

1 genetic marker was way off base. The history of that is  
2 that it's one to one and, therefore, we would expect if  
3 that history is any indication of what we saw in these  
4 sample here that the genetic sex and phenotypic sex  
5 should be the same in that population. It turns out  
6 that's what we did find.

7  
8 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. And there's a  
9 good reason for that. Mr. Chair.

10  
11 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Do you  
12 think you could go ahead and skip to conclusions because  
13 I've had enough.

14  
15 MR. OLSEN: Okay. The tentative  
16 conclusion we came up with is that the sex ratio  
17 distortion is due to gender biased marine survival rates  
18 related to gender differences in life history strategies  
19 and not due to phenotypic sex reversal.

20  
21 These three general results support this  
22 conclusion. Adult phenotypic and genetic sex ratios are  
23 generally similar and are male-biased. The second is  
24 that juvenile genetic sex ratios are not male-biased.  
25 Finally, the average age at maturation for males  
26 significantly less than for females. In a couple of  
27 those systems it was over a year.

28  
29 The caveats to this, why our conclusion  
30 is tentative and why we cannot exclude entirely sex  
31 reversal and other genetic factors, is that the  
32 phenotypical and genetic sex ratios did differ  
33 statistically in the Gisasa River and some of the  
34 individuals in each population differ in genetic and  
35 phenotypic sex. So although at the population level we  
36 saw no difference between the genetic and phenotypic sex,  
37 what we did find is that for certain individuals there  
38 was a difference, but those individuals were few enough  
39 in number. The other thing is that it shifted by  
40 category. We had some individuals that had the  
41 phenotypic characteristic of a female, genetically male  
42 and vice versa. So, on the whole, there was no  
43 difference.

44  
45 Finally, the female biased sex ratio we  
46 found in the Tuluksak River. However, we feel that we  
47 can explain these factors. First of all, as I said, we  
48 saw both categories of disagreement in each population.  
49 It turns out that there may be some error in the genetic  
50 and phenotypic sexing or both and that's where further

1 study is needed. Finally, we saw female bias in the  
2 juveniles in the Tuluksak and that should persist in the  
3 adults, but it did not.

4  
5 So, further studies, it would be  
6 advisable to do a cohort analysis to test for sex-biased  
7 marine survival. Here you could look at the survival of  
8 the two sexes and determine whether or not they differ  
9 and that may indicate that there is something going on in  
10 the marine environment in terms of foraging. We want to  
11 use the other genetic marker to validate the genetic sex.  
12 In particular, there are 164 individuals where we had  
13 differences in phenotypic and genetic sex.

14  
15 Finally, use post spawn adults to  
16 estimate phenotypic sex ratio. There's some concern that  
17 there may be bias or error in the sexing of live  
18 individuals. The management implications for this study  
19 would be to examine the fishery for female biased harvest  
20 and evaluate if male bias is impacting genetic health.  
21 Thanks.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Jeff. Are  
24 there any last questions, comments.

25  
26 (No comments)

27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Thank you very  
29 much. Is someone here to do the Tozitna fish weir data  
30 presentation. Yes, come forth. I don't know if you have  
31 handouts. I'm going to limit your time, but I'm going to  
32 give you 14 minutes.

33  
34 MS. MCSWEENEY: My name is Ingrid  
35 McSweeney. I'm from the Bureau of Land Management. I  
36 just assumed I was going to give this presentation after  
37 lunch, so there's some data back at the office that I can  
38 bring back from past years. What I have is just a brief  
39 summary of the age and sex data from the weir from '04.  
40 I'll just read the brief report.

41  
42 The Tozitna River project is a multi-  
43 agency study to determine escapement of adult Chinook and  
44 summer chum salmon in a middle Yukon Basin tributary.  
45 Participation included the Bureau of Land Management,  
46 Tanana Tribal Council, Alaska Department of Fish and  
47 Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish  
48 and Wildlife Service.

49  
50 The project site was located 50 river

1 miles upstream from the mouth of the Tozitna River,  
2 approximately 1/4 mile upstream from the confluence of  
3 Dagislahkna Creek. A resistance board weir was used to  
4 collect escapement, run timing and age-sex-length  
5 composition from June 21 to August 10 for Chinook salmon  
6 returning to the Tozitna River.

7  
8 High stream discharge prevented daily  
9 counting and biological sampling between 1700 hours on  
10 August 1st and 10 hours on August 3 and daily counts were  
11 estimated for this period. The escapement for chinook  
12 salmon was 1,880 fish. The age composition was 38  
13 percent age four, 41 percent age five, and 20 percent age  
14 six. The sex composition from readable scales was 17.3  
15 percent female. The escapement for summer chum salmon  
16 was 25,003. The age composition was 3 percent age three,  
17 64 percent age four and 33 percent age five. The sex  
18 composition from readable scales was 47.3 percent female.  
19

20 If you have specific questions on age and  
21 length, I can get that information to you when we do the  
22 agency reports at the end. I also told Tim Sudloff any  
23 information he sent out to also cc Mr. Umphenour.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Do we have questions  
26 or comments. Virgil.

27  
28 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
29 When I make my proposal later on, I'm going to refer to  
30 her data. They did send this to me. I've had it for  
31 over a week. The only thing I want to say is that rather  
32 than the sex ratio, the percent of females was worse this  
33 year than last year. The majority of the fish she just  
34 spoke to, the age four and five year old component, what  
35 percent of the run was that. I'll just give the size and  
36 inches of those fish, because I calculated it out from  
37 her report, and this is age four fish averaged 23.22  
38 inches long. The age five fish were 26.96 inches long.  
39 The big hummers, the six year olds, the males were only  
40 31.45 inches long and there were only three seven years  
41 old. Mr. Chair.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much.  
44 Any more questions or comments.

45  
46 (No comments)

47  
48 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. We're recessed  
49 until 1:00 o'clock.

50

1 (Off record)

2

3

(On record)

4

5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. The next item  
6 up for bid is Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program  
7 update. I don't know if Gretchen is in the house yet.  
8 We're going to start with you then?

9

10 MR. SCHLEUSNER: Certainly, Mr. Chairman.  
11 What we had planned on doing was Polly was going to  
12 introduce our Partners biologists and they were each  
13 going to give you a presentation on their respective  
14 organizations and what their plans are for the summer,  
15 but I'll do that in their absence.

16

17 We've got two Partners biologists in your  
18 region, CATG and TCC. This is the first time you'll have  
19 an opportunity to meet Gretchen Sideroff, the new  
20 Partners biologist for the CATG region. We've got Kim  
21 Elkin who's presented before this Council in the past  
22 from TCC.

23

24 The Partners Program, as you know, is a  
25 program in which the Office of Subsistence Management  
26 supports the placement of professional positions within  
27 rural organizations in Alaska. We have three on the  
28 Yukon, ACP, TCC and CATG. With that, I'll let Kim Elkin  
29 start off with her presentation.

30

31 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thank you very  
32 much. Kim, welcome.

33

34 MS. ELKIN: Hello. Just for the record,  
35 I'm Kim Elkin, Partners fisheries biologist for Tanana  
36 Chiefs Conference. I do have about eight slides worth of  
37 pictures I could show you, but it seems like we have a  
38 lot to get through today. I'll just go over the projects  
39 we have going on and if you are interested in seeing  
40 those photos, I can show them to you. I also have a  
41 handout here of all the projects that have been going on  
42 and what our future is for different projects in the next  
43 three years.

44

45 We just finished a project looking at  
46 non-salmon species population distribution and  
47 subsistence use in the Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy  
48 Cross area. That was basically a collaborative project  
49 with Fish and Game and Tanana Chiefs Conference. We were  
50 conducting traditional ecological knowledge interviews in

1 the GASH area and looking at the northern pike population  
2 down there in Rainbow Lake in particular. If you're  
3 interested in that report, I have it. I'm not going to  
4 get into the details of it.

5  
6 We also for the past couple of years have  
7 been hiring several people in the communities to collect  
8 subsistence harvest data, particularly biological data  
9 such as scales, fin tissues for genetics and heart  
10 tissues for ichthyophonous disease on the Yukon River, to  
11 get local people involved in biological data collection  
12 and doing more outreach in those communities.

13  
14 The communities that we just worked with  
15 this past summer were Holy Cross, Grayling, Koyukuk,  
16 Huslia, Galena, Ruby and Minto and we ended up hiring  
17 about three people per community.  
18 The idea was mainly for outreach and provide information  
19 to the State and Federal management agencies.

20  
21 So those are some projects we just  
22 completed and right now we kind of had the foundation set  
23 at TCC for our program and now we're looking at the next  
24 three years. Those are going to consist of the Henshaw  
25 Creek weir, abundance and run timing of the king salmon  
26 and summer chum population. We're going to be hiring  
27 local people from that community to work on that weir, so  
28 if any of you know of anybody that's interested, they  
29 will get paid for their time.

30  
31 Another project that I'm working on  
32 cooperatively with Randy Brown at Fish and Wildlife  
33 Service is Kanuti Whitefish Radiotelemetry Project.  
34 We're basically looking at spawning, over-wintering and  
35 feeding habitats of three whitefish species using  
36 radiotelemetry. There's the other component with Dave  
37 Andersen looking at TEK.

38  
39 One other project we have is abundance  
40 and run timing of chinook salmon on the Goodpaster River.  
41 If you have any specific questions about that project,  
42 Mike Smith will be the one for that because he worked on  
43 that last summer.

44  
45 The other one I mainly wanted to talk to  
46 you about was our Fort Yukon Science Camp that we have  
47 going on for the next two summers. We really want to get  
48 youths involved, particularly 9th through 12th graders.  
49 This is a cooperative project with CATG and Alaska  
50 Department of Fish and Game, Subsistence Division. We're

1 trying to get elders from those same villages involved  
2 and bring traditional knowledge and western biology  
3 together to see where we can go with that in the future.  
4 We're going to have it at the confluence of the Yukon and  
5 Porcupine Rivers.

6  
7 I just wanted to give you an update that  
8 was short and sweet. If you have any questions, feel  
9 free to ask.

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Kim. Andy.

11  
12 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
13 Kim, I was just wondering if it's feasible to broaden the  
14 scope of some of that collection data of hearts and  
15 things like that up into the Eagle area.

16  
17 MS. ELKIN: We're not continuing that  
18 project because it wasn't as successful as I had hoped in  
19 terms of getting good quality data collected. It was  
20 good for outreach. But if that's something you're  
21 interested in, maybe we can work with you and the Council  
22 and get that information. I'm not sure where the State  
23 is going with that because I'm not responsible for the  
24 coordination of actually processing the samples, but more  
25 the outreach.

26  
27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Andy.

28  
29 MR. BASSICH: I think it would be pretty  
30 valuable information especially concerning the  
31 ichthyophonous studies that we're doing. I'm just putting  
32 that out there and I'd be willing to try and work as a  
33 local coordinator to get people in touch with whomever  
34 they need to get in touch with. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
37 questions for Kim.

38  
39 (No comments)

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much.  
42 Gretchen. Do you want to come up also, Bruce.

43  
44 MR. THOMAS: My name is Bruce Thomas.  
45 I'm the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Government director,  
46 for the record. This is Gretchen Sideroff, our fisheries  
47 biologist funded underneath the OSM program.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Bruce.

50

1 MS. SIDEROFF: I have Bruce up here with  
2 me so that he can help me with any of the fish questions  
3 because he's been out on a lot of the fish projects. I'm  
4 new. I've been here about six months, so some of these  
5 questions that may come up I'm referring to Bruce.

6  
7 We have six or seven projects going on  
8 this year with CATG and the OSM program. Some of these  
9 projects, as a Partner biologist, I'm facilitating. I  
10 just want to give you an overview of these projects so  
11 you can get an idea of what we're doing for 2005.

12  
13 One of the things I wanted to emphasize  
14 for this particular season and maybe carry it through for  
15 the next three or four years is that we need new interns  
16 this year and we also need to implement a new program  
17 within the schools to check in with students to see if  
18 they are grasping the idea that there is a fisheries  
19 program going on.

20  
21 One of the themes I'd like to have for  
22 these kids if they're thinking about fish into the future  
23 and that's kind of the theme I'm going with. That will  
24 come up in the intern program. The key word is the  
25 future and the kids connecting with the fish and the  
26 future.

27  
28 We have six or seven projects going on  
29 this year that are either ongoing projects like the  
30 Chandalar River sonar, which has been going on for about  
31 10 or 12 years, Sheenjek River genetics inventory, which  
32 is a continuation of last year in conjunction with the  
33 TEK harvest study that is funded by YRDFA. Subsistence  
34 harvest interviews, fisheries internship program and then  
35 we have a whitefish TEK study on Birch Creek that's  
36 funded by OSM. I believe that's Caroline's project.  
37 Then the science camp, which I'm highlighting as being  
38 the most important project this summer in terms of effort  
39 and outreach.

40  
41 The annual sonar counts with the Fish and  
42 Wildlife Service on the Chandalar River is an ongoing  
43 project refunded for this year. We will be sending one  
44 intern out there. The sonar station is July to mid-  
45 September. We're contributing time, effort, getting the  
46 people out there and making sure everything is set up.  
47 We're partnering with Fish and Wildlife Service on this,  
48 so they're the main funding source.

49  
50 The second project is Sheenjek genetics.

1 Fish and Wildlife Service conservation lab in Anchorage  
2 has deemed this a very important project because they  
3 want to look at how the Sheenjek are unique in their  
4 genetic makeup. It gives them an ID and gives them an  
5 idea what fish are coming up from the mouth of the river.  
6

7                   The Sheenjek project along with the  
8 salmon harvest TEK in-season TEK harvest data that we're  
9 taking is a partnership between CATG, YRDFA and the Fish  
10 and Wildlife Service conservation genetics lab. The hope  
11 for this summer is that we get real time TEK data and the  
12 harvest survey data which is in-season, which is real  
13 time. This is important data to get because it gives us  
14 a clearer picture of the number of fish. If you take  
15 post-season data, they may be off by hundreds of fish. So  
16 YRDFA funded this with the hope that we would get more  
17 accurate information in-season.  
18

19                   This is also a study that addresses the  
20 TEK question you had earlier, whether or not you can meld  
21 that information into scientific changes that are going  
22 on. How I look at this TEK in-season information is that  
23 the TEK is not just about the historical information, but  
24 social structure and cultural background.  
25

26                   The Sheenjek GSI data is not really  
27 related to the TEK information that we're gathering,  
28 but.....  
29

30                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Gretchen, could you  
31 let everybody know what GSI means.  
32

33                   MS. SIDEROFF: Genetic stock inventory.  
34 So we do these in-season interviews which give us  
35 information on how the fish are caught, what size nets,  
36 where they're catching the fish. You get out there on  
37 the river and it's never a dull moment.  
38

39                   Again, as I'm relaying this to the high  
40 school and other kids, the theme is fish for the future.  
41 Internships, we're hoping to hire two folks this summer  
42 on the Chandalar project and a general fish intern, which  
43 we hope will be more than just this season. The themes  
44 of the internship program are you are the fish and you  
45 are the future of the fish. These kids need to start  
46 working with western science more and more.  
47

48                   With this OSM program, which is  
49 brilliant, it's bringing western people out into the  
50 field and gives Anchorage and Fairbanks folks eyes and

1 ears, it gives CATG a chance and other groups a chance to  
2 have a liaison to the scientists. We're presenting all  
3 this information to at least the high schools in the  
4 villages so they get a chance to start thinking when  
5 they're younger about these projects and ideas and how to  
6 keep the fishery sustainable.

7  
8                   The fifth project, Birch Creek pike and  
9 whitefish study, that is Caroline Brown's work and we're  
10 just hoping to supplement the biology of that. Why study  
11 these fish? Again, we heard earlier the fish are  
12 declining. Supposedly, according to word of mouth,  
13 they're declining and they're being fished more. Thank  
14 you.

15  
16                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Gretchen.  
17 Questions or comments. Larry.

18  
19                   MR. WILLIAMS: At the beginning of your  
20 presentation you mentioned something about the outreach  
21 program. I think that needs to be more aggressively  
22 pursued. A lot of these students and younger people  
23 don't know about these programs and maybe they'd be  
24 interested and maybe we could send out flyers and paste  
25 them to the wall. Somebody from CATG can actually go up  
26 to Venetie or Arctic Village or Chalkyitsik and go in the  
27 classroom and present these kind of slides and maybe that  
28 will work. Thank you.

29  
30                   MS. SIDEROFF: Thank you, Larry.  
31 Yesterday we gave a full presentation of this and more to  
32 the high school science 9 through 12. Mitch gave a  
33 fairly in-depth presentation on how he does sonar and he  
34 went into detail about the technology of it. At the end,  
35 I think we had about 10 kids that wanted to stay after  
36 and seemed interested. In a month we're going up to  
37 Beaver and doing the same presentation. My hope is that  
38 we do all the villages by the end of the year. The  
39 problem is we can only hire two interns, but we're  
40 encouraging kids to come to the Science Camp. Regardless  
41 of whether or not it actually helps us scientifically in  
42 the long run, the point is to bring these two cultures  
43 together so kids feel more comfortable with the western  
44 science and the western scientists start to appreciate  
45 folks who have been out there for 10,000 years.

46  
47                   MR. THOMAS: Can I say something to  
48 address Larry's question?

49  
50                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Bruce.

1 MR. THOMAS: We have a trip planned to  
2 Venetie, Larry, to do that outreach and in our budget we  
3 have for an intern from Venetie, so we're going to the  
4 school and the community in a couple weeks and give a  
5 presentation on what's going on.  
6  
7 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Bruce. That's  
8 good news.  
9  
10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any more questions or  
11 comments. Yes, James.  
12  
13 MR. NATHANIEL: It just came to my  
14 attention, these internships, is there anything in  
15 Chalkyitsik for these students?  
16  
17 MR. THOMAS: Not at this time, James, no.  
18  
19 MR. NATHANIEL: I don't know why I didn't  
20 know anything about it. You're speaking of internship  
21 for the kids and there's nothing going on in Chalkyitsik  
22 for our high school students. Maybe I didn't contact my  
23 tribal council or anyone of that sort, but I haven't  
24 heard anything that's going on in our village.  
25  
26 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Gretchen.  
27  
28 MS. SIDEROFF: We have sent a few posters  
29 out to the high school and we're going to be giving a  
30 high school presentation and we're welcoming students to  
31 come to the Science Camp this summer. It's the first two  
32 weeks of August. It is something that needs to get  
33 bumped up in terms of communication to other villages.  
34  
35 MR. NATHANIEL: Mr. Chair, one more  
36 thing.  
37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, James.  
39  
40 MR. NATHANIEL: If this happens, then you  
41 have to do it the right time because when the school is  
42 out they have summer vacation and a lot of times our kids  
43 are not at home. They're out on vacation or whatever.  
44  
45 MS. SIDEROFF: It's possible having a  
46 winter science camp when the kids are in school to  
47 participate in data collection or data analysis so they  
48 get hands on.  
49  
50 MR. NATHANIEL: One more thing. I notice

1 they've been doing that and they have some sort of  
2 project through Natural Resource and Chalkyitsik is doing  
3 the waterfowl survey or something like that. That's all  
4 I know about it.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, James.

7 Andy

8

9 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman, Gretchen.  
10 Polly, this may go to you as well. I was wondering if  
11 during some of these surveys and trying to collect TEK  
12 information if there's much questioning going on as to  
13 how the communities are changing in their dynamics. In  
14 particular, what I'm interested and I'd really like to  
15 see some data in the future on is the amount of people  
16 living in remote areas compared to what it used to be.  
17 These are trappers and particularly dog mushers. Since  
18 I've been in the region that I'm in, I've seen a dramatic  
19 decline in that and these are people that fish pretty  
20 heavily for whitefish, sheefish and other non-salmon  
21 species during their realm of existence there and they're  
22 now gone.

23

24 It's my belief that they had an impact on  
25 the salmon simply by taking these pray species to the fry  
26 and the out-migration and I really do believe that that's  
27 changing all up and down the Yukon River. People have  
28 snowmachines now. They're not running dogs. The people  
29 that are living in the communities are buying more dog  
30 food and not relying on the salmon quite so much. I  
31 think this would be valuable information. It may not be  
32 a dramatic impact, but I think it's cumulative.

33

34 I'd like to share a brief thing I've  
35 noticed in fishing sheefish and whitefish in my region.  
36 There are times when the salmon aren't in the river and I  
37 do this. Without a doubt, almost every sheefish or  
38 whitefish I catch has an average of 15 to 35 salmon fry  
39 in their bellies. This is consistent. So when we're not  
40 harvesting that, seeing that traditional harvest which  
41 has been going on previously by dog mushers, trappers,  
42 remote families, I do believe that has an impact. I  
43 think it would be worth investigating.

44

45 So when you do ask these questions, if  
46 you could maybe try and document some of the social  
47 changes taking place along the river, I think that would  
48 bear some good information. Just a comment. Thank you.

49

50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Andy. So why

1 don't we go on to the next agenda item. I'd like to  
2 thank you. I wanted to say something about the Partners  
3 in Fisheries Program, having worked with them for a  
4 couple years. I think it's an excellent program. It  
5 creates a lot of opportunity. As Gretchen was saying, it  
6 connects people in the villages with people in Anchorage  
7 and Fairbanks that otherwise may not be connected. So I  
8 think there's a lot of really good opportunities. The  
9 program is awesome. There's a lot of potential. I think  
10 we can do more to make it better and I think we need to  
11 give it as much support as possible.

12  
13 I've spoken with folks such as Tom Boyd  
14 in the past about the idea of us also having a wildlife  
15 monitoring program. I think the fisheries monitoring  
16 program has been and will continue to be a success, but I  
17 think we should also look at increasing it to wildlife.  
18 I know it's given CATG and TCC and others a lot of  
19 capability that we wouldn't have had otherwise. I won't  
20 say anymore, but I just wanted to thank the Fish and  
21 Wildlife Service for the Partners Program. I think it's  
22 really good. Andy.

23  
24 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
25 Just to follow up on your comment there. I agree with  
26 you and I also think that in regards to game issues we  
27 need to start to make an attempt to get rural and non-  
28 rural people together. As more oil and gas development  
29 happens, as more roads open up, as Alaska begins to  
30 expand with road systems, we're going to have more and  
31 more interaction between these two groups and they need  
32 to understand each other. Similar to what YRDFA has been  
33 successful in doing in their communication efforts  
34 between upriver and downriver people. I think that's the  
35 next step and I think we need to be prepared for that in  
36 the future regarding game issues. Thank you.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy. If  
39 we can, the next four agenda items I'd like to try to  
40 speed through them if possible. Not cutting anyone off,  
41 but I'm going to be very conscious of the time. I know  
42 some people have to leave, so I'd like to try to make it  
43 through these next four items as quickly as possible.

44  
45 Go ahead, Vince.

46  
47 MR. MATHEWS: What I'm passing out is the  
48 805c letter. We talked about it a lot in training. I  
49 make a big deal about that, but it's required in Federal  
50 law that the Board has to respond to you as to why they

1 did not adopt your recommendation. As that moves around,  
2 you'll see that each proposal is listed there that you  
3 took up at your last meeting in Eagle. I'm not going to  
4 go through some that are not of high interest to you.  
5

6 Proposal 02 was submitted by the AVCP to  
7 relax the window schedule. Both you and Western Interior  
8 opposed the proposal and Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta supported  
9 it. The Board rejected it based on your recommendations.  
10 The proposed regulation is not needed because it is  
11 already in practice as far as relaxing the seasons and it  
12 is implemented in-season when the abundance of salmon is  
13 sufficient to remove the windowed schedule.  
14

15 I believe the next one is one you may  
16 want further discussion on. That was your Proposal 03  
17 that you submitted that would limit subsistence and  
18 commercial gillnets with 6-inch or larger to a 35-mesh  
19 depth. To give you an idea what the Councils did, the  
20 Yukon-Kuskokwim and Western Interior opposed the proposal  
21 and you guys supported it. The Board rejected your  
22 proposal and they believed that the passage of this  
23 proposal would restrict subsistence users more than the  
24 existing State regulations and would have detrimental  
25 effect on subsistence users. The Board acknowledged that  
26 there are several ongoing studies that will look into the  
27 impacts of gear characteristics on returning salmon and  
28 the subsistence use patterns. The results of these  
29 studies may answer whether larger female Chinook are  
30 targeted by deeper nets.  
31

32 Again, I wasn't here for your discussion  
33 on Tozitna, but it is possible you discussed this topic.  
34 Is there any questions on the Board action on your  
35 proposal to restrict driftnets.  
36

37 (No comments)  
38

39 MR. MATHEWS: with that, the next  
40 proposal is one that maybe we can cover in two steps.  
41 This was a controversial proposal to expand the gillnet  
42 fishery to include Subdistricts 4B, 4C and District 5.  
43 Your Council and the Y-K Council opposed it. Seward Pen  
44 took no action and deferred to the home regions.  
45

46 The Western Interior Council heard your  
47 recommendation and they modified their proposal to be  
48 just for Subdistricts 4b and 4C and reduced it to the  
49 final 18 hours during a windowed opening. That was a  
50 good debate before the Board and the Board adopted the

1 modified recommendation of the Western Interior and put  
2 on the additional modification to limit the regulation to  
3 Chinook salmon and would require a Federal permit. You  
4 can read the rest there.

5  
6 I've been encouraged to ask if you have  
7 any suggestions on how the permits could be distributed.  
8 We need to rapidly get that established, so if any of the  
9 Council members have an idea on how the permits could be  
10 distributed. The limitations or restrictions on that  
11 would be that we'd prefer to have that through some kind  
12 of entity or organization and not just individuals  
13 distributing the permits.

14  
15 Are there any questions on the 4B, 4C  
16 expansion? Obviously, the in-season managers are here to  
17 address how they see this season being implemented.

18  
19 (No comments)

20  
21 MR. MATHEWS: Boy, I'm getting off easy.  
22 I think Andy had questions on the next one and that was  
23 one you guys submitted to establish a five-day chum  
24 season for Federally-qualified subsistence users in 5D.  
25 Basically, your two downriver Councils opposed and you  
26 guys supported it. The Board rejected it contrary to  
27 your recommendation and consistent with the  
28 recommendations of the neighboring Councils. The Board  
29 holds that passage of this proposal would be inconsistent  
30 with the principle of sound fisheries management and  
31 would restrict or eliminate the in-season manager's  
32 authority to manage the subsistence fisheries based on  
33 run strength or timing.

34  
35 Again, I'll step out of my role here and  
36 go back to the training role. Bingo, there's the words,  
37 inconsistent with the principles of fish or wildlife  
38 management. With that, I'll stop and see if there are  
39 any questions or comments on Proposal 05.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

42  
43 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
44 Yeah, Vince, your luck just ran out, I guess.

45  
46 (Laughter)

47  
48 MR. BASSICH: I was the one who kind of  
49 proposed this and I still think it's a valid issue that  
50 maybe needs more discussion. As I stated earlier in the

1 meetings, I think these people out in the remote areas  
2 need protection and I know that the managers are doing  
3 the best job they can to get the fisheries open and keep  
4 it open for them and I do respect that. As I mentioned  
5 earlier, the most important thing to people out in the  
6 remote areas is consistency and a restriction or a  
7 closure, they just can't live that way and that's why  
8 this was put in. I also don't feel that the review was  
9 accurate.

10

11 When I look at what the run timing is and  
12 when this proposal was to take place, most of the fish  
13 are past Eagle. If you go backwards in their migration,  
14 the run timing, the people that are going to be fishing  
15 these fish, it's the back end of the run. The fish have  
16 already made their escapement into Canada, so I don't see  
17 it as a conservation concern or a management problem  
18 because these fish are now in Canada and the managers  
19 can't manage them anymore on the Alaska side.

20

21 So I do disagree with the analysis on  
22 this and I think I will continue to pursue this on my own  
23 time and hopefully we can come up with something in the  
24 future that would be acceptable for all parties to try  
25 and help these people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.

28

29 MR. MATHEWS: I don't know if you wanted  
30 someone to further talk about that. I would encourage  
31 you though that when you're developing your proposals we  
32 can set it up for you to run your ideas by the in-season  
33 managers and others just to assist with formulating them  
34 and understanding their viewpoints.

35

36 MR. BASSICH: That would be fine.

37

38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you.

39

40 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, I think the  
41 rest of them are overlap proposals. I'm not putting them  
42 in a different light, but I think it would be wise just  
43 to look at them and see if you have questions. With  
44 that, I'll just pause and if you have questions about the  
45 remaining proposals, then we can answer them.

46

47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Are there any  
48 questions related to any more of the information in the  
49 letter?

50

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No questions, Vince.

4

5 MR. MATHEWS: I think I covered the next  
6 one, but I'll refer to the in-season management staff as  
7 well as others, but I think I covered what was needed for  
8 an update on the drift gillnet fishery in 4B and C. If I  
9 missed something, I'd encourage them to bring that up.

10

11 I had hoped to have materials here that  
12 would be in draft form on the outreach efforts on that.  
13 We were unable to pull that off at this time and that  
14 would be kind of the posters, the question and answer  
15 things and maybe a permit. Those will be forthcoming.  
16 Many of you are not impacted by this, but you have a high  
17 interest on the Yukon. With that, I'll stop.

18

19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Vince. Who  
20 is up first?

21

22 MR. HOLDER: Mr. Chairman and members of  
23 the Council. My name is Russ Holder and I'm the Federal  
24 fisheries manager for the Yukon River area and just  
25 wanted to provide some additional comments along with  
26 Vince's introductory comments on Subdistrict 4B and 4C  
27 regarding the drift gillnet proposal that was passed by  
28 the Board. I wanted to make you aware that the permits  
29 are in development. Myself, along with a refuge staff in  
30 Galena and OSM staff in Anchorage, have been working to  
31 develop the format for the permits. The refuge is  
32 working on identifying where to put the boundary markers  
33 for this fishery, identifying the refuge lands along with  
34 OSM staff that is going to be doing some of the  
35 procurement for this. We're planning on conducting pre-  
36 season meetings both in Galena and potentially other  
37 villages to let people know this is coming and what some  
38 of the requirements are regarding this fishery, and a  
39 request for proposals is going out to address some of the  
40 harvest concerns regarding the interaction between the  
41 permit numbers and the ADF&G post-season survey that is  
42 conducted in this area. With that, I'll turn it over to  
43 Polly Wheeler if she has any additional comments to add.

44

45 DR. WHEELER: I think Russ summarized it  
46 real well. It's been a complex issue as you all know and  
47 it has required some levels of interaction that have been  
48 challenging at times between OSM and the refuges and  
49 Russ's office, but I think we sort of have an over-  
50 arching plan and we're moving forward on this. We'll

1 keep you apprised of what we come up with when we have  
2 something to offer you, probably at the fall meeting.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly. Any  
5 comments. Vince.

6

7 MR. MATHEWS: As the drafter of your next  
8 agenda, I think we could possibly give you a summary of  
9 how the season went at the next meeting. It may not be  
10 final, but we'll get back to you on that so you have an  
11 idea.

12

13 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thank you very  
14 much.

15

16 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman.

17

18 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Andy.

19

20 MR. BASSICH: I don't know if it's  
21 possible, but since this is a new fishery and we're going  
22 to be collecting post-season harvest data on this. I'm  
23 just wondering how hard it would be for a year or two to  
24 collect age-length-sex data on this fisheries. I know  
25 it's not required, but it might be interesting data to  
26 look at as far as what these people are actually catching  
27 in this new fishery.

28

29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Russ.

30

31 MR. HOLDER: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Bassich.  
32 That is definitely a concern and we're in the process of  
33 evaluating to see if we can get that to happen.

34

35 MR. BASSICH: One more quick comment.  
36 Russ, I'm glad I don't have your job right now.

37

38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Fred, you had a  
39 comment or a question.

40

41 MR. BUE: Yeah, Mr. Chairman. It's a  
42 little bit not quite on the agenda, so to speak, but more  
43 of a comment towards the Federal Board process this past  
44 meeting. Of course, the Department wanted me to say all  
45 kinds of things here, but I know you're limited for time.  
46 It's more of a comment towards the expansion of this  
47 subsistence king salmon fishery. Of course, the Alaska  
48 Department of Fish and Game was very disappointed with  
49 the decision. They opposed the expansion of this  
50 fishery. As you know, two of the RAC's opposed the

1 decision and YRDFA.

2

3

4 The Department has expressed concerns  
5 regarding potential biological impacts caused by these  
6 changes to stock composition of harvest with this new  
7 gear type. And that's been decided and there will be  
8 continued discussion on that. What I'd like this RAC to  
9 think about and other RAC's, our major concern is that  
10 the three RAC's involved in the Yukon River were not  
11 provided an opportunity to meet together to discuss and  
12 vote on this proposal as a group.

12

13 The Yukon fishery, as you know, is very  
14 complex. Each proposal affecting migratory fish will  
15 likely have some affect on all fishers. Each individual  
16 RAC has provided somewhat different information and  
17 recommendations pertaining to the proposal. As a result,  
18 we think communication was lacking when the RAC's met  
19 separately and conflicts between the users were  
20 unnecessarily increased.

20

21

22 Fishers and the Department have worked  
23 hard together to bring users together. While this newly-  
24 formed system seems to be pulling people apart to some  
25 degree, it's new ground and people are unsure where they  
26 stand. The Department continues to urge OSM to consider  
27 combining the three RAC's at least on the fisheries  
28 issues because it's a shared resource, provide joint  
29 discussions and actions on fisheries proposals. The  
30 combined RAC meetings would ensure the information  
31 provided is the same for all RAC's.

31

32

33 A single recommendation on proposals  
34 would provide more clarity to the Subsistence Board. As  
35 you know, you guys are the fishermen, you guys are the  
36 users, but when I look at the Federal Board I see that  
37 they need your guidance. The more concise you can have  
38 it, the better I think it is.

38

39

40 I'm going to cut this short, but I think  
41 your recommendation to OSM to at least have some  
42 opportunity to combine the three RAC's together,  
43 certainly it's important to have your own ideas, but also  
44 to come together and discuss these things together. For  
45 the Department, we'll work to bring users together  
46 throughout the watershed, hopefully find some solutions.  
47 They're not always going to be what we want, there will  
48 be compromises, but we're striving by coming to these  
49 meetings to talk with everybody.

49

50

I appreciate your time, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Fred.  
2 Andy.

3  
4 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. I guess this is  
5 a question to you, Mr. Chairman. What is our ability to  
6 make that request to have Tri-Council meetings and is  
7 that left up to us or Staff. I'd like to know what the  
8 process is and I wanted to thank Mr. Bue for reinforcing  
9 the statements I made earlier pertaining to that. I  
10 think this is vital if we're going to continue to work on  
11 fisheries issues on the Yukon River. Thank you.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy, as I think most  
14 of you are aware, if I think we need to do something, I  
15 think we push the issue until somebody tells us no and  
16 then we keep on pushing. It used to be that we wanted to  
17 have frequent Tri-Council meetings when we discussed  
18 these issues and then, at times, we were told we couldn't  
19 do it. But I think we keep pushing. We had some  
20 discussion earlier about the importance of Tri-Council  
21 meetings. I think Vince would probably have to answer the  
22 question on process and whatnot. I know we've had them  
23 in the past and they're extremely valuable.

24  
25 I'd also like to thank Fred for pointing  
26 that out because it's true, they're valuable meetings,  
27 they help us solve upriver/downriver issues with nobody  
28 else necessarily having to listen. Part of the problem,  
29 I think, is this whole Open Meetings Act and us wanting  
30 to get together with these other Councils and solve some  
31 of our internal problems, they don't see that as an open  
32 process, so that may be part of the problem, but maybe  
33 Vince can go into it a little more.

34  
35 MR. MATHEWS: Tri-Council meetings are  
36 available. My own personal opinion, not the Office  
37 opinion, what I got from the Wasilla meeting is that many  
38 of the Councils did not want to meet together. So now  
39 I'm hearing a different story. They're available,  
40 they're expensive, but they can be productive. So we'll  
41 just have to look at them at the time that's necessary  
42 for them.

43  
44 We're starting to look at different  
45 options of increasing coordination on the river, but I'd  
46 also caution you that the assumed conclusion that you  
47 guys are going to come to consensus could be achieved,  
48 but at times the differences are so great that you  
49 cannot. We'll continue to work forward to make better  
50 coordination and communication and Tri-Councils is one.

1 We just have to have some kind of triggering mechanism to  
2 trigger that so we can set it up.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Vince.

5

6 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman.

7

8 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

9

10 MR. BASSICH: My personal opinion, I  
11 don't think money should be an issue at all here.  
12 There's so much money being spent on fisheries research.  
13 When it comes down to it, the only way we're going to fix  
14 fisheries is by the fishermen. It doesn't matter what  
15 this Council says or what the Board says or what the  
16 Board of Fish says, it's the fishermen that are going to  
17 fix the problem. Getting those fishermen together and  
18 having them understand each other so they can work  
19 together is the only way the long-term solution is going  
20 to take place. Issues of money for Council meetings I  
21 don't see it as a problem and, quite frankly, I don't  
22 care if I meet in Anchorage or Fairbanks or Dillingham.  
23 I don't think it has to be spread around. Wherever it  
24 can be done most efficiently, let's just do it. The  
25 important thing is to get the fishermen together. Thank  
26 you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy. Any  
29 more comments or questions on this issue.

30

31 (No comments)

32

33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay. Thank  
34 you, Fred. Russ, you have more?

35

36 MR. HOLDER: Yes, Mr. Chairman and  
37 Council members. I'm Russ Holder with Fish and Wildlife  
38 Service, Yukon Federal fisheries manager. I'm going to  
39 provide you a short introduction for the 2005 Yukon River  
40 salmon season outlook and then Fred Bue will be  
41 continuing and providing some additional information  
42 regarding the Department's outlooks that have been  
43 developed.

44

45 Both the Federal and State Yukon River  
46 fishery managers are planning to start the fishing season  
47 using the Alaska Board of Fisheries windowed subsistence  
48 fishing schedule in late May or June. Similar to the  
49 last four years, a joint information sheet reviewing the  
50 2004 fishery and discussing the 2005 outlook will be

1 published and distributed to the Yukon River fishermen in  
2 May sometime.

3

4 Mr. Bue has provided a handout which  
5 contains outlook information for this upcoming 2005  
6 season and he's going to continue to provide you  
7 additional information regarding this outlook.

8

9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Fred.

10

11 MR. BUE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What  
12 I'm passing around is just the Department's sections to  
13 the JTC report. They're just a draft at this time.  
14 They'll be taken to the US/Canada Panel next week and  
15 there will be further discussion. As you know, a lot of  
16 it involves Canadian stocks, so they'll provide their  
17 input and it will be tweaked a little bit as we go.

18

19 Just to really summarize those sections  
20 and give you an idea of our outlook, as you know, the '98  
21 to 2000 were poor years for king and chum salmon. 2003-  
22 2004 we saw significant improvements. The runs seem to  
23 be trying to come back. Most escapement and subsistence  
24 needs were satisfied and there was a small opportunity  
25 for commercial harvest. In 2005, we're anticipating  
26 below average returns of king, summer chum and fall chum  
27 and average to above average returns of coho salmon,  
28 similar to what we saw in 2003 and 2004.

29

30 This means there should be enough for  
31 escapement and subsistence needs generally drainage-wide  
32 with some surplus for commercial harvest. Ballpark  
33 commercial harvest for kings, we're expecting 20,000 to  
34 60,000 this year. That's below average. Summer chum is  
35 similar to last year, but markets are going to be really  
36 limited.

37

38 Fall chum we do a formal projection  
39 because we do have some good escapement ground counts and  
40 mainstem sonar. What we're projecting is a run between  
41 584,000 to 776,000. So, plugging that in to the fall  
42 chum management plan, we're expecting a commercial  
43 harvest that could range between 20,000 and 150,000.

44

45 Coho harvest is still tied to fall chum  
46 run strength, but with our expected fall chum run and the  
47 coho run, we're looking at a potential harvest of 10,000  
48 to 75,000.

49

50 For stocks we're becoming a bit more

1 optimistic. The salmon runs are on the rebound because,  
2 as you heard, 2003 and 2004 showed improvements. Also,  
3 unusually large numbers of three-year-old chum were  
4 observed in last year's run, which indicates good  
5 survival from that parent year. That parent year would  
6 show as four-year-olds in 2005, so that makes us pretty  
7 optimistic.

8  
9 Reports also from the Bering Sea catches,  
10 I know a lot of you have different opinions on what's  
11 going on out there, but they've been observing increasing  
12 numbers of juvenile chum, which should indicate fish  
13 returning to spawn. Production in the ocean is better  
14 because of the large numbers of fish this past season.

15  
16 A few issues that we're looking at is  
17 that Yukon River is in a rebuilding mode from the low  
18 parent year escapements. Commercial markets are weak.  
19 As many of you know, demand is for high-quality fish and  
20 the major hurdle was transportation factor with a low  
21 profit margin.

22  
23 For subsistence, management in District 4  
24 may be cumbersome this next season because of the Federal  
25 Subsistence Board choice to expand the drift fishery in  
26 Subdistricts 4B and 4C. Fishermen and managers will have  
27 to deal with two different sets of regulations in that  
28 area, the patchwork of State and Federal waters there.

29  
30 Also, another issue is the low runs in  
31 the Porcupine River. Now they seem to be actually getting  
32 good production, but we are getting off poor runs. So  
33 even though we're not expecting them to make the goal,  
34 we're expecting to have pretty good production and  
35 working towards rebuilding from that. That concludes it,  
36 Mr. Chairman.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Fred.

39  
40 MR. BASSICH: Mr. Chairman.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

43  
44 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
45 Fred, the high numbers being caught out in the marine  
46 environment, has Kate Myers or anybody done any genetics  
47 to determine whether those are western Alaska fish or  
48 whether those are going over to Asia? To your knowledge,  
49 has any of that been collected?

50

1 MR. BUE: To my knowledge, quite a bit  
2 has, but I'm not sure how much they've actually  
3 apportioned to estimate the harvest, but they do know  
4 that there are very big mixing areas, there are  
5 significant Asian stocks and different stocks in those  
6 areas. Mr. Chairman.

7  
8 MR. BASSICH: Thank you. And those  
9 stocks that are abundant out there, is that mainly fall  
10 chum, summer chum or king salmon or do you have any kind  
11 of a breakdown on that? Have you seen any data on what  
12 seems to be the most prevalent?

13  
14 MR. BUE: I guess summer chum, is what I  
15 understand, but I'm not sure to what level they can break  
16 it out to.

17  
18 MR. BASSICH: I guess what I was looking  
19 for, in comparison to previous years, are they seeing a  
20 vast amount more chinook salmon in comparison? I don't  
21 know if I'm getting my question across very well. It's  
22 more proportionately, not so much just sheer numbers, is  
23 what I was wondering. Is the proportion of king salmon  
24 greater now out there than they have been in previous  
25 years or is it more just chum salmon?

26  
27 MR. BUE: I think the bycatch has  
28 increased across the board for most species this past  
29 year for whatever reason. The chum is the most  
30 significant though.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So are you saying  
33 proportionately you think chum are higher?

34  
35 MR. BUE: Yes, the chum catch went up,  
36 but I'm not sure what age classes those were and we're  
37 not sure what country of origin.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any more questions.

40  
41 (No comments)

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anything more?

44  
45 MR. BUE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I think  
46 Andy was probably aware of it, but the US/Canada Panel  
47 Meeting next week has some of the most recent breakout of  
48 the bycatch and should be in the JTC report.

49  
50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Fred.

1 Thank you very much, gentlemen. Area M. How are we  
2 going to proceed with that?

3

4 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman.

5

6 MR. UMPHENOUR: You can't leave, Fred.

7

8 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Oh, he's bringing his  
9 briefcase.

10

11 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, I think the  
12 Council should recognize it's extra effort on his part on  
13 short notice to pull this together and I applaud Fred for  
14 being in the hot seat right now.

15

16 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Fred.

17

18 MR. BUE: So, I guess for my benefit I  
19 was not here yesterday and I wasn't sure what was being  
20 asked of me. Terry Haynes called me yesterday saying you  
21 were going to bring up Area M.

22

23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Fred, why don't we let  
24 Virgil talk about this for a few seconds and it might  
25 help you to focus your discussion. How does that sound?  
26 I don't want to put you in the hot seat and you not know  
27 what the question really is. Virgil.

28

29 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
30 Fred, when the Federal Subsistence Board met to address  
31 extra territorial jurisdiction, which was this RAC's  
32 petition to the Federal Subsistence Board, there were a  
33 number of promises made by the Deputy Commissioner for  
34 Fish and Game and among those promises there was going to  
35 be additional monitoring of the harvest in Area M and  
36 additional enforcement to address the subject of chum  
37 chucking and not reporting chum salmon, so my question is  
38 what extra efforts were done. I know this is unfair to  
39 you, but do you know of any?

40

41 MR. BUE: Mr. Chairman. I had a brief e-  
42 mail that was sent out mid-season and it's unofficial.  
43 It was an update on how the fishery was going. As you  
44 say, the events leading into the season was that they  
45 were expecting a lot of sockeye salmon and the effort was  
46 not going to be there. They were trying to figure out  
47 how to spread out the harvest so they could use the small  
48 capacity processing fleet that was there, so they  
49 expanded the harvest area.

50

This past season, just reading from this

1 report, it was June 30th, and I'm not handing it out  
2 because it was just an e-mail from one person to another.  
3 The South Peninsula June commercial fishery at the time  
4 their harvest information for sockeye was 1.3 million,  
5 the chum harvest at that point was 482,000. That was  
6 both from the South Unimak and Shumagin Islands combined.

7  
8 On average, to give you some perspective,  
9 the harvest for these years, 2002 and 2003, was 522,000  
10 sockeye as compared to this year, 1.3 million. Chum  
11 salmon, the average the previous two years was 331,000  
12 and this past year was 482,000, so a slight increase.  
13 They're saying that thus the Area M fleets were  
14 successful in increasing their sockeye salmon harvest by  
15 somewhat more than a factor of 2.6 and their chum harvest  
16 increased by a factor of 1.5.

17  
18 The Department deployed increasing  
19 monitoring of the fishery in 2004. This included scale  
20 samplers and processing plants in King Cove to determine  
21 age composition of harvested sockeye salmon and, thus,  
22 the likelihood of a strong return of sockeye to the  
23 Kwejak River in Bristol Bay. Also, samplers were  
24 deployed in the plants in King Cove and Sand Point to  
25 independently verify ratios of sockeye to chum salmon in  
26 the June fishery harvest. Finally, two test fishery  
27 vessels were contracted to fish at South Unimak during  
28 several of the closed commercial periods in June, also as  
29 a method to verify sockeye to chum salmon ratios in the  
30 fisheries.

31  
32 As a result of the sampling, indications  
33 are a fairly strong presence of 2:2 sockeye in the  
34 fishery catches, age 2:2 sockeye, although on a  
35 proportion slightly lower than the Bristol Bay forecast.  
36 They suggest the Kwejak return may be strong, but not  
37 quite as large as it was forecasted. The sockeye to chum  
38 salmon ratios found in the cannery and test fish sampling  
39 were extremely variable from set to set and vessel to  
40 vessel, but this reflects the same variability gathered  
41 from their regular fish ticket reports and the commercial  
42 harvests.

43  
44 There was also increased enforcement  
45 monitoring of the fishery, but the results of these  
46 efforts are not yet available to the public. That's the  
47 extent of what I have.

48  
49 I brought a few copies of the Area M  
50 season summary. I can share those if you're interested,

1 Mr. Chairman.

2

3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Comments  
4 or questions. Virgil.

5

6 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. I'm glad you  
7 brought that to us. I don't know if there's anything more  
8 detailed or a detailed report, but from being involved as  
9 I have on this issue over the years, I'm disappointed in  
10 that we never got an official report like the Deputy  
11 Commissioner promised. I know you have nothing to do  
12 with that, so I'll let you off the hot seat as far as I'm  
13 concerned.

14

15 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any  
16 comments. Go ahead, Fred.

17

18 MR. BUE: Of further interest to this  
19 group, and Virgil specifically, in their season summary  
20 they did have the post-June fishery also and just for  
21 your information the post-June chum catch this year was  
22 308,000 and the '94 to 2003, the previous 10-year  
23 average, was 397,000, so the post-June fishery was  
24 significantly less even though we had fairly good runs  
25 into the Yukon.

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any follow-up  
28 questions.

29

30 (No comments)

31

32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Thank you,  
33 Fred. Vince.

34

35 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, I think that  
36 closes out the Area M as well as the 2005 outlook. This  
37 brings us into the call for fisheries proposals. Virgil  
38 has already indicated he has some proposals, so I don't  
39 know if he has them written or he wants general concepts  
40 or if he wants Council endorsement, so it might be best  
41 to find out. This is the time to get your proposals in  
42 as a Council if you'd like or as individuals.

43

44 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

45

46 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
47 move to resubmit the same proposal we had this last year,  
48 which was Proposal 03, back to the Federal Subsistence  
49 Board. Mr. Chair.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion on  
2 the floor. Is there a second.

3  
4 MR. BASSICH: Seconded.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: It's been seconded.  
7 Discussion. Virgil.

8  
9 MR. UMPHENOUR: Speaking to my proposal,  
10 all the reasons that the State of Alaska, Department of  
11 Fish and Game put forward to oppose Proposal 04, which  
12 got passed, which was to expand the drift gillnet fishery  
13 in 4B and C, are applicable to support Proposal 03, every  
14 one of them. This Tozitna weir information that we have  
15 supports this proposal as well, so that's why I would  
16 like to submit this proposal.

17  
18 One thing that happened this year is we  
19 had also submitted a petition to the State Board of  
20 Fisheries to do this same thing, but they voted in  
21 November not to accept our petition. So they had  
22 rejected it prior to the Federal Subsistence Board  
23 hearing it.

24  
25 What I want to do after we do this is I  
26 want to make a motion to submit the same thing back to  
27 the Board of Fisheries as an agenda change request. I've  
28 been told unofficially that the State more than likely or  
29 the Alaska Department of Fish and Game more than likely  
30 may have changed their mind and support this drift  
31 gillnet proposal, to reduce the depth of it, rather than  
32 oppose it like they did when the petition came along. Of  
33 course, that's speculation on the part of some people  
34 that work for the State in Fish and Game.

35  
36 As far as conservation of the king salmon  
37 of the Yukon River, we have to do something about the  
38 genetic integrity of it. Short of outlying large mesh  
39 gillnets, this is about the only thing we can do, is  
40 raise the nets up off the bottom so the larger fish will  
41 have a chance to go underneath the nets and get on  
42 upriver and hopefully a lot of them get to the spawning  
43 grounds and give more reasonable opportunity for the  
44 upriver subsistence users at the same time. But this  
45 addresses conservation and it addresses reasonable  
46 opportunity for the people upriver.

47  
48 That's why I want to resubmit the  
49 proposal, because I think this time we have a better  
50 chance of getting the Board of Fisheries to accept it.

1 And I do know that, because I'm on the Fairbanks Advisory  
2 Committee and I'm chair of the Fisheries Committee there,  
3 that we've already decided to do the same exact thing as  
4 I'm doing here and that way the two different groups, our  
5 group and the Fairbanks Advisory Committee, will be  
6 submitting the same thing to the State Board of Fisheries  
7 and I think it will stand a real good chance of making it  
8 this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
11 More comments or questions. Discussion I should say.  
12 Vince.

13

14 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. Just to get  
15 the option out there, and I'm sure there will be a bunch  
16 of people jumping up to the mike when I bring this up,  
17 the regulations go into effect April 1st. This would not  
18 qualify for a request of reconsideration is what I'm  
19 trying to explore here since the Board didn't adopt your  
20 proposal. I'm just wondering if that's an option if the  
21 Staff Committee members want to jump in on this.

22

23 What I'm getting at is resubmitting it to  
24 the Board. The Board has already taken action on it. So  
25 you're saying the information on Proposal 04 as well as  
26 other things are compelling to resubmit it. I'm  
27 wondering why the Board would entertain the proposal  
28 again. I mean they will take it. I suppose I'm asking  
29 for more ammunition on that and then asking for Staff  
30 Committee support or discussion about would this be a  
31 request or reconsideration.

32

33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

34

35 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
36 This Tozitna River study shows the quality of escapement  
37 in the king salmon is not improving, in fact it's  
38 decreasing, it's getting worse. If you read what they  
39 wrote, the Federal Subsistence Board, for rejecting this,  
40 it was two main things. One of them was that this would  
41 make Federal subsistence regulations more restrictive  
42 than State. The State will hear this before the Federal  
43 Subsistence Board does. So if the State Board of  
44 Fisheries were to accept this agenda change request and  
45 then take action and pass it, then that eliminates that  
46 part of it where the State regulation would not be more  
47 restrictive than Federal regulation. That's the first  
48 part of it.

49

50 Then they also say the Board acknowledged

1 there were several ongoing studies that were looking to  
2 impacts of gear characteristics on returning salmon and  
3 the subsistence use patterns. Okay. There are already  
4 studies that have been done. We don't need to study  
5 something to death. Then, when you take the Tozitna  
6 River weir data and throw that in the mix, it shows  
7 things are getting worse, and then as soon as Cliff  
8 finishes his thing that he's working on on the age,  
9 length and sex of the fish, then I think that is further  
10 going to support this action.

11  
12 So that's why I think we should go ahead  
13 and resubmit it because I think we have very compelling  
14 evidence that the deeper the net, the bigger the fish  
15 you're going to get because the big fish swim deeper than  
16 the smaller fish. The fact that 80 percent or more of  
17 the king salmon, and I measured the length of them from  
18 this year's Tozitna River weir, when you get over 80  
19 percent of the fish are less than 27 inches long, then  
20 that's absurd. Twenty-seven inches is this big. I took  
21 Dr. Cossand's sampling, some of his samples. He's from  
22 the University of Washington that did the ichthyophonous  
23 study. When he sampled all the fish, he did something  
24 that hasn't ever been done in this age, length, sex  
25 study, is he actually weighed the fish as well as  
26 measured them.

27  
28 One of these 655 millimeter long fish,  
29 which is what the State says is a large king salmon in  
30 all their test fisheries, they only weigh seven pounds.  
31 That's not a large king salmon. So the State has misled  
32 the Federal Subsistence Board, the Board of Fish and the  
33 public into thinking that a seven-pound king salmon is a  
34 large king salmon. We have that actual data done by  
35 Dr. Cossand where he measured 1,500 or so king salmon and  
36 he weighed them as well. So I think that's an important  
37 thing.

38  
39 What I did before the Fairbanks AC  
40 started talking about this is I went and got the test  
41 data from the oldest test fishery we have on king salmon  
42 up here and that's the Nenana test fish wheel and it says  
43 right in the notes for small and large king salmon, a  
44 large king salmon is one that weighs 14 pounds or more  
45 and a small one weighs less than 14 pounds and they're  
46 greater or smaller than 655 millimeter. They've been  
47 putting out this data that's calling a seven-pound king  
48 salmon a 14-pound king salmon. Misleading the public,  
49 the Board of Fisheries and everyone in the world.  
50

1 But I actually have that in Department  
2 documents and I feel that is very compelling myself.  
3 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
6 Andy.

7  
8 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to support  
9 Virgil's motion as well. I think, as stated, this is a  
10 conservation concern if we are indeed changing the  
11 genetic makeup of a king salmon. It is documented  
12 through TEK in my region that salmon are getting smaller.  
13 People up in Dawson that I talk to and people up in  
14 Tetlin are saying the same thing and have been for a  
15 number of years.

16  
17 As far as addressing subsistence needs,  
18 if we can stabilize these fish and not continue to  
19 decrease their size, we're doing what's right for the  
20 fisheries and whatever we can do to make the fisheries  
21 right is going to be good for subsistence in the future.  
22 I don't believe what we're doing is going to restrict  
23 anybody in any way. They might have to fish a little bit  
24 longer, they may get a different size of fish, but  
25 they're still going to have a good opportunity to catch  
26 salmon. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
29 discussion. Vince.

30  
31 MR. MATHEWS: I misspoke on the RFR  
32 unless I'm missing something here. It's only on new  
33 regulations that go into effect. So that would not kick  
34 in on this one. I understand from the record that you  
35 have compelling new information that would warrant the  
36 Board to revisit this proposal.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you for that  
39 clarification.

40  
41 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a question on  
44 the motion. All in favor signify by saying aye.

45  
46 IN UNISON: Aye.

47  
48 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.

49  
50

1 (No opposing votes)  
2  
3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The motion carries.  
4 Any further. Yes, Virgil.  
5  
6 MR. UMPHENOUR: Now I would like to make  
7 the motion for us to submit an agenda change request to  
8 the Board of Fisheries that's identical to this proposal  
9 that we just passed to the Federal Subsistence Board.  
10  
11 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion for  
12 an agenda change request. Is there a second.  
13  
14 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll second.  
15  
16 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a second.  
17 Discussion. Virgil.  
18  
19 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
20 would like to reference all my previous remarks on this  
21 subject. Mr. Chair.  
22  
23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
24 Further discussion.  
25  
26 (No comments)  
27  
28 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.  
29  
30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a question on  
31 the motion. All in favor signify by saying aye.  
32  
33 IN UNISON: Aye.  
34  
35 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.  
36  
37 (No opposing votes)  
38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The motion carries.  
40 Is there further discussion on Area M. Yes, Virgil.  
41  
42 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
43 would like to move that we submit a proposal to the  
44 Alaska Board of Fisheries to restrict chum salmon  
45 hatchery production in Prince William Sound and Southeast  
46 Alaska. Mr. Chair.  
47  
48 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion on  
49 the floor. Is there a second.  
50

1 MR. BASSICH: Seconded.

2

3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a second.  
4 Discussion. Virgil.

5

6 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
7 spent five years on the hatchery committee when I was on  
8 the Board of Fisheries. I have two documents in my hands  
9 here, record copy 360 and record copy 396 from the  
10 January 2001 Board of Fisheries meeting. At that  
11 meeting, what ended up happening, because we'd had a  
12 proposal to restrict chum salmon production in Southeast  
13 Alaska and Prince William Sound, the hatchery managers  
14 got with the Governor and they promised the Governor they  
15 would reduce hatchery production by 23 percent if the  
16 Board would not vote on this proposal.

17

18 The hatchery committee wrote an RC,  
19 record copy 360, this one right here in this hand, and it  
20 states that in there. It states a number of other things  
21 too that were going to happen. Another one that they  
22 didn't do is they were supposed to have a statewide chum  
23 salmon forum to investigate what the effects of too much  
24 hatchery chum salmon production by Southeast and Prince  
25 William Sound hatcheries what biological effect and  
26 economic effect that would have on fisheries such as the  
27 Yukon River.

28

29 None of this happened. We changed  
30 Governors and because Senator Ted Stevens got about \$150  
31 million in the Pacific Salmon Treaty for the sustainable  
32 salmon rehabilitation fund, what has happened is this  
33 money has been misused and they've increased hatchery  
34 production. So we need to point out that this agreement  
35 was made between the Board of Fisheries, the Governor's  
36 Office and the hatchery management for all these  
37 hatcheries. This agreement was made in 2001. They have  
38 not lived up to their agreement, so we need to make sure  
39 that they live up to their agreement.

40

41 There's only one agency or one person  
42 that has attempted to hold their feet to the fire and  
43 that's Trout Unlimited. If you read these documents,  
44 there's 14 pages of them, you'll see that Trout Unlimited  
45 was highly involved in this. They've been going to all  
46 these salmon rehabilitation meetings on how to spend this  
47 money and they have been increasing hatchery production.  
48 They're liars. So we need to hold their feet to the fire  
49 and expose them for what they are, which is greed-heads  
50 and liars, that don't care anything about the biology of

1 wild salmon.

2

3 The wild salmon take priority over the  
4 artificially-produced salmon, the hatchery salmon. Many  
5 of the leading scientists in the world believe that the  
6 ocean is overgrazed. Dr. Healy gave a presentation to  
7 the Sustainable Salmon Initiative where he showed that  
8 right now ocean productivity is at an all-time high. The  
9 only problem is that 60 percent of the fish out there  
10 eating the food in the ocean pasture are hatchery fish.  
11 So that is the basis for my proposal. Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Andy.

14

15 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
16 I'd like to open it up for discussion to have some  
17 numbers put on this as well. Maybe these documents have  
18 them. I haven't look at these. As the motion is stated,  
19 it seems to me it could come across as somewhat vague if  
20 we're asking them just to reduce hatchery output. I  
21 think it would carry more weight if there was by a  
22 percentage, by a number, something like that. So I'd  
23 like to put that on the table for discussion. Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.

26 Virgil.

27

28 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
29 I'll take about two minutes to give you some background  
30 information here of an example. The Taku River is right  
31 next to Juneau. There's a wild chum run that goes up the  
32 Taku River. That chum run, the number of fish harvested  
33 with more fishing time on them, between the year 1990 and  
34 2000, decreased by approximately 80 percent. During that  
35 same time period the DIPAC Hatchery has averaged  
36 releasing 110 million chum salmon smolt into the marine  
37 estuary right there near the Taku River.

38

39 One of the researchers for Fish and Game  
40 did an analysis as to what's happened to the wild fall  
41 chum from the Taku River. His conclusion was that these  
42 110 million hatchery chums weigh three times as much when  
43 they're released, because they're put in net pens and fed  
44 a perfect diet, than the wild chums do when they finally  
45 get to the ocean. The main difference is that these  
46 hatchery fish get held in the net pen, they're in  
47 perfectly good health, they're released at the optimum  
48 time for survival and they weigh three times as much, but  
49 this happens two to three weeks before the wild fish get  
50 there. So these 110 million fish that weren't there

1 before when these wild fish were there, all the groceries  
2 are gone. They've eaten everything up. So these little  
3 guys get there and if there's still some of the big guys  
4 hanging around, they're three times as big, so they're  
5 going to out-compete them. That's the first thing. So  
6 they're having problems getting enough to eat.

7  
8 The second thing is, because of all these  
9 hatchery fish being there, what they've done is attracted  
10 hordes and hordes of sea gulls and terns and everything  
11 else that likes to eat chum salmon smolt and they're in  
12 good practice at eating them because they've been  
13 gobbling up all these hatchery ones.

14  
15 So this guy puts this in an official  
16 paper. What do you think happened? Unofficially he got  
17 a spanking. He hasn't said another word about it since.  
18 But that's the politics of the hatcheries. I just want  
19 to point that out.

20  
21 But I think we should say there should be  
22 at least a minimum of a 30 percent reduction. I'm going  
23 to personally put in a proposal to restrict DIPAC  
24 Hatchery by 50 percent because that's the one messing up  
25 that chum salmon stock I just told you about. But I  
26 think we should put in for at least 30 percent because  
27 they've made all these promises about research and  
28 everything and they did all that in bad faith. They've  
29 done nothing except the opposite. Mr. Chair.

30  
31 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So the maker of the  
32 motion is saying that he would like to add a 30 percent  
33 reduction. Would the seconder agree with that?

34  
35 MR. BASSICH: Yes.

36  
37 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: He says yes. Thank  
38 you. Any more discussion on the motion. Vince.

39  
40 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, just for the  
41 record, the linkage between the subsistence concerns is  
42 the fact that there's competition and that competition is  
43 affecting the returns to the rivers that are within your  
44 region?

45  
46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Virgil.

47  
48 MR. UMPHENOUR: That's correct. And  
49 trawl bycatch analyzed by Dr. Wilmot proves that a high  
50 number of DIPAC hatchery chums were caught in the trawl

1 bycatch in the Bering Sea. Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
4 Vince.

5

6 MR. MATHEWS: I'm just, as your  
7 coordinator, trying to keep you within your bounds and  
8 that's all I'm doing. You can submit proposals to the  
9 Board of Fisheries and I just wanted to make sure there  
10 was a linkage with subsistence. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11

12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: You just don't want to  
13 get in trouble. We won't get into any trouble, but you  
14 will. Any more discussion on the motion.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.

19

20 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The question has been  
21 called. All in favor of the motion signify by saying  
22 aye.

23

24 IN UNISON: Aye.

25

26 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.

27

28 (No opposing votes)

29

30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The motion carries.  
31 Any more fisheries proposals to discuss.

32

33 (No comments)

34

35 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Then let's take  
36 a 10-minute break.

37

38 (Off record)

39

40 (On record)

41

42 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The next agenda item  
43 is the 2004 annual report and Vince Mathews will be  
44 taking the lead.

45

46 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. I'll be  
47 passing it around and the timing is perfect. I made it  
48 yellow so it would be easier to find. It has gone out to  
49 some of you by e-mail and responses were received on  
50 those and incorporated. To speed this up for the new

1 Council members, I talked a lot about Section 805 in  
2 ANILCA. I kind of feel it's more than an option, but  
3 it's an option for you guys to submit an annual report to  
4 the Federal Subsistence Board on issues and topics that  
5 you would like their attention.

6  
7 This is pretty much your final draft  
8 unless we need to add or modify. This will be submitted  
9 hopefully very soon and then it will go into the process  
10 by April 1st. The Federal Board will meet sometime this  
11 summer, they'll review it and we'll be drafting a  
12 response to you by your fall meeting. So that's the  
13 process.

14  
15 You have two topics there and you can  
16 read them yourselves. They've already been addressed  
17 today and partially yesterday. With that, I'll just wait  
18 and see if there's any editing or additional topics that  
19 need to be done.

20  
21 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Vince. I  
22 wonder, Virgil, if you think that some of the information  
23 we've gone over with your proposals just recently would  
24 be worth putting in the annual report. I know we've  
25 discussed the problems of hatchery fish for many years.  
26 I know that's been an issue that's been important to us.  
27 I actually don't think we ever put hatchery fish as an  
28 issue in our annual report. I don't even know if it's  
29 the right place, but we could certainly identify it as an  
30 ongoing problem that we're not getting satisfaction from  
31 current managers, but I want your opinion on that,  
32 Virgil.

33  
34 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
35 What I think we should do is attach these two records  
36 from the Board of Fish meeting in 2001 to this report  
37 because in there they promise to do this, the State did.  
38 It was one of the promises made. So I think it would be  
39 good because it gives a lot of background information on  
40 this that the Board could use in helping them do what  
41 we're requesting, which is thermally otolyph mark all  
42 these hatchery fish so they can be identified wherever  
43 they go. Mr. Chair.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.  
46 Vince.

47  
48 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, Virgil. Those  
49 are public documents, those two reports, correct?  
50

1 MR. UMPHENOUR: That's correct. What  
2 I'll do is tomorrow I'll make copies of them and bring  
3 them over to your office for you.  
4  
5 MR. MATHEWS: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chair.  
7  
8 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.  
9  
10 MR. BASSICH: Just a comment. It will be  
11 a typo. It says we met in Venetie in the second  
12 paragraph.  
13  
14 MR. MATHEWS: I'll correct that. Also, I  
15 needed to ask for your input on that box on the second  
16 page. I kind of went out on thin ice there to see if you  
17 wanted a presentation to take place in your fall meeting.  
18 If I don't hear anything, I'll take that as you agree to  
19 have that.  
20  
21 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Do we want a  
22 presentation? Virgil.  
23  
24 MR. UMPHENOUR: The other thing, which  
25 was our second thing, and Fred Bue gave us a report he  
26 had, but that wasn't what we requested. I mean he gave  
27 us a report a few minutes ago that was an e-mail that  
28 someone in Area M sent him, but the promise was made.  
29 I'd like to see it official. It was made to the Federal  
30 Subsistence Board. I would like the Federal Subsistence  
31 Board to ask the State for an official report of their  
32 promises made at that meeting. That's our number two,  
33 status of harvest reporting and monitoring of the Area M  
34 fisheries.  
35  
36 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Sounds good.  
37 Comments. Sue.  
38  
39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
40 might ask your guidance and direction here. This is an  
41 annual report, right, and it should take up both fish and  
42 game.  
43  
44 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: We can put anything we  
45 want in here. This is a letter from us basically stating  
46 what's important to us, issues that are important that we  
47 would like addressed in some way and it goes to a higher  
48 level than the Federal Subsistence Board.  
49  
50 MS. ENTSMINGER: I think one thing I'd

1 like to see mentioned is ongoing pressure on the Federal  
2 lands that more management be done with predators. I  
3 feel like that's a very vital thing to continue to hammer  
4 them with. Someday somebody might listen. I'm not sure  
5 how you'd word it.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I think we can leave  
8 the specific wording to Vince, but I know we've talked  
9 about that for years as well. I think Vince can come up  
10 with three or four sentences that encapsulate the issue  
11 of predator management and how important it is,  
12 especially in low population areas where the species that  
13 we would like to harvest to eat are low.

14  
15 More comments, discussion. Yes, Virgil.

16  
17 MR. UMPHENOUR: Andy just brought up  
18 bycatch. The bycatch has been hinted about a little  
19 here, but back in either '99 or 2000, somewhere in there,  
20 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted  
21 bycatch limits for chinook salmon, for king salmon in the  
22 Bering Sea, and the Gulf of Alaska as well. In the  
23 Bering Sea they were supposed to be down to -- and they  
24 scaled them back because they'd been averaging around  
25 50,000 king salmon a year, so they scaled them back and  
26 by now they shouldn't be catching more than around  
27 20,000. Well, they caught over 60,000 this year.

28  
29 An ironic thing about this is that each  
30 trawler gets allocated a percent of the bycatch, X amount  
31 of king salmon. The funny thing is that the Lower Yukon  
32 CDQ group was the highest bycatcher of king salmon last  
33 year. I don't know what they were this year. Anyway, so  
34 what they've done this year is they have tripled the  
35 amount of allowable bycatch. They've caught three times  
36 as much. What happens to them? Nothing happens to them.

37  
38 In chum salmon, it was mentioned that it  
39 was real high. Well, it's up close to half a million  
40 this year. I know the last time they did this, which was  
41 '93, was a chum disaster on the Yukon River. They caught  
42 a record number of bycatch. So what they did is they did  
43 genetic stock identification sampling and they sent these  
44 chum salmon to the Auk Bay laboratory where Dr. Wilmot  
45 analyzed them and that's where he found all these DIPAC  
46 Hatchery thermal otolith marked chum salmon.

47  
48 So I think we need to say something about  
49 the bycatch issue as well because nothing happens to  
50 these guys that do all this bycatching, killing all these

1 king salmon and chum salmon. Nothing happens to them.  
2 They're all out-of-staters. They're owned by big  
3 companies from the Lower 48 with the exception of some of  
4 the CDQ groups.

5  
6                   Anyway, I think we should say something  
7 about the bycatch so that they're aware that we're really  
8 concerned about the bycatch of the king and chum salmon  
9 in the Bering Sea. Mr. Chair.

10  
11                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

12  
13                   MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
14 Maybe to help Vince a little bit, I guess my personal  
15 concerns or what I'd like to see voiced is that even in  
16 the upper reaches of the Yukon River we're impacted by  
17 bycatch, especially chinook, and that's a great concern.  
18 Just for more information I was down in Seattle at the  
19 North Pacific Marine Council's meeting there and this is  
20 an issue that's being taken up and there's some work  
21 groups that will be formed to try and come up with some  
22 new guidelines and some new methods for limiting and  
23 reducing bycatch, so it might be an appropriate time to  
24 keep this topic out there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

25  
26                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I also agree that's a  
27 good item to add. It's been a problem for a long time.  
28 We've talked about it for a long time. It's sort of a  
29 terrible thing that subsistence harvests are frequently  
30 reduced, allowable harvest times are reduced, but bycatch  
31 is still allowed to continue. There's lots of reasons  
32 that they give to allow bycatch to continue, but there  
33 are very few things that we can control when it comes to  
34 fish, wildlife, so on, management, but what we can  
35 control is human harvest and waste by humans. So I think  
36 this is something we can control and I think this is a  
37 good thing to add.

38  
39                   Go ahead, Vince.

40  
41                   MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, I understand the  
42 issue, but what are you asking for the Board to do. The  
43 annual report is to point out issues and you've learned  
44 over time, Craig, that you have to tell the Board what  
45 you would like them to do on that issue. I mean I heard  
46 so far you want it as an informational item and that's  
47 fine, but I don't know if you want some action. I will  
48 advise you they have no jurisdiction over this, so what  
49 are you asking the Board to do.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

2

3 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 Number one is to do genetic stock identification of an  
5 adequate number of the chum and chinook salmon taken in  
6 that fishery to determine river of origin. That's number  
7 one.

8

9 Number two is to participate in the  
10 observer program to make sure that the observer program  
11 is credible. That's the two things we should do. When I  
12 say participate in the observer program in some manner or  
13 another, I don't know how they're going to do that, but I  
14 can tell you this.

15

16 The Board of Fisheries and the North  
17 Pacific Fishery Management Council meet a minimum of once  
18 a year in joint session and I can remember when we met  
19 with them when I was on the Board of Fisheries and we  
20 were giving them a hard time about bycatch and about the  
21 observer program because we had gotten letters from some  
22 people who had been observers telling us that observers  
23 were threatened if they observed properly, that they were  
24 paid off to not observe at all. We had good information  
25 on that because the whistle-blowers lost their jobs. The  
26 guys that reported this lost their jobs. So we had very  
27 credible information on bycatch reporting that was bogus.

28

29 So, what the Council wanted to do, they  
30 do what they call the basket method where they haul up  
31 200,000 pounds of pollack and dump it on the deck and the  
32 observer goes out there with one of these laundry baskets  
33 made out of plastic and dips it in there a couple times  
34 and counts how many salmon are in there and extrapolates  
35 and that's how they did it. So what they did is called  
36 whole haul bycatch analysis where they counted every fish  
37 in there that was a salmon and then compared that to the  
38 way they did it and they didn't begin to even come close  
39 to correlating, so they wanted to completely do away with  
40 the observer program. The Council and the trawlers did.  
41 We didn't say no. We said hell no. Figure out a better  
42 way to do it. Well, I don't think they've done anything  
43 about figuring out a better way of doing it.

44

45 So that's what we want them to look it,  
46 is look at an accurate way of accessing bycatch and  
47 making sure that it's credible. Mr. Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Virgil.

50 You got it, Vince?

1 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have  
2 it. As I said earlier, the Board does not have  
3 jurisdiction over this, so you're encouraging them to  
4 have adequate collection of chum and king and bycatch and  
5 accurate ways of observer proponent of that fishery.  
6 They have no jurisdiction. They can't tell them to do  
7 whatever, but they can forward your request on.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
10 comments or questions.

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So is everyone  
15 satisfied with the additions of these several items to  
16 the annual report. Do we need a motion to approve this?

17  
18 MR. MATHEWS: It would be clearer and  
19 then if in the motion you would agree, because you're not  
20 meeting again, that you empower your chair or whoever to  
21 be the reviewer, final approval of this.

22  
23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: What action are we  
24 going to take? Virgil.

25  
26 MR. UMPHENOUR: I have an idea. Being  
27 that we have different people interested in this, can we  
28 have the Chair and maybe the Vice Chair and Sue look at  
29 the one on predator control and Andy and I look at the  
30 two on the bycatch and the hatchery issues.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: We can do anything we  
33 want.

34  
35 MR. UMPHENOUR: I would like to move that  
36 we do that and reference all my previous comments on  
37 these subjects. Mr. Chair.

38  
39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: We have a motion and a  
42 second. Discussion. Vince.

43  
44 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, your Vice Chair  
45 is not here, but I think the intent is that the people  
46 that are directly involved with these issues would be  
47 copied and they would focus on individual ones. I just  
48 know what e-mails I'd get back from Gerald if I did this,  
49 so it would be those that are here.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: He also understands  
2 when you miss a meeting, you get jobbed from time to  
3 time. More discussion on the motion.  
4  
5 (No comments)  
6  
7 MR. BASSICH: Question.  
8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The question has been  
10 called. All in favor of the motion signify by saying  
11 aye.  
12  
13 IN UNISON: Aye.  
14  
15 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.  
16  
17 (No opposing votes)  
18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Motion carries.  
20 What's up next, Vince?  
21  
22 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. Then we get  
23 into Office of Subsistence Management reports. The first  
24 one we've talked a little bit about. It's on Page 109.  
25 We will have a presentation on subsistence use amounts  
26 protocol.  
27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Polly.  
29  
30 DR. WHEELER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For  
31 the record, Polly Wheeler with the Office of Subsistence  
32 Management. I'll try and make this short and sweet. It  
33 is a written briefing, but I think it's worth saying a  
34 few words about what's going on with this protocol.  
35  
36 As you might remember from previous  
37 meetings, this was a protocol group to look at the  
38 amounts necessary for subsistence and the subsistence use  
39 amounts. The amounts necessary for subsistence is in the  
40 State system and the subsistence use amounts is in the  
41 Federal system.  
42  
43 In July or August of 2003, Governor  
44 Murkowski wrote a letter to the Federal Board saying that  
45 in his and the Department of Fish and Game's opinion this  
46 was the most important protocol to be working on and that  
47 work on other protocols was going to cease until this  
48 protocol was developed and signed. In addition to that,  
49 the State assigned their work group members as being the  
50 MOA team, the Memorandum of Agreement team, which are

1 representatives from each of the different divisions  
2 within the Department.

3  
4 The Federal program decided they would  
5 identify their members. The members that were identified  
6 at that time anyway were myself for the Office of  
7 Subsistence Management, Janet Cohen with the National  
8 Park Service, Mike Reardon with the Y-K Delta Refuge,  
9 Glenn Chen with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bob  
10 Schroeder with the U.S. Forest Service. Since that time  
11 Mike Reardon has been replaced by Greg Bos with the Fish  
12 and Wildlife Service.

13  
14 In an effort to provide additional  
15 direction to this protocol working group, the then  
16 Commissioner Duffy and Tom Boyd co-wrote a letter which  
17 is on Page 109 in your books identifying the process by  
18 which this protocol should proceed. That letter was  
19 written on November 9th. We had a meeting in August and  
20 we requested the letter to provide us direction. We had  
21 another meeting in early December and we're still moving  
22 rather slowly, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

23  
24 The goal of the group at this point, as  
25 directed by then Commissioner Duffy and Tom Boyd, is to  
26 recognize the amounts necessary for subsistence somehow,  
27 some way in the Federal system. As you probably know,  
28 there's not really a mechanism in place from a regulatory  
29 standpoint to recognize them in the Federal system, so  
30 really what recognition means in the context of the  
31 Federal system I don't know and it hasn't been defined  
32 yet.

33  
34 One of the other charges for the group is  
35 to develop a consultative process to review the need for  
36 reviewing existing amounts necessary for subsistence  
37 numbers and to kind of agree on a process for both  
38 reviewing the need for updating these numbers, getting  
39 new numbers and then also developing a process to figure  
40 out what we do when we disagree with these numbers. So  
41 it's basically sort of an effort to lay out research  
42 priorities as much as anything else. This is again for  
43 both wildlife and fisheries.

44  
45 The third component as laid out in the  
46 letter on Page 109 is to develop a public outreach  
47 process. As you probably remember, in the fall the issue  
48 of FACA compliance for these protocol working groups came  
49 up and whereas RAC members had been members of these  
50 protocol working groups it was decided because of FACA

1 concerns that RAC members would no longer be part of  
2 these protocol working groups.

3  
4 So the whole issue now is how do we  
5 involve the RAC's in this process and that, again, is  
6 still being laid out. Like I said, it's moving very  
7 slowly. We have not come up with much yet. There were  
8 subgroups assigned at the last meeting, but, to my  
9 knowledge, no work has been done in the subgroups. But  
10 we are clearly concerned about public outreach. We will  
11 keep you informed. That's why even though this is  
12 supposed to be a written briefing, I felt it important to  
13 provide you sort of a spoken update and will keep you  
14 informed as we move forward.

15  
16 That's it, Mr. Chair, unless there's any  
17 questions.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly. I  
20 have one concern before I take other questions. I am  
21 actually quite concerned that any protocol be developed  
22 or any decision be made or any discussions regarding  
23 subsistence use determinations without participation of  
24 actual subsistence users in some way. I know that we at  
25 this Council and many others have talked about the  
26 importance of understanding need and different ways of  
27 identifying need and how some have actually abused that  
28 concept and there's a whole gradient of numbers you can  
29 consider when you're actually trying to determine what  
30 someone's need is. I'm actually very concerned that any  
31 protocol or any determinations would be made without much  
32 more and close involvement with actual subsistence users,  
33 not just -- and this is nothing to be offensive -- but  
34 not just a bunch of Federal employees trying to determine  
35 what we should be eating, how much we should be eating  
36 and when we can go and get it. That's enough.

37  
38 Any more questions or comments. Yes,  
39 Andy.

40  
41 MR. BASSICH: Yes, I'd just like to echo  
42 that same statement. It's very important to me,  
43 personally. If they do make these determinations, it has  
44 to come back for review for the communities that would be  
45 affected by it in my opinion. Thank you.

46  
47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.  
48 Vince.

49  
50 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. Maybe I

1 missed it and Polly will correct me, but whatever comes  
2 out of this group will come before this Council as a  
3 draft. So you guys will have the opportunity then.  
4 Because of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, your Vice  
5 Chair is no longer part of that group.

6  
7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That's not the point,  
8 though, Vince. The point is, if you want to get good  
9 participation, if you want to get good understanding, if  
10 you want to get good numbers, you don't have some folks  
11 that are not involved make the decision and then say this  
12 is the decision, what do you think. It can't be done  
13 that way if you want the best response, if you want the  
14 best answers. I'm not going to be happy with it. I'm  
15 not speaking for anybody else, but I can certainly tell  
16 you that I know if I'm not going to be happy, there's got  
17 to be at least one or two others that aren't going to be  
18 happy about that process.

19  
20 MR. MATHEWS: I understand.

21  
22 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Polly, I saw you  
23 leaning toward the microphone.

24  
25 DR. WHEELER: I was just going to add,  
26 Mr. Chair, that one of the truly wonderful things about  
27 having a transcriber here is that we have transcriptions  
28 from the meetings. I was at the Southeast meeting last  
29 week and I can tell you that the Southeast Regional  
30 Advisory Council more than shares your concerns and these  
31 will be useful to bring back to our policymakers and to  
32 the work group as a whole. Thank you.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly.  
35 Sue.

36  
37 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
38 Polly, I'm a little bit confused. This is going to be  
39 State and Federal jointly working on the amounts? With  
40 the difference of all people in Alaska qualifying, I  
41 don't understand how you can do that.

42  
43 MS. WHEELER: Mr. Chair, Member  
44 Entsminger. You raised one of the many issues that need  
45 to be raised by this group. You're absolutely right.  
46 There's different eligibility within the State program  
47 and within the Federal program and then you come to the  
48 issue of are you going to have a subset of those numbers.  
49 Even if you believed that those numbers were okay, then  
50 what do you do with them. There's a lot issue-wise and

1 process-wise that still needs to be worked out just in  
2 terms of how these numbers are going to be used in the  
3 Federal program if they're going to be used in the  
4 Federal program, aside from the issues of eligibility.  
5 But you raised a big issue and there's others.

6  
7 Like I said, the two meetings that we've  
8 had, we had one meeting in early August and one meeting  
9 in December, I think they raised more questions than  
10 answers.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Polly. I  
13 almost wonder if this is an issue important enough to  
14 revisit our annual report to put it in there because I  
15 really don't like the idea of anybody making a  
16 determination without us having involvement from the very  
17 beginning. Well, we made a motion to adopt it, so we  
18 would have to have a motion to revisit it.

19  
20 MS. ENTSMINGER: So moved.

21  
22 MR. BASSICH: Second.

23  
24 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I think we can revisit  
25 it without a vote. So, since I'm the Chair, I won't make  
26 the motion to put that in there if someone else wants to  
27 make that motion.

28  
29 MS. ENTSMINGER: I made a motion that the  
30 protocol is a concern of the RAC's that we have some  
31 participation in the decision process as it moves along,  
32 that the subsistence users are involved.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That doesn't really  
35 need to be in motion form. I think everybody can just  
36 agree whether or not they want that in there. Is that  
37 favorable?

38  
39 (Council nods affirmatively)

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I see everybody  
42 nodding yes. So is there a motion? I see Mike's hand  
43 up.

44  
45 MR. SMITH: Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry.  
46 Mike Smith, Tanana Chiefs Conference. The concerns we  
47 had with this are much the same as you have. The FACA  
48 determinations that have precluded us from participating  
49 in this process, I think we all know how bureaucracies  
50 are. Those can easily be fixed and we could fix the

1 process very easily if we had the support of the Feds and  
2 the State to do so. We don't have to make the  
3 recommendations to the Federal Board, they do, but we  
4 could make recommendations to them and they could accept  
5 them or reject them and I think that's a process we need  
6 to take.

7  
8 In regards to the letter that was signed  
9 by Mr. Boyd and Kevin Duffy, my concern there is, of  
10 course, that I'm not sure exactly what this letter does,  
11 but we've always had concerns with ANS amounts  
12 established by the State. We think they're artificially  
13 low, that the process by which they were established is  
14 faulty and we were extremely concerned that the Federal  
15 government adopts the State ANS amounts. Even as a  
16 starting point, we think that is just a bad thing to do  
17 and we'd be opposed to that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you for that  
20 input. So is there a motion to accept the new annual  
21 report.

22  
23 MS. ENTSMINGER: So moved.

24  
25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion. Is  
26 there a second.

27  
28 MR. BASSICH: Second.

29  
30 MR. UMPHENOUR: Second.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Discussion.

33  
34 MS. ENTSMINGER: Question.

35  
36 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The question has been  
37 called on the motion. All in favor signify by saying  
38 aye.

39  
40 IN UNISON: Aye.

41  
42 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All opposed same sign.

43  
44 (No opposing votes)

45  
46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Thank you,  
47 Polly.

48  
49 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, that brings  
50 us up to the rural review process. Rod Campbell is going

1 to be presenting that and hot off the press is a question  
2 and answer sheet that he just got in his hands today, so  
3 I'll be passing it out.

4

5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Rod.

6

7 MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For  
8 the record, my name is Rod Campbell with the Office of  
9 Subsistence Management. As Vince said, you should be  
10 getting this any time. I just received that. We had  
11 seen some in a draft form, so I will keep my comments  
12 very brief. Most everything I have to say is covered in  
13 this and probably even in more detail.

14

15 The Federal Subsistence Board is  
16 initiating its 10-year review, which is required by the  
17 Federal Subsistence Regulations of the rural/non-rural  
18 status of Alaska communities and it's currently inviting  
19 both the public and the Councils to comment on this  
20 process. A news release is in the Council book on Page  
21 110 where the Councils may provide comments on the review  
22 process now and the current comment period is open until  
23 April 1st. That is just for the process. There will be  
24 several other points laid out in the time line on that  
25 letter on Page 111 in your Council book.

26

27 As I said, as we move through this  
28 process, which will take approximately two years, both  
29 the public and the Councils will have time to comment on  
30 these specific stages as they go through the review  
31 process.

32

33 As you know, ANILCA requires that rural  
34 Alaskans be given a priority for subsistence uses of fish  
35 and wildlife on Federal public lands. So determining  
36 which communities are rural determines eligibility for  
37 this subsistence priority. That's why this is very  
38 important. The Board initially determined which  
39 communities were rural when the Federal Subsistence  
40 Management Program began in 1990. Regulations require  
41 that the rural/non-rural status of the communities be  
42 reviewed every 10 years, beginning with the availability  
43 of the 2000 census data. The focus of this review will  
44 be on what has changed since 1990.

45

46 In general terms, most of Alaska  
47 communities have not changed significantly or at least  
48 have not seen a significant increase in their population  
49 between the 1990 and 2000 censuses. So right now they  
50 expect that most of these areas will remain unchanged.

1 That's why this review will focus on the areas where they  
2 think the largest change or increase has taken place.

3  
4 I believe most of the other information  
5 is included in here. If you want, I can go through some  
6 of the other key questions that they're going to use as a  
7 basis and the guidelines. I know you're pressed for  
8 time.

9  
10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Andy.

11  
12 MR. BASSICH: I just have one quick  
13 question. Currently the Fairbanks Northstar Borough is  
14 trying to encompass a number of what are now considered  
15 rural communities. I'm just wondering how this might  
16 affect those communities in the future if they are  
17 incorporated in the Borough. I'm not really sure how  
18 this process takes place, but I do know they're trying to  
19 take up Fort Yukon and Eagle and Tok and a number of  
20 communities in the area and include them in the Borough.  
21 Is that going to make us non-rural?

22  
23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: They better build a K-  
24 Mart up there if they're going to do it. Rod.

25  
26 MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman. That is one  
27 of the key issues, I believe, that will be addressed by  
28 this initial review. They're going to consider the  
29 communities that were previously grouped, like you said,  
30 the Fairbanks Northstar Borough. They're going to see if  
31 they still have the same economic, social and other  
32 characteristics that still make them a group. So that  
33 will be a very important part of this process.

34  
35 So if somebody is trying to incorporate  
36 these different communities into the Fairbanks Northstar  
37 Borough that don't fit into these categories where  
38 they're similar with their economics, with their social,  
39 with their sharing of different resources, then that will  
40 definitely be looked at and they'll have to make a  
41 determination on that.

42  
43 As we go through this process, this is  
44 just the process that we're looking for comments until  
45 April 1st. Then you will see the guidelines, the  
46 different time lines when this review study will take  
47 place, then you will have an opportunity all along the  
48 process. You don't have to wait. You can call in and  
49 make comments. They're going to narrow it down to the  
50 communities that the Board feels meet the different

1 criteria and see if there needs to be any adjustments  
2 made. If so, it will continue to have input throughout  
3 the process and then the review committee will come up  
4 with a list of communities. They may or may not be the  
5 same as they were in 1990. Then there will be an  
6 opportunity for additional review from all the Councils  
7 and the public to have input to say these do fit or don't  
8 fit or don't make sense at all.

9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Hey, Rod. I wonder if  
10 you could focus. I'm not sure if I even heard an answer  
11 to that question. At least what my interest in that  
12 question has to do with is the outside boundary of the  
13 Fairbanks Northstar Borough. That's what's recognized as  
14 being urban. If that boundary expands in whatever  
15 direction it goes -- and if you don't know the answer,  
16 just say no because that will save a lot of time. If you  
17 do, then maybe you can give us a brief description. But  
18 if that boundary expands, will then the communities and  
19 the territory then expand with that non-rural  
20 determination?

21  
22 MR. CAMPBELL: Mr. Chairman. My  
23 understanding is it will not. They will have to re-  
24 evaluate those groupings. It says if there are  
25 communities that are not currently grouped and for which  
26 we know of reasons to consider their grouping, such  
27 communities will also be considered for further analysis.

28  
29 MS. ENTSMINGER: No.

30  
31 MR. CAMPBELL: They can't just be grouped  
32 in there. Yeah, no.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
35 questions for Rod. Was that good enough, Andy?

36  
37 MR. BASSICH: Yes, that's fine.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Rod. Do  
40 you want to move to the next agenda item.

41  
42 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, sir. I'll try not to  
43 ramble so much.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: That's all right.

46  
47 MR. CAMPBELL: The next agenda item is  
48 also in your Council book. It's proposed rule on marine  
49 jurisdiction. I believe it starts on Page 112. It has  
50 some highlights. This is a proposed rule to revise and

1 clarify jurisdiction in coastal waters which really does  
2 not come within this Council's region, but you are still  
3 asked if you want to make comments on it, please do so.

4

5                   Again, this proposed rule is to revise  
6 and clarify coastal waters as published in the Federal  
7 Register on December 8, 2004. That's included starting  
8 on Page 113 in your book. This would amend Federal  
9 Subsistence Management Regulations to clarify that the  
10 jurisdiction is confined to inland waters and pre-  
11 statehood withdrawals. This amendment would primarily  
12 impact coastal areas within the Yukon/Kuskokwim Delta,  
13 Bristol Bay and Kodiak/Aleutians Regions.

14

15                   I shared the maps with you earlier, Mr.  
16 Chair. There are some along the coastal regions.  
17 Basically what has occurred is that back when this ruling  
18 was made in 1992 it was very clear that these various  
19 embayments should not be included under Federal  
20 jurisdiction. However, they were. In your Federal  
21 Register that's on Page 114 it does say additionally  
22 under ANILCA Section 103 very specific that the coastal  
23 areas and boundaries for new additions to Federal  
24 reservations shall not exceed seaward beyond the mean  
25 high tide line for these bays.

26

27                   I do have these maps and I can pass them  
28 around or put up the big ones if you're interested in  
29 looking at that. What it's basically doing is it says  
30 there was an error made when these embayments were  
31 included in Federal jurisdiction and they're in the  
32 process of changing that. If you have comments, please  
33 submit those.

34

35                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much,  
36 Rod. This is an informational presentation because, of  
37 course, we don't have any bays with ocean borders, so our  
38 region is not specifically impacted unless, of course,  
39 you believe that a change in this jurisdiction and a  
40 change in these incorrect boundaries might have an impact  
41 by changing management hands. If you believe there may  
42 be an impact to subsistence resources, then it may impact  
43 us. I don't necessarily think that's the case, but if  
44 anybody has any discussion or questions for Rod, now is  
45 the time.

46

47                   (No comments)

48

49                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Then I thank  
50 you very much. You had one more thing or you're just

1 waving good-bye?

2

3 MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you. Just waving  
4 good-bye.

5

6 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. This brings  
7 us up to Agency reports. There are different handouts.  
8 We have to remember Agency Staff have been waiting for  
9 two days to present these. I'm sure you guys are going  
10 to listen really closely, but any advise on developing  
11 the agenda, how to avoid everything kind of piling up at  
12 the end would be greatly appreciated. These are the  
13 times when you can get inklings to things that are coming  
14 up and maybe work out things without going to a proposal,  
15 without going to an annual report.

16

17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The only way you can  
18 really avoid things not piling up at the end -- I don't  
19 think they're piling up. But the only way you can avoid  
20 that is either cut the agenda in half or to lengthen the  
21 meeting. I don't necessarily think we need to do either.  
22 I think we have plenty of time in the hour and a half we  
23 have left. Who is next? If there are any Native  
24 corporations, regional, village, tribal councils, et  
25 cetera. We don't have any specific names on the agenda,  
26 but if there are any in particular that would like to  
27 come and give an update, you are now welcome. I see a  
28 hand. Bruce, go ahead.

29

30 MR. THOMAS: Mr. Chair, Council. I'd  
31 like to combine the CATG report with the Alaska  
32 Department of Fish and Game.

33

34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: It sounds good to me.

35

36 MR. THOMAS: I'm going to give an update  
37 on the moose survey the CATG and Alaska Department of  
38 Fish and Game did back in November. We were able to do  
39 this survey through our annual funding agreement with the  
40 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their funding helped us  
41 include the Venetie area in the survey, so I'll just give  
42 a brief summary of what we observed.

43

44 The Council of Athabaskan Tribal  
45 Governments, Natural Resources Department and the  
46 Department of Fish and Game counted moose in two areas  
47 near Fort Yukon during November 2 to 7, 2004. Survey  
48 conditions were very good with plenty of snow and good  
49 weather.

50

1                   We counted moose in the 2,900 square mile  
2 survey area around Fort Yukon and also a new survey area  
3 around Venetie. We estimate that the total number of  
4 moose in the Fort Yukon survey area is about 900. There  
5 are about 51 calves and 43 bulls for every 100 cows.  
6 There was about one moose per four square miles. It  
7 appears there has been a small increase in the number of  
8 moose during the last three years, but moose are still  
9 scarce and the area could support a much higher  
10 population.

11  
12                   There are about 550 moose in the Venetie  
13 survey area and we estimate there are about 41 calves and  
14 75 bulls for every 100 cows. There is about one moose  
15 per five square miles. This density is very similar to  
16 the Fort Yukon area. The number of calves and bulls was  
17 fairly high compared to the number of cows in both survey  
18 areas. We also found that 20 percent of the cows still  
19 had twins with them. This means the moose population has  
20 high quality food.

21  
22                   There are not very many yearling moose in  
23 the population. This means that even though there are  
24 quite a few calves in the fall, many of them die from  
25 wolf and bear predation during the next year.

26  
27                   The moose population is very productive  
28 and could grow rapidly if we can protect cow and calf  
29 moose and reduce the loss of young moose.

30  
31                   In conclusion, moose numbers are still  
32 low on the Eastern Yukon Flats, but it is possible that  
33 the population decline we saw from 1995 to 2001 has  
34 stopped. There might have been a small increase in  
35 numbers during the last three years. It will take years  
36 of continued careful management to build a really healthy  
37 moose population that can support a higher harvest.

38  
39                   We need to continue to follow the  
40 recommendations in the Moose Management Plan and try to  
41 help the population grow by taking the legal limit of  
42 black bears and brown bears, try to take more wolves, not  
43 shooting cow moose and regulating the number of moose  
44 that are taken for potlatches.

45  
46                   I just wanted to throw in that the Yukon  
47 Flats villages are taking a major effort in harvesting  
48 more predators and I think that had a major impact on the  
49 moose population, stabilizing, just from what I've been  
50 seeing because I've been following this for the last five

1 years.

2 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Bruce, I have a  
3 question. Do you really think that according to this  
4 statement that only taking the legal limit of black and  
5 brown bears is going to be enough? If Craig Fleener goes  
6 out and shoots his three black bears and his one brown  
7 bear, do you think with the small number of bear hunters  
8 that we have that will actually be enough hunting of  
9 bears to protect the moose population?

10  
11 MR. THOMAS: Actually, what some of the  
12 villages implemented is what you call the community black  
13 bear harvest. Say my grandpa, if he didn't want to get  
14 his legal limit of bears, that with a hunting license I  
15 could go over there and he could sign those bears over to  
16 me since I'm an active hunter and harvest those bears.  
17 Does that answer your question?

18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No, but it gives me  
20 another angle. You basically said that that's one way  
21 you can increase the amount of harvest, but you didn't  
22 tell me whether or not you really think that if we stuck  
23 to our legal limit of bears if that would actually be  
24 enough.

25  
26 MR. THOMAS: You're talking about  
27 increasing?

28  
29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I'm asking you your  
30 personal opinion, killing this number of bears with the  
31 amount of bear hunters we have going out, is it enough?

32  
33 MR. THOMAS: I don't think so.

34  
35 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Are there any more  
36 questions for Bruce.

37  
38 (No comments)

39  
40 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Bob.

41  
42 MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair, thank you. I  
43 really don't have a great deal to add. Bruce did a good  
44 job of summarizing our survey results. Wennona, is the  
45 refuge going to talk about the Western survey?

46  
47 MS. BROWN: I have the information, but  
48 why don't you go ahead.

49  
50 MR. STEPHENSON: The Fish and Wildlife

1 Service does a survey in Western Yukon Flats in the  
2 Beaver/Stevens Village area.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Keep going, Bob. I  
5 just saw someone in the crowd I had to wave to.

6

7 MR. STEPHENSON: Okay. Interestingly  
8 enough, their results this year -- in the past, we've  
9 been seeing a declining trend in the Eastern Flats and  
10 their trend was declining but at a much slower rate.  
11 This year their survey estimate went down largely because  
12 they just could not find the number of cow moose they did  
13 in the past. So their trend is now down and our trend  
14 has perked up. If our estimate is good and we did see  
15 more moose than we've been able to find in the past,  
16 maybe ours is coming up.

17

18 So theirs is kind of confusing. Their  
19 calf survival isn't as high, it's more like 30 calves per  
20 100 cows. Their bull ratio is pretty good. It's around  
21 50 or so. One explanation we've thought of over the  
22 years, because there are more people and more hunters in  
23 the Eastern Flats, maybe the bear harvest there over the  
24 years has contributed to this kind of consistently higher  
25 calf/cow ratio we get in the east, whereas the Western  
26 Flats isn't as heavily hunted.

27

28 Maybe just a word on Craig's question  
29 about the bear harvest. We could either increase the  
30 legal limit of bears, which is an option, or try to use  
31 the community harvest permit to effectively increase the  
32 limit for each active hunter. Beaver has done this for  
33 the past few years and I think they've taken up to 21  
34 black bears. Under the community harvest permit you pool  
35 the individual bag limits and then anybody in the group  
36 can take up to that limit. It doesn't matter how many  
37 each individual takes.

38

39 It's an option and it's a bit of  
40 paperwork, which I know is onerous to some people, but it  
41 can be done if you have a hunt monitoring system  
42 basically and it can be done. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

43

44 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Bob.  
45 Virgil.

46

47 MR. UMPHENOUR: Couldn't that be covered  
48 by the proxy regulation anyway?

49

50 MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair, Member

1 Umphenour. I think it could, but I think it's probably a  
2 lot more paperwork and trouble to do it that way. In a  
3 way, the community harvest permit is sort of like a proxy  
4 hunt, but you just sign up all the people on one sheet of  
5 paper at one time, elders, people with permanent  
6 licenses, kids from 10 to 16 can put their birth date  
7 down and contribute their legal bag limit to the group.  
8 But we could use the proxy system, too.

9

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any more questions.  
11 Yes, James.

12

13 MR. NATHANIEL: You're speaking of taking  
14 bears. I haven't heard anything on wolves. Have you  
15 done anything on that?

16

17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Is that question  
18 directed to Bruce?

19

20 MR. THOMAS: I personally, myself, don't  
21 trap anymore, but there's very few people trapping in the  
22 Yukon Flats. To answer your question, I think the wolves  
23 need to be targeted because they're taking quite a bit of  
24 moose. As we all know, the State predator control  
25 program, I'd like to see it in the Yukon Flats, but we  
26 live in a refuge and our hands are kind of tied at this  
27 moment. So I don't know, unless Bob has another answer  
28 for that.

29

30 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, Bob.

31

32 MR. STEPHENSON: Thank you, Bruce.

33

34 (Laughter)

35

36 MR. STEPHENSON: It's a difficult  
37 proposition with the pattern of land ownership we have  
38 and not to mention wolf control is a controversial issue.  
39 It's kind of being done in more areas in Alaska now, but  
40 so far Federal lands are kind of in a different category.  
41 I don't know what could change that. So with your mix of  
42 land ownership, it's difficult to propose -- for example,  
43 if you propose aerial wolf hunting program, people would  
44 have to know exactly where they are in those  
45 checkerboards and townships around communities if it was  
46 only good for private land and they would risk -- for  
47 example, if they were to kill a wolf and it was on  
48 Federal land, they could lose their airplane, so they  
49 probably wouldn't be excited about participating. It's  
50 hard to make it a clear program.

1                   And Terry Haynes reminded me, Mr.  
2 Umphenour, bears aren't covered under the proxy  
3 regulation, so I guess proxy isn't an option. But the  
4 community harvest is sort of a proxy system in a way.

5  
6                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Bob. More  
7 questions. Yes, James.

8  
9                   MR. NATHANIEL: One more question. You  
10 took a moose survey in Yukon Flats. How big an area did  
11 you cover?

12  
13                   MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair, James. The  
14 Fort Yukon area is about 2,900 square miles, so it goes a  
15 little east of Chalkyitsik all the way over past the  
16 Sheenjek and west of Fort Yukon, almost to the Christian  
17 River and then just south of Shuman House on the  
18 Porcupine all the way down to about 20 miles north of  
19 Circle. It's kind of a big square. And then the Venetie  
20 area is about 2,800. It's about the same size. It's  
21 right next to the Fort Yukon area.

22  
23                   MR. NATHANIEL: One more question.

24  
25                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Go ahead, James.

26  
27                   MR. NATHANIEL: You're taking a survey  
28 every day or just one day thing?

29  
30                   MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair, Mr.  
31 Nathaniel. The survey this year we flew from November  
32 2nd to November 7th continually with three SuperCubs  
33 flying a total -- the actual survey time was about 80  
34 hours over about six days. So it's spread out over a  
35 week and we try to do it after we've had about a foot of  
36 snow, which we had this year, it was really good snow, we  
37 had good light, we did it early, we had pretty good day  
38 length because it was November 2nd to the 7th. So that's  
39 how we do it.

40  
41                   MR. NATHANIEL: You know, those moose  
42 could travel a long way in one day. If you're taking a  
43 survey in a different area each day, a moose could move  
44 to that area where you'd be counting that day. I don't  
45 know if your moose survey is accurate or not. Could you  
46 answer that?

47  
48                   MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chairman and Mr.  
49 Nathaniel. Yes, I think we account for that because the  
50 way we do it is we have separate square survey areas.

1 They're about five square miles. They're not next to  
2 each other usually. Sometimes they are next to each  
3 other, but we count those at the same time and we'll  
4 start in the southern part of the area and we'll do all  
5 those units in one or two days with all three airplanes,  
6 so we do a big area all at once in a couple days before  
7 the moose can move too much, then we'll do another  
8 section.

9

10 So I think the error we would get from  
11 moose moving between these survey units in this short  
12 time is pretty small because we do it fast before they  
13 would have a chance to move.

14

MR. NATHANIEL: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much.

18 Andy.

19

20 MR. BASSICH: One quick question. This  
21 can be just a yes or no. Is the Department in agreement  
22 with the statement made by Bruce that the stabilization  
23 of the moose population in that area has been attributed  
24 to the local bear control program that's been in place?  
25 So I guess what I'm asking does the Department agree that  
26 the local bear control program that is in place and has  
27 been in place has had a major effect on the stabilization  
28 of the moose population there?

29

30 MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair. We don't  
31 know that for a fact, but it makes sense. It's certainly  
32 part of the picture, but we don't know how big a part.  
33 The other things that play a role, one is that as part of  
34 our cooperative moose management plan, which we completed  
35 in 2002, one of the things that the community stressed  
36 was the importance of regulating potlatch harvest and  
37 reducing cow moose harvest, which was fairly high in the  
38 Yukon Flats area. So those two things acting together  
39 both would tend to push the population up or improve  
40 survival.

41

42 I certainly don't argue with the idea  
43 that the bear harvest has made a difference. We just  
44 can't measure. We don't have an estimate of the total  
45 bear population. It's hard to say what percentage of the  
46 population or in what segments you'd have like adult  
47 males to really see a change of, say, 40 calves per 100  
48 cows to 50. We don't know what that would take because  
49 there's a lot of compensatory mortality in that picture.  
50 If one bear is not in a population, it might mean that a

1 calf moose goes a few more days before it encounters a  
2 bear that will kill it.

3

4                   So I think the thinking is you have to  
5 make a fairly substantial reduction in the bear  
6 population before you see a big change in moose  
7 population dynamics.

8

9                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
10 questions. Last chance.

11

12                   (No comments)

13

14                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thank you,  
15 gentlemen.

16

17                   MR. BASSICH: Thank you.

18

19                   MR. STEPHENSON: Mr. Chair, I was just  
20 going to say I think at this point if Randy Rogers could  
21 come up.

22

23                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Randy is right behind  
24 you. Grab a chair, Randy.

25

26                   MR. STEPHENSON: We have another subject  
27 that Randy would like to talk about.

28

29                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thanks. As you  
30 are aware, we're pressed for time, so without rushing you  
31 too much, be somewhat brief. Thank you.

32

33                   MR. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
34 members of the Council. I only wanted to give you a  
35 quick update on a couple planning processes that will be  
36 moving forward here in the next few months. First of  
37 all, I sent to you, Mr. Chairman, a memo. There's an  
38 effort being initiated through the Fairbanks Advisory  
39 Committee and other advisory committees to create an  
40 update of the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Plan.  
41 It's about to expire, so it's real timely. It's kind of  
42 forward thinking.

43

44                   The idea is trying to get a new harvest  
45 plan put together in cooperation with the different  
46 Advisory Committees, the Federal subsistence process and  
47 the folks over in the Yukon side and the idea would be to  
48 have a new plan proposed for the Board of Game for the  
49 March 2006 meeting. I believe Mike Tinker with the  
50 Fairbanks Advisory Committee, who is the one heading up

1 this process, would like to get a draft plan and some  
2 ideas put together this spring so they're available for  
3 circulation with Advisory Committees and the Regional  
4 Council next fall.

5  
6 This is really more of a citizen-driven  
7 process than a State planning process, but I'm helping to  
8 coordinate. So if there is any need for information for  
9 members of the Council, they could always feel free to  
10 contact me to find out what's going on.

11  
12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you for that,  
13 Randy.

14  
15 MR. ROGERS: And the one potential action  
16 item there, as this process gets going, if this Council  
17 wanted to identify a contact who could be involved if  
18 there's a teleconference or face to face meeting  
19 organized, and that could happen before your next  
20 meeting, it would be good to have someone identified for  
21 that. Just like the other issues you talked about. This  
22 way you get in from the ground up as it's first being  
23 formulated rather than react to something later.

24  
25 I'll go ahead and finish my other one.  
26 You can decide if you want to take action if that's what  
27 you prefer.

28  
29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anybody interested in  
30 participating in that?

31  
32 MS. ENTSMINGER: (Affirmative)

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Sue stuck her finger  
35 up and said, sure, I would.

36  
37 MR. MATHEWS: For Sue, we'll coordinate  
38 your travel activities through Randy or whatever if  
39 there's travel associated or whatever. The Eastern  
40 Interior did play a part in the earlier plan, so I'm  
41 almost certain we can get funding for that, but I'll have  
42 to run it up the flag.

43  
44 MR. ROGERS: To be honest, too, we're  
45 very short on funding as far as supporting travel of  
46 this, so there may not be much involved, but we may try  
47 to scrape together a meeting. Any support you can give  
48 would be appreciated.

49  
50 The other topic I wanted to mention to

1 you folks and one I think you've heard of in the past and  
2 I believe years ago the Eastern Interior Council took  
3 action on is the topic of wood bison restoration in  
4 Alaska. I've got a couple brochures if you folks haven't  
5 seen these. This is a project the Department has been  
6 pursuing for better than a decade right now and in close  
7 cooperation with folks from Yukon Flats, CATG and others.  
8 We're attempting to move forward on this project right  
9 now.

10  
11 I have here some copies of our proposed  
12 planning process that we hope to get initiated this  
13 spring. Essentially what we're looking at right now is a  
14 two-phase process where initially we would want to work  
15 with the public and have a public advisor group to  
16 consider just the merits of bringing wood bison to Alaska  
17 in general.

18  
19 We feel very positive about this as a  
20 real benefit, a wildlife conservation opportunity,  
21 perhaps one of the greatest opportunities we've seen in  
22 the state for years. So we're advocates of it, but we  
23 also want to move slow and make sure that all the  
24 different interest groups of the public agree with this  
25 project.

26  
27 Actually, I guess I should say we don't  
28 want to move slow, we want to move forward. We have to  
29 make sure that all the public agrees with it and we bring  
30 this in place properly. What we hope is we have two  
31 meetings this spring, hope that that would be enough to  
32 get general concurrence that the idea of restoring wood  
33 bison is good.

34  
35 From that we would like to go into our  
36 phase two planning efforts where we would look at  
37 site-specific areas and work towards detailed plans for  
38 wood bison restoration, seeking to complete all the  
39 necessary agency approvals and work towards agreement to  
40 put wood bison on the ground and as expeditiously as  
41 possible.

42  
43 Of course, the main area that has been  
44 talked about for years with this project has been the  
45 Yukon Flats. As I said, we have broadened this to be a  
46 statewide project. Another area that's within this  
47 Council's jurisdiction that's being considered is the  
48 Minto Flats.

49  
50 So we would hope that the Council would

1 play a fairly active role in working with us on this  
2 project, speaking up on behalf of issues associated with  
3 Federal lands, Federal subsistence related to wood bison  
4 and become a partner in making this happen.

5  
6 In a nutshell, that's all I have to say  
7 and I'd be happy to answer any questions.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Randy. Any  
10 questions. Don.

11  
12 MR. WOODRUFF: Randy, what do you predict  
13 the foot turf ratio is 10 years or 15 years from now or  
14 five years? And you mentioned that you'd like all the  
15 public to concur. Well, there's probably a fraction of  
16 Green people or whatever that's not going to concur.

17  
18 MR. ROGERS: Well, we would hope that all  
19 the different groups would concur. You know, that's our  
20 goal. We're prepared to move forward if we have general  
21 support among the Alaska public. We can't expect every  
22 individual to go along with this. We'll have to see how  
23 that shakes out. All the different interest groups that  
24 we've contacted so far we've had a pretty positive  
25 reception. To us, this looks like a really great  
26 opportunity to bring some different interest groups  
27 together that sometimes disagree on wildlife management  
28 and could share in a common objective.

29  
30 As far as the time line on this, one of  
31 the key factors, and Bob is the one that really knows the  
32 details on this, but we need to get wood bison from Elk  
33 Island National Park and they do that on a two-year  
34 cycle. If at all possible, we would like to get this  
35 figured out to the point where we could put in a request  
36 for bison this fall to be brought into Alaska.

37  
38 It's probable that what we would do is  
39 the initial site they would be taken to is the Alaska  
40 Wildlife Conservation Center down by Portage where  
41 they've got eight wood bison right now. They're  
42 developing the handling facilities to take care of it.  
43 Once we have them in the state, as the approvals fall in  
44 place for whatever locations we can, we'd like to move  
45 them as expeditiously as possible.

46  
47 So we'd like to see it much shorter than  
48 the 10 year time frame that you've thrown out. As Sue  
49 knows, we've been working at this for a long time. We've  
50 been working very closely with CATG and there is a

1 certain sense of frustration of how long this project has  
2 taken. We want to move forward if at all possible.

3

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you.

5

6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Randy. Any  
7 more questions.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No more. Anything  
12 else from Fish and Game. Thank you, gentlemen. Oh,  
13 we've got Terry. That's right. I was even reminded last  
14 night and still forgot.

15

16 MR. HAYNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We  
17 will take a very small amount of your time. Although  
18 most of you have already met Mike Koskey with Subsistence  
19 Division, I wanted to take the opportunity to make sure  
20 that all of you knew that Mike started working for the  
21 division last year. He had hoped to get to the meeting  
22 in Eagle last fall, but, like other people, did have some  
23 weather issues that kept some of us in or some of us out.

24

25 Anyway, I thought Mike might like to  
26 briefly tell you what kind of projects he's working on  
27 just so the Council has a sense of his responsibilities  
28 and his geographic area of coverage.

29

30 MR. KOSKEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
31 Council. My name is Mike Koskey and I will be working in  
32 Eastern Interior primarily in the Yukon Flats and Tanana  
33 River valley. In the approximate year I've been with the  
34 Division, I've been primarily focusing on migratory bird  
35 issues in the Upper Tanana as well as the Yukon Flats to  
36 a lesser degree.

37

38 Currently there's a survey going on with  
39 the tribal government for Fort Yukon and this project  
40 won't start up again until 2006 assuming all things  
41 remain the same. We are looking at a project in Upper  
42 Tanana, a non-salmon, whitefish TEK project as well as a  
43 TEK project in the Birch Creek area. Those, of course,  
44 are dependent on whether or not the funding comes  
45 through.

46

47 Like Terry said, I've met most of you  
48 already, but it's nice to meet you. Thanks.

49

50 MR. HAYNES: One other thing I'd mention,

1 Mr. Chairman. I mentioned this at the Council meeting  
2 last fall, but, as you know, there are a number of  
3 proposals on the table to build a natural gas pipeline  
4 from the North Slope south and one of the proposals by  
5 Trans-Canada Pipeline Company would follow the oil  
6 pipeline to Fairbanks and parallel the Alaska Highway to  
7 the Canadian border, so it would go through the heart of  
8 the region covered by this Council.

9  
10 Subsistence Division has been tracking  
11 the work on this lease application that Trans-Canada  
12 submitted. I've been doing some of that work in  
13 conjunction with Subsistence Division. I attended some  
14 public hearings on this lease application earlier this  
15 winter out in the Upper Tanana region and this is  
16 something the Council will clearly have an interest in if  
17 this project becomes reality. It's too early to say for  
18 sure. But be assured that the Department of Fish and  
19 Game is tracking this process very closely.

20  
21 I was involved working with the pipeline  
22 coordinators office back in 1980 when Northwest Pipeline  
23 Project was proposed, so I have a personal interest in  
24 that.

25  
26 Finally, as always, we appreciate the  
27 opportunity to come and present information at these  
28 meetings and to help you in your discussions. Even  
29 though we don't always agree on where we're going, we  
30 appreciate having the dialogue. Thank you.

31  
32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Terry. I  
33 also want to extend appreciation for your position and  
34 the information you provide us because you are always in  
35 the hot seat and we do often butt heads. As a few of my  
36 colleagues up here and I talked about yesterday, I think  
37 we have very common goals. Subsistence users want to do  
38 what -- we want to eat. Your division also wants to help  
39 us to eat. So our ultimate goal is the same, it's just  
40 how we're going to get there. We know we can work  
41 together with you and we appreciate that. Thank you,  
42 Terry. Thank you, Mike.

43  
44 Let's take a 10-minute break.

45  
46 (Off record)

47  
48 (On record)

49  
50 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay, you can get

1 started.

2

3 MS. MCSWEENY: Mr. Chair, Council  
4 members. My name is Ingrid McSweeny. I'm from the  
5 Bureau of Land Management. What I passed out, what's in  
6 front of you right now is age, sex and length information  
7 from the weir. If you have any questions or comments on  
8 that I can answer them.

9

10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any questions or  
11 comments. Virgil.

12

13 MR. UMPHENOUR: About the only thing I've  
14 really got is a comment. I really appreciate this  
15 project and I think it's probably the best project in the  
16 whole drainage as far as telling us what's getting on the  
17 spawning grounds on the Yukon River. There's a number of  
18 reasons I feel that way, but I don't need to bore  
19 everyone with all that. This tells what is really  
20 happening and I really appreciate the project. Thank  
21 you.

22

23 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

24

25 MR. BASSICH: Not to beat an old drum  
26 here, but I guess one point I'd just like to have on the  
27 record, in looking at this, I only see three fish that  
28 are seven years old in this entire survey. I think  
29 that's something that needs to be noted because that  
30 speaks very poignantly to what Virgil and I have both  
31 been trying to expound on for the last couple of years,  
32 that we're losing those older, bigger fish. The elders  
33 are telling us that in the Upper Yukon and this is  
34 showing it here. So I just want that on the record.  
35 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

36

37 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy. Any  
38 more comments or questions.

39

40 (No comments)

41

42 MS. MCSWEENY: There's one other thing.  
43 That first packet that I passed out to you has another  
44 project on the second page and this is a project that I  
45 introduced to the RAC two years ago. It's a reclamation  
46 project in Birch Creek. It started in '01 and we've  
47 received approximately \$450,000 in funding for it and the  
48 on-the-ground work is going to take place in '06 and  
49 we're going through the NEPA process for it right now.  
50 The handout I gave you just gives a brief description of

1 the project and a time line. If you have any questions  
2 on this, I can answer them.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any questions.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No questions. Thank  
9 you.

10

11 MR. WATERS: Good afternoon, Mr.

12 Chairman, Council members. My name is Elijah Waters. I  
13 work for the Bureau of Land Management in the Glennallen  
14 Field Office. Today what I'd like to do is just give you  
15 a brief overview of our East Alaska Resource Management  
16 Plan. When I gave this report to the Southeast Council,  
17 it took me a half hour, so I'm going to try to do it in  
18 10 minutes, so I'm going to really cut to the chase here.

19

20 First of all, I'm only going to highlight  
21 the things that potentially affect subsistence users.  
22 This has been about a two-year process we've been going  
23 through this planning process. Currently where we are,  
24 we're scheduled to have the draft product out sometime  
25 the end of this month, maybe the first of next month.

26

27 Section 810 requires us, if we come up  
28 with any alternative that could affect subsistence users,  
29 we are required by Section 810 to hold some hearings in  
30 those communities. This does not constitute those  
31 hearings, but we do have one of the alternatives that's  
32 being considered that will affect subsistence users and  
33 we want to make sure we get that message out early.

34

35 Just to give you a brief overview of the  
36 planning area just to put it into perspective what it  
37 comes to. That uppermost part there if you can see is  
38 the Black Rapids area. It goes all the way up to Black  
39 Rapids, over to Cantwell, goes as far over as the end of  
40 Unit 13 over the Nabesna area of Mentasta Pass area, down  
41 to Valdez, then we have some of that land down in Cordova  
42 as well.

43

44 The reason it's important here is because  
45 even though the majority of the lands are in Unit 13,  
46 residents of Unit 12, which is covered by this Council,  
47 does have a C&T determination for Unit 13 for moose and  
48 caribou.

49

50 So we went through a series of public

1 meetings and these are the issues we came up with or we  
2 identified and these were either identified internally  
3 through the BLM, Department of Interior, or identified at  
4 the series of public meetings. We had many, many public  
5 meetings all over the state and some of you may have been  
6 at some of those meetings.

7  
8 We took the issues that were identified  
9 and we come up with four alternatives. Here's just a  
10 brief overview of those alternatives. What I want to  
11 point out is Alternative B, the resource development  
12 alternative, is the only one that we feel like will have  
13 a significant effect to subsistence users.

14  
15 I'm going to go through each issue. Some  
16 of them I'm going to completely skip over, but I do want  
17 to talk about travel management because that includes ATV  
18 use and that always gets people going. The bottom line  
19 here, distinction will be made between summer/winter use  
20 and subsistence use. What applies to ATV's or four-  
21 wheelers won't necessarily apply to snowmachines. Also,  
22 nothing that we're proposing will prevent a subsistence  
23 user from using traditional means, ATV's and  
24 snowmachines, in the pursuit of subsistence activities.

25  
26 Protection of resource values. This is  
27 where we start to get into what may affect subsistence  
28 users. Land tenure adjustments. I want to concentrate  
29 specifically on Alternative B here, the revoke PLO 5150.  
30 PLO 5150 stands for Public Land Order 5150 and the only  
31 alternative that we are considering that this would be  
32 revoked in would be Alternative B. To understand PLO  
33 5150, you need to understand what's open to Federal  
34 subsistence hunting. It's unencumbered Federal lands.  
35 In the case of BLM, that means lands that aren't selected  
36 by the State or Native corporations. Only the  
37 unencumbered Federal lands.

38  
39 PLO 5150 was established in 1971 and that  
40 took the entire Pipeline Utility Corridor from Prudhoe  
41 Bay to Valdez and withdrew that from State and Native  
42 selections. The BLM said the U.S. government has a  
43 strong interest in this for oil development. We are  
44 withdrawing that. We won't allow people to select that.  
45 At least twice, in '83 and '89, that was modified in some  
46 form to allow the State to select some of those lands.  
47 In both cases, that was in response to a formal request  
48 by the State of Alaska to modify that to allow them to  
49 take some of those lands. That's why we have kind of the  
50 broken pattern that we have now.

1                   The effects, if PLO 5150 is revoked, and  
2 this only applies to our district, there are existing  
3 selections on that land. Even though that was withdrawn  
4 from selection, the State did what's called top filing,  
5 which means they selected it anyway. So any time those  
6 withdrawals are lifted, then that land then becomes  
7 validly selected and the effect is it would no longer be  
8 under the jurisdiction of the Federal Subsistence Board,  
9 which would mean that that would no longer be open to  
10 Federal subsistence hunting. There's the big part of it.

11  
12                   These two maps show the Federal  
13 subsistence hunting areas in Unit 13 and the map on the  
14 right is what we call the TCAL block, everything south of  
15 Glennallen. The map on the left is everything north of  
16 Glennallen. If you see that large block there, you see  
17 the Richardson Highway going up, here's Paxson, here's  
18 the Denali Highway. These are the Wild and Scenic River  
19 corridors, the Gulkana, the Delta and then this large  
20 block most of that is pipeline utility withdrawal as  
21 well.

22  
23                   This is the same map. The purple hatched  
24 area is the lands that are open to Federal subsistence,  
25 including this orange with the hatch. The orange is what  
26 would be removed if PLO 5150 is revoked. That makes up  
27 63 percent of the Federal hunting area that's in Unit 13.  
28 According to our harvest records, in a typical year, over  
29 80 percent of the moose and caribou harvested under  
30 Federal regulations come within that corridor.

31  
32                   So this is where we get the significant  
33 restriction on subsistence users. I want to point out  
34 here only for the ones who have a C&T use determination  
35 for GMU 13.

36  
37                   The rest of this, we don't feel like any  
38 of these, the management under any of the alternatives  
39 regardless of what's selected, it's not going to have a  
40 significant effect on subsistence users. To emphasize  
41 the last issue, subsistence management, under Alternative  
42 B there would be a significant effect.

43  
44                   In summary, I think I kept it under 10  
45 minutes, the official 90-day public comment won't begin  
46 until the draft is on the street and that will be late  
47 this month or early next month. Still, we take public  
48 comments at any time. We welcome public comments. The  
49 decision-maker doesn't have to pick Alternative B or  
50 Alternative C. The decision-maker might pick one part of

1 Alternative B, one part of Alternative C, one part of  
2 Alternative D, so it can be a mix-match of the four  
3 alternatives that are presented in the plan.

4  
5 So I'd encourage you to follow this plan  
6 and have an interest in this. We're not presenting it in  
7 Alternative D, which is considered our preferred  
8 alternative. It's not the preferred alternative from the  
9 BLM's position. However, that doesn't mean that still  
10 won't be the alternative that's chosen or at least that  
11 specific part of that alternative won't be chosen. So  
12 just because we're not calling it the preferred  
13 alternative, don't sit back and ignore it.

14  
15 We're going out to try to get this word  
16 out that this is being considered. We will be having  
17 public meetings once that 90-day period starts. We'll be  
18 having public meetings in Delta Junction, which is  
19 represented by this Council, Chistochina which is close  
20 to the area covered by this Council, and then another  
21 meeting in Glennallen. In addition to that, I'm more  
22 than willing to go to anybody who asks and get a more  
23 thorough, in-depth briefing and get all the weeds of  
24 the plan.

25  
26 With that, I'll answer any questions.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Are there  
29 any questions.

30  
31 (No comments)

32  
33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So no questions.  
34 Thank you very much.

35  
36 MR. WATERS: I can't believe I'm getting  
37 off that easy.

38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: The next up is Fish  
40 and Wildlife Service.

41  
42 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, while they're  
43 setting up, we'll have some additional handouts on avian  
44 influenza and West Nile virus. Again, the caution is  
45 we're not the experts on it. This is information you  
46 would like. We can connect you with the right person,  
47 but we don't have any answers for those questions here.

48  
49 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Vince.  
50 Wennona, are you doing Arctic, Yukon and Tetlin or what

1 are you doing?

2

3 MS. BROWN: Arctic and Yukon Flats.

4

5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thank you.

6

7 MS. BROWN: I'll start with Arctic.  
8 Wennona Brown, subsistence coordinator for the Yukon  
9 Flats and Arctic National Wildlife Refuges. On Page 118  
10 of your book there is a list of projects that the Arctic  
11 Refuge has submitted that I will be involved with. If  
12 you have any questions or whatever about those.

13

14 Also, the information that Vince is  
15 passing around regarding the West Nile Virus and bird  
16 flu, those are in response to Councilman Titus's question  
17 yesterday. I went back to the waterfowl biologist for  
18 Arctic Refuge and got some additional information.  
19 Unless there's any questions about the Arctic Refuge.

20

21 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Are there any  
22 questions regarding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge  
23 for Wennona.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay.

28

29 MS. BROWN: I'll move on to the Yukon  
30 Flats. There is some information in your book regarding  
31 our activities starting on Page 119 through 121.  
32 There's also an updated version on the table that has  
33 some pictures in it. It has a couple additional  
34 projects. Bruce and Bob have already covered the moose  
35 surveys. James mentioned the project with the school at  
36 Otik Lake and our refuge has been working with that.  
37 Paul worked hard at getting that set up.

38

39 Upcoming activities that we expect this  
40 year. We've got new hen mortality studies starting this  
41 spring. We also expect to do our fish camp survey again  
42 this summer, probably in July. Just as a reminder, in  
43 some of the villages, the proposal period for the Tribal  
44 Wildlife Grants Program will be open until April 4th.

45

46 Unless there's any other particular  
47 questions, I would do a quick synopsis. Also, I brought  
48 several copies of the full Western Yukon Flats Moose  
49 Management report from last fall's surveys. It's on the  
50 table if you're interested.

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: I think we'll go ahead  
2 and hold our questions until you're done with your whole  
3 presentation.

4  
5 MS. BROWN: As requested by the Chair and  
6 other members of the Council, I've prepared a little  
7 synopsis of the presentation that we've been giving at  
8 the public meetings regarding the proposed land exchange.

9  
10  
11 This is a project that there's been some  
12 ongoing negotiations for a couple of years and it's  
13 resulted in kind of an agreement in principle. In your  
14 package you'll have an explanation of why the Service is  
15 interested in it. There's also some information towards  
16 the back of what Doyon hopes to gain from the exchange.

17  
18 Like I said, we have the agreement in  
19 principle and there are two phases of the agreement. The  
20 first phase is actually the land exchange itself. In the  
21 exchange, Doyon identified 110,000 acres in the southern  
22 part of the refuge that stretches roughly from Birch  
23 Creek south to the refuge border and there are color maps  
24 floating around. Doyon identified 110,000 acres that  
25 they wanted to exchange surface and subsurface rights and  
26 then around that area there is another 97,000 acres that  
27 they identified as some potential and they were looking  
28 at that as subsurface only. There would be no surface  
29 occupancy. Any production there would have to be from  
30 directional drilling or whatever from Doyon lands.

31  
32 It would be an equal value exchange and  
33 the equal value would be totally based on appraisals of  
34 the uniform appraisal system that the government has to  
35 use. The estimate right now on how that exchange would  
36 go is that for the 110,000 acres that the refuge would  
37 give to Doyon, Doyon would give 150,000 acres and that's  
38 surface and subsurface to the refuge. The appraisals  
39 have not been done. They're expected to be done sometime  
40 this summer.

41  
42 In addition to that, Doyon has about  
43 420,000 acres of 12(b) selections that have been  
44 identified within the refuge. Most of that land is over-  
45 selection. Of that 420,000 acres, the actual  
46 entitlements that remain are a little over 56,000. Doyon  
47 has agreed as part of this agreement of this exchange to  
48 remove their selections on the entire 420,000 acres and  
49 take the remaining 56,000 acres outside the refuge  
50 boundaries and most likely over around the village of

1 Circle.

2

3                   So what that looks like is a lot of land  
4 coming back to the Service. It's actually not. I guess  
5 that has been a question that has come up before. Most  
6 of that is over-selected land that the Service would get  
7 back anyway.

8

9                   Also, as part of the agreement, they  
10 started looking at this checkerboard pattern around the  
11 villages. We've identified some swapping of land back  
12 and forth to consolidate land ownership and sort of get  
13 rid of that checkerboard pattern. I think one of the  
14 last maps, maybe Map 5, kind of shows how that  
15 consolidation would occur. It would make management on  
16 both sides easier. Another point to be brought out is  
17 that the exchange only involves Doyon land. It does not  
18 involve any village corporation lands.

19

20                   Habitats that would be involved in the  
21 Phase I exchange, the lands that Doyon would receive,  
22 it's mostly upland terrain, low density of waterfowl and  
23 wetland-dependent species. In identifying the lands the  
24 Service would be interested in, a lot of the criteria we  
25 used was based on our data sets, and since one of the  
26 purposes for which the refuge was established was for the  
27 protection of waterfowl and wetland-dependent species,  
28 our criteria was looking at high-density areas for  
29 waterfowl, good wetland habitat.

30

31                   So a lot of the areas that Doyon would be  
32 receiving in the exchange are upland terrains, low  
33 density of waterfowl and wetland-dependent species, 173  
34 lakes, 35 river miles and 2 percent wetlands area.

35

36                   The lands that the refuge would get in  
37 exchange are mostly lowland terrain, higher density of  
38 waterfowl and wetland-dependent species, 1,395 lakes, 109  
39 river miles and wetlands are 12 percent of the area.

40

41                   To point out in the consolidation phase,  
42 between the Service and Doyon there's no net loss or gain  
43 of public lands. It's an even swap.

44

45                   In the second phase of this agreement in  
46 principle, it would only happen if Doyon finds oil and  
47 gas within the region. If they find gas and proceed to  
48 production, Doyon agreed to pay the Service 1.25 percent  
49 of the well-head value of the oil and gas. In the 2005  
50 Omnibus Spending Bill, Congress did put in place a

1 special account that that money would go to so that money  
2 will stay in Alaska. It does not go into the general  
3 revenue fund.

4  
5 What that money would be designated for  
6 was to buy additional land within refuges and also to  
7 develop facilities. As part of the agreement, Doyon has  
8 committed to selling the refuge an additional 120,000  
9 acres within the refuge. So there would be no loss of  
10 public lands in the refuge in Phase II. The refuge would  
11 have the option of buying 120,000 additional acres.

12  
13 The habitats of the Phase II of the  
14 exchange, the lands that the Service identified for  
15 possible acquisition contain 768 lakes and 77 river  
16 miles. There would be no lands going out of public  
17 ownership. The actual acreage acquired in the exchange  
18 is a three to one exchange. Doyon gets 110,000 acres,  
19 the Service would get 330,000 acres.

20  
21 Additionally, Doyon has identified their  
22 preferred route would go south out of the refuge and  
23 probably out Victoria Creek and tying in to the Trans-  
24 Alaska Pipeline somewhere around Livengood. However, if  
25 there are some permitting or engineering issues that  
26 preclude them from going that route and they come across  
27 refuge land, they have agreed to up the production  
28 payment to 1.5 percent and also for every linear mile  
29 that the pipeline would cross refuge land the refuge  
30 would get an additional section of Doyon land.

31  
32 So, the bottom line, if all portions of  
33 the exchange are implemented, the refuge would divest  
34 110,000 acres and we would acquire 330,000 acres of  
35 habitat, for a net gain of 220,000 acres. To put that in  
36 perspective, that's 343 square miles or a strip of land  
37 6.8 miles wide from Fairbanks to Nenana.

38  
39 Any questions so far?

40  
41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Just keep going if  
42 you're not done. If you're done, we'll start taking  
43 questions.

44  
45 MS. BROWN: I was just going to briefly  
46 hit on some of the impacts that we've identified. The  
47 potential effects of Phase I, which is going to be after  
48 the exchange, would be seismic and exploration  
49 activities. Any potential effects there would depend on  
50 the timing and exploration methods used. If they go in

1 the winter time, particularly if it's helicopter  
2 supported, I don't feel there would be that many impacts.

3  
4

5                   If development takes place, the potential  
6 impacts there would be a direct loss of vegetation from  
7 construction or production facilities in the  
8 transportation corridor, probably a direct loss of  
9 habitat from developing borrow pits, changes in  
10 vegetation from dust accumulation, particularly off the  
11 road, potential erosion at stream crossings if not done  
12 properly, potential decreased water quality, displacement  
13 of wildlife, potential increased predator populations  
14 from human food sources, loss of wilderness character.

15

16                   That's one thing I didn't touch on. A  
17 little over 26,000 acres that Doyon has identified they  
18 would like to have is within the area back in 1987 the  
19 refuge had initially proposed for wilderness designation.  
20 So if this exchange were to go through and they were to  
21 develop the area, that would essentially negate any kind  
22 of wilderness designation.

23

24                   On the other side, Doyon has requested an  
25 easement on all lands that they would be giving to the  
26 Service to maintain in perpetuity a subsistence use  
27 easement so that those lands would always be available to  
28 the Doyon shareholders for subsistence. That's sort of a  
29 provision that would still be in effect if laws change in  
30 the future.

31

32                   Continuing on the impacts, like I  
33 mentioned, the loss of wilderness character, diminished  
34 biological integrity and environmental health of the area  
35 affected by development, increased human activity if  
36 access corridor is open to the public, disruptions in the  
37 natural hydrology and always the potential from  
38 contaminant spills.

39

40                   The most measurable impacts would  
41 probably occur on the lands that Doyon would receive and  
42 the lands surrounding the transportation corridor.  
43 Probably the most significant effects to the refuge would  
44 likely be the loss of wilderness values and other than  
45 the potential corridor if it goes across.

46

47                   I did attach the slides as to why Doyon  
48 is interested in the trade, but I'd prefer not to speak  
49 to their interests.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Wennona.  
2 Are there any questions or comments from the Council.  
3 Yes, Sue.

4  
5 MS. ENTSMINGER: It just brings up a  
6 question to me. I assume you're in favor of the land  
7 swap, the Service is.

8  
9 MS. BROWN: The Service feels it is a  
10 win/win situation because we're gaining more habitats and  
11 more wetland habitats than what we're giving up.

12  
13 MS. ENTSMINGER: I guess I was interested  
14 in why so many potential problems arise that they'd go  
15 for the favorite. It seems like the other side is there  
16 also.

17  
18 MS. BROWN: The Service feels that by  
19 doing the land exchange any development issues would  
20 actually be on private land, it would not be on Federal  
21 public land. So they would be isolating any potential  
22 problems or whatever to private land. It would not  
23 actually be occurring on Federal land and we would not  
24 have to look at the issue of whether or not oil and gas  
25 development on the wildlife refuge is compatible with the  
26 purposes for which the refuge was established.

27  
28 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
29 comments or questions.

30  
31 (No comments)

32  
33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Seeing none. Thank  
34 you.

35  
36 MS. BROWN: I would just like to add as  
37 of right now the public comment period on the proposed  
38 exchange is open until April 1st. We've been doing a  
39 series of meetings in villages. We're going to Arctic  
40 Village tomorrow and then later in the month we're going  
41 to Stevens Village and that would complete all the  
42 villages of the Flats. We've had numerous requests that  
43 that be extended and I don't know whether it will be or  
44 not.

45  
46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much.  
47 Paul.

48  
49 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

50

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: You have the floor,  
2 Paul.

3  
4 MR. WILLIAMS: I don't have anything in  
5 particular unless you have questions on any of the  
6 activities that we're involved in on a yearly basis as  
7 managers of the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge.

8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any questions for  
10 Paul.

11  
12 (No comments)

13  
14 MR. WILLIAMS: If not, I could touch on  
15 the surveys on king salmon we do in the summertime. This  
16 is going to be the third year that we've started from the  
17 bridge. Usually we start around the 10th of July and  
18 after about two weeks hopefully we end up there around  
19 Circle. Generally what we do is stop at all the fish  
20 wheels and fish nets and fish camps and talk to people  
21 about what we're doing and making sure that they're  
22 getting enough fish and the quality of fish is also  
23 looked into and we take samples for genetic studies by  
24 taking scales and talking to people about how they're  
25 doing and if they have any questions or complaints or  
26 complements. We share a cup of coffee with them and have  
27 a good time. If there's no questions, I thank you.

28  
29 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Paul and  
30 Wenona. Next is Tetlin. Is someone here? Yes. Okay.  
31 Go ahead.

32  
33 MS. FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
34 Council members. My name is Connie Friend. I'm the  
35 refuge liaison for Tetlin Wildlife Refuge. I'd just like  
36 to begin by sharing with you the report that's on Page  
37 123 of your books. We're losing our manager, he's  
38 retiring this year in June and we're going to greatly  
39 miss him. He was previously manager of Innoko. He's a  
40 30-year career U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee.  
41 He succeeded Richard Voss at the Tetlin Refuge in 1999.  
42 He and his wife plan to move to Hawaii where they have a  
43 home. It's going to be a big loss for us.

44  
45 For our winter moose hunt we issued 28  
46 permits and there were no harvests reported. Ninety-six  
47 permits and four designated hunter permits have been  
48 issued thus far for the subsistence winter/spring caribou  
49 hunt and five caribou have been reported harvested thus  
50 far.

1                   While we have periodically been flying  
2 the Nelchina caribou herd to ascertain the composition of  
3 the Mentasta mixes, Wrangell-St. Elias Park and Preserve  
4 have also been flying and they've been closely following  
5 the Nelchina herd to understand a little better the  
6 effects of the fires last year on the movement of the  
7 Nelchina herd. We're kind of coordinating those studies.

8  
9                   Our moose population census was completed  
10 in November. 2,954 square miles were surveyed. That  
11 included the refuge and portions of the Wrangell-St.  
12 Elias Park and Preserve as well as Tetlin Native  
13 Corporation lands or 30 percent of GMU 12. Given our  
14 estimates of moose density, .43 moose per square mile,  
15 adults bulls, there were 70 bulls to 100 cows, 48 calves  
16 to 100 cows and yearling bulls 16 per 100. So this  
17 continues to tell us that our moose population is stable.

18  
19                   We participated in a formal biological  
20 review last fall. The purpose of the review is to insure  
21 that the best science is being used to design and  
22 implement biological programs on refuges. This review  
23 brought together a panel of scientists and wildlife  
24 experts from across Alaska and Canada. Those results are  
25 being analyzed and compiled yet.

26  
27                   We're also currently engaged in revising  
28 our Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This is a  
29 projection of program goals and objectives over the next  
30 15 years and we've had public comment periods for that  
31 and we'll continue to have more.

32  
33                   We captured last fall 10 adult cow moose  
34 and fitted with satellite collars and real time  
35 biological data is being incorporated from those into  
36 middle and high school science curricula which was  
37 developed by our environmental specialist Mary Timm. The  
38 data gives the biologists, students and local residents  
39 increased information regarding moose demographics.  
40 That's been a real success in the schools. Tetlin just  
41 kind of tagged on after seeing it on the internet where  
42 the kids can log on each day and find out where the moose  
43 are and where they crossed the road. It was like this  
44 big deal in Northway.

45  
46                   I didn't have it in my report and I  
47 apologize, but the TEK fishery study that I've been  
48 involved in for the last two years is still in progress.  
49 Some really good things are happening as we've been  
50 working on this comprehensive conservation plan and also

1 on cultural resources, some that I'll talk about in a  
2 minute. All of these components and the biology review,  
3 these things are kind of working together to help us to  
4 create better products and more integrated maps and a  
5 better database for information regarding subsistence  
6 uses, traditional uses and also cultural resources.

7  
8                   So that's kind of where that is. I've  
9 been doing a few group interviews, which have also been  
10 really dynamic and one of the best data collection  
11 processes I've found so far. So those are working out  
12 well.

13  
14                   The last thing is we did partner with the  
15 Alaska Fire Service, Tanana Chiefs Conference, village  
16 councils on both sides of the Canadian border to put  
17 together a summit to look at the protection and  
18 preservation of cultural resources on Refuge lands and  
19 also along the proposed gas pipeline route. That was  
20 previously scheduled in February and it's now been  
21 rescheduled for March 22 and 23. We're looking forward  
22 to that. I think it's kind of a new concept of bringing  
23 together all the researchers who have done research in  
24 the Upper Tanana and the elders and the tribal leaders  
25 and the focus is on dialogue.

26  
27                   I've heard the Council emphasize that and  
28 I apologize for not contacting Council members when maybe  
29 it would have been to your advantage and definitely to  
30 ours but pledge to do better. There are a lot of issues  
31 that I think are important for us to collaborate on.  
32 Some of them get to me in a timely way and some don't,  
33 but when they do I'm happy to share and hear your input  
34 and share our perspectives. Thank you for your time and  
35 your interest and communication. I appreciate you all  
36 for being here.

37  
38                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Connie.  
39 Are there any comments or questions. Andy.

40  
41                   MR. BASSICH: Just one quick question.  
42 Refuge issued 28 permits for a 10-day hunt and there was  
43 no harvest of moose and then 96 permits and only five  
44 caribou were taken. How does that compare with other  
45 years when you've done this? It just seems like an  
46 incredibly low success rate to me.

47  
48                   MS. FRIEND: Yeah. As far as the moose  
49 hunt, it's a 10-day hunt in November, from November 20th  
50 to 30th, for the purpose of putting food on the table if

1 a person didn't get their moose earlier in the season.  
2 Typically, there have not been any harvests. I think  
3 maybe the location of the moose are a little inaccessible  
4 at that time. But it's just out there in case people can  
5 do it.

6  
7 As far as the caribou is concerned,  
8 because the hunt is open so long, we don't have all the  
9 data for your meetings until the following fall, so I  
10 think probably the harvest for the caribou is higher  
11 because they did stay for a while and people were out  
12 there. So all I can report is what I have.

13  
14 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Connie.  
15 Any more questions or comments.

16  
17 (No comments)

18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Thank you very  
20 much. Let's move to the next, National Park Service.

21  
22 MS. CELLARIUS: Mr. Chair, members of the  
23 Council. I'm Barbara Cellarius, subsistence coordinator  
24 for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. I'm  
25 going to try to be quick, but if I'm too quick and you've  
26 got some questions, please ask.

27  
28 Just a couple really quick things about  
29 what's going on at the Park. We have a new  
30 superintendent, Jed Davis. He joined us in November.  
31 We've been briefing him on subsistence and he has been  
32 taking an active role in subsistence or an active  
33 interest in subsistence. We also have a new Nabesna  
34 district ranger who is based on Slana, so part of his  
35 area is Unit 12, and he's been with us just a month or  
36 so. His name is Mark Thompson. Your appointment to the  
37 Wrangell-St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission is  
38 Chuck Miller of Dot Lake. His appointment is good until  
39 November of 2006.

40  
41 The next thing is a little longer. I  
42 just wanted to update you on the Chisana caribou herd,  
43 what's happening with that captive rearing program. In  
44 November they made a decision to continue for a third  
45 year of the captive rearing program. The goal of the  
46 program at this point is to better determine the advocacy  
47 and to refine the methodology of the program in the  
48 conservation of declining ungulates.

49  
50 The Chisana caribou herd is a small

1 woodland caribou herd that's been declining over the last  
2 decade or two. It winters in the Yukon and comes over  
3 into the Park and Preserve in the spring.

4  
5                   There were poor survey conditions in the  
6 fall, but over 500 caribou were counted, calf  
7 survivorship to mid-October was 10 times greater for the  
8 pen-raised calves compared to the wild calves and pen-  
9 raised calf weight in October averaged 15 pounds greater  
10 than wild calves. We will continue to evaluate the  
11 effects of the program for at least the next three years.  
12 Future plans for captive rearing efforts will be decided  
13 at the fall meeting following this year's findings.

14  
15                   We will begin to develop a herd  
16 management plan similar to that developed for the  
17 Mentasta caribou herd and will involve Alaska and Yukon  
18 stakeholders as well as agency biologists.

19  
20                   That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

21  
22                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you very much,  
23 Barbara. Any questions or comments. Sue.

24  
25                   MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
26 On the Chisana caribou herd, did the Park Service get  
27 involved in it at all or was it all done in Canada by the  
28 Canadians?

29  
30                   MS. CELLARIUS: The Park Service is  
31 somewhat limited in exactly how we can participate in  
32 this project. We can't do single species management  
33 unless there's a conservation concern that's been  
34 recognized by putting a species on the endangered species  
35 list. What we can do, our wildlife biologist is an  
36 active participant in this sort of larger project and the  
37 Park's specific role is to fund monitoring.

38  
39                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any more questions or  
40 comments.

41  
42                   (No comments)

43  
44                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Thank you very  
45 much. Any other National Park Service. Hollis.

46  
47                   MR. TWITCHELL: Hollis Twitchell. I'm  
48 with Denali National Park and Preserve, subsistence  
49 coordinator, cultural coordinator. I'm happy to report  
50 that all is smooth in Denali. There's no controversies,

1 there's no issues, no legislation, no congressional  
2 inquiries and everybody is happy with park management.

3

4 (Laughter)

5

6 MR. TWITCHELL: I didn't think you'd buy  
7 that. I only have four items that I was going to mention  
8 quickly. The last meeting we mentioned that the  
9 Subsistence Resource Commission passed a hunting proposal  
10 asking for continuation of the Denali studies on caribou  
11 and wolves. It was an effort to look at that data for  
12 natural and healthy clarifications of what that means for  
13 management on park lands.

14

15 The Commission received a letter from the  
16 Park Service Regional Director responding that, yes, that  
17 was a very valid proposal and recommendation that the  
18 continuation of those studies are the highest priority  
19 for the park and that those will continue to be funded.

20

21 She went on to say that Denali has also  
22 advanced a proposal to hold a workshop with subsistence  
23 managers and biologists as well as knowledgeable local  
24 individuals, subsistence users that will review the data  
25 both for the Mentasta herd and the Denali herd as well as  
26 the biology on the wolves and come forth with some  
27 recommendation of what those populations might mean in  
28 terms of natural and healthy in management regimes. That  
29 proposal was not funded yet this year.

30

31 She went on to say that the regional  
32 offices, natural resources and subsistence strategic  
33 management plans addressed this as a high priority and a  
34 need and recognized it's something that needs to be  
35 clarified and worked on, so it's recognized at the  
36 regional level as well. I think that's probably going to  
37 happen sometime in the near future.

38

39 The Park Service did a fairly large moose  
40 survey on the north side of Denali encompassing most of  
41 the park lands this past fall and came out with an  
42 estimate 1,104 moose that has a density of about .29  
43 moose per square mile. The cow:calf ratio was 39 calves  
44 per 100 cows. The bull:cow ratio was 88 bulls per 100  
45 cows.

46

47 At the last Council meeting, I mentioned  
48 another SRC proposal to do a monitoring report for the  
49 Kantishna Hills area and that was done this year. There  
50 was only one hunter that traveled to Kantishna this fall

1 to hunt in the area. Hiked through the area, down to the  
2 Bear Paw, floated out the Bear Paw to the Kantishna and  
3 down the Kantishna and made a harvest outside of park  
4 lands, so there was no harvest in the Kantishna area this  
5 year. We will continue that reporting process as  
6 requested by the SRC in future years.

7  
8 The Kantishna River fall chum salmon  
9 stock assessment, received a report back on that. The  
10 Toklat recovery fish wheels were operated from the 16th  
11 through the 29th. There were 7,504 fall chum salmon  
12 examined, 387 were tagged. The Upper Kantishna recovery  
13 wheels operated from August 16th to October 5th on both  
14 the left and right bank of the river. There were 529  
15 fall chum captured, 19 were tagged. The preliminary fall  
16 chum abundance estimate for the Kantishna River was  
17 64,950 chum salmon, which is the second highest estimate  
18 since the project began.

19  
20 At the last meeting I think Virgil asked  
21 the question on what the biological escapement goal was  
22 for the Toklat River. The BEG goal is 15,000 to 33,000  
23 fall chum salmon for that area. The Toklat River  
24 abundance for this year was 35,480 fall chum salmon based  
25 upon ground surveys of the spawning area that was  
26 conducted on October 23rd and 24th.

27  
28 That's all that I had. I'll try and  
29 answer any questions.

30  
31 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Hollis.  
32 Virgil.

33  
34 MR. UMPHENOUR: That population estimate  
35 for the Kantishna, that's upstream from the Toklat?

36  
37 MR. TWITCHELL: The population estimate  
38 would include both Toklat and the Upper Kantishna River  
39 drainages, the 64,000 salmon.

40  
41 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you. Mr. Chair.

42  
43 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any more questions or  
44 comments.

45  
46 (No comments)

47  
48 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Thank you very  
49 much, Hollis. Any more Park folks.

50

1 (No comments)  
2  
3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Seeing none. How  
4 about the Regional Office. I'm not sure which Regional  
5 Office that's talking about.  
6  
7 MR. MATHEWS: National Park Service.  
8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Ahh. Okay. Other  
10 Agencies or Groups.  
11  
12 (No comments)  
13  
14 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay. Let's  
15 move to Regional Council business. Vince.  
16  
17 MR. MATHEWS: Yes, Mr. Chairman. That  
18 falls into my bailiwick. Basically the first one that's  
19 there is they're going to look at revising and updating  
20 your operations manual. If you have any thoughts on how  
21 to revise it, make it better, different format, anything  
22 like that, right now it's a question/answer format,  
23 please let me know and I'll convey it to the other Staff  
24 that are looking at updating this. Was there anything  
25 else on that?  
26  
27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No. Proceed.  
28  
29 MR. MATHEWS: Now we get into the  
30 elections of officers. That's Chair, Vice Chair and  
31 Secretary. That I think you handle.  
32  
33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Are there any  
34 nominations for Chair. Andy.  
35  
36 MR. BASSICH: I'd like to nominate you  
37 for Chair again, Craig Fleener.  
38  
39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. Any more  
40 nominations.  
41  
42 MR. UMPHENOUR: Move that nominations  
43 close.  
44  
45 MS. ENTSMINGER: Second.  
46  
47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: It's been moved,  
48 closed and seconded. So it's a done deal. You've only  
49 got one guy to vote for. Let's go to the next one. Any  
50 nominations for Vice Chair.

1 MS. ENTSMINGER: I make a nomination for  
2 Gerald.  
3  
4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Gerald has been  
5 nominated for Vice Chair. Any other nominations.  
6  
7 MR. UMPHENOUR: I move nominations close.  
8  
9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay, so it's closed.  
10 Next one, Secretary. Any nominations.  
11  
12 MR. UMPHENOUR: Nominate Sue Entsminger.  
13  
14 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Sue has been  
15 nominated. Any more nominations.  
16  
17 MR. TITUS: Move to close.  
18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Jeep moved to close.  
20 Okay. I think that's got it all. All three of those are  
21 done. You have no choice in the matter, Sue. It's just  
22 a done deal. Appointments.  
23  
24 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. For the new  
25 Council members, the title of secretary is really like an  
26 additional officer, just so you understand that when it  
27 comes up to other elections. I do your minutes and  
28 correspondence and et cetera.  
29  
30 Hollis already covered your appointments,  
31 so you have no appointments to the SRC that I'm aware of.  
32  
33  
34 The Yukon River Coordinating Fisheries  
35 Committee, yes, you do. Your present members are Virgil  
36 and Gerald with an alternate of Jay Stevens. Jay  
37 Steven's seat is up during this time. He did not submit  
38 an application, so you may want to reconfirm the two  
39 present active members and then look at an alternate  
40 since Jay didn't reapply.  
41  
42 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Who is  
43 interested in being appointed? Virgil.  
44  
45 MR. UMPHENOUR: I'd like to stay on the  
46 Fisheries Coordinating Committee.  
47  
48 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anybody have a problem  
49 with that?  
50

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Neither do I. Okay,  
4 that's done. Yes, Andy.

5

6 MR. BASSICH: I'd be willing to serve as  
7 an alternate on that in lieu of Jay leaving.

8

9 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Anyone have a problem  
10 with that?

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay. You're  
15 an alternate, Jay's replacement. So we have all three.  
16 Gerald is still the second. Other appointments.

17

18 MR. MATHEWS: Not that I know of unless  
19 there's other Staff here that knows of any other  
20 appointments. That's usually like planning groups and  
21 stuff like that. Actually, you did do that. That was  
22 Sue.

23

24 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Let's move on  
25 to correspondence received and sent.

26

27 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, your policy  
28 on that has been just a summary and that's on Page 124 if  
29 you want to look at it. There wasn't a lot of  
30 correspondence. I have copies if you want to look at  
31 them.

32

33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Are there any  
34 questions or comments relating to correspondence sent and  
35 received.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Doesn't appear  
40 to be any. Council topics for the 2005 Board Meeting.  
41 Oh, that's me and Vinnie.

42

43 MR. MATHEWS: No, it's not me. The  
44 Board, during its meeting, has a section where Chairs can  
45 bring up topics, so this is an opportunity if the Council  
46 wants to empower you to bring up a particular topic.  
47 Again, you don't revisit proposals that are before them,  
48 but you may want to bring up a topic on whatever. It  
49 seems like your focus right now is on fishery management  
50 so there might be some topic there.

1 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks, Vince. Are  
2 there any specific topics that the Council may want to be  
3 brought up at the May 2005 Board meeting.

4  
5 (No comments)

6  
7 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: None. Okay. Let's  
8 proceed then.

9  
10 MR. MATHEWS: The last item, if you look  
11 at Page 125, is the calendar for the next round of  
12 meetings. I'll give you a second to find that because I  
13 have a series of questions for you on that. It won't  
14 take long. If you look on Page 125, you'll see all the  
15 Council meetings there for the upcoming fall meeting.  
16 You preliminarily selected Tanana, October 11th and 12th.  
17 I've been asked to see if you would be willing to move  
18 that to the 10th and 11th because the same Staff other  
19 than myself have to travel to the Y-K Delta meeting right  
20 after yours and they're going to be meeting in Bethel.

21  
22 So one option is to move that to the 10th  
23 and 11th, your meeting, or move it to the next week,  
24 October 18th and 19th. The advantage of moving it to the  
25 18th and 19th are kind of personal on my part, but when  
26 these meetings go back to back, that's why I missed part  
27 of your discussion today, I'm actually planning the  
28 Allakaket meeting for Western Interior the same time I'm  
29 doing your meeting. So if there could be a week spread,  
30 that would be great. So there's two options, October  
31 10th and 11th or 18th and 19th.

32  
33 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Don.

34  
35 MR. WOODRUFF: I'd prefer the 10th and  
36 11th.

37  
38 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Don prefers the 10th  
39 and 11th. Andy.

40  
41 MR. BASSICH: I have to say it has to be  
42 earlier than later. That time of the year the Yukon  
43 River is untravelable sometimes and that would eliminate  
44 Don and I for sure.

45  
46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So you prefer 10th and  
47 11th also.

48  
49 MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I would prefer  
50 earlier if possible, but I don't see that. Earlier would

1 be better if possible in the future, keep in mind.  
2 That's a tough time of year for us to move on the river  
3 some years.

4  
5 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: 10th and 11th sounds  
6 good. Any opposition to that.

7  
8 (No comments)

9  
10 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So let it be written.  
11 So let it be done. Vince.

12  
13 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman, do you still  
14 want to stay.....

15  
16 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Is that a Federal  
17 holiday on the 10th?

18  
19 MR. MATHEWS: No. We work holidays. We  
20 did it with Western Interior. We met on the weekend and  
21 a holiday. So that doesn't factor in. So the 10th and  
22 11th. Is it still Tanana or do you want Venetie or  
23 whatever. Right now Gerald is not here to speak for  
24 Tanana.

25  
26 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Unless there's  
27 opposition by the Council, I think we should leave it as  
28 is. We can perhaps make Venetie for the following  
29 meeting unless Larry has a problem with that idea.

30  
31 MR. WILLIAMS: No, I have no problem with  
32 that.

33  
34 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thanks. How about the  
35 rest of the Council, any problem with meeting in Tanana  
36 on the 10th and 11th of October, 2005.

37  
38 (No comments)

39  
40 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Okay. Vince.

41  
42 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. I heard loud  
43 and clear that you guys have a desire for a Tri-Council  
44 meeting. While it's in front of you now, tell me what  
45 week you would like to have a Tri-Council meeting if  
46 that's what we're going to do. A Tri-Council meeting  
47 will probably run three to four days at a minimum. I  
48 would need to know now instead of coming back to you.  
49 Your Tri-Council meeting request was dealing with  
50 fisheries. Your fall meeting is fisheries, so we're at

1 that point now of exploring a Tri-Council meeting.

2

3

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Philip.

4

5

6

MR. TITUS: When will we know about the other committees, if they're available to meet?

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

MR. MATHEWS: Y-K has already met. Western is meeting next week. So I will convey to Western your desire to have a Tri-Council when there's fishery issues, but it would also be nice to convey to them that you're looking at a particular week. Again, that's just information exchange. I've still got to run it up through the process here. Funding is not the question. It's more the logistics of pulling this all off in addition to a justification for it.

I'm kind of putting you guys in a corner here, but it would help to know which week you're looking at and then if you can give me advice of a location. The last one was in Wasilla because it was felt that it was a neutral location for the three Councils. I personally do not want to go back to Wasilla. Not because of the community. Just because the logistics of it compounded a lot of things. Again, a week and a location would be great.

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Sue.

MS. ENTSMINGER: I was wondering, do you want to see an Eastern Interior meeting and a Tri-Council meeting? Just one. So we'd be meeting in Tanana.

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

40

41

42

43

44

45

46

47

48

49

50

CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

MR. BASSICH: Yeah, I think either we meet in Tanana or we have a Tri-Council meeting, is what we're talking about. If that's the case, I'd like to state let's do it earlier and maybe it could be moved up that week to incorporate where you would have been with Western Interior. So that would be the 3rd, 4th, 5th of October and that would accommodate my concerns earlier as far as making it and it wouldn't have to reschedule them as much.

As far as meeting locations, as I stated earlier, I don't think it makes any difference. Quite frankly, I don't feel that worrying about neutrality of place has any issue as far as I'm concerned. I'm quite happy to go to Anchorage and meet there if that works for

1 logistics or Fairbanks. But I think it should be in one  
2 of these major areas to alleviate that travel.

3

4 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

5

6 MR. UMPHENOUR: I think as far as cost it  
7 would be cheaper to have the meeting in Fairbanks,  
8 myself. But I agree with Andy, we could just have it  
9 that week before whenever the Western Interior was going  
10 to meet.

11

12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So what's the  
13 recommendation, to meet the 3rd, 4th and 5th? Meet here  
14 in Fairbanks. And Vince will try to convince the other  
15 two. Hey, we should just call you Convince.

16

17 (Laughter)

18

19 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, I've been called  
20 worse, but we won't get it on the record. Now that we've  
21 gone through that and that's very helpful, now we're  
22 projecting a year out, which really helps you and us. So  
23 a year from now, when you're dealing with wildlife  
24 issues, you have a calendar on the next page. Don, as a  
25 new member, has impressed upon me the importance of the  
26 trapping season, so I hope he speaks up, but we need to  
27 know when it is best for you to meet. The only date that  
28 I know of now of another Council that's meeting is Yukon-  
29 Kuskokwim is meeting in Emmonak on February 23rd and  
30 24th, 2006.

31

32 The Staff Committee has asked that we  
33 don't have more than four meetings in a week. To be  
34 honest with you, I'm going to ignore that at this point  
35 because I've got to balance your hunting seasons with  
36 everything else. So we can manage that and get back to  
37 you if there is a problem, but we try to avoid four  
38 meetings in a week.

39

40 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Andy.

41

42 MR. BASSICH: As I stated at the very  
43 beginning of this meeting, for those of us who live in a  
44 more rural area and are geared up towards subsistence  
45 living, March and April are the two prime months of the  
46 year. Myself, the whole year is geared up around having  
47 that as my time to get out and really enjoy the country.  
48 I would really like to see it pushed into February as  
49 much as possible. This entire month of March this year  
50 could be set at meetings and I don't know how much longer

1 I'm going to participate if that continues to go on.

2

3 The other thing I'd really like to push  
4 for is we need to start getting all the different  
5 agencies to start communicating a little bit more on  
6 this. I think, in the long run, what really needs to  
7 happen is that the different agencies need to sit down,  
8 they need to pick a week of the year and try to stick to  
9 it year to year so that people can know so that we're not  
10 wasting all this time every year trying to juggle who's  
11 doing what, where and when. I really think that task  
12 should be put on the Staff to start to communicate with  
13 ADF&G, with Yukon River Panel, with YRDFA, with AVCP or  
14 whomever and let's start locking these dates in so that  
15 people will know in the future. I think that will be a  
16 great time saver and certainly benefit those of us who  
17 want to participate but simply can't give up our life  
18 just to participate at meetings. Thank you.

19

20 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you. So what  
21 have we decided. We haven't decided anything. How about  
22 February 27th and 28th. Any problems with those dates.

23

(No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No problems with those  
26 dates. What location do we want to meet.

27

28 MR. WOODRUFF: Someone mentioned  
29 something about Venetie this time next year. So if  
30 that's okay with Larry.

31

32 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: We have one mention  
33 for Venetie. Sue.

34

35 MS. ENTSMINGER: I was wondering if we  
36 want to meet in Unit 12 one time. It's been a long time.

37

38 MR. BASSICH: I'd be happy to meet down  
39 in Unit 12, too.

40

41 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Virgil.

42

43 MR. UMPHENOUR: We have an invitation to  
44 hold the meeting in Tok and we've got a place for the  
45 meeting anyway.

46

47 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So we have several  
48 folks interested in Unit 12 and a couple potentially  
49 interested in Venetie. I'd like to do this by consensus,  
50

1 so if we can come to a mutual agreement. Larry.

2

3 MR. WILLIAMS: For myself, I would speak  
4 for Venetie. The reason I say that is we couldn't have  
5 this one in Venetie because of problems with water and  
6 all that. I'm going to reiterate what I said in Eagle.  
7 Venetie, we basically run our own fish and game and  
8 nobody hardly comes around and tells us who can go  
9 hunting or anything. It's all been more or less  
10 traditional law that you harvest certain animals in  
11 certain time of year. There was an unfortunate incident  
12 about 15 years back that a Fish and Game enforcement  
13 officer came in and tried to confiscate some caribou meat  
14 that he said was taken illegally, so ever since then we  
15 have kind of a contentious relationship with whatever  
16 agencies they come in and represent and I'd like to  
17 straighten that out in people's minds. It's still fresh  
18 in their minds, a lot of them. They speak of it from  
19 time to time. We are working with them to ensure that  
20 populations remain healthy for our kids and our  
21 grandkids. That's the reason I want it up there.  
22 Unfortunately we didn't meet because of circumstances  
23 beyond our control. I would speak for Venetie, but with  
24 all due respect I would go anyplace that the Council  
25 wants to. Thank you very much.

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Larry. I  
28 know what we've done historically, is we've tended to go  
29 to meeting locations where we've had a Council member  
30 because it made it a lot easier for coordinating. Maybe  
31 that might be a consideration at this time as well. We  
32 don't necessarily have anybody from Tok, although that's  
33 an easy place to set up a meeting.

34

35 MS. ENTSMINGER: I know people in Tok.

36

37 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: She knows people in  
38 Tok. So that's just something worth considering. Andy.

39

40 MR. BASSICH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I  
41 think Larry brings up a really good point and I think  
42 that should be addressed. If having a meeting up there  
43 would help to address that problem, I think that's a  
44 course we should take.

45

46 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy. Any  
47 further discussion on this. Vince.

48

49 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chairman. It's easier  
50 for travel arrangements to meet midweek, Tuesday or

1 Wednesday, because then you can fly on Monday. Sunday  
2 flights get difficult. When you say the 27th and 28th,  
3 I'm interpreting that as being the 28th and the 1st. Is  
4 that okay with everybody?

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Is that okay with  
7 Andy? If March 1st is important to Andy, then I don't  
8 think we want to travel on that day.

9  
10 MR. BASSICH: I can live with that. How  
11 about January 1st? That would be even better.

12  
13 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Sue.

14  
15 MS. ENTSMINGER: As an alternative, if we  
16 don't end up in Venetie, it would be good to come to the  
17 Tok area.

18  
19 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So am I hearing  
20 basically unanimous consent on Venetie.

21  
22 (Council nods affirmatively)

23  
24 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: So we'll have Venetie  
25 with a backup of Tok. Okay. That's it. Does anybody  
26 have any closing comments. Andy.

27  
28 MR. BASSICH: I'll start it out. I guess  
29 it was a good meeting. I think we covered some  
30 interesting topics. It's unfortunate that we didn't make  
31 it to Venetie. I was looking forward to meeting the  
32 people up there. I guess we'll do it next year.

33  
34 As I stated during the meeting, I have a  
35 lot of concerns about some of the really remote people  
36 and I hope we can continue to move to recognize that and  
37 see what we can do to help those people.

38  
39 I guess that's about it. I would like to  
40 remind the Chairman also, shortly after we adjourn here,  
41 if people would like to just meet out front, I wouldn't  
42 mind snapping a picture of the Council members out there.  
43 I think that's it. Thank you.

44  
45 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Andy.  
46 Others. Virgil.

47  
48 MR. UMPHENOUR: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
49 The things that I was really concerned about we have  
50 addressed in our annual report and we've addressed as

1 proposals. I think this was a real productive meeting.  
2 We got a lot of good help from the Staff. I think this  
3 was a super good meeting myself. We're getting to the  
4 meat of some of the real problems facing the resources  
5 that the people in the region depend on and  
6 sustainability of these resources so that people can have  
7 reasonable opportunity and I think that's our main  
8 objective here. There has to be enough of the resource  
9 so people have real reasonable opportunity and not  
10 reasonable opportunity on paper. Thank you.

11

12 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: James.

13

14 MR. NATHANIEL: It was very complicated  
15 for me to attend this first meeting, but as far as I'm  
16 concerned I learned a lot from this meeting here and I  
17 hope next time it will be easier for me to attend this  
18 meeting. I'd like to point out one thing. Are we going  
19 to carry all these papers home or can it be mailed?

20

21 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Vince can mail it.  
22 He's done that in the past. Just hand it to him.

23

24 MR. NATHANIEL: I'm referring to not  
25 paying the excess baggage.

26

27 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, James. Any  
28 other comments. Larry.

29

30 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's a comment, I  
31 suppose. I'd like to thank Vince and all the other  
32 people who put together this meeting. It came together  
33 pretty good. Thanks for the ride and all the good humor  
34 that goes along with it. That's it. Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Larry.  
37 Sue.

38

39 MS. ENTSMINGER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
40 would like to thank everyone also and especially you, Mr.  
41 Chair. I really enjoy your humor that you add to this  
42 Council. It makes it fun. Like you said when I first  
43 got here, oh, yeah, it's fun meeting with you guys and I  
44 thought he calls this fun.

44

45 (Laughter)

46

47 MS. ENTSMINGER: Actually, you do make it  
48 fun, so it's greatly appreciated to lighten up some of  
49 the seriousness of some of the issues sometimes and it  
50 makes it easier to deal with. I also wanted to thank

1 Staff and Vince, and, you, the group, for my absence at  
2 the Eagle meeting. I had a death in the family that I  
3 needed to attend to and I got some sympathy cards, and I  
4 want to thank you for it all.

5  
6 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Thank you, Sue.

7 Others.

8

9 (No comments)

10

11 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: No more. Well, I  
12 guess I'll go last then, unless someone else has a  
13 chance, if not it's going to be the last opportunity.

14

15 (No comments)

16

17 CHAIRMAN FLEENER: All right. I also  
18 want to thank the Staff. I think they did a terrific job  
19 of pulling something together at the last minute when it  
20 was supposed to be held somewhere else, and the meeting  
21 location was good, everything seemed to work out fine.  
22 The only complaint I have, of course, and I've already  
23 told Vince, but I might as well share it with the rest of  
24 the world, is that, I think that meeting attendees should  
25 be staying in the same hotel as the meeting so we don't  
26 have to worry about the problem with traveling across  
27 town, and people without transportation, so on and so  
28 forth. And, you, the Staff, also have to spend an extra  
29 half hour in the morning trying to round folks up and get  
30 them down here and I think it actually took you longer  
31 than a half an hour this morning, and you also have to  
32 get them home in the evening. And so that problem is  
33 alleviated when we're staying at the meeting location.

34

35 But I do thank you for pulling this thing  
36 together so quickly, and that's the end of the comments.

37

38 That's the end of the comments -- okay,  
39 Vince.

40

41 MR. MATHEWS: I still got to get the  
42 paperwork to Larry and James. On travel, if you guys  
43 need rides to the airport tomorrow, some of you guys -- I  
44 probably shouldn't say it on the record, are -- you're  
45 flexing your travel schedules, if you need a ride to the  
46 airport you're going to have to let me know because I'm  
47 available to take you guys from the hotel to the airport  
48 since there's not a shuttle. So let me know if you need  
49 that.

50

1                   That's it, that I have, and I need to  
2 meet with Sue on the proposal for 13(C).  
3  
4                   CHAIRMAN FLEENER: And, Vince, another  
5 benefit, if folks would have stayed here there is a  
6 shuttle, so that's an added benefit.  
7  
8                   Jeep.  
9  
10                  MR. TITUS: Move to adjourn.  
11  
12                  CHAIRMAN FLEENER: There's a motion to  
13 adjourn.  
14  
15                  MR. NATHANIEL: Second.  
16  
17                  MR. UMPHENOUR: Second.  
18  
19                  CHAIRMAN FLEENER: And there's a second.  
20 All in favor.  
21  
22                  IN UNISON: Aye.  
23  
24                  CHAIRMAN FLEENER: Any opposed.  
25  
26                  (No opposing votes)  
27  
28                  CHAIRMAN FLEENER: We're adjourned.  
29  
30                  (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33

C E R T I F I C A T E

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )  
 )ss.  
STATE OF ALASKA )

I, Joseph P. Kolasinski, Notary Public in and for the state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court Reporters, LLC do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing pages numbered 87 through 230 contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the EASTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II taken electronically by Salena Hile on the 2nd day of March 2005 at Fairbanks, Alaska;

THAT the transcript is a true and correct transcript requested to be transcribed and thereafter transcribed by under my direction and reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and ability;

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

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 14th day of March 2005.

---

Joseph P. Kolasinski  
Notary Public in and for Alaska  
My Commission Expires: 03/12/08