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YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

PUBLIC MEETING

VOLUME II

TELECONFERENCE
March 4, 2021
9:15 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Raymond Oney, Chair
Thomas Alstrom
John Andrew
Richard Slats

Regional Council Coordinator, Eva Patton

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Teleconference - 3/4/2021)

(On record)

MS. PATTON: We do have our four current voting members present this morning. Before we get started I just have the quick spiel to mute your phones. Again, you can hit that little microphone button on your cell phone or push star six to mute. So right now there's definitely open lines with a lot of background noise so everyone that's calling in please take a moment to star six to mute your phone.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: We did have a couple suggestions, too. We had a really bad echo yesterday. Some things that might help that is when you're speaking, only one line open so whoever's speaking with a line open, if you -- rather than using speaker phone, speaker phone can cause some echo, or if you're close to, you know, another electronic device it can cause some static, so if you're speaking maybe just to use the regular phone. If anybody has options for landline, sometimes that can help too if there's problems with cell phone static. But the key thing is to make sure everyone's got their phone muted and that'll keep the noise down and also prevent echo.

So, again, I'm hearing a lot of background noise and we're going to need to have everybody mute your phone, star six to mute.

(Pause)

MS. PATTON: That sounds better, thank you. So press star six to mute. All right, great, thank you everyone and I'll turn it over to our Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, thank you, Eva. Good morning everyone. Had a nice windy evening, still windy again this morning. High winds and minus six below this morning, so a real chilly morning. Maybe kind of bring us up to date, if there's any housecleaning events that need to be said before we start the meeting.

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Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Council members. So yesterday at the end of the meeting the Council had discussed taking back up both wildlife reports this morning, and resuming discussion on the Federal subsistence wildlife proposals, any proposals the Council would like to submit. We do have an opportunity in the morning to open the floor for public and tribal comment as well. I know we had discussed right at the end of the meeting we were trying to help juggle for Holly Carroll who's presenting to both Eastern Interior and YK Delta, but the Council did want to followup with the work on wildlife proposals and receive those reports this morning. So as the Council wishes we can open the floor for public and tribal comments and then get back into the wildlife reports and discussion on proposals.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Eva. If there's anyone out there in the public that would like to comment on nonagenda items you're welcome to do so at this time.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, this is Mike Williams from the Akiak Native Community.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Good morning, Mike.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah. I made comments on our fish returns yesterday but I think with the issue of caribou closure is justified because, you know, I think it's a lot easier to count caribou from the air and we can see -- you know, most of them can be seen along with moose populations and the counts seem to be more accurate. And we're seeing, you know, a good number of moose around our area and among our villages and while they're doing that there is influx of wolves near our villages and we're very scared of them and, you know, that they might prey on our children or other, you know, pets or dogs or whatever but they're pretty close in our villages due to moose population and they're going after the moose and the moose just,

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1 you know, resting nearby our villages. But, you know,
2 going down to Bethel I would see anywhere from 20 to 30
3 moose in the morning when I head down to Bethel or when
4 I travel early in the morning or late in the evenings.
5 But I think with the caribou we need to, you know, make
6 sure that those diseases that may be affecting them,
7 you know, hearing reports of dead caribou due to health
8 conditions, but I think it would be very good to
9 increase the research on the affects of health issues
10 on our caribou.

11

12 But I'm also worried about the moose
13 population here, overharvesting their food sources.
14 And they might have been running out of food and with
15 amount of snow we have, I think it poses more
16 challenges for moose not to have their food and we're
17 seeing those around here, they're trying to dig out
18 their food and, you know, it's -- you know we may --
19 we're seeing some dead moose that the wolves have
20 gotten.

21

22 But those are just my comments this
23 morning and just really appreciate all the work you
24 guys do in terms of managing our wildlife and fish
25 resources.

26

27 Thank you.

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29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Mike. Do we
30 have any questions or comments for Mike at this time.

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32

33 (No comments)

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35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank
36 you, Mike. Your comments will be taken, thank you. Is
37 there anyone else that may want to comment on nonagenda
38 items.

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40 MS. ROGERS: Good morning, Mr. Chair.

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42 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

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44 MS. ROGERS: Hi, good morning, Alissa
45 Rogers, for the record. Mr. Chair, could I have --
46 after yesterday's meeting we were thinking about
47 different ways of helping the lower Yukon be able to
48 harvest more moose and reduce that population so they
49 don't eat themselves out of home and location. There

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1 is a few things that came from brainstorming with folks
2 yesterday.

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4 The first one was that we allow proxy
5 hunting on the Federal side to have Federally-qualified
6 users from the Kuskokwim, proxy, lower Yukon Federal
7 subsistence users to harvest moose and then have it
8 shipped back to Bethel. There was also discussion of
9 having it done in bulk, like for instance if we have
10 five families here in town that wanted a moose, then we
11 send information to a tribe or to people who are going
12 to be hunting, like a list of people who are going to
13 be hunting out there and then have them go hunting for
14 five families and then have it shipped back to Bethel
15 at the same time so that we're not paying for a lot of
16 -- too much cargo, but at the same time we can also put
17 a contract together with the airlines to see if they
18 could put it on their returning flights that are coming
19 back pretty empty as free -- free freight like we did
20 with Era when we were doing the caribou -- transporting
21 caribou from the Kuskokwim to the Yukon folks when we
22 had the moratoriums over on the Yukon area. So we'd
23 just be switching, instead of sending caribou we'd be
24 sending moose back and switching villages.

25
26 And then also there was another
27 discussion of having -- when -- for folks who want to
28 fly down to the Yukon for like same day travel, instead
29 of having to wait 24 hours or charter a flight down or
30 have a private airlines fly down, that they would be
31 able to come back home the same day after hunting, same
32 day airborne travel for both. So for instance if I
33 went down to the Yukon with my plane or with an
34 airline, we would be able to go hunting down there the
35 same day that we're flying and then be able to come
36 back home the same day, that way we don't have to wait
37 24 hours. That was another option.

38
39 And the other option to increase
40 harvest in the lower Yukon would be to increase the bag
41 limit from two moose to three to four moose per person.

42
43 And I think that might conclude all the
44 options that we were discussing yesterday.

45
46 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,
49 Alissa. I don't know what the process would be.....
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1 (Teleconference interference -
2 participants not muted)

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4 CHAIRMAN ONEY:to make this
5 happen, so if there's anyone out there that have ways
6 or if we're able to do that, I think we should be able
7 to at least comment on this. Thank you.

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9 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman.

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11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

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13 MR. EPCHOOK: Chariton Epchhook,
14 Kwethluk Incorporated. Yesterday there was a
15 discussion by the Refuge regarding Zone 1 and 2, and
16 maybe it would be a better idea for people here in
17 these villages, instead of adding more days to Zone 2,
18 maybe decreasing the amount in Zone 2 and add them to
19 Zone 1. I'm saying this because towards the end of
20 September and October, the water level starts to recede
21 and some people cannot reach those areas where --
22 around Zone 2 without using a jet lower unit so I think
23 it would be better to decrease the number for harvest
24 in Zone 2 and add them to Zone 1.

25

26 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. We'll take
29 that into consideration. I don't know if we can do it
30 now, or if we might be able to address that and so
31 we'll keep that in mind.

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33 (Teleconference interference -
34 participants not muted - radio)

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36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Somebody's playing
37 music in the background.

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39 MS. PATTON: Friendly reminder.
40 Friendly reminder everyone to please mute your phones,
41 we hear some music in the background. Remember to push
42 star six on your phones.

43

44 Thank you.

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46 (Pause - radio music playing)

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48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Is there anyone
49 else that may want to comment on nonagenda items at

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1 this time.

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MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair.

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

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MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, this is Bill at St.

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Marys.

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: Good morning, Bill.

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MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, I just got a question here. I don't know -- I'm pretty sure the Board is aware of this, it was on the news the other day that there was some sort of monies, I think it was \$50 million allocated to the state of Alaska for fisheries and is that the -- is that going to be monies towards the Yukon, Kuskokwim Delta for the disaster we had last year, is that going to apply, just curious?

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Bill for that comment. I don't know if there's anyone out there that may respond to this -- to Bill's question.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Bill. This is Eva. We will have Holly Carroll on, she's juggling two meetings so she'll be on a little later this morning when we get to the Yukon River discussion for the preseason salmon discussion. She may be able to answer that question for you. I don't have -- I don't have any specific information on that disaster declaration myself at this time. But Holly will be on later for the Yukon River report and hopefully if you're able to bring that question up to Holly up then at that time.

MR. ALSTROM: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. If there's no other one that wanted to comment on nonagenda items, we will take into consideration those comments by Alissa and also by the person from Kwethluk on possibly taking action on those so I don't know where along the line we could maybe even consider those on the agenda. Eva.

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, absolutely. So this morning the Council was interested to hear any further wildlife updates. Rick Merizon is online and would be able to provide information on ptarmigan and hares and there may be

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1 others as well. Andy is on -- Andy Aderman from Togiak
2 is also on this morning. If the Council wishes to hear
3 those reports and then get back into developing any
4 proposals that the Council would like to.

5

6 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.

9 Yes, we did leave off on Patrick Jones who was giving
10 us updates on the moose populations in the lower Yukon
11 River. So we could go ahead and continue if there's --
12 or Andy or someone who would like to present at this
13 time.

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15 MR. JONES: Mr. Chair, this is Patrick
16 Jones with Fish and Game.

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18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Patrick.

19

20 MR. JONES: So I got a quick update
21 about the wood bison if this is a good time for that.

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23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, go ahead.

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25 MR. JONES: Can you hear me?

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27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, you're good.

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29 MR. JONES: All right. So I got a
30 quick update about the wood bison up there in the lower
31 Innoko by Shageluk and Holy Cross. So talking to Tom
32 Seaton, the biologist that kind of watches those
33 critters up there, this morning, he said the spring of
34 2020, so last year, was kind of rough on them. They
35 got caught -- the snow lasted until -- through April
36 when they were calving and we had a little bit of
37 mortality there. But overall it was a pretty positive
38 message. They've been in the wild for five years now.
39 Of the five years they've been in the wild we've seen
40 growth three of the years and we seen decline two of
41 the years. And overall it looks like -- you know these
42 animals came from being in a pen over by Girdwood to
43 being released in the wild and that five years time it
44 looks like they've kind of figured out how to --
45 figured out where the good food is in the wintertime,
46 where the grass is and they're starting to figure out
47 how to deal with wolves and predators. We're seeing
48 less accidental deaths. Early on when we released
49 them there was a lot that fell through thin ice and had

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1 problems with that kind of thing. So they're kind of
2 figuring out where the dangers are and doing pretty
3 well there.

4
5 Last spring we had nine calves and as
6 of a month ago it sounds like seven of them are still
7 alive. A lot of the cows are expected to be giving
8 birth this spring. So right now where the bison are
9 hanging out the snow's pretty shallow, it's less than
10 a foot deep, so as long as that stays true we're
11 expecting a good calf crop this spring and hopefully
12 another year of growth.

13
14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Have you
15 seen any kind of expansion from where they were -- I
16 know one time we did see a bison that was down around
17 Quinhagak area, one that was shot, I'm just wondering
18 if you might see any other patches of bison that might
19 be outside of the place where they were put in the
20 first place.

21
22 MR. JONES: Yeah, so we had three
23 initially move. We had the one that came down to --
24 came down to our area and she died between Quinhagak
25 and Eek. We had one that went north and almost made it
26 to the Brooks Range before he died. And another young
27 bull that kind of went -- went for a big walkabout and
28 got returned. But by and large everybody else has
29 stayed in the general area. They've done some
30 exploring, they've gone up into the hills and up the
31 river valleys and stuff but they've kind of -- it seems
32 like they found the area they like and they're not
33 moving around much lately.

34
35 But that being said we still have bison
36 in Girdwood. And we are looking for new places to put
37 some and maybe put some -- add some more to these ones.
38 But we're looking for places that have grass available
39 to them, you know, grassy meadows available to them all
40 winter, especially in April as spring comes and they
41 start to calve. So we're trying to identify places
42 that are going to be good habitat for them and see if
43 we can't release more and get another population of
44 them going somewhere.

45
46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Pat. Do we
47 have any comments for Patrick at this time.

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49 MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair.

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

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3 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, this is Bill again
4 from St. Marys. Hey, Patrick, you know, I'm going to
5 mention the muskox, have you seen any kind of a drift
6 towards the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta on muskox. I know
7 they're allowed on the islands in Nunivak. Have you
8 had any muskox drift this way recently?

9

10 MR. JONES: Yeah, through the Chair to
11 Mr. Alstrom there. Bill, that's a good question and
12 it's something we've been dedicating a little more time
13 and money to in the last few years is -- well, we
14 initially put muskox on Nunivak and then we moved them
15 to Nelson Island and then, of course, on Nelson Island
16 they can walk off in the winter when the rivers are
17 frozen, and they do. We've seen them walk off the
18 island since the early 70s and so we counted them in
19 the summer of 2019 and we counted the area between the
20 Yukon River and the Kuskokwim River from the Coast all
21 the way up to -- into the Portage Mountains there above
22 Kalskag and we found 275 muskox, approximately. So
23 they're definitely established on the main land now.
24 There's some on Kusilvak, in that area, and there was
25 some near Treeline by Russian Mission. But they really
26 like the higher, drier tundra out in that Big Delta.
27 And we're also seeing them come south from the Seward
28 Peninsula, so the Seward Peninsula muskox population is
29 pushing in slowly and they're pushing south slowly. So
30 they're coming -- well, they're coming into your area
31 from the north as well, coming down from 22A, you know,
32 by Kotlik and stuff on the outside of the Andreafsky's
33 we've seen them moving down. So you're kind of in the
34 area where we have Unit 18 muskox and Unit 22 muskox
35 kind of slowly expanding into from both directions.
36 The trend is very, very slow growth.

37

38 So I'm hopeful that in the near future
39 we can have a hunt -- hunt for these things on the main
40 land but I'd kind of like to see that population get
41 over 500 animals before we start doing that just
42 because they're so spread out over a huge area.

43

44 But, anyway, does that help answer your
45 question.

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47 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, thank you, Pat.

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49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Do we have

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1 any more questions or comments for Pat at this time.

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3 (No comments)

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5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I know last fall, I
6 believe, we did receive a report from you saying that
7 you were going to be tagging some ptarmigans, I don't
8 know how far you got on that, if you're still going to
9 tag some ptarmigan?

10

11 MR. JONES: Yeah, I might let Rick
12 Merizon talk about that if he's online. If he's not
13 online I can definitely answer that.

14

15 MR. MERIZON: Yeah, Mr. Chair and
16 members of the Council. I'm online and I'm happy to
17 answer any questions about small game that you might
18 have.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. I
21 know we got a report last fall saying that you guys
22 were in the process of tagging some ptarmigan just to,
23 you know, see what their pattern of migration is. I
24 don't know how far you might have gotten regarding
25 that.

26

27 MR. MERIZON: Right. No, absolutely,
28 I'm happy to provide a quick update. So, yeah,
29 absolutely you're correct in that last fall we had
30 plans in the works to go out in the springtime of 2020
31 and capture willow ptarmigan across the YK Delta and
32 put radio collars on them to do exactly that, like you
33 said, monitor their movement and locality. And sadly
34 with Covid rolling in March that pretty much stopped
35 all of our field plans due to travel restrictions and,
36 you know, safety mitigation measures by the State of
37 Alaska so we weren't able to get out into the field
38 last spring. And based on our experience in radio --
39 or capturing and radio collaring ptarmigan it works
40 best if we can get radio collars out in the spring and
41 then followup with some of those birds to get radio
42 collars on their chicks when they're full grown in the
43 fall. It gets more difficult if we go out in the fall
44 without any prior collared individuals. So as a result
45 of that we were also -- we're not planning any -- or we
46 weren't able to get out last fall, Covid restricted us
47 from getting out this past spring and then fall, so we
48 do still have plans to get out to the YK Delta and
49 radio collar ptarmigan. We're working on those plans

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1 right now and we're still not certain whether that's
2 going to happen this spring due to some Covid-related
3 issues and other issues but we do definitely have plans
4 to continue that work and as soon as any of those data
5 and results become available we can certainly let the
6 Council know.

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8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Do
9 you know what may be causing the decline in the
10 ptarmigan?

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12 MR. MERIZON: Well, it's hard to know
13 exactly what's going on on the YK Delta population just
14 because the information that we have for that specific
15 population, as you're aware, is pretty limited. We
16 have, however, done a number of rock and willow
17 ptarmigan studies across the state. For example, we've
18 done some work along the Denali Highway in Unit 13,
19 we've also done quite a bit of work up around the
20 Steese Highway in Unit 25, and we are learning some,
21 what seem to be fairly uniform ecological and life
22 history patterns across all ptarmigan populations. And
23 what we're finding is that one of the biggest drivers
24 in the success of our ptarmigan populations is the
25 weather window immediately after the chicks hatch in
26 late June and July, that's a very, very critical time
27 period for all of our grouse and ptarmigan populations
28 all across the state. And given some of the recent
29 poor weather we've had, especially in the YK Delta over
30 the last five or six years during that time period,
31 pretty wet, rainy, cool weather periods immediately
32 after those chicks hatch can have a huge affect on the
33 chicks survival and that, then, in turn, affects
34 obviously the overall population and obviously what
35 hunters are seeing when they go out hunting.

36

37 So that is likely one of the big
38 drivers in the YK population is my suspicion, but,
39 again, we don't have specific information relative to
40 the population out there on the YK Delta.

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42 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Is
43 there anyone else who has any questions or comments for
44 Rick at this time.

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46 MR. BUSTER: I got a comment, Mr.
47 Chair.

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49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Thomas.

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1 MR. BUSTER: About the fishing, you
2 know, about the salmon from the Pacific to the
3 Atlantic, I wasn't on yesterday, but today I am on,
4 about the salmon, you know, if there's funding for
5 trying to let the Atlantic, about the salmon to try out
6 over in the Pacific because in the Atlantic, you know,
7 the salmon go up river to spawn and then they go back
8 out but in the Pacific, even here in Alaska, they go up
9 and spawn but they die, and I was kind of wondering if
10 they could do, you know, a little sample of Atlantic
11 fish, you know, to try to spawn over here in the
12 Pacific side and see if it works. That was my question
13 for the -- for the people that, you know, work with
14 Fish and Game.

15
16 Thank you.

17
18 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Thomas. This
19 is Eva. I don't believe we have anyone on at the
20 moment to address salmon. We will have the Federal in-
21 season manager for the Yukon River, Holly Carroll, will
22 be on later this morning. She might be best able to
23 address your question.

24
25 And can I get your last name, Thomas.

26
27 MR. BUSTER: Gabriel.

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29 MS. PATTON: Thomas Gabriel from
30 Alakanuk.

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32 MR. BUSTER: From Alakanuk, from
33 Alakanuk Tribe.

34
35 MS. PATTON: Oh, okay, Gabriel Buster.

36
37 MR. BUSTER: Yes.

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39 MS. PATTON: Okay, thank you, Gabriel.
40 Yeah, at this time I believe we have just the wildlife
41 biologist on and, again, we'll be getting into
42 discussing Yukon salmon a little later this morning and
43 Holly might be able to better respond to your question.

44
45 MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair.

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47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Bill, go ahead.

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49 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, thank you, Ray.

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1 You know the gentleman that just asked that question
2 about Atlantic salmon transferring or going -- you
3 know, that subject came up before at our YRDFA Board
4 meetings in the past and it was totally -- what should
5 I say -- it wasn't, you know, welcomed because the
6 reason being Atlantic salmon they never get on the
7 Pacific side, you know, they -- I think they'd be
8 treated as invasive species. If they ever start
9 multiplying out on the -- especially on the Alaska
10 Coast, you know, they'll be competing for food with our
11 wild salmon out there. So that's the -- you know, I
12 remember that coming up, you know, one time, or maybe a
13 couple times at our Board meetings and it was adamantly
14 shot down, we didn't want to see no invasive species
15 coming into our area competing for food.

16
17 Okay, like Eva said there'll probably
18 be a biologist or somebody that'll come out later and
19 explain it a little bit more better than me.

20
21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Bill.
22 I'm sure Holly hopefully heard you John and could
23 answer questions or comments related to the salmon so
24 just hang on to your question until Holly comes on.
25 Thank you, appreciate those comments.

26
27 Getting back to wildlife proposals, if
28 there's anyone that has any comments or questions
29 related to wildlife proposals, we have Rick and Patrick
30 Jones available at this time.

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32 MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair.

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34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Bill.

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36 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, Pat, are any
37 wildlife -- I think, Patrick, you know the gentleman
38 that brought up the ptarmigan populations, you know, we
39 really have seen them -- seen the population of
40 ptarmigan in this area really diminish in the last few
41 years. I remember when I was growing up there used to
42 be ptarmigans all over the place and, you know, right
43 now -- I don't think this winter I've been out -- in
44 the country, I don't think I've seen one ptarmigan,
45 although I've heard reports of some flocks being seen,
46 but they sure are not plentiful like they used to be
47 like many years ago. so I don't know what's going on
48 with them but there's -- sometimes during the summer I
49 see all these seagulls, they're predatory birds, you
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1 know, up in the hills and I think they're going after
2 the -- probably the little chicks that are running
3 around on the tundra but I'm not really sure. But I
4 noticed a lot of them predatory seagulls and crows or
5 ravens having a field day out there on the tundra, I
6 wonder if that could be one of the reasons.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Bill.
11 I think that's something that needs to be looked at and
12 hopefully if there's someone out there that is studying
13 the ptarmigans, you know, that species alone I think
14 we'll get a lot more answers to what we're trying to --
15 with all the questions that we have related to the
16 ptarmigan, like you mentioned, you know, I've seen that
17 flock, and as a young person too, and over the years,
18 you know, things have been diminishing, not only
19 wildlife, but also the fisheries. We don't know what's
20 going to be the next thing that we're going to be
21 concerned about but overall things are going, you
22 know, going downhill at a face pace with the resources
23 that we depend on and we need to make sure that those
24 people that are assigned to be responsible to make sure
25 that those don't be extinct, you know, we do need to
26 find some ways to at least try and find what's causing
27 the decline in those. Not only in the wildlife but
28 also in the salmon and the rest of the things that
29 we're seeing that are, you know, being either sickly
30 from, you know, or is it the global warming, you know,
31 there's a lot of factors that we could think about, but
32 if someone could study them and pinpoint, you know,
33 what's causing it then hopefully it could be able to
34 rebound in some of those that we're concerned about.

35

36 Thank you.

37

38 MS. PELTOLA: Mr. Chairman.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

41

42 MS. PELTOLA: This is Mary Peltola.
43 And, you know, this ptarmigan conversation and the
44 salmon conversation too, one explanation I've heard is
45 just simply snow cover. That without powdery snow the
46 ptarmigan can't burrow down to sleep and get cover and
47 they don't have good camouflage for the hawks and the
48 foxes and owls and stuff, but, you know, and then the
49 snow cover has a lot to do with how the elders forecast

50

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1 the returns and having a really good break up as a
2 signal for the salmon to start going up at the right
3 time. And we've had such poor snow cover and so much
4 of our snow cover has been ice cover, and brown cover,
5 and I think that may be, you know, one of the culprits.

6
7 That's all I wanted to say, thank you.

8
9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mary,
10 appreciate that.

11
12 MR. MERIZON: Mr. Chairman, this is
13 Rick Merizon again online. May I have a chance to
14 respond to that.

15
16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Rick.

17
18 MR. MERIZON: Yeah, thank you, and
19 thank you members of the Council. Those are all really
20 interesting observations and frankly I completely agree
21 with all of them. Part of the objec -- one of the
22 objectives of our research project that we want to
23 apply these radio collars on these birds is that we
24 will start to get estimates of survival so we'll know
25 when these birds are alive and when they die. And from
26 that we are hopeful that we can begin to try to
27 understand perhaps what's causing the mortality. And I
28 just wanted to followup with the woman that just spoke
29 about the snow cover. It's very insightful and I just
30 wanted to acknowledge that and also point to the fact
31 that some of our prior research has demonstrated that
32 winter snow cover is very important for overwinter
33 survival of ptarmigan and exactly as she said, the
34 quality of the snow is very important. So a lot of
35 folks think if we have a very, very cold heavy snow
36 winter that that's actually bad for ptarmigan but, in
37 fact, the opposite is quite true, where if we have a
38 cold, very snow winter it's actually quite good for
39 ptarmigan because exactly what she pointed out, the
40 birds can burrow into deep snow and they can snow roost
41 for up to 36 or 48 hours and avoid the really cold,
42 bitter wind and conditions, you know, temperatures and
43 wind, and actually do quite well. In fact we've
44 noticed through our research that when birds -- birds
45 can actually come out of the winter heavier than when
46 they go into the winter in the fall if they have a good
47 hard cold severe winter. So it's almost a little bit
48 counter-intuitive but precisely to her point.

49
50

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1 So I just wanted to acknowledge that
2 and I'll standby.

3

4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.
5 Anyone else has any comments for Rick or Pat at this
6 time regarding wildlife.

7

8 MR. TULUK: Yeah, Mr. Chairman.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

11

12 MR. TULUK: Yeah, this is Chris Tuluk.
13 I'd like to quickly comment on -- or briefly comment on
14 ptarmigans. From my observation -- I agree with
15 everybody that these ptarmigans are not as abundant as
16 they used to be a long time ago but from my
17 observations, you know, it seems like these birds, when
18 they're flying, they don't seem to be aware of where
19 they're heading. Because at one point there was a guy
20 that got -- that the ptarmigan collided or ran into a
21 guys face when he was riding a snowmachine and
22 eventually that ptarmigan died and that poor guy ended
23 up with a good black eye.

24

25 (Laughter)

26

27 MR. TULUK: And the other thing I heard
28 because I'm from Nelson Island, from Nightmute, and we
29 have one power source from Toksook Bay and then we have
30 these powerlines laid out or stretched between the
31 three villages on Nelson Island and I have seen some
32 ptarmigans just right below those power lines and there
33 have been some people seeing ptarmigans flying right
34 into those powerlines. And there was one guy that saw
35 a flock that flew right into the power lines and
36 several of them came down. So that could be one factor
37 there. So, yeah, and my brother told me that he has
38 not seen ptarmigans in awhile from -- we have seen some
39 in the late -- or in the '80s and early '90s but then
40 they just seemed to have disappeared after '95, and my
41 brother told me that he has not seen any ptarmigan and
42 then just a couple of years ago he said, when he called
43 me, he finally saw a few birds out there in the spring.
44 Normally, they used to migrate out there in great
45 numbers in april and we just don't see that anymore.

46

47 Quyana.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Chris.

50

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1 If that's it then another item that we talked about was
2 the rabbit, the jackrabbit. I don't know, I think you
3 guys were going to see and do a study on that because
4 that is one of the species that is also on the decline.
5 I know growing up here in the mid-80s, I used to hunt
6 them, but I don't see them anymore. So I'd like to
7 know what's going on with the jackrabbit.

8

9 MR. MERIZON: Yeah, Mr. Chairman,
10 again, this is Rick Merizon with Fish and Game online,
11 I'm happy to address that. And just for the record,
12 I'm not sure if I stated it earlier, I'm the statewide
13 Small Game Program Coordinator, so our program not only
14 deals with ptarmigan and grouse but we've also -- one
15 of our responsibilities is also addressing Alaska hare,
16 jackrabbit populations and snowshoe hare populations.

17

18 So, yes, your point, we did begin a
19 study back in 2018, kind of a multi-part study and that
20 is still ongoing. So one component of that project is
21 to, again, capture and radio collar jackrabbits from
22 not only around Bristol Bay and the YK Delta, but we
23 also do field work up on the Seward Peninsula near Nome
24 and even up near the Selawik Hills, south of Kotzebue.
25 And we have struggled to figure out methods to capture
26 Alaska hares, but we've actually discovered some fairly
27 productive methods recently and we've been able to get
28 a few radio collars out on jackrabbits. And what we're
29 learning from the movement of those jackrabbits is
30 interesting.

31

32 The second component of that project is
33 we're developing -- we're trying to develop a long-term
34 population monitoring technique and I don't need to go
35 into all the nitty-gritty details today, but if
36 anyone's interested in the specifics I'm happy to talk
37 to them. But essentially what we're doing is we're
38 riding on snowmachines on these long transect routes
39 that are 10 to 20 miles long, or even longer in some
40 cases and we're able to pick up jackrabbit pellets and
41 from that there's a technique where we can actually get
42 the genes, the genetics off of that pellet and identify
43 individual animals so we can, with a high degree of
44 confidence, identify, you know, one individual animal
45 from another one that might be 20 or 30 miles away that
46 we pick up the pellets for. And what that project --
47 or what that component of our research is starting to
48 show is, that, yes, in fact, there are fairly very few
49 jackrabbits on the landscape, much to your point.

50

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1 Obviously we've noticed a fairly significant decline
2 since the '80s. The populations north of Unit 18 seem
3 to be doing slightly better and there are certainly are
4 areas in Unit 18 that have, you know, bigger
5 populations than other areas of Unit 18. But what
6 we're finding is that overall there are fairly few
7 jackrabbits on the landscape.

8
9 So a couple of years ago -- over the
10 last couple of years the Alaska Board of Game on the
11 State side began restricting the regulations, the
12 seasons, the harvest limits for jackrabbits across
13 their range from Kotzebue all the way down throughout
14 the YK Delta and the Alaska Peninsula just in
15 acknowledgement that the fact that populations have
16 declined and the no limit, no closed season, we're
17 realizing is not necessarily an appropriate management
18 structure anymore.

19
20 So that's something that I also just
21 wanted to bring up very briefly is we -- as I
22 mentioned, the State Board of Game has created a much
23 more conservative management structure in every game
24 management unit where that species exists except Unit
25 17, which is around Dillingham, so we submitted a
26 proposal to just create very similar regulations in
27 Unit 17, therefore, the -- the whole range of the
28 species would be covered by these more conservative
29 management regulations. So that proposal is going to
30 -- as you know the Board of Game cancelled their
31 meetings for this winter, that proposal will be heard
32 at the Board of Game meeting in January of 2022.

33
34 So if anyone has any questions I'm
35 happy to address that.

36
37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Is
38 there anyone else -- anyone has any comments or
39 questions for Rick at this time.

40
41 (No comments)

42
43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: So hopefully we'll be
44 able to get back to you again sometime in the future to
45 get an update on these issues that we're addressing,
46 the declines for the ptarmigan and jackrabbits. I'm
47 sure it'll be an ongoing study and hopefully things
48 will turnaround in the long-run. So hope to hear from
49 you sometime in the near future just to give us updates
50

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1 on concerns that we've brought up.

2

3 Is there anyone else that has any
4 comments or questions related to wildlife while we have
5 Rick and Patrick Jones online.

6

7 MR. MAXIE: Good morning. This is
8 Carl, Napaskiak.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Carl.

11

12 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, I have a question.
13 When they have on the tags -- do they have blood
14 samples because the Mulchatna Caribou Herd has that
15 illness that kind of declined them, is that same thing
16 happening to ptarmigans and jackrabbits.

17

18 Thank you.

19

20 MR. MERIZON: Mr. Chairman. Members of
21 the Council. We have not taken blood samples from
22 either ptarmigan or the hares. We're -- that certainly
23 could be a component in the future, especially for the
24 jackrabbits but as far as the ptarmigan go, there's no
25 clear evidence to suggest that disease is the leading
26 factor in the recent decline. Rather I -- that
27 certainly could be a component in the future, I don't
28 want to disregard it, but, currently as far as
29 ptarmigan go we think it might be more weather-related
30 issues.

31

32 MR. MAXIE: Thank you.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Carl.
35 Anyone else has any question or comments at this time.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Maybe getting some
40 feedback on beaver. I know beaver has been an issue
41 for a number of years and I know it's still a problem
42 as far as the blockage of streams in places where
43 species of fish go and spawn. I don't know if you are
44 hearing anything about the beaver population.

45

46 MR. JONES: Mr. Chair, this is Patrick
47 with Fish and Game.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Pat.

50

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1 MR. JONES: Yeah, so currently we don't
2 have any surveys or anything that we're using to count
3 beavers or monitor them. Just historically speaking,
4 you know, if you look back in time into the '60s or
5 earlier, we didn't have very many beavers at least on
6 the Kuskokwim side, and probably on the Yukon side they
7 were present but they were relatively rare and then as
8 trapping practices changed and prices went down and
9 effort went down, we now have probably record numbers
10 or near record numbers of beavers in the area. It's
11 actually pretty amazing flying around doing other
12 surveys and seeing exactly where and how many houses we
13 have up in the mountains, Nelson Island the Coast and
14 then just out in the tundra. But other than -- I guess
15 we haven't done any studies other than -- on them
16 directly and just indirect evidence that shows we
17 probably have a near all time record numbers for them
18 in our area. And I guess that's all I can add to that.

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Pat. Okay.
21 Is there anyone else out there that might have any
22 questions or comments relating to wildlife for Rick or
23 Pat at this time.

24

25 (No comments)

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank
28 you, Pat and Rick. I'm sure we'll get back to you
29 later on as we move around on our agenda, and any
30 wildlife that may come up, so appreciate your time.

31

32 Eva, next agenda item.

33

34 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
35 I'll just check in, we do have Andy Aderman online from
36 Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and just want to check
37 and see if he wanted to provide any updates for the
38 Council in addition to what Kenton had shared
39 yesterday.

40

41 MR. ADERMAN: Hi, Eva, and Mr. Chairman.
42 This is Andy Aderman with the Togiak National Wildlife
43 Refuge in Dillingham. It's my understanding that
44 Patrick gave a real good update on moose in the
45 southern part of Unit 18, specifically the Goodnews
46 Drainage and Kanektok surveys that we did a year ago.
47 That information is in your meeting books starting on
48 Page 20 -- actually the moose stuff is on Page 21, but
49 that was really all that I was planning to present to

50

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1 the Council at this time.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Andy. I
4 know -- I think last fall we considered opening a
5 winter moose hunt for our people in Goodnews Bay, any
6 updates relating to that as far as catches and what
7 not?

8

9 MR. ADERMAN: I believe Patrick could
10 answer that better than I. He gets the harvest
11 information and there was a winter moose hunt last year
12 and one this year that may still be ongoing. Maybe we
13 could see if Patrick could address that.

14

15 MR. JONES: Hey guys, I got dropped from
16 the call for a second there so I might have missed the
17 question.

18

19 MR. ADERMAN: Yeah, Patrick, could you
20 give them an update on the winter moose hunt in the
21 Goodnews Drainage?

22

23 MR. JONES: Absolutely. So we have an
24 extended season this year, it's going to be open until
25 the end of March so it's still ongoing. We've only
26 issued a handful of permits and have one moose recorded
27 as harvested at this point in time. I suspect people
28 will get more, I think they're just waiting for a nice
29 day to go do that hunt. But we had a quota of roughly
30 30 animals from the fall. We still had about 15
31 animals left on the quota so we were able to open this
32 winter hunt and provide a little more opportunity.
33 This is the -- I think this is the fourth year we've
34 had the winter hunt. So far there's just not a lot of
35 moose hunters in that area so we haven't -- we have not
36 reached the quota in the last four years, anyway, even
37 with the winter hunt. So it's providing good
38 opportunity. The moose population there is still
39 continuing to grow.

40

41 And I guess that's -- did that help?

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, it did, thank you.
44 Do we have anyone else has any comments or questions
45 for Andy at this time.

46

47 MR. WASKA: Hello, are you taking
48 testimony too. Evan Waska asking.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva.

2

3 MR. WASKA: Evan Waska.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, go ahead Evan, go
6 ahead.

7

8 MR. WASKA: Yeah, good morning and
9 welcome to all of you, and I'm sorry I'm late in all
10 this but I wanted to give my testimony anyway.

11

12 But all I'm hearing is negative
13 predictions by Federal Fish and Game and State and I
14 ain't going to go by your predictions on kings and I
15 want to go by my elders predictions, they ain't even
16 predict yet. When the ice goes out and when it's time
17 I'm going to go to an elder and ask him, like Mary and
18 them, we know all the kings are coming and all the
19 salmon, but something's happening out there in the high
20 seas where are all the salmon come from. Last year you
21 guys predicted 200,000, what happened to them? Still
22 them high seas trawlers we always mention, Area M, I
23 know there's interception going on out there. And all
24 you, you guys police the hell out of me and my people,
25 what I call undue hardship here on the Kuskokwim and
26 the Yukon. For millennium our dads taught us to, and
27 our moms taught their daughters, smoked, dried fish
28 that gets us through these hard winter months for
29 millennium, including kings in our freezer. That
30 stopped and it's called undue hardship, all this
31 negative predictions you're doing. We have a rule on
32 fish and wildlife from our elders passed on, not to
33 make noise on this fish and wildlife because they'll
34 disappear. You guys make us mad and make noise on
35 them. You guys are supposed to be helping us not cause
36 us undue hardship. Hell, high cost of living here,
37 gallon of milk \$9, butter \$8, hell it's double out
38 there in the villages. Me and my people go to
39 subsistence.

40

41 I remember my -- one of our Native men
42 say, yeah. \$10,000 for outboard now, that's why our
43 forefathers put our villages by the Kuskokwim, by the
44 river, to have easy access to salmon who we know are
45 coming. What make me made more this last summer you
46 guys open up river 24 hours, 24/7, you guys close us
47 two weeks, that's not right. That was undue hardship.
48 Every year. We always have fish spoilage, you guys let
49 us fish in inclimate weather. Our dads and moms taught

50

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1 us how to fish in good weather. You guys stopped that
2 from happening, only undue hardship.

3

4 Hell, when the -- what can I say, thank
5 you for the extended moose hunt and I know our caribou
6 are declining on that disease, (indiscernible) next
7 that those Russian reindeers had the same problem and
8 they had medication for them, they call it hoof
9 disease, but I hope you guys think of me and my people
10 especially now where there's -- we're having Covid19.
11 I brought it up there last year from -- tried to let
12 them open up for kings when that Covid hit, when people
13 were getting unemployed and you guys still never
14 opened, it's what I call mismanagement, opened up river
15 24 hours and closed the hell out of us, two weeks, let
16 the good drying fish weather pass and make us stressed
17 out, and think of our stomach if we're going to make it
18 through these long winter months or not, here on the
19 Kuskokwim and the Yukon. That's not right. You're
20 supposed to be helping us. Maybe it's time to go over
21 your head and complain and I hope these tribal leaders
22 are listening and I hope we -- we need to get together
23 and complain about this management here.

24

25 But anyway thanks for letting me give
26 my testimony and I hope Fish and Wildlife and Feds and
27 State come to understanding due to these conditions now
28 we need -- me and my people need our subsistence, fish
29 and wildlife, salmon and moose and everything too. Not
30 give us hardship. Me and my people need those foods.

31

32 Yeah, quyana and good morning.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
35 Waska, appreciate your comments. Care to respond.

36

37 (No comments)

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, okay,
40 thank you. Moving on, if there's any other questions
41 or comments for Andy at this time from Togiak National
42 Wildlife Refuge.

43

44 MR. BUSTER: Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

47

48 MR. BUSTER: Yeah, Gabriel from Alakanuk
49 Tribe. I wanted to understand more about the -- you

50

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1 know, from the Coastal and the village and people way
2 up north, about the fishing stuff that's going on -- I
3 kind of don't understand who's running the fishing
4 goings on and with the openings and closings so I
5 wanted to know if there's going to be a balance between
6 the Coastal and the village and the people way up
7 river, and it's kind of hard to understand, you know,
8 the openings and closings, especially the Coastal, you
9 know, it's kind of hard to understand. I think we need
10 more information and a balance of, you know, who's
11 going to fish from the Coast and from the rivers.

12

13 And the other one is the gold mine over
14 somewhere in the up river part, I don't know if there's
15 representatives for that gold mine people right now and
16 I remember we had a -- maybe two meetings ago about
17 that gold mining stuff and I remember that lady was
18 talking about a poison, you know, that kills people and
19 they use that to clean the mining stuff and I'm still
20 kind of concerned about that and if that's going to
21 affect our fishing, and spawning.

22

23 Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Gabe.
26 Later on Holly Carroll and Jeff from ADF&G will be on
27 so if you could reserve your questions or comments
28 relating to fisheries you could bring it up at that
29 time.

30

31 MR. BUSTER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Gabe. At
34 this time we're still on with Andy and Patrick relating
35 to Togiak, relating to any wildlife, if anyone wants to
36 comment or have any questions for Andy or Pat at this
37 time.

38

39 (No comments)

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, Eva, next
42 on the agenda.

43

44 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
45 Council. I did want to just check back in with the
46 Council, there were a couple potential proposals that
47 the Council had discussed yesterday with the public and
48 then this morning as well. If the Council wishes to
49 consider submitting any proposals this would be a good
50

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1 time to go back to that discussion.

2

3 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.

6 So I'll go ahead and leave that open for now. I think
7 we've had good, a lot of discussion starting from
8 yesterday and again this morning. If there's anything
9 that pops up, I'd appreciate your comments relating to
10 any wildlife proposals that we'd like to submit.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay.

15

16 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair and Council.

17 The Council had begun discussion yesterday options for
18 flexible ptarmigan hunt if the population was looking
19 better. That was one of the discussions the Council
20 had started. And there was also a request from the
21 public about what options there might be for a limited
22 elder hunt for caribou. And then this morning there
23 was discussion of potentially expanding the moose bag
24 limits for that lower Yukon, that Unit 18 remainder,
25 lower Yukon area where the population is high. So in a
26 way to address sharing of food throughout the region
27 and also address the high moose population in that
28 area. So those were three proposals that I had heard
29 the Council begin to discuss and as you -- as the
30 Council wishes if you would like to discuss those
31 further or develop a recommendation for the Council,
32 this meeting would be the opportunity for the Council
33 to submit proposals. And, again, it is open to the
34 public through May 24th to submit proposals as well.

35

36 So as the Council wishes.

37

38 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.

41 Yeah, I think we should go ahead and follow through
42 with that moose issue that you heard yesterday and
43 again this morning, a number of things that came up was
44 to create a proxy hunt for elders when conditions are
45 poor, and also on Alissa's comments this morning
46 related to -- I wrote it down here -- being able to do
47 hunting for people that are -- that don't have moose --
48 that are limited to moose -- I think that would be a
49 good idea, what Alissa brought up as far as being able
50

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1 to get people from the area to -- in our area to at
2 least do some hunting, moose hunting for our people
3 that are having hardship at this time and be able to
4 find an airline or air service that would be willing to
5 work with us to supply meat for those that are in need.
6 I think this would be a strategy that needs to be
7 looked at and make sure that things are in place before
8 things happen as far as providing meat for those that
9 are in need. And, again, as far as those nonprofits,
10 too, I'm thinking about them, elder care home, and
11 prematernal home there in Bethel, if that can be -- at
12 least, you know, trying to reduce some of that moose
13 population in our area. So we're open if you have
14 any.....

15
16 MR. OWEN: Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

19
20 MR. OWEN: Yes, this is Moses Owen from
21 Akiak, Akiak Native Community.

22
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, go ahead, Moses.
24 You know with all this snow that we have around here,
25 our moose population isn't -- doesn't have the ability
26 to defend themselves and right now, right around Akiak
27 here, because of all the snow that we have, I think
28 I've heard of a couple of moose kills by predators,
29 wolves and they're even getting close to the community
30 here, right behind Akiak. They're the ones that are
31 killing the moose. And I've heard of a couple elders
32 here in the community that we have to do something
33 about this wolf population because they're even coming
34 in within there around the village -- back around the
35 village there behind Akiak, right around the -- pretty
36 close to the houses and that's -- and the moose are
37 populating within the community. I'm watching it here
38 in Akiak. I don't know how it is in the other
39 villages. But a couple times we've had moose go
40 through the community here this winter already being
41 chased -- probably being chased by wolves around here.

42
43 So -- and I think you brought out a
44 valid point there that if we did -- instead of having
45 the wolves kill and the meat going to waste out there,
46 you know, we could be authorized to provide for the
47 elders and some of the community members that have no
48 ability to buy food or meat from the stores because of
49 the high cost of the meat and everything out there.
50

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1 Quyana. Thank you.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Moses,
4 appreciate your comment. We do have the same problem
5 here in our village. It seems like when we do get a
6 good amount of snow the moose tend to come closer to
7 the village and are being harassed by young people and
8 also by house dogs. And yesterday I took a ride with
9 my grandson close by, right by the airport and when we
10 came around the bend we seen a cow with three calves
11 and they were already beginning to be aggressive
12 towards me, you know, without provoking them. So
13 that's scary for me to encounter and I'm sure that's
14 something we do not want to encounter.

15

16 So maybe if we can authorize a special
17 action to take up wolf hunting just to try and decrease
18 the predators. I think maybe a week long or maybe two
19 or three day open hunt for wolves, even aerial hunting,
20 I guess that'll help in many ways so maybe if someone
21 can come, relating that, you know, we're open to see
22 how we could help.

23

24 Thank you.

25

26 MR. IVAN: Mr. Chairman.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

29

30 MR. IVAN: This is Ivan from Akiak and
31 I would like to make brief remark on what Moses Owen
32 from here in Akiak presented. I've observed -- watched
33 our people getting wood and fishing, blackfish
34 trapping, the last several years the wolves are closing
35 in on us and this is the worst year now. And they
36 begin to walk through the community roads, they're
37 dangerous. They're telling our -- parents are telling
38 their kids to stay home, I mean in the evenings. And
39 like Moses said there's several moose across the river
40 killed by wolves and nothing is being done. What are
41 we supposed to do. I know I'd like to get one but I'm
42 74 years old I can't jump around like I used to, but --
43 and my down coat needs a parka. But that's an issue
44 that's got to be -- I mean the parka needs a ruff. But
45 those are critical issues that nobody is doing anything
46 about it. And like -- and my last comment is, now is
47 the time when the dryfish are lowering in our fish
48 caches and freezers and we begin to -- they're getting
49 brittle and then we go after ducks and geese, hopefully

50

0177

1 we go after them, we get in trouble for them in the
2 past and I know some 10/15 years ago or something, both
3 State of Alaska and U.S. government apologize for 1660
4 -- and '64 when people were put in jail, or cited and
5 harassed, but right now is a bad season for us,
6 especially the elders that's longed to eat and we're
7 not that used to store bought -- little store bought
8 items in our small village stores. And Covid is
9 bothering our cycle of -- aircraft that transports
10 these to the small little stores, lockdowns in Bethel
11 and et cetera. This is the best time of the year for
12 me anyway, I just want us to make sure that these moose
13 -- protect us from wolves and they're getting to be
14 dangerous around here.

15
16 Quyana.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
19 Ivan. Like I mentioned, Eva, if a special action
20 request is needed at this time to try, at least,
21 control some of the wolves, the predator wolves that
22 are -- that are beginning to grow and that are coming
23 into the villages, I don't know what process you need
24 for us to at least request for a special action
25 regarding the predator wolves.

26
27 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
28 members of the Council. For the Federal wildlife
29 management, for Federal subsistence wildlife
30 management.....

31
32 (Teleconference interference -
33 participants not muted)

34
35 MS. PATTON:predator control is
36 not -- that is not.....

37
38 (Teleconference interference -
39 participants not muted)

40
41 MS. PATTON: Maybe just a reminder for
42 folks to mute your phone.

43
44 REPORTER: Hi. Hello, this is Tina.
45 Yes, could I have people please mute your phones, take
46 one second, look down see if you're muted. I'd
47 appreciate that.

48
49 Thank you.

50

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1 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So
2 predator control is not a mechanism or option that the
3 Federal Subsistence Program or the Federal Subsistence
4 Board can engage in. The Council can submit a proposal
5 or a special action to increase the harvest limit or
6 the season for wolf for hunting and trapping. So
7 currently the residents of Units 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13,
8 16, 17, 18 within the YK Delta region, 19, 20, 21, and
9 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26 have a harvest limit of 10 wolves
10 with an open season of August 10th through April 30th.

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And so the pathway, if the Council
wanted to increase opportunity for harvest of wolves,
would be to submit a proposal or a special action, as
you request, to increase that bag limit, that harvest
limit.

And that's for Federal subsistence
regulations.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you, Eva.

MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

MR. DEWITT: This is Neil DeWitt from
the Anchorage AC. I'm only doing this on my own
personal behalf, not the AC, but do you guys have any
information on how many your people in your area
actually do hunt wolves and what the take of that hunt
might be?

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. I think
that'd be a question for Patrick.

MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
don't have a number that hunt wolves. Anybody with a
hunting license can hunt them. I can, I guess, echo
kind of what Eva just said, in our area the season's
open to 10 wolves per person with a hunting license.
However, if you have a trapping license there's no
limit. So from November 10th through the end of March
there's no limit for trappers. And if you have a
trapping license, shooting is considered a method of
take under our trapping license. But typically harvest
here varies with our snow years. In years we don't

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1 have very much snow we see about 30 wolves getting
2 sealed or less, and then years when we have really good
3 snow sometimes it gets as high as 120 wolves getting
4 caught and sealed. So it bounces around and it seems
5 to be more related to how much snow we have what drives
6 wolf harvest in our area.

7
8 MR. DEWITT: A followup question on
9 that would be then, is the take -- is there any way to
10 actually see -- I mean you're telling me about a 120 on
11 a low snow year, I understand that, but is there kind
12 of a general idea then, I mean we're talking -- and
13 where I'm coming from is I sit on the Western Arctic
14 Caribou Herd Working Group and I know we hear this from
15 all the areas involved in that bear and the -- the
16 wolves and the bear are just overrunning everything up
17 there, and I notice down here, actually in my area
18 around Trapper Creek, I have the same problem, wolves
19 are taking all the animals, so my question is what can
20 we do other than try to impress upon hunters to get out
21 there and kill more wolves, is there any ideas, or has
22 anybody thought into that anymore?

23
24 Thank you.

25
26 MR. JONES: That's a solid question and
27 I'm not sure that I have any new ground breaking ideas
28 on it. I know some of the up river communities on the
29 Kuskokwim, the community or the tribes offer some
30 incentive with a bounty, that seems to help motivate
31 some people, especially in areas -- you know, up river,
32 in Unit 19 we start seeing lice on wolves so the
33 quality of the fur goes basically to zero. In Unit 18
34 we haven't found lice yet but we have a lot of wolves
35 with what we call flecuria dysplasia and it kind of
36 results in a similar thing where the fur is really
37 short and broken off and essentially worthless. So
38 trapping wolves, at least in my experience, is pretty
39 difficult, they're a smart animal, it's a lot of time
40 and effort for a hide that might be worthless. So I'm
41 not sure if it makes a big difference in motivating
42 people but it seems like it might help some of those
43 other communities if the local community or one of the
44 tribes wants to place a bounty on them.

45
46 That's the only other thing I can think
47 of to help turn up the notch.

48
49 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman.
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0180

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, this is Mike
4 Williams from Akiak Native Community. Yeah, thank you
5 for the information on the bag limits and the methods
6 of take. So for public safety concerns and also the
7 protection of the moose population, I think, you know,
8 it's incumbent upon the tribal governments to initiate
9 on what the other tribes are doing on upper river of
10 the Kuskokwim and to take a look at several options on
11 what actions we can do; get the bounty going, pay for
12 gas for our hunters, and et cetera, but I think the
13 main thing is public safety concerns and also, you
14 know, it's going to be calving season for moose and I
15 think right now is a good time that I think the tribes
16 have several options to take and we're going to take
17 that up in our next tribal Council meeting.

18

19 Thank you.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you.

22

23 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
24 DeWitt again. Can I respond to the gentleman that was
25 just talking.

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

28

29 MR. DEWITT: My question to you, sir,
30 is -- are you guys for or against aerial hunting of
31 wolves, I mean would that work in your area?

32

33 Thank you.

34

35 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, we are for aerial,
36 any way we can get to the wolves, it's easiest way to,
37 you know, because of the conditions we have now with
38 lots of snow and trees that we have around here to --
39 and those wolves tend to, you know, run into the woods
40 and we can't get to them. But I think, you know, I
41 think there are others that do trapping but, you know,
42 it's not worth the time and effort to do that as the
43 conditions of the fur and, you know, amount of
44 resources that we don't have. But then, yeah, we're
45 for aerial hunting.

46

47 MR. DEWITT: Thank you, sir. And,
48 thank you, Mr. Chair, for that time.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Yeah,
2 I think definitely aerial hunt would be an answer to a
3 quick fix on the wolves that are driving the moose into
4 the village. So I don't know if Fish and Game or
5 someone has the authority to authorize maybe a one day
6 aerial hunt. I think it's an urgent need, I feel the
7 people are, you know, being harassed by them and are
8 afraid to be out at night so I think this needs to be
9 dealt with quickly and, you know, right away. Because
10 we've got at least two or three more months of winter
11 left so I don't know if Fish and Game or Fish and
12 Wildlife has the authority to authorize maybe a one day
13 aerial hunt that could be considered. If anyone has
14 any comments to that.

15

16 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
17 DeWitt again.

18

19 MS. PATTON: Actually this is Eva, I
20 would like to respond to that. Again, the Federal
21 Subsistence Program and the Federal Subsistence Board
22 under policy does not engage in predator control and
23 much of the area being within Yukon Delta National
24 Wildlife Refuge is Federal land, these are not options
25 that can be pursued under the Federal regulations.

26

27 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.

30

31 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
32 DeWitt again.

33

34 (Connection Drop - 1.5 min)

35

36 MS. PATTON:issued by the Federal
37 land manager, so by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife
38 Refuge, and that designated hunter permit, it's -- on
39 the Federal side it's a much more open process that
40 provides for others. So anyone can provide for anyone
41 else, essentially, so the recipient doesn't have to
42 have special documentation of anything, they just need
43 to be a Federally-qualified subsistence user to
44 receive, you know, in this case if it was sharing of a
45 moose, they would just need to be a rural resident of
46 the region. And the recipient can then in turn share
47 with anyone. And so there is a potential for a
48 mechanism and we can work with the Council and the
49 Refuge to make sure, you know, all communities are

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1 aware of that designated hunter permit option. The
2 recipient can then in turn share with anyone, and so
3 there is kind of a mechanism for a local community or
4 tribe to organization distribution of moose. And that
5 designated hunter permit allows twice the harvest
6 limit. So unless, say someone under the current
7 regulations in that lower Yukon area, the harvest of
8 two moose, a person with a designated hunter permit
9 could provide for others, could harvest four moose.

10

11 And especially in that lower Yukon
12 area, if the Council wanted to pursue increasing that
13 harvest limit where the moose population is quite high,
14 you know, then the designated hunter would be able to
15 take twice that harvest limit. So that mechanism for
16 sharing is already in place so we can, you know, work
17 with the Council and work with the Refuge and all the
18 communities to better understand and be able to, you
19 know, apply for the designated hunter permit, again,
20 which is a pretty simple process.

21

22 And if the Council wishes to submit a
23 proposal to increase that harvest limit in the lower
24 Yukon then that would increase the number that
25 designated hunters could, in turn, take in order to
26 share.

27

28 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva,
31 for that clarification. I know Alissa mentioned
32 earlier to allow a proxy hunt to harvest moose to be
33 shipped outside of an area, if that could be done, what
34 avenues do we need to do to make that happen?

35

36 MS. PATTON: Yes. So under the
37 designated hunter permit -- under the Federal
38 subsistence designated hunter permit, someone can,
39 again, take twice the harvest limit and that can be
40 shared any -- you know, anybody in the region can be a
41 recipient of that as long as they're a Federally-
42 qualified subsistence user, that person would be on the
43 designated hunter permit as the recipient so that could
44 be, you know, say someone from Alakanuk wanted to --
45 wanted to be a designated hunter and maybe it was, you
46 know, AVCP helping to organize, or ONC helping to
47 organize distribution out of the Bethel area, and
48 someone from that organization could be the recipient
49 and they, in turn, could share that moose with others

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1 in the region. So it doesn't have to be just within
2 your community it's within -- you can share with any
3 Federal subsistence qualified user throughout the YK
4 Delta. So there's no restriction on, you know,
5 shipping or sharing food that way as long as the
6 recipient is on the harvest permit. And that's in
7 place already so it wouldn't require any proposals to
8 do that.

9

10 If the Council wanted to increase the
11 harvest limit to up that, that would be a proposal to
12 take up this year if you wanted to increase the harvest
13 limit for that lower Yukon area to bump up those
14 numbers that could be shared.

15

16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva,
19 for that clarification. Yeah, I think we should go
20 ahead and consider increasing the catches of moose from
21 2 to 3 for the purpose of sharing. I think, you know,
22 that's who we are. That's who we are as Native people,
23 you know, we share, like potlatches we share what we
24 have so I think I'd like to -- if there's no other
25 comments relating to increasing the bag limit from 2
26 to 3, I'll be willing to, you know, address that to try
27 and decrease the moose population in our area because
28 over time, you know, we've heard about the growing
29 moose population in our area and we're afraid of
30 browsing that moose browse on, you know, and once that
31 happens, then, you know, we'll see a big crash of the
32 moose population.

33

34 So we are fortunate at this time that
35 we're able to, you know, see this moose population grow
36 so we're at that state now where we're having too many
37 moose so I think increasing the moose population --
38 excuse me, the moose harvest from 2 to 3 at least gives
39 us an opportunity to share that third moose with
40 relatives or areas that are in hardship for red meat.

41

42 Anyone else has a question or comment.

43

44 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
45 DeWitt.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

48

49 MR. DEWITT: Are you talking to me, Mr.

50

0184

1 Chair?

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I don't know, someone
4 wanted to comment, was that you?

5

6 MR. DEWITT: Yes. This is Neil DeWitt
7 again for the record. And on my own behalf I don't
8 hunt you guys' area out there, are your lands -- are
9 your Federal lands locked up to Federally-qualified
10 subsistence users only and, if so, do you think
11 possibly opening them back up to.....

12

13 (Connection Drop - 1.5 min)

14

15 MR. JONES: I can just make a quick
16 comment on that. Biologically we can absolutely do
17 that, more harvest would be good for that area on the
18 Yukon. And because we're trying to bring that
19 population down or at least stabilize it, I would
20 encourage cow harvest. So with that in mind, I would
21 ask that it still remain only one antlered bull in the
22 fall and then two antlerless moose or something close
23 to that when you're considering your proposal.
24 Shooting additional bulls right now doesn't really help
25 us bring the population down, we've got to shoot some
26 cows to slow down the reproduction.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,
29 Patrick, we'll keep that in mind.

30

31 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mr. Chairman, I
32 would like to make a comment on that.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

35

36 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: On the -- have you
37 looked at extending the moose season like year-round on
38 that -- in that area to help keep the moose population
39 down.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Anyone care to comment
42 on that, on that person's question.

43

44 (No comments)

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I don't know what the
47 process is needed in order to consider a year-round
48 hunt. Maybe Patrick or someone can respond to the
49 person's question.

50

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1 MR. JONES: Sure, through the Chair,
2 this is Patrick. The Council could absolutely make a
3 proposal to extend that season year-round. I don't know
4 that that would help a lot, it's already open from
5 August through April, kind of the primetime people want
6 to put meat away. Of course we stopped it in April
7 last time because we didn't want to have a hunting
8 season on cows or having newborn calves, we didn't want
9 to worry about young orphan calves but you guys can
10 work that out in your proposal on what the bag limit is
11 in the spring or the dates and so you guys have options
12 there anyway.

13
14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. I
15 believe my motion is still in order if someone would
16 care to respond to that.

17
18 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman.

19
20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

21
22 MR. SLATS: Yeah, before we go into
23 motions, I wanted to point out that I agree with
24 Melissa [sic] and Moses, on extending the moose season
25 and, you know, during these times especially in helping
26 our elders for -- with -- for special considerations
27 and beings since we're not able to request for predator
28 control because we have these considerations and
29 emergency situations that are before us I'm wondering
30 if there's -- if we're able to propose for an emergency
31 order to open the season for wolves for our hunters.
32 With -- you know, like opening it up for 10 wolves with
33 all of those units that Eva had mentioned and no limit
34 for trappers, those things, because it sounds like the
35 wolf are -- well, they're predators and then, you know,
36 like we've always been dead set against killing wolves
37 for no reason or things like this, but then if they are
38 starting to encroach on the welfare of our communities,
39 especially when the moose are coming in and around our
40 villages then that's something that needs to be
41 considered. And then I'm wondering if opening up an
42 emergency -- emergency order on wolves would be in
43 order.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, Patrick.....

48
49 MS. PATTON: This is -- thank you --
50

0186

1 oh, go ahead.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I was going to
4 ask Patrick if he wanted to respond.

5

6 MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This
7 is Patrick Jones with Alaska Department of Fish and
8 Game. So I guess just a quick update. So wolves
9 season in Unit 18 is currently open. The hunting
10 season, if you only have a hunting license it's a limit
11 of 10 wolves per person but if a person has a trapping
12 license or the \$5 low income license which includes the
13 trapping license then there's no limit. They just have
14 to get them sealed by the State at the end of the
15 season so that's a free service, before they sell them.
16 But right now -- right now the regulations are open for
17 people to go hunt and trap wolves right now so I don't
18 think we need an EO or anything on that. Like we just
19 need to find a way to encourage people to go out and go
20 hunting and trapping, I guess.

21

22 MR. SLATS: Thank you.

23

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Could you increase
25 that to 20 wolves?

26

27 MR. JONES: The Council could propose
28 an increase in the wolf bag limit. I'm not sure that
29 I've had a hunter, without a trapping license, get 10
30 wolves but most people that get that number of wolves
31 have a trapping license in my experience. But you
32 could absolutely increase it, no objections here.

33

34 MR. ALSTROM: Hello, Mr. Chair, it's
35 Thomas Alstrom.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thomas, go ahead.

38

39 MR. ALSTROM: Yes, before we go into
40 motion, I would also like for the Committee to keep in
41 mind that, you know, as a subsistence hunter --
42 subsistence moose hunter for Unit 18 here out on the
43 Yukon Delta, this past fall I caught -- myself I caught
44 two moose, the first one we had packaged up and put
45 away, but the second moose, you know, we kind of ran
46 out of freezer space so I was calling around and asking
47 people if they wanted moose and, you know, a lot of
48 families and people that I called said they already got
49 their moose or their freezers are full. And I believe

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1 every fall in our neighboring village of Emmonak, you
2 know, it's becoming more relevant with moose legs and
3 moose ribs, you know, butchered into quarters and
4 they're being found by, you know, found in the local
5 landfill so it's kind of like more of a wanton waste.
6 With increasing the bag limit from 2 moose to 3 moose,
7 you know, I'm just, you know, real -- as a Committee we
8 want to keep in mind that we don't want to increase
9 that wanton waste because of the moose quarters being
10 thrown at the landfill maybe for big game hunters, or
11 shooting moose for the antlers or, you know, because a
12 lot of people are, you know, what -- what I see is now
13 that the buy and sale of moose antlers, you know, more
14 younger individuals and families -- well, not families,
15 individuals are going after big antlered moose so
16 they're out for the money. So while we put this in a
17 motion that increasing the bag limit for moose in Unit
18 18 for out here on the Yukon Delta, from 2 moose to 3
19 moose, we don't want to start seeing more moose at the
20 local landfills.

21

22 Thank you, very much.

23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Thomas. Do
25 you have any idea then how we could remedy the over
26 moose population in our area? I know like he says
27 it'll continue to grow until we find a solution, at
28 least trying to at least control the population. Like
29 I mentioned earlier, maybe three moose would be okay as
30 long as we share the third one with villages that are
31 experiencing hardship and I'm sure many villages are in
32 this situation because of the snow density in their
33 area and we do have a storm right now and I'm sure
34 moose will come closer to the village and so something
35 we need to think about this -- you know, trying to
36 decrease the moose population in the area before they
37 crash. So I think just, you know, if we could educate
38 our people about the wanton waste and encourage people
39 to at least -- if we could identify some villages or
40 areas that may need meat at least -- we can at least be
41 prepared to do that, to send it to the village, there's
42 no use getting the third moose until we know for sure
43 that's going to be shared, I think that would be the
44 way to do it.

45

46 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
47 Chair.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Thank
50

0188

1 you. Anyone else care to comment.

2

3 MR. SAMUELSON: Mr. Chair, Earl from
4 Napaskiak.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

7

8 MR. SAMUELSON: Through the Chair. I'd
9 like to speak in favor of that proposal to add that
10 third moose on there and intent to share. And if you
11 look at the population of moose it's really high in
12 your area, the lower Yukon and upwards so -- but if you
13 look at down by Kong, Kwig and all those guys, Toksook
14 Bay, I'm sure they'd probably come on board for that
15 sharing program, the problem probably might be is how
16 to get that moose out to those communities because
17 it'll probably incur additional cost if -- they might
18 be able to support the aircraft, maybe to get up there
19 and deliver to those communities of need. So thank you
20 very much on that part.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Earl.
23 Good to hear you. Yeah, I think even if the villages
24 -- different villages in the lower Yukon can catch on
25 to that and people can work together to try to find
26 ways to get that third moose and to arrange some type
27 of airlines to at least deliver it to maybe a hub area
28 where it can be distributed. So I'd be in favor of
29 increasing the bag limit from 2 to 3 for our area, for
30 the purpose of sharing.

31

32 Anyone care to comment.

33

34 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

37

38 MR. ANDREW: John Andrew, Kwethluk. I
39 was waiting for somebody from the Yukon side to make a
40 motion. Increasing the moose harvest limit on the
41 Yukon is that doable, and the biologist they say 25,000
42 plus, starting from Russian Mission area to scattered
43 all over, they're over grazing their food and there's a
44 real danger of population crashing.

45

46 And I could suggest if they do -- if we
47 want to do the opening, August and September, open in
48 there and give them a limit of 2, then to end the
49 season by March 30 because the cows are pregnant at
50

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1 that time, still with a limit of 2, they're antlerless
2 -- I think they have an antlerless season in there too,
3 that -- that's just my idea.
4

5 Then on wolves -- the other issue where
6 they're talking about the wolves, trapping has no
7 limit, I could suggest that they could include -- make
8 a proposal to increase the hunting limit up to 20
9 animals.

10

11 Qu yana.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Thank
14 you, John. Anyone care to comment.

15

16 (No comments)

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: If there's no other
19 comments I'll go ahead and ask for a motion to increase
20 the bag limit from 2 to 3 moose in lower Unit 18 area
21 and also to consider Patrick's comments relating to one
22 bull moose in the fall and any moose, I believe, in
23 December when it opens up again.

24

25 MR. ALSTROM: Hello, Chair. This is
26 Thomas Alstrom, I move that we increase the bag limit
27 on the moose on the lower Yukon, Unit 18 from 2 moose
28 to 3 moose, with one antlered moose during the fall and
29 any moose during the remainder of the season.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you,
32 Thomas. There's a motion on the floor by Thomas
33 Alstrom to increase the bag limit for moose in the
34 lower Yukon 18 from 2 moose to 3 moose and to have one
35 antlered bull moose in the fall and any two moose in
36 the winter hunt.

37

38 MR. ANDREW: Second by John Andrew.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by John Andrew.
41 All in favor say aye.

42

43 IN UNISON: Aye.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I'm sorry, I'm sorry,
46 I'll take that back, I think we need -- do we need to
47 discuss it -- is there any further additions to the
48 motion.

49

50

0190

1 MR. SAMUELSON: For discussion
2 purposes, Earl, I'd like to speak on the motion.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

5
6 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl Samuelson from
7 Napaskiak. On board with the motion of, could we get a
8 boundary line in there from the lower Yukon to the
9 upper boundary line, is that Mountain Village or
10 Russian Mission. Could we ask that that be clarified.

11
12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, Patrick, or Eva
13 can correct me, but I believe it's in the lower Yukon,
14 which is below Mountain Village on down, you could
15 correct me if I'm wrong.

16
17 MR. JONES: Through the Chair, this is
18 Patrick. So Unit 18 remainder is the legal area we're
19 calling this hunt area and it stretches -- it's a big
20 area. It stretches from the border between -- I guess
21 the border starts about halfway between Holy Cross and
22 Russian Mission on the Yukon and it goes all the way
23 down to the coast. And then it includes -- from the
24 coastline it includes Ishkiwik (ph) which is over there
25 by Kongiganak and then it goes north all the way up to
26 just past Kotlik. So it's a big area. I suspect we
27 don't need to redefine the hunt area at the moment, we
28 might need to in the future, but right now it looks
29 like we have high numbers of moose the entire length of
30 the Yukon right now so I -- for discussion purposes
31 today I don't think we need to draw new hunt
32 boundaries, I think just the bag limit will be good.

33
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Does
35 that answer your question Earl.

36
37 MR. SAMUELSON: Okay, followup. Does
38 that mean the bag limit will increase then on the
39 remainder from Russian Mission downstream and then
40 north of Johnson River.

41
42 MR. JONES: Yeah, that's the current
43 hunt boundary, yep, it is.

44
45 MR. SAMUELSON: Okay, yeah, thanks for
46 the clarification.

47
48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Any
49 more discussion to the motion.

50

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1 MR. TULUK: Yeah, Mr. Chairman, this is
2 Chris Tuluk.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Chris.

5
6 MR. TULUK: Yeah, I was going to speak
7 about that, or comment on that. Patrick just explained
8 it. So I would suggest that you redefine your motion
9 to increase the bag limit within remain -- Unit 18
10 remainder.

11
12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Thank
13 you, Chris. So noted. I'll correct my motion to that
14 regard, thank you. Any more discussion regarding the
15 motion.

16
17 (No comments)

18
19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more discussion to
20 the motion.

21
22 MR. ANDREW: What about the dates of
23 the season, starting in the fall time, what month, what
24 date, and ending towards spring, towards the end of
25 March?

26
27 MR. JONES: Through the Chair, this is
28 Patrick again. So the season right now is long but we
29 kind of have it broken up into sections. So it opens
30 up August 1st, and August 1st through September 30th,
31 you can only shoot one antlered bull but a total of two
32 moose, so you can shoot two cows, or a bull and a cow.
33 October 1st through November 30th, you're no longer
34 allowed to shoot bulls with antlers, it becomes an
35 antlerless hunt, so cows and calves, and then starting
36 December 1st through the April 30th it goes to any
37 moose. So we were just trying to limit the number of
38 antlered bulls people shot in the fall with that and
39 encourage people to shoot cows, and I guess I would
40 encourage you guys to keep those kind of same season
41 breaks where people hunt for bulls in August 1 through
42 September 30th and then October 1 through November 30th
43 it remains antlerless for cows and calves, and December
44 1st through April 30th it can revert back to any moose
45 as the bulls start dropping all their antlers then.

46
47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Does that answer your
48 question, John.

49
50

0192

1 (No comments)

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Any more comments
4 relating to the main motion.

5

6 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl has one more
7 comment.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

10

11 MR. SAMUELSON: I don't know if this
12 pertains to the motion but remember when Covid started
13 a lot of communities wanted to get some moose to get
14 through the crises and they were declined because of
15 regulations. Is this something that will maybe -- has
16 to be put in regulations so hunters can go out to help
17 support the people in need during this Covid. So we
18 don't run into the same situation the folks on the
19 Yukon, and the same way in our area, I don't know if
20 you guys addressed that or not. I don't know if it
21 pertains to the motion.

22

23 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
24 This is Eva.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva.

27

28 MS. PATTON: I can try to help respond
29 to that question. If the Council wishes -- so this is
30 a proposal that under the regulatory cycle would be
31 taken up by the Federal Subsistence Board at their
32 spring '22 meeting and go into effect under the --
33 summer '22 regulations. If this is something that the
34 Council would like to see enacted for this winter
35 season, especially with the challenges communities are
36 facing due to Covid, once the Council passes the
37 proposal you can also make a motion to submit the same
38 proposal as a special action request which would then
39 initiate a process to change those regulations out of
40 cycle and, potentially, be able to have that change
41 made this winter/spring.

42

43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
46 Does that answer your question, Earl?

47

48 MR. SAMUELSON: Yes, it would help and
49 if you could make that motion after this proposal that
50

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1 would help our region -- help our people quite a bit.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, okay. Yeah,
4 we'll go ahead and -- go ahead and pass this motion and
5 also ask for another motion for a special action to
6 take up this proposal so it could be enacted as soon as
7 possible.

8

9 Any more comments, discussion relating
10 to the main motion, which is to increase the bag limit
11 from 2 to 3 in remainder of Unit 18.

12

13 (No comments)

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: If there's no other
16 discussion is there a question.

17

18 (No comments)

19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: If there's no other
21 discussion can we ask for the question.

22

23 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl Samuelson,
24 Napaskiak from the public, can I call the question.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Carl.....

27

28 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Earl, this is
29 Eva. It would need to come from a Council member.

30

31 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman.....

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I was.....

34

35 MR. SLATS:this is Richard.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard.

38

39 MR. SLATS: Call question.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Question's been called
42 by Richard. We'll go ahead and do a roll call vote on
43 this. Richard if you could call for a roll call vote.

44

45 MR. SLATS: Hold on.

46

47 John Andrew.

48

49 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

50

0194

1 MR. SLATS: Thomas Alstrom.

2

3 MR. ALSTROM: Yes.

4

5 MR. SLATS: Richard Slats is an aye.

6

7 Ray Oney.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes.

10

11 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chair. Were there only
12 four of us that are voting members?

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes. We're.....

15

16 MS. PATTON: Yes. Correct, thank you,
17 Richard.

18

19 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman. I have four
20 ayes.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you,
23 Richard. Motion carries. Thank you. We could go
24 ahead and take up the next item which is a special
25 action that we're requesting to put into effect --
26 enact this proposal that we just passed, to request
27 special action to address the moose population in our
28 area. Would that be the correct way to announce that
29 Eva.

30

31 MS. PATTON: Yes, correct, thank you,
32 Mr. Chair. The Council can make a motion to submit the
33 proposal you just adopted as a special action request.

34

35 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Eva. I'll
38 go ahead and ask for a motion to ask for a special
39 action to put the proposal that we just passed to enact
40 as soon as possible, that is my motion.

41

42 MR. ALSTROM: Thomas Alstrom, I second
43 that motion.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, second by Thomas
46 Alstrom. Discussion.

47

48 (No comments)

49

50

0195

1 MR. SLATS: Question.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead. Did I hear
4 someone want to comment.

5

6 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, I think that
7 was a call for question. Was that Richard call for
8 question.

9

10 MR. SLATS: Richard Slats calling for
11 question.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, question's been
14 called. Go ahead and do a roll call again for this
15 special action, Richard.

16

17 MR. SLATS: Roll call.

18

19 John Andrew.

20

21 MR. ANDREW: Yes.

22

23 MR. SLATS: Thomas Alstrom.

24

25 MR. ALSTROM: Yes.

26

27 MR. SLATS: Richard Slats is an aye.

28

29 Ray Oney.

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes.

32

33 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman, I have four
34 ayes.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you,
37 Richard. Motion carries. Eva.

38

39 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
40 Council. Good work. I'll just check in to see if
41 there's any other proposals the Council wanted to
42 consider at this time.

43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva, I know there's a
45 gentleman from Kwethluk that commented earlier
46 regarding Zone 1 and 2, and instead of adding more
47 days, decreasing one moose and moving it to another
48 zone, would that be a possibility for us to consider or
49 how should we approach this?

50

0196

1 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
2 didn't quite catch -- when he was speaking I didn't
3 quite catch what he was asking for, can you repeat your
4 understanding of that request.

5
6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I believe -- I
7 don't know if he's still on, but he mentioned about
8 Zone 1 and 2 and instead of increasing or decreasing,
9 from one zone to another, just add the moose hunt to
10 another zone, that's my understanding. I don't know if
11 he's still on, if he still wants to comment or clarify
12 his comments.

13
14 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15
16 MR. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

19
20 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think he signed
21 off or may be on mute but my understanding is that on
22 Zone 2 on upper headwaters because of the low -- when
23 water drops down and they extended the time of Zone 2,
24 that he was requesting that you increase the hunt in
25 Zone 1 and that was my understanding of this request.

26
27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Eva.

28
29 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
30 maybe we could reach out to -- and I have his name in
31 my notes to that individual and work with him to draft
32 the proposal that he was looking for, and then that
33 would be a proposal coming from him from his request
34 and it will come before the Council at the fall meeting
35 for the Council's review. So all proposals submitted
36 for the region will come before the Council for your
37 review. That might be a good strategy to get exactly
38 what his request was that he was seeking so that we
39 have that accurately. That's just a suggestion, Mr.
40 Chair, for one option for how to address his request.

41
42 Thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
45 So we'll just go ahead and hopefully get that message
46 to him and if he's willing to submit the proposal then
47 we'll be looking forward to seeing it in the fall, so,
48 thank you.

49
50

0197

1 Do we have any other wildlife proposals
2 that the Council would like to consider to the Federal
3 Subsistence Board at this time.

4

5 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl -- through the
6 Chair, Earl Samuelson, Napaskiak to the Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Earl.

9

10 MR. SAMUELSON: Just basically what was
11 said on Zones 1 and 2. And I know that zone boundary
12 is way up in there, that's burdensome for down river
13 people to get up in that area, especially when there's
14 low water. If they can consider to lower the boundary
15 further downstream to increase hunting opportunity
16 would really benefit our region, too. The same way up
17 in that -- that boundary up towards Kisaralik, maybe
18 they're too far up. If they could reduce that boundary
19 further down stream would be super beneficial for our
20 region.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Earl. Maybe
23 you could work with that person from Kwethluk to submit
24 a proposal with your villages working together on that.
25 So that could be done that way.

26

27 MR. SAMUELSON: I've got one more for
28 the moose and then I'll probably sign off. Is the --
29 you know, we worked really hard with the moose
30 moratorium and so we can build up our moose in this
31 area and we're thankful for that. But recently in the
32 last few years, I'm just going to throw this out there,
33 for something to think about, is the increase of snared
34 moose trapping -- trappers snaring moose. We've had
35 three moose that I know of -- four -- just outside of
36 our community in the last, probably eight years, one
37 here in our community was able to get loose and with
38 the aid of the wildlife guys, no trapper around, one
39 didn't make it up -- up above our village, snared and
40 didn't make it and then just recently another big old
41 cow moose got snared by a trapper so it's not really
42 good to see -- maybe get the word out there, trappers
43 could be more responsible snaring. Maybe there's got
44 to be something in motion to start addressing the
45 issue, whether changing that style of snare or naming
46 names on the snare. I got into an argument with one of
47 the guys about naming as well -- if we have to put our
48 names on our setnets then why -- well, maybe we should
49 put names on our snares, too, he had mentioned that it

50

0198

1 was -- naming snares was brought up before and that --
2 maybe it was the State denied that proposal
3 (indiscernible) the southeast people, so just -- just
4 to get that out there. If that's an interest of
5 putting in a proposal, now's the time to start talking
6 about it.

7

8 So that's what I wanted to mention to
9 you guys.

10

11 And that cow that I saw a couple weeks
12 ago was snared, the next day the trapper came by and
13 take the snare off, no salvage, nothing like that. I
14 don't know if he was unable or already reported, in
15 that, it was an incidental catch or not, don't know
16 that, but at least around our area we're starting to
17 see snared moose. Several years ago I know on the
18 Tuluksak, that was a big problem up there, too, until
19 the trappers changed the styled of snare. I do believe
20 there's a different kind of snaring -- break loose
21 snaring that Patrick might know about, if you guys want
22 him to talk about that. There are options to protect
23 the moose out here by changing the style of snare they
24 use.

25

26 So I'll leave it at that, thank you.

27

28 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman.

29

30 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

31

32 MR. EPCHOOK: This is Chariton Epchhook
33 from Kwethluk. Earlier this morning I made a comment
34 that one of the Fish and Wildlife -- yesterday's
35 discussion regarding their proposal to increase the
36 hunt days on Zone 2. I was -- I wanted an amendment to
37 be made by you guys to -- instead of increasing the
38 days, decrease the bag limit in Zone 2 and increase the
39 bag limit in Zone 1.

40

41 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Yeah, I
44 didn't catch your name earlier. Chariton Epchhook,
45 okay, thank you.

46

47 Eva.

48

49 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and

50

0199

1 Council. As the Council wishes, if the Council wants
2 to take up that proposal, to submit it yourselves here
3 you're welcome to do so.

4

5 MR. JONES: Mr. Chair, this is Patrick.

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Pat.

8

9 MR. JONES: I guess I'd like to talk
10 about that briefly. Why the -- so on the Kuskokwim
11 hunt we have two zones, Zone 1 and Zone 2. Zone 1 is
12 the main river and has all the villages and Bethel in
13 it, has generally very easy access and that's -- and a
14 lot of hunters, so we had 1,800 people hunting this
15 fall with an 11 day season. And the reason that the
16 Zone 1 season is so short is because we have so many
17 people and access is so good.

18

19 Zone 2 is mostly we're talking about
20 moose up in the mountains now, or the upper
21 tributaries, and these are different moose. They move
22 around a little bit but by and large they don't seem to
23 come down to the main river into Zone 1. They seem to
24 mostly stay in Zone 2. And so that's why we have
25 different quotas for Zone 1 and Zone 2. It's an
26 attempt to offer more opportunity for animals. They're
27 harder to get to for sure, but it's -- we're trying to
28 provide some opportunity for people to get these
29 animals, otherwise nobody would have a chance to
30 harvest them and they'd just grow old up in the
31 mountains.

32

33 And increasing the seasons in Zone 1
34 wouldn't solve that problem, we would just drive the
35 bull numbers down in Zone 1 and wouldn't change the
36 mountains at all. So I mean there's a reason why it is
37 what it is and it's trying to provide the most
38 opportunity for animals based on where the animals are,
39 I guess, if that helps.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Pat.
42 I been trying to figure the catch in Zone 1 and Zone 2.

43

44 MR. SAMUELSON: Hello, I got a question
45 for Patrick, through the Chair.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

48

49 MR. SAMUELSON: Referencing that Zone

50

0200

1 2, are there any outside hunters up in there that are
2 harvesting moose?

3
4 MR. JONES: So currently Zone 2 is by
5 and large mostly Federal land. There's a little bit of
6 State land in there but by and large it's Federal. And
7 on the Kuskokwim, moose are Federalized, so you have to
8 be Federally-qualified to hunt on Federal land. So
9 there shouldn't be, I guess, is the answer.

10
11 MR. SAMUELSON: Okay, I just asked
12 because I know on the other parts of the Delta on
13 Federal land way over there south of St. Marys and
14 south of Russian Mission, and all those areas, there's
15 those drop off hunters out there, and they really
16 harvest some really huge bulls. Yeah, because we know
17 the big master bulls are the producers and is there any
18 -- when you're looking at the numbers on that,
19 effective, non-effective.

20
21 MR. JONES: So I -- I think I know what
22 you're going for. So on the Yukon -- those Federal
23 lands on the Yukon, in the hunt Unit 18 remainder are
24 open to anyone, residents or nonresidents, locals and
25 nonlocals. As far as drop offs, successful hunters
26 using airplanes I guess is the way we record it in our
27 data, it's about 100 people a year that harvest moose
28 using airplanes in Unit 18 remainder. So we add up all
29 the harvest in Unit 18 remainder, it hovers between
30 800, maybe a thousand on a big year, but it's pretty
31 consistently in the high 800s, low 900s and so -- but
32 we're talking 10 percent of that being airplane
33 hunters. Some of those airplane hunters are locals and
34 some of aren't. But even if I'm harvesting a thousand
35 moose in Unit 18 remainder, we could easily harvest
36 3,000 or more so I -- I'd like to see more harvest in
37 Unit 18 remainder, not less, I guess.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, Patrick, do you
40 have any data relating to how much moose were caught in
41 Zone 1 and 2.

42
43 MR. JONES: I don't have the final
44 breakdown of that. It's 330 moose total. I believe
45 about 90 of that was in Zone 2 up in the hills and the
46 rest of it was down in Zone 1. We had a lot of late
47 reporting this year. We had lots of problems with post
48 offices being out of service and planes not flying and
49 the list went on and on for trying to communicate with
50

0201

1 people. So we're still sending letters out to people,
2 trying to call people to get their hunt report. The
3 last time I looked I was down to 200 people still
4 hadn't reported. So that information's really coming
5 in really slow this year.

6
7 Yeah, so I suspect there's even more
8 moose out there that I don't know about. I mean in the
9 last couple weeks we've gotten 20 reports of moose that
10 were killed in early September, in Zone 1 for instance,
11 as people start getting their mail. So I apologize I
12 don't have solid numbers right now but we're just
13 trying to go with the flow this year and get
14 information when we can and work with communities as we
15 can. I know for a long time Tuntutuliak, you couldn't
16 call them, they could call out but their phones
17 wouldn't receive a call so we couldn't call anybody
18 there, and there were a lot of post offices that were
19 just not open for a month or more at a time, so it's
20 kind of been a difficult year for getting good numbers
21 for us but, you know, right now I can say there's 86 to
22 90 moose harvested in Zone 2 and about 330 total, if
23 that helps.

24
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,
26 Patrick. The reason why I say that is because if there
27 is -- if the moose population is growing in that area
28 then we should consider increasing the quota and it
29 sounds like you don't have no figures right now to rely
30 on to see how much.....

31
32 (Teleconference interference -
33 participants not muted)

34
35 CHAIRMAN ONEY:if that's
36 something we need to keep an eye out, so if we do see
37 an increase in the moose population in that area,
38 considering increasing the bag limit for Zone 1.

39
40 MR. JONES: I guess, Mr. Chair, so
41 we're watching the moose population pretty good, I just
42 don't have good harvest numbers this year or as good as
43 I had liked. But we're watching the population and the
44 bull/cow ratio in October. So this October we looked
45 at bull/cow ratio after the hunt and we were down to 27
46 bulls per 100 cows. I'd kind of like to hold it around
47 30 bulls per 100 cows, that seems to make hunters
48 happy. But every -- we've been increasing the length
49 of the hunt so the hunt was, at one point, three days
50

0202

1 long, before we hit our quota, this year it was 11 days
2 long. Zone 2's season's increased too, so the seasons
3 increasing, we have the regulations to make the season
4 longer or shorter depending on what we think the moose
5 numbers are and we're trying to be pretty adaptive to
6 that but it only increases a day or two at a time just
7 because we have so many hunters and people are really
8 effective at catching moose here. The first day of the
9 season here we caught over 60 moose in one day, so they
10 just add up fast.

11
12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. What
13 is the wish of the Council at this time. I know we're
14 going to consider -- Eva, maybe if you could clarify to
15 us if we could submit a proposal regarding.....

16
17 (Teleconference interference -
18 participants not muted)

19
20 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21 It's at the Council's wish. If the Council does want
22 to take up this proposal on behalf of Mr. Epchook, it's
23 at the Council's wish based on the discussion.

24
25 (Teleconference interference -
26 participants not muted)

27
28 MS. PATTON: Hi, just checking in with
29 folks on teleconference, if you can please mute your
30 phone, push star six to mute your phone, we're hearing
31 some talking in the background there.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 (Pause)

36
37 MS. PATTON: So, again, Mr. Chair, it's
38 up to the Council as you wish. If you want to take up
39 this proposal based on the information you've heard on
40 the Zone 1 and 2 management, and, again, the public is
41 always open to submit the proposal themselves and it
42 will come before the Council in the fall as well.

43
44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45
46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
47 I don't know what Mr. Epchook wants to do, if he wants
48 to go ahead and submit a proposal or he wants us to do
49 it on their behalf.

50

0203

1 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman, this is
2 Chariton. I wanted you guys to consider making an
3 amendment to U.S. Fish and Wildlife's proposal.
4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. We
6 will consider that amendment. If we could clarify the
7 language to put this in a proposal form. Eva.
8

9 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
10 would need that language from Chariton Epchhook, if you
11 can please say again, specifically what you want
12 changed in the regulation.
13

14 Thank you.
15

16 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman. Yesterday
17 U.S. Fish and Wildlife stated that they wanted to
18 increase the days in Zone 2, the hunt, up until October
19 15th and because of the water level during those times
20 I wanted to decrease the harvest limit in Zone 2 and
21 increase the harvest limit in Zone 1. So that's what I
22 wanted you guys to consider amending, U.S. Fish and
23 Wildlife's proposal on -- if not I can probably submit
24 a proposal to lower the Zone 1 and 2's line.
25

26 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.
27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.
29

30 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
31 wanted to reiterate, if that's okay, through the Chair
32 -- Alissa Rogers for the record. I feel a little leery
33 about having to decrease an opportunity for harvesting
34 more as stated by both U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
35 and Alaska Department of Fish and Game, because we're
36 trying to decrease the number of moose that are in Zone
37 2 so they don't eat themselves out of home and out of
38 area. And they're not very migratory type of moose up
39 there, they stay there year-round in their little area,
40 they don't go down river or move about.
41

42 So I just want to make that note.
43

44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa.
47

48 MR. REARDON: Mr. Chair, this is
49 Spencer Reardon.
50

0204

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3 MR. REARDON: I just wanted to provide a
4 little clarification on some of this. So in the past,
5 the late Greg Roczicka worked with Fish and Game, Fish
6 and Wildlife Service, the RACs, the ACs to come up with
7 a Zone 1 and a Zone 2 with a -- they do not follow the
8 Federal land boundaries but it was intended to make it
9 easier for hunters to know where the boundaries were
10 for the different seasons because we provide different
11 quotas. So both Zone 1 and Zone 2 incorporate Federal
12 and State lands. Zone 1 by and large includes the
13 majority of State managed lands, which is the area
14 along the Kuskokwim, and very little Federal lands,
15 which is just a little bit of land that's on the upper
16 Gweek, way up on the Gweek, and a little bit below
17 Kalskag for the most part. On the Zone 2 area, some of
18 the lower boundaries and some other areas do include
19 small portions of State lands. So I'm afraid that a
20 proposal that would be dealing with Zone 1 would have
21 little effect because the avenue to change regulations
22 through that is by and large through the State system,
23 which includes the Advisory Committees, not so much the
24 RACs. So the RACs are dealing with Federal lands,
25 which there is very little Federal lands in Zone 1, but
26 most of it is in Zone 2.

27

28 So just a little clarification there.

29

30 Thanks.

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you,
33 Spencer. Anyone want to comment regarding that.

34

35 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.

36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, John.

38

39 MR. ANDREW: John Andrew, Kwethluk. On
40 discussion only. Like the biologist say, I seen it --
41 I used to hunt up there, way up there for many years, I
42 went up there in falltime too, I took another hunter
43 out there, it was for -- we were just using a regular
44 prop and we couldn't get too far beyond Three Step.
45 People that go further up are the ones with the big jet
46 boats and they're not local guys, they're from another
47 area, mostly from Bethel, and people that do hunt up
48 there, they go a little up -- little on the lower
49 areas, if you have a prop only, but if you have a
50

0205

1 little jet unit you could go further up. And the other
2 group of hunters, they're not too many of them, are
3 fly-in hunters from outside, and half the times you see
4 them coming down with a raft, they'll have only the
5 antlers and no meat. I've seen that. And there are
6 hunters that go up there, that are from here, they said
7 when they run into those sporthunters sometimes they
8 end up with their moose meat but -- but not the
9 antlers. And like they say the moose up there, they're
10 different animals, they don't migrate down river or to
11 other areas, they can migrate up to the next valley or
12 the other -- further down, but they never come down to
13 the main stem. That much I can -- and they don't move
14 out -- the bulls up there don't move around until the
15 air gets cold and when the rut starts. (Indiscernible)
16 there's hardly any of them moving except thousand cows
17 and calves on the river.

18
19 Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, John.
22 Anyone else want to comment regarding this, if we want
23 to submit a proposal to make changes to the
24 regulations.

25
26 (No comments)

27
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I don't know -- I don't
29 know if there's enough information there Eva that we
30 could move forward on this, if not, then maybe Chariton
31 would -- Mr. Epchook would be willing to submit that
32 proposal with the help of other villages that are in
33 that area.

34
35 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
36 also to address Chariton Epchook, as Spencer noted,
37 that, Zone 1 is largely in State managed lands and to
38 effect that would be a proposal to State Board of Game.

39
40 (Teleconference interference -
41 participants not muted - several)

42
43 REPORTER: Okay, hang on. Excuse me.
44 I need to have just one person talking at a time,
45 please, Eva, one person at a time.

46
47 MS. PATTON: Yes, that was somebody
48 with an unmuted line.

49
50

0206

1 REPORTER: Thank you.

2

3

4 MS. PATTON: So if you could mute your
5 phones. Chariton, it sounded like maybe there was some
6 ideas for changing Zone 2 hunt boundary and will be
7 happy to follow up with you after the meeting to take a
8 closer look at that if that would be helpful. It's
9 sounding like a change to Zone 1 would be effective
10 under a proposal to the State Board of Game, which is a
11 separate process from the Federal Subsistence
12 regulations.

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(Pause)

MS. PATTON: So, again, if you wish,
we're happy to followup with you after the Council
meeting to further work through a proposal that you
would like to see under the Federal Subsistence
regulations or as the Council wishes today.

MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman. I think if
submitting a proposal right now will be a little too
late on the State side. Well, with that I think for
the time being we should be good, Zone 1 and 2.

MR. SAMUELSON: Mr. Chair, Earl,
Napaskiak.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Earl.

MR. SAMUELSON: And then leading to Mr.
Epchhook's comments on that, I know what he was asking
for, is the opportunity to hunt when the water levels
are down low and I do believe we should put that in
some kind of tool mechanism, in case the water does get
low and we're unable to get up in that region, that we
can do change the regulation to allow the extent of --
or not an extent -- or extend hunting time in Zone 1 in
that area. If this is -- I know most of it's on State
land, we'd have to push it at the State level, but he
was asking if you could consider that and maybe you
could make some type of recommendation of support,
maybe, and then forward it over to the State Board.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, good point, thank
you.

MR. SAMUELSON: I think that's what he
was thinking in line with that. Mr. Epchhook.

0207

1 MR. EPCHOOK: I didn't get that
2 question, this is Chariton.

3
4 MR. SAMUELSON: Through the Chair,
5 Earl. Chariton. I was trying to mention that --
6 trying to allow additional hunting time at the time
7 that the water levels are really low where hunters
8 can't get up in there, and to allow an extended time in
9 Zone 1.....

10
11 MR. EPCHOOK: Yeah.

12
13 MR. SAMUELSON:so that can allow
14 further hunting when unable to get into Zone 2.

15
16 MR. EPCHOOK: Yeah, that would be good.

17
18 MR. SAMUELSON: Maybe Patrick could
19 make that up in a proposal as an emergency order.

20
21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Sorry, I had my phone
22 dropped so I just dialed back in.

23
24 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
25 This is Eva. I also got dropped and just called back
26 in so I missed some, whatever discussion just happened
27 there. Thank you.

28
29 MR. SAMUELSON: I heard two big loud
30 drops, was that you guys just banging on the floor?

31
32 (Pause)

33
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva, I think we will go
35 ahead and work with Chariton Epchhook to further help
36 him out in any way we can and if it means to give
37 support from our Council then, you know, I'm willing to
38 give that support.

39
40 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Was
41 that a suggestion for a motion.

42
43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, it sounded like --
44 yeah, I think -- if that's a route that Mr. Epchhook
45 wants to take.

46
47 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman, that would
48 be good. To go along with what Earl stated, during
49 times of low water up in Zone 2, possibly they'll
50

0208

1 extend moose hunt in Zone 1.

2

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Thank
6 you. I think that will clarify everything regarding to
7 this. So it is now five minutes after 12:00, if I
8 could call for a lunch break until 1:00 p.m.

9

10 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 Just to clarify, did the Council want to support that
12 motion -- it wasn't clear, I'm sorry.

13

14 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I believe that's
17 the request to give support, I'll go ahead and put that
18 in a motion.

19

20 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman, what was
21 that motion, my phone got cut off earlier.

22

23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, mine, -- Eva,
24 clarification.

25

26 REPORTER: Excuse me, Ray. Ray.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Tina, go ahead.

29

30 REPORTER: Yep, yep, I'm sorry. I
31 think I must have missed that too, are you doing a
32 motion right now or was there one on the table?

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I'm not too sure that's
35 why I was going to ask for clarification from Eva.

36

37 REPORTER: I see, okay, thank you.
38 Sorry to interrupt.

39

40 MS. PATTON: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
41 Chair. So what I heard was you were expressing an
42 interest for the Council to make a motion in support of
43 Chariton Epchook's request for a proposal that during
44 times of low water in Zone 2 to extend the moose hunt
45 in Zone 1.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, that's how I
48 understood it too. So that is a motion.

49

50

0209

1 MS. PATTON: Thank you.

2

3 REPORTER: Thank you.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do I hear a second.

6

7 MR. ANDREW: Second. John Andrew.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John Andrew seconds.

10 All those in favor say aye.

11

12 IN UNISON: Aye.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed, same sign.

15

16 (No opposing votes)

17

18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: And motion carries.

19 Okay, it is now lunch time. Eva, anything else to take

20 care of before we go to lunch, I'd like to maybe ask

21 for a one hour lunch and come back at 1:00 o'clock.

22

23 (No comments)

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva.

26

27 MS. PATTON: Oh, sorry, I was on mute.

28 Okay, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, that sounds good.

29 Did you say 1:00 o'clock to resume the meeting?

30

31 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, and we'll go ahead

32 and continue with the agenda. So if we could take a

33 lunch break for one hour and come back at 1:00 o'clock.

34

35 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

36 Thank you everyone. Good discussion this morning.

37 Have a good lunch.

38

39 (Off record)

40

41 (On record)

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we have a quorum to

44 get started.

45

46 MS. PATTON: Let me check back in. Do

47 we have John Andrew online.

48

49 MR. ANDREW: Over here.

50

0210

1 MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you,
2 John.

3
4 And Richard Slats.

5
6 MR. SLATS: Here. I'm here.

7
8 MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you,
9 Richard.

10
11 And Thomas Alstrom.

12
13 MR. ALSTROM: Yes, I'm here Eva.

14
15 MS. PATTON: Wonderful, thank you,
16 Thomas. And Ray Oney's online.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, present.

19
20 MS. PATTON: And I believe we will have
21 our other Council members calling in as well so I thank
22 you everyone. I'll turn it over to you, Mr. Chair, we
23 do have a quorum.

24
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Eva. I'll
26 call the meeting back to order, the time now is 1:03
27 p.m. We could go ahead and follow through with our
28 agenda, where are we at as far as -- on our agenda.

29
30 Eva.

31
32 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
33 Council. Maybe if I can real quick. We did have a
34 request from folks to provide a phone number for the
35 ADF&G wildlife biologist, Patrick Jones in Bethel, and
36 I have that number here and maybe, Patrick, if you're
37 on the line you could reconfirm.

38
39 The Bethel area -- or YK Delta area
40 Wildlife Biologist Patrick Jones, phone number there in
41 Bethel, is 907-543-2839.

42
43 So just wanted to make that
44 announcement. We had some requests for contact
45 information.

46
47 And Mr. Char and members of the
48 Council, next up on the agenda we have fisheries
49 reports this afternoon. We are down to the 2021

50

0211

1 Kuskokwim River salmon management pre-season discussion
2 and then the 2021 Yukon River pre-season salmon
3 outlook. And I am networking back and forth with Holly
4 Carroll, at this time she's kind of on two meetings at
5 once and so it might work well to take up the Yukon
6 River discussion first if that's okay with the Council
7 and others.

8

9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
12 If there are no objections we could go ahead and take
13 up the Yukon, 2021 Yukon River pre-season salmon
14 outlook.

15

16 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm
17 just sending a note back to Holly there so hopefully
18 she can join us shortly. And probably what would work
19 best for the flow of information for the Council, too,
20 we do have that Yukon chinook heat stress report from
21 USGS if the Council would like to hear that after the
22 discussion on the Yukon fisheries. That would probably
23 be the best flow of information and discussion there as
24 well.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, so ordered, we'll
27 go ahead and follow that route.

28

29 MS. PATTON: Okay. And I do have a
30 note that Holly Carroll is calling in now.

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, we'll wait for
33 her call.

34

35 MS. PATTON: And while we're waiting
36 for Holly to come online, just a friendly reminder
37 again to everyone, take a look at your phones and push
38 star six if you're on a cell phone, or a mute button,
39 so we can reduce all that background noise, there's a
40 few open lines. So star six to mute your phones,
41 please.

42

43 Thank you.

44

45 (Pause)

46

47 MS. PATTON: And it may take Holly just
48 a minute to get through on the teleconference line.
49 Maybe I should have mentioned earlier to everyone, so

50

0212

1 this is materials in the Council's supplemental packet,
2 you know, you have a big print copy of the Yukon pre-
3 season outlook in your supplemental materials. And
4 anyone that is on teleconference, if you would like any
5 of the supplemental materials I can email that.
6 Unfortunately we weren't able to post things to the web
7 that aren't accessible compliance under .508
8 regulations with the Department of Interior. So if
9 anyone would like any of the supplemental materials I'm
10 happy to email those to folks, but Council members you
11 have hard copies in your meeting packet.

12

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

14

15 MS. CARROLL: Eva Patton. Eva Patton,
16 this is Holly Carroll, I made it on the line.

17

18 MS. PATTON: Wonderful, Holly, thank
19 you.

20

21 MS. CARROLL: Thanks so much for
22 accommodating us trying to juggle two meetings at once,
23 can you guys hear me okay?

24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Nice and loud, Holly.

26

27 MS. CARROLL: Okay, great. A lot of
28 you should know who I am because I've been working with
29 a lot of you through my role at Fish and Game, but I
30 began as the Federal Yukon subsistence fishery manager
31 in November. I replaced Fred Bue, and those are pretty
32 big shoes to fill. But he has been working closely
33 with me for years before he retired so I was well
34 mentored by him. And I also work closely with Gerald
35 Maschmann, the assistant manager, he can't be here
36 today but he, you know, he brings almost 20 years to
37 the table so I have great people over at Fish and
38 Wildlife Service that I'm learning from.

39

40 So I want to keep this nice and brief
41 but I know that Gerald gave you an update at the fall
42 meeting about generally how our runs went but I also
43 wanted to touch on newer information. We do have our
44 subsistence harvest estimates and I like to give those
45 out since most people don't have a way to hear how that
46 went.

47

48 I know that 2020 was a pretty rough
49 season overall, and what made it so unusual is that,

50

0213

1 you know, a lot of people focus on chinook harvest, but
2 it was actually the summer and fall chum harvest that
3 were really much reduced. And so I'll start off by
4 talking about the run sizes.

5

6 For chinook salmon, the drainage-wide
7 run was about 162,000. That is a below average run
8 size. It should have been large enough to meet
9 escapement goals, however, the Canadian run that
10 escaped into Canada was much smaller than we were
11 expecting. The Eagle sonar counted only about 33,550.
12 That's over 10,000 fish below what was needed to meet
13 the escapement goal and the harvest shares that we have
14 by treaty with Canada.

15

16 Now, the summer chum run wasn't
17 terrible, it was about 760,000 fish but that's also a
18 very low run for that species. That's the lowest run
19 we've seen since 2001. We did meet the drainage-wide
20 goal for that species. But management in-season was
21 pretty challenging because the summer chum run was
22 late, the chinook run was pretty weak and then we saw
23 pretty poor passage at the border.

24

25 So the 2020 fall species, I'll just
26 cover that. There was about 192,000 fall chum. This
27 is definitely the lowest on record. We also failed to
28 meet the goal at the border for that species. That
29 goal is 70,000 to 104,000. We only saw 23,500 fall chum
30 pass the border. So that was a pretty abysmal
31 escapement for that species. And one of the reasons
32 the fall chum run was so weak is that we had quite a
33 few four year olds missing from the run. And many of
34 you have probably heard by now but chum runs were
35 affected by this loss of four year olds across the
36 Western stocks, we saw that on the Kuskokwim, we saw it
37 in other areas of Alaska as well so we think it might
38 have been something going on in the ocean. But we are
39 a little hopeful that ocean research on juvenile salmon
40 indicate that the five year old component, that we
41 should be expecting this year for chums, should be
42 pretty good based on higher numbers of juveniles that
43 were seen of that age class when they were doing the
44 surface trawls. So that's -- we're a little hopeful
45 that next year will be better for the chums, although
46 we won't really know until the season begins.

47

48 The coho run was about 121,000, this is
49 about half the average run size.

50

0214

1 So really it was a pretty weak year
2 overall for salmon.

3
4 I'll quickly review the subsistence
5 harvests that were taken for the Yukon area. We figure
6 out these estimates, the Alaska Department of Fish and
7 Game works with YRDFA and they usually do a door to
8 door survey, this year it was done by phone survey.
9 But they do get very accurate estimates of harvest.
10 They're able to expand for households they don't
11 connect with and so we do have a confidence interval
12 around this estimate that's pretty tight. These are
13 good numbers. And what they found was that actually
14 this year there was 23,000 chinook -- I'm also rounding
15 these numbers because I know it's a lot of numbers to
16 throw at you -- 23,000 chinook were harvested. Now,
17 that is below the recent five year average. The recent
18 five year average is more like 29,000. And a lot of
19 fishermen may remember actually that 2019 we had a
20 pretty good chinook harvest, it was our best chinook
21 harvest since 2007, 50,000 chinook were taken. So for
22 those of you, you know, that just like to think of
23 recent averages for perspective, that 23,000 chinook
24 wasn't as bad as it could have been.

25
26 Where we really took the hit as far as
27 the fishermen is that, you know, typically we see a lot
28 of summer chum harvested. This year only 43,000 were
29 taken. Compare that to the five year average, Yukon
30 households are normally relying about 80,000 summer
31 chum, so they got about half what they needed for
32 summer chums.

33
34 And then another kicker came in fall,
35 they took only 6,000 fall chum for the whole river.
36 The five year average that is normally harvested is
37 77,000 so, you know, this is a lot of empty freezers.
38 And so, yeah, that's why you hear about a lot of
39 hardship. The harvest for these salmon were super low.

40
41 So moving on to the outlook. I just
42 want to clarify that our outlooks that I'm going to
43 discuss today are very preliminary. For the summer
44 species we formalize those with the Joint Technical
45 Committee and at the Yukon River Panel. And so the
46 Yukon River Panel is going to decide on these forecasts
47 officially April 12th through the 14th, and then after
48 that management Staff will work with YRDFA at the pre-
49 season fisheries meeting and then we will formalize a
50

0215

1 management strategy and then we'll send our outlook
2 flier to all the households. So this is going to be a
3 very sort of just high level discussion of what we
4 think you can expect for the salmon outlooks.

5

6 But for the chinook run, we are
7 expecting a similar or smaller run to 2020. So we're
8 expecting 102,000 to 189,000. For perspective, just to
9 kind of paint a picture of the size of that run,
10 remember I said this year we had a 162,000 chinook, and
11 while we were able to harvest some we failed to meet
12 our goals at the border. So with a run of 102 to
13 189,000 we're probably going to need to take a very
14 cautious management approach and we're probably going
15 to expect to see a lot of harvest restrictions,
16 particularly early on in the run while we're assessing
17 the run as it comes in. And so I wanted to remind
18 people that we haven't needed to do this in a few years
19 but we may be required to put a first pulse closure in
20 place. And so what that would look like is, you know,
21 a lot of times we've been allowing fishing on the front
22 end or the trickle and then when the first pulse
23 arrives we usually have been putting people on half the
24 regulatory fishing schedule. We may need to be closed
25 during the entire first pulse and then follow it up
26 river and so that would be a full week of closure and
27 so that's going to be a real hardship for people so I
28 think it's worth knowing that that might be happening.
29 The other thing fishermen can expect, depending on run
30 size, is, you know, that half regulatory fishing
31 schedule. A lot of times we've also been implementing
32 gillnet restrictions to 6 inch or smaller and that's in
33 order to allow larger, older fish to go on to the
34 spawning grounds. We may even have full closure where
35 gillnets aren't allowed but we do allow selective
36 fishing, so that's fishing with manned fishwheels where
37 kings can be released or fishing with dipnets and beach
38 seines where kings can be released and summer chum can
39 be retained.

40

41 So those are going to be some of the
42 generic management strategies that you can expect.

43

44 For summer chum we are expecting a run
45 size of about 1.2 million fish although, you know, we
46 have some uncertainty because we had sort of a low
47 return of four year olds, we don't know the affect of
48 that on the five year olds but this forecast has taken
49 into account some of that uncertainty. So a run of 1.2

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0216

1 million would allow for a full subsistence harvest,
2 possibly commercial opportunity. The problem is, is
3 that if it's going to overlap with a really weak
4 chinook run our ability to harvest a lot of those
5 summer chum might be hampered by the need to conserve
6 the chinook.

7

8 So going into the fall fishing outlook.
9 We've got a fall chum run forecasted that's about
10 542,000 up to 762,000. Now, because of last year we're
11 going to probably want to take a cautious approach and
12 assume that we might see that lower end. But a run of
13 that size is absolutely sufficient to meet escapement
14 objectives and provide a normal subsistence harvest.
15 The beauty of the fall outlook is that we get a chance
16 to revise that when we see the summer chum run as it
17 comes in the river and we can revise that fall chum
18 forecast based on the relationship that the summer chum
19 and fall chum have with one another. And that's often
20 a much more accurate forecast. But in talking with
21 Jeff Estensen, the fishery manager for the State, he
22 does anticipate full subsistence fishing opportunity.
23 Also if commercial fall chum fishing is warranted it's
24 expected that that wouldn't begin until around the
25 transition date between summer and fall which is July
26 16th.

27

28 So I've just given you, you know, sort
29 of a brief look at that. I will turn it over to the
30 Fish and Game managers to see if they want to add
31 anything, but I know that earlier in the meeting you
32 discussed FRMP proposals, and I just wanted to let you
33 know that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is submitting
34 two proposals to OSM. You've heard of them, I'm sure.
35 One of them is for the Gisasa River weir, the
36 importance of that project is that it measures
37 escapement of salmon into the Koyukuk drainage, and, in
38 particular, the lower Koyukuk. You may recall we had a
39 heat stress die-off of chums in that river in 2019.
40 Continuing to watch these stocks is ever important.
41 But one thing that we're going to change in the
42 proposal is that we're really hoping that if we work
43 closely with Tanana Chiefs Conference they'll actually
44 be able to take over the project in two years time.
45 That is our plan, is to build capacity within their
46 fisheries resource department, because they're -- you
47 know they have expertise on Henshaw River weir. So
48 we've kind of written in that hopefully in two years
49 time you would see them as the main proponent going
50

0217

1 forward.

2

3

4 The other project we're going to submit
5 for is the East Fork Andreafsky River weir. What a lot
6 of people don't realize is even though we've had that
7 data set for nearly 30 years, and that's important in
8 its own right, the most important thing about that area
9 is that the stock that goes to the Andreafsky is not
10 counted at the Pilot Station sonar, it escapes before
11 it can be counted, and it makes up a considerable
12 portion of the summer chum and the chinook run. And so
13 we need that escapement data in order to estimate the
14 full drainage-wide estimates for both summer chum and
15 chinook. So we'll be submitting that weir again.

15

16 And so those are the two FRMP proposals
17 that we'll be submitting.

18

19

20 And I guess I just wanted to say, you
21 know, I am available to any of you at any time if you
22 have questions about fishing or if you have feedback
23 about fishing. I'm going to give out my phone number
24 now and then I'll repeat it again, but you can call me
25 or text me on my cell. It is 907-351-3029. Again,
26 anything to do with Yukon subsistence fishing I'd love
27 to hear from you, and my cell number is 907-351-3029.

27

28

29 I would like to hand it over to
30 Department of Fish and Game. We've given a combined
31 report on their behalf but if I've left anything out I
32 would certainly like them to have the opportunity to
33 cover it. So I would hand it over to Deena Jallen or
34 Jeff Estensen if they are on the line.

34

35

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MS. JALLEN: Hi, Holly. This is Deena
Jallen with Fish and Game up in Fairbanks. Can you
hear me okay?

MS. CARROLL: Yep.

MS. JALLEN: Okay. Yeah, thanks for
that report. I'm sorry I missed the first part of it,
I was listening in to the Eastern Interior RAC and,
yeah, just concur with what Holly said. Thank you for
giving that really comprehensive report. Yeah, we just
look forward to getting back out on the river and
hearing from people in-season. We expect it to be --
have a challenging year and, you know, we'll see how
things are looking like once fish start coming in and

0218

1 hopefully we don't have a lot of high water or adverse
2 environmental conditions this year. And, yeah, if
3 people are seeing things on the river, you know, poor
4 fishing conditions or if you notice anything happening
5 with fish, like incidences of ichthyophonus or
6 anything, we certainly, yeah, encourage you to call in,
7 let us know things during the YRDFA teleconferences,
8 call our offices, you know, hearing information from
9 the river in-season is exceptionally valuable.

10

11 And, yeah, I'll turn it over to fall
12 season.

13

14 Thank you.

15

16 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, good afternoon, Mr.
17 Chair and members of the Council. That was a very
18 thorough report, Holly, I appreciate that very much.
19 Appreciate you giving that to the Council members
20 there. I don't think I have much more to add other
21 than kind of goes without saying that 2020 was a really
22 horrible year but looking forward to, hopefully, a
23 better year this year for the fall season and looking
24 forward to hearing from folks and working with folks
25 and maybe having this Covid over and actually being
26 able to go out and see people.

27

28 But, thank you, very much.

29

30 MS. CARROLL: This is Holly again. I'm
31 happy to standby for questions if you have any about
32 the fishery.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Holly,
35 thank you Jeff, thank you Deena for that report. Do we
36 have any questions or comments for anyone at this time
37 regarding the Yukon River salmon fishery review and
38 2021 season outlook.

39

40 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, I have a
41 question for Holly if I may.

42

43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

44

45 MR. DEWITT: Holly, this is Neil
46 DeWitt. I'm representing myself but I sit on the
47 Anchorage AC. I missed what you said the actual chum
48 run numbers were right after you told -- at the very
49 first, you gave the king numbers.

50

0219

1 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, sorry, I missed
2 your name, sir. Through the Chair, this is Holly, the
3 Fish and Wildlife manager. You're looking for the
4 summer chum run size at the end of 2020?

5

6 MR. DEWITT: Yeah, when you first
7 started your report you said the kings were 120,000
8 which was down, and then you said there was 33,500 that
9 went into Canada and then you went into chums and I
10 didn't catch that number.

11

12 MS. CARROLL: Okay, yep. So the
13 drainage-wide chinook was 162, just to clarify that.
14 But, yes, the summer chum run at the end of the season
15 ended up being about 760,000. This is actually pretty
16 small for a summer chum run. This is our lowest since
17 2001.

18

19 MR. DEWITT: Got it, thank you,
20 appreciate it. And, thank you, Mr. Chair.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we have any more
23 questions or comments for Holly, Jeff or Deena at this
24 time.

25

26 MR. ALSTROM: Hello, Mr. Chair, this is
27 Thomas Alstrom.

28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thomas, go ahead.

30

31 MR. ALSTROM: Yes, I'd just like to
32 thank Holly Carroll with that report there. Commercial
33 and subsistence salmon fishermen here over there on the
34 Yukon, you know, we -- this past summer, 2020, there
35 was a couple of commercial openers and I believe I made
36 one -- made it out to one of the commercial openers and
37 I believe we were having long commercial openers and
38 throughout that whole time I was fishing my net I only
39 caught one summer chum salmon. So -- and I didn't sell
40 it, I brought it home for subsistence use. So thanks
41 for the report. And out here on the Yukon there was
42 very low numbers there during the summer and we were in
43 conservation mode for the summer, chinook salmon. So
44 thanks for the report.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Do we have
47 any more questions or comments regarding the Yukon
48 River salmon fisheries overview 2021 season outlook for
49 Holly, Jeff or Deena.

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0220

1 (No comments)

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, maybe I'll go ahead and ask one. Holly you mentioned there may be something going out in the ocean that may be causing some of the fish to return, is there any entity or any organization that may be looking into that issue of maybe seeing what may be causing fish not to return?

MS. CARROLL: You know we don't really know what caused that event. You know the fact that we saw a reduced return of age four chum across multiple rivers we don't know what occurred. I think it's going to be very telling what happens with the five year olds because like I said, you know, there's a trawl survey that intercepts juvenile chinook and chum salmon and they saw low numbers of the four year olds. So their data predicted what occurred. So that means that our data is working, we don't know why. But their data now predicts we will see more of the five year olds. And so if that ends up being true, we may not have the problem anymore but we may not necessarily know the answer. So unless someone else on the call has a better answer for that I just don't think any of us really know why that occurred to that one particular age class of summer chum.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.

MR. ESTENSEN: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, this is Jeff Estensen, fall season manager. I do know that, and Holly's absolutely correct with her answer, if we could -- within the Department of Fish and Game we do have fishery scientists, Katy Howard, Dr. Katy Howard, Sabrina Garcia, that are looking into it. You know it may not necessarily be an answer that's going to be, you know, answered quickly and conclusively but at least we have a few people looking into it as I'm sure that academia folks might be looking to it as well, but it may be awhile before there's any definitive answers but, you know, if and when some do come up it's something that we will certainly be passing on to the public for sure.

So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

0221

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Based on
2 the number of chinook making it in to Canada Border and
3 into the spawning grounds, based on the amount of years
4 that they spend out in the sea, over the years, I don't
5 know the life cycle of the salmon -- the chinook
6 salmon, I think it's five or seven years, and if that's
7 the case then the amount of chinook that we put into
8 the spawning grounds, based on maybe even this years
9 predictions, what are we expecting as far as returns
10 based on the age of the returning chinook?

11
12 MS. CARROLL: Mr. Chair, this is Holly
13 Carroll, Fish and Wildlife Service. That's an
14 excellent question. I'm glad you asked that because
15 this is one of the kind of founding issues with salmon.
16 So you're right the king salmon are returning as five
17 and six year olds, that's what dominate the run, we do
18 get four year olds, we do get seven year olds, but it's
19 the five and six year olds that dominate the run.
20 What's interesting about this poor escapement that we
21 saw into Canada this year is that it comes off of our
22 2015 escapement, 2015 and 2014, because that's the five
23 year olds and the six year olds. And in 2015 we
24 exceeded the escapement goal by over 20,000 fish. So
25 the escapement goal is 42,500 to 55,000 and in 2015 we
26 put almost 85,000 chinook salmon on to the spawning
27 grounds. So I would not have expected a return this
28 low for that stock. And so I don't know what that
29 bodes. But now if you're saying well what is the
30 effect of putting 33,000 on the escapement grounds now,
31 whatever effect of that we will see that, you know,
32 five years from now, so five and six years from now
33 most likely. So you'd be looking at the 2026 run and
34 2027 runs. And we don't project the runs that far in
35 the future. Usually we can only project the runs one
36 year ahead, and it's actually only because of the
37 Bering Sea research that they're doing with juveniles
38 that we're able to have a three year forecast. They've
39 been able to help us see what's happening three years
40 out.

41
42 So, yeah, not sure what the effects of
43 this will be. Because what we have seen is that last
44 time we had escapements this low were like in 2013 and
45 2014 and those escapements actually gave us some of our
46 biggest runs. We saw 260,000 chinook come into the
47 river off that poor escapement that occurred in 2013.
48 So it is really confounding that sometimes we can have
49 poor escapements and they actually yield pretty good
50

0222

1 returns, five and six years later. And then sometimes
2 we have this really great escapement of 85,000, you
3 know, more than was needed and then we have this very
4 poor return off that.

5

6 So, yeah, time will tell what the
7 effect of this escapement will be.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. And also I
10 don't know who may be able to give us answers to the
11 spawning grounds. I know due to global warming, I
12 don't know if there's any affects to the spawning
13 grounds as far as, you know, this global warming making
14 any affects to that area, or who would we ask this
15 question to?

16

17 MS. CARROLL: Well, I can take a stab
18 at that, Mr. Chair. Again, this is Holly. So one of
19 the things that -- so the ideal situation is that you
20 want to put your largest fish on the spawning grounds,
21 they hold the most eggs. And what we do know is that,
22 you know, since the year 2000 our fish are getting a
23 lot smaller. They're returning younger, and our larger
24 fish are getting smaller, and our young fish are
25 getting bigger. And so to that end, you know, you want
26 more eggs on the spawning ground. And so we definitely
27 want to be meeting our escapement goals because if the
28 fish have less eggs than they used to then we need more
29 fish on the spawning grounds, or we need more large
30 fish on the spawning grounds. That is one affect of
31 the climate change that has been affecting the size of
32 salmon.

33

34 As to how well they're surviving on the
35 spawning grounds, there's not a lot of research that I
36 know of where we are collecting a lot of data about
37 survival on the spawning grounds, itself. You know the
38 Yukon River Panel has a research fund, and anyone can
39 put proposals in to study salmon, and there are a lot
40 of First Nations on the Canada side that are putting in
41 some research into certain streams, but there's just
42 not a lot known about the survival of the eggs coming
43 out of the gravel or how many eggs are going into the
44 gravel and whether climate effects are affecting that.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.
47 Anyone has any comments or questions for Holly, Jeff or
48 Deena at this time.

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0223

1 MR. BUSTER: Yeah, I got a question,
2 Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

5
6 MR. BUSTER: Yeah. Was there any study
7 about the Atlantic salmon, you know, trying to -- you
8 know from the Atlantic to the Pacific, you know, was
9 there any (indiscernible) of that, you know, I don't
10 want to go on to that, you know, putting our king
11 salmon in jeopardy but I just wanted to know if there
12 was any study of trying to put salmon -- Pacific --
13 from the Atlantic to the Pacific -- or just watching so
14 like a couple weeks ago, that the Atlantic salmon, you
15 know, they go up stream and then after they lay their
16 eggs they come back out again but in the Yukon, you
17 know, they go up and then -- way up and then they don't
18 come back. That was my question.

19
20 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, Mr. Chair, this is
21 Holly Carroll again. So are you asking about like
22 maybe introducing hatchery Atlantic salmon to augment
23 our salmon stocks on the Yukon, is that the question?

24
25 MR. BUSTER: The question was, was
26 there any study, you know, from the Atlantic fisheries,
27 you know, the salmon from the Atlantic to the Pacific,
28 was there any study about that. Because, you know, I
29 was hearing about stuff like, you know, they might
30 overrun the salmon here in the Pacific and, you know,
31 we don't want that to happen, but, you know, I don't
32 know if that was a good idea but, you know, but it
33 sounded so good to hear that the salmon in the
34 Atlantic, you know, they go in and then lay their eggs
35 and then come back out again. That was just the
36 question.

37
38 MS. CARROLL: I think I understand your
39 question. Yeah, that's not an issue for us on the
40 Yukon. Straying Atlantic salmon is always an issue
41 where, you know, we've always got fishermen, you know,
42 noticed, please tell us if you find a straying Atlantic
43 salmon but it is a super rare occurrence on the Yukon.
44 And if they do lay their eggs they're going to die just
45 like the Pacific salmon so they won't be leaving the
46 system. And a single salmon probably wouldn't cause an
47 issue right now because we don't have Atlantic salmon
48 farms nearby, we have pretty strict rules in Alaska, I
49 don't think it's a concern for the Yukon.
50

0224

1 MR. BUSTER: Okay, thank you.

2

3 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

6

7 MR. LANDLORD: This is James Landlord,
8 Mountain Village. When did the First Nations, Yukon
9 Territory, start their study on chinook?

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, you might have
12 to restate your question, I think you might have been
13 covered.

14

15 MR. LANDLORD: Okay. Holly mentioned
16 -- one of them mentioned that First Nations Canada
17 began studying chinook, I just wanted to know when did
18 it get started.

19

20 MS. CARROLL: Thanks for that
21 question, Mr. Chair. This is Holly Carroll again. So
22 hopefully I didn't confuse the situation. Every single
23 year there's a research fund that awards money to
24 investigators that want to do research and every year
25 that can be up to 20 or 30 different studies. And the
26 Yukon River Panel has been funding these studies for, I
27 believe it's over 15 years. So there's been all
28 different types of research. Some are doing
29 enhancement, you know, where they try to put some eggs
30 in the gravel and see how they survive. Some are
31 weirs. Some are sonars. There's all kinds of
32 research. And if you want to learn more about the
33 kinds of research that the Yukon River Panel is doing,
34 they have a wonderful website, they usually have a map
35 showing the different research, they post the reports
36 on there, it's called the Yukon River Panel. And that
37 would be a good source to go to to see what kind of
38 research has been done on the Canadian side because
39 it's been going on for decades.

40

41 MR. LANDLORD: Thank you.

42

43 (Teleconference interference -
44 participants not muted - several)

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Someone's doing a lot
47 of shuffling of paper or what not, maybe if you could
48 mute your phones, star six, we'd appreciate it. Thank
49 you.

50

0225

1 At this time do we have any comments or
2 questions for Holly, Jeff and Deena regarding the Yukon
3 salmon.
4

5 REPORTER: Hi. For you folks online,
6 could everybody take a second, check your phone, see if
7 it's muted. All of a sudden we are getting a lot of
8 override. So we have a couple open lines I think.
9 Appreciate it. Just look down at your phone and make
10 sure it's on mute, star six.
11

12 Go ahead, Ray.
13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Again, if
15 there's any questions for Holly or Jeff or Deena
16 regarding the Yukon fisheries, now is your time to ask
17 or comment.
18

19 MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair, this is Thomas
20 Alstrom, I have a quick question.
21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thomas, go ahead.
23

24 MR. ALSTROM: Yes. On the 2020 Yukon
25 River salmon fisheries, salmon fisheries review and
26 2021 season outlook supplemental on Page 4, on Page 5,
27 6, and 7, can they -- or on Pages 6 and 7, on the graph
28 charts, summer chum salmon drainage-wide run size and
29 the coho salmon index of run sizes, I see both 96 and
30 on the coho salmon index 2009 the record numbers are
31 missing, or no data was collected; can they explain on
32 the two charts why 1996 and 2009 are missing.
33

34 MS. CARROLL: Yeah, this is Holly
35 Carroll. I'm going to differ to the Department to
36 answer the coho question. But for 1996 it was a year
37 that the sonar was not operational and so we usually
38 leave that a year out of the data series. The sonar
39 estimates were not good in that year so we don't
40 include them. As for the later coho estimate I'm going
41 to let Jeff answer that one, I don't know the answer to
42 '09 what occurred.
43

44 MR. ESTENSEN: Yeah, thank you, Holly.
45 Mr. Chair. To answer the question, it wasn't
46 necessarily a sonar problem with the coho, but there
47 was a lot of difficulty in assessing the coho run that
48 year to the point where the estimate was incomplete and
49 not really representative of what occurred that year.
50

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1 There was difficulty in monitoring the coho, I believe
2 we had high water that year, some other issues. But
3 really it's missing because the information is not
4 reliable or accurate or complete enough to report.

5

6 Thank you.

7

8 MR. ALSTROM: Thank you, Holly and
9 Jeff.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I have one. I don't
12 know if there's been any talks about looking at a
13 second sonar somewhere along the Yukon, I think, would
14 be helpful because from Pilot all the way up to the
15 Canadian Border is a pretty long stretch and from north
16 of the Yukon to Pilot Station is just -- is a small
17 stretch and I think by installing maybe another sonar,
18 maybe up Galena area, I think that'll answer some of
19 your questions about the fish run because we do
20 sacrifice our time here on the lower Yukon in Y1 and 2,
21 and as you know Y1 and 2, are a majority of the in-
22 river users, which makes up 64 percent of the people
23 that are utilizing the resource. And as you go further
24 up, there are just little villages that are small but
25 do take a big number and if you do consider a sonar I
26 think that'll give you a better, accurate number as to
27 the escapement that you are watching as it goes further
28 up the river. I know we heard about that 20,000 fish,
29 chinook that were missing and there was no -- no answer
30 to that. So I think by putting in -- requesting for a
31 second sonar up in that -- further up the Yukon I think
32 you'll have better accuracy of how much fish are being
33 harvested or how much fish are between Pilot and the
34 Canadian Border.

35

36 MS. CARROLL: Thanks so much for your
37 comments, Mr. Chair. This is Holly at Fish and
38 Wildlife Service again. That's a great idea and
39 actually Fish and Wildlife Service is working with
40 Stephanie Quinn-Davidson who is the Executive Director
41 of the Yukon River InterTribal Fish Commission. She
42 has got some funding to explore the feasibility of
43 finding a sonar site in the mid-river and so we've
44 committed to working to at least help design a
45 feasibility study. It is a great idea. What's
46 important for people to know is that it can take
47 sometimes up to three years to get any usable data from
48 a new sonar project. And so it is going to be a long-
49 term commitment, if it occurs, but, yes, I think

50

0227

1 getting a better warning system, if you will, that the
2 counts are either good or poorer than we thought, once
3 they get up river is something to explore, and so I'll
4 be working with Tanana Chiefs to do that. Standby
5 because there's not much to report on but you might
6 hear something next year.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Okay, is
9 there any more questions or comments for Holly, Jeff or
10 Deena at this time regarding the Yukon River salmon.

11

12 (No comments)

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, I
15 appreciate your report. And also congratulations on
16 your new job Holly.

17

18 MS. CARROLL: Thanks very much, Mr.
19 Chair. And I won't be on the call because I have to
20 pop on to the Eastern Interior RAC but I do encourage
21 any of you to call me on that cell phone number if
22 anything comes up or if you think of anything, or you
23 can shoot me an email or someone can message me and I
24 can call back in if need be. Thanks very much for your
25 time today.

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Eva.

28

29 MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair.
30 And thanks, again, to Holly and Jeff and Deena for
31 coming on today and juggling both meetings, so
32 appreciate that. Next up we do have a special report
33 from USGS Alaska Science Center on heat stress and
34 Yukon River chinook that the Council was very
35 interested in hearing and we have Vanessa vonBeila
36 online. She might be able to correct my pronunciation
37 but we do have Vanessa online to share that with the
38 Council. This was added to the agenda more recently
39 and so the handout she had provided was emailed to
40 Council members who have email, and, John, I did get
41 that to the tribal council office there to pick up for
42 you and otherwise it will be coming in the mail, there
43 just wasn't time for it to arrive. So that handout for
44 this report was sent to you by email.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Sorry. I forgot to
47 mention earlier, Mr. Alstrom from St. Marys wanted to
48 know if you might hear any type of fishery assistance
49 for commercial or subsistence, if anyone got any

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0228

1 information relating to the fisheries disaster from
2 last year, if there's any kind of funding that might be
3 available to subsistence and commercial fishermen.
4

5 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
6 that's a question I would have to get back to Holly and
7 others on the fisheries side there. I don't have that
8 information right now. But maybe we could certainly
9 try to get that to Thomas, if not before the end of the
10 meeting can make sure that we make those connections to
11 get any update on that if possible.
12

13 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I forgot to ask
16 this question while they were still on. So I just saw
17 my note relating to that.
18

19 MS. PATTON: Yeah, maybe I could put a
20 plug into them via text to see if maybe at the end of
21 the meeting they'd be able to circle back around and
22 answer that question for the Council.
23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, sounds good,
25 thank you.
26

27 MS. PATTON: Thank you.
28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you.
30 Continue on with USGS, I believe.
31

32 MS. vonBIELE : Yeah, I am on. This is
33 Vanessa vonBiela, can you guys hear me all right?
34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Nice and loud.
36

37 MS. vonBIELE: Thanks. And thanks for
38 this opportunity to present to you guys. I'm happy to
39 be able to share the results of this research. Like
40 most of the research reports you get the data that I'm
41 going to be talking about isn't from just the last
42 couple of years, it's a little bit older than that.
43

44 We did a heat stress study in the Yukon
45 River in 2016 and 2017 and the results are published
46 now so I'm able to share them in more depth with as
47 many audiences as are interested.
48

49 Now, of course the heat stress has been
50

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1 a concern on the Yukon River and a lot of people have
2 expressed it for a number of years and that's really
3 the basis of this study, is that concern from people on
4 the river, and the water temperature data and what it
5 shows. Particularly in the middle of the summer and in
6 the middle of the chinook salmon run. So July tends to
7 be the peak of water temperatures in Alaska and we do
8 see that these river water temperatures peak between
9 about 65 and 70 degrees fahrenheit and those
10 temperatures are associated with heat, stress in
11 Pacific salmon in the Pacific Northwest. A lot of
12 people don't realize we even get water temperatures
13 this hot in Alaska unless you happen to live in a place
14 where you get to experience that first hand. For the
15 rest of the outside world they're pretty surprised to
16 hear that our water temperatures get this high on the
17 Yukon, since, of course, they think of it being quite
18 cold, you know, in Northern Alaska, and most people are
19 aware that this is an ice covered river every winter,
20 so to come from freezing temperatures every winter to
21 these really warm summer temperatures is quite a feat.

22
23 So the data that we had going into the
24 project were mostly just the water temperature data
25 records that are available on the main stem Yukon,
26 that's Stan Zuray's data on his fishwheel there at
27 Rapids, and then there's some good long-term data
28 collected by Alaska Department of Fish and Game at the
29 Pilot Station sonar project as well. So we do have
30 some context for about the last 20 years of data and
31 see that the river's frequently in this range, between
32 65 and 70 degrees and that the two years of our study,
33 2016 and 2017, were warm years, but not really
34 abnormally so. So the water temperatures were between
35 that 65 to 70 degree temperature range in July.

36
37 So the way this research worked, it's
38 basically a lab test that we do with samples from wild
39 chinook salmon. We worked with the existing monitoring
40 projects, several monitoring projects in the Yukon
41 drainage, and we take a tiny piece of muscle tissue
42 sample, it's about the size of a pencil eraser and it
43 has to go into this thing we call a dry shipper, which
44 instantly freezes it so that the sample can basically
45 stay frozen in time and be sent to the lab. What we're
46 measuring in the sample is a marker that shows us which
47 gene, how much of a gene a fish is using at any given
48 time and we're specifically looking at a handful of
49 genes that have to do with heat stress and then we're
50

0230

1 also looking at a protein that's made by one of those
2 genes that's called a heat shock protein. And so that
3 protein actually can help a fish cope with warmer
4 temperatures. So I think of these tests as sort of
5 like the same sort of thing a doctor might run on a
6 blood test. So they give you a little window to what's
7 going on and you kind of can set a threshold to say,
8 you know, does this test say everything is fine or does
9 this test suggest that there might be a problem.

10

11 (Teleconference interference -
12 participants not muted)

13

14 MS. vonBIELE: And that's sort of the
15 basis of how these tests work. Now heat stress is a
16 physiological term that we're using and it sort of just
17 encompasses the fact that the fish are above the
18 thermal preference that they like, so above that
19 temperature range that they prefer, and that's going to
20 make their bodies work a lot harder. You can push
21 beyond a level that their body can work at and that's
22 when you can actually get mortality. So a lot of times
23 in practice in the field we see a few things go hand in
24 hand where populations of fish that have high levels of
25 heat stress also have high levels of premature
26 mortality, meaning that the fish are dying in the river
27 before the spawn.

28

29 So at this point, you know, that was
30 the motivation for the study, concern that they might
31 be dying before they spawn and see if this is part of
32 the reason that you guys do see that disconnect by the
33 number of fish that contribute to a future generation
34 and how many fish come down the line. One of those
35 issues you guys were just talking about with Holly's
36 report there, where, you know, the 2014 and 2015 runs
37 didn't signal that there might be a problem coming in
38 2020 because those were good numbers.

39

40 So we worked in locations throughout
41 the river that included the two test fisheries in
42 Emmonak and Eagle. Also two Fish and Wildlife Service
43 weirs, so the Andrafsky and the Gisasa. We also were
44 able to collect samples at the Rapids fishwheel area
45 with Stan Zuray and other community members that fish
46 nearby there. And then with Alaska Department of Fish
47 and Game in the Chena River.

48

49 So I'm going to move sort of through

50

0231

1 the river from the mouth to the border and share the
2 results of what those heat stress rates are for the two
3 study years. We had the lowest rates of heat stress
4 down at the mouth of the river near Emmonak and this
5 makes sense, of course, because the fish haven't been
6 in the warmer river water for too long. Those rates
7 were 31 percent and 34 percent in 2016 and 2017. And
8 we think even some of these are a little bit of an over
9 estimate because a lot of these lab test results came
10 back right on the borderline, between what we're
11 considering heat stress and not stress. So I think
12 some of these are a little high. As the fish come into
13 the river there can be, of course, there's major
14 changes with their physiology as they move from
15 saltwater to freshwater and so we think that might sort
16 of affect some of these test thresholds a little bit.
17 But that's the only site that we have those concerns
18 about.

19
20 Moving a bit further up the river in
21 the lower Delta, we sampled the EastFork Andreafksy
22 River there at the weir and we saw a rate of 98 percent
23 heat stress in 2016 but then much lower in 2017, only
24 18 percent heat stress in 2017. So sort of like a
25 night and day difference there on the EastFork
26 Andreafsky and that did align with what the people and
27 the field crew saw on the ground there. 2016 the river
28 temperatures there in the Andreafsky and the EastFork
29 were really warm and they got up above 70 degrees
30 fahrenheit which is also above 21 degrees celsius if
31 you're used to thinking of the temperatures like that.
32 But then in 2017 those tributary waters were a lot
33 cooler so that aligns with that big difference that we
34 saw between the 2016 and the 2017 heat stress results.

35
36 Then, you know, we've got kind of a gap
37 in monitoring in the river, so the next place we have
38 heat stress results from is in the Koyukuk Basin at the
39 Gisasa River weir. And there we saw pretty high rates
40 of heat stress in both years, 66 percent and 77
41 percent. So a little bit higher in 2017. And that
42 pattern sort of continues through the rest of the data
43 where we had higher heat stress results in 2017 and
44 that does agree with the differences in the mainstem
45 Yukon water temperatures between the two years. Where
46 2017 was a little bit warmer than 2016. But the most
47 interesting thing about the Gisasa was that was one of
48 the only places where heat stress -- that was the only
49 place stress was above 50 percent in both of the years.
50

0232

1 Now, the Gisasa is sampled in the middle of July so
2 partly that could be due to the fact that we're just
3 able to sample those fish at the hottest point in the
4 year and that's a little bit different than some of the
5 other stations.

6
7 Then we're going to go back into the
8 mainstem and continue up the river to the Rapids
9 fishwheel area. Here we saw big differences as well.
10 Lower rates of heat stress in 2016 when the mainstem
11 was a little cooler, so that was only 18 percent, but
12 then much higher in 2017, that was 97 percent of the
13 fish that we captured there had evidence of heat
14 stress.

15
16 Now, if we go into the Tanana watershed
17 we did have some data from the Chena River. And this
18 was a really interesting place for us to understand the
19 heat stress for the salmon because the Tanana and the
20 Chena River are both very cold waters, here, that get a
21 lot of ground water influence and some glacier
22 influence in the watershed too that helps it stay cool
23 even when it's a really warm summer. And so here we're
24 looking to see if the fish that we captured had sort of
25 recovered from heat stress or if they still had this
26 evidence with these lab tests that we run. And we did
27 find that they still had some evidence of heat stress
28 and we think that's left over from their mainstem
29 migration and the Yukon. 45 percent of the fish had
30 evidence of heat stress in 2016 and 64 percent of the
31 fish had evidence of heat stress in 2017.

32
33 And then our last site is at Eagle on
34 the Canadian Border, and here at Eagle we saw 38
35 percent of the fish had evidence of heat stress in 2016
36 and then 64 percent in 2017.

37
38 So if we look across all the fish that
39 were in the study, that's 477 wild chinook salmon for
40 which we took the small piece of muscle, and then
41 importantly these fish are -- this non-lethal sampling,
42 most of these fish are re-released so that they can
43 continue on to spawn, but across all those fish we saw
44 that just over half of the fish had evidence of heat
45 stress, that's 54 percent in the study and this is a
46 high and concerning level of heat stress. And so this
47 is something that we think warrants additional study,
48 given that this level is high and the fact that the
49 water temperatures during these study years were kind
50

0233

1 of the new normal for the Yukon, it's not clear from
2 the water temperature data I've seen that we understand
3 exactly when the Yukon got this warm, but it is clear
4 that over the last 20 years we often get water
5 temperatures in this sort of range that we associate
6 with heat stress.

7
8 So the main concern here is that these
9 fish would then have higher rates of in-river mortality
10 and there's a chance here that we've actually got fish
11 that are being counted towards escapement goals and
12 we're concerned that they're not actually making it all
13 the way to put their eggs in the spawning grounds. So
14 fish can die at two different points in the migration.
15 They can either die sort of in the mainstem and on
16 their way to spawning grounds, or they could die
17 actually on the spawning grounds, and either way it's
18 really hard to detect that so if fish are dying on the
19 way to the spawning grounds, for instance, in the
20 mainstem Yukon, it's very hard to see any of those
21 carcasses. Carcasses occasionally do float for a short
22 amount of time, but as a general rule most of the time
23 they're going to sink. And then when you get fish up
24 on the spawning grounds there's a phenomenon that we
25 call pre-spawn mortality where sometimes the fish do
26 reach the spawning grounds so they look like they're a
27 success but they actually don't have enough energy left
28 to spawn or they're otherwise too stressed to spawn so
29 you can get this pre-spawn mortality that -- the only
30 way to distinguish if that's happening is by actually
31 having people open carcasses and looking to see if they
32 have eggs and milt retained in their body.

33
34 So we've already worked with partners
35 in the region to propose a study to the Arctic Yukon
36 Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative that would try
37 to look at whether there is a mortality issue
38 happening, where fish are just not being able to
39 successfully spawn when they have heat stress, and that
40 proposal was developed in partnership with several
41 other groups, including ADF&G, and the Fish and
42 Wildlife Service, the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries
43 Association, the Yukon River InterTribal Watershed
44 Council, Tanana Chiefs, and the Yukon River InterTribal
45 Fish Commission.

46
47 And with that I will take questions.

48
49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Vanessa. Do
50

0234

1 we have any questions or comments for Vanessa at this
2 time relating to the heat stress in the Yukon River
3 chinook salmon.

4
5 MR. ALSTROM: Yes, this is Thomas
6 Alstrom.

7
8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, go ahead.

9
10 MR. ALSTROM: Mr. Chair. this is Thomas
11 Alstrom.

12
13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thomas, go ahead.

14
15 MR. ALSTROM: Yeah, I was just
16 reviewing the heat stress map there, is there any data
17 collected, you know, I see there's data collected as
18 far as adult salmon go up the river, all the way up
19 into Eagle -- you know, back in the -- back in the last
20 10 years, you know, there was -- the fry, you know,
21 exiting the Yukon River making their way back down with
22 the ice flow, was there any kind of like heat level,
23 because I know there's a lot of, you know, big floods
24 or the main ice jams stuck further -- you know, further
25 on up the Yukon and then maybe the high water is
26 causing the fry to scatter and can't locate the main
27 river. Is there any, you know, data collected, you
28 know, not only on the adult salmon that are going up
29 but small fry salmon, you know, exiting in the late --
30 early spring, late spring?

31
32 MS. vonBIELE: Yeah, I don't -- I think
33 on the Chena River, the University of Alaska-Fairbanks
34 has had some studies looking at juvenile chinook salmon
35 production from the Chena and what sort of
36 environmental differences affect that, and I do think
37 flooding, as part of that story. I haven't seen work
38 looking at heat stress in juvenile chinook salmon yet.
39 We are starting to develop what those lab tests
40 thresholds would be like and that would kind of allow
41 us to look at heat stress in juveniles. So we're
42 starting that work which begins with some captive
43 experiments with hatchery fish actually to understand
44 what those heat stress thresholds are for the juveniles
45 and then it would be possible to do that work with the
46 wild fish in any place that there was like a concern, a
47 particular rearing habitat that's too warm. And then
48 so in terms, too, of what we know about different life
49 history stages and heat stress, we do understand across
50

0235

1 all fish that spawning fish, and particularly spawning
2 females are much more sensitive to heat stress when
3 other life history stages -- the only other one that's
4 a really big concern is the eggs, they also tend to
5 have, you know, more narrow temperature preferences so
6 it's those eggs and the spawning fish that we would
7 look to first for this evidence of heat stress. So --
8 and I haven't seen any work on the eggs and the
9 development so essentially like our -- our fish success
10 we're having -- there could be concerns that eggs that
11 are spawned in this period when it's very warm, those
12 eggs might not actually be successful. So there's some
13 other work there, but to my knowledge, nobody's
14 proposed to study yet.

15
16 MR. ALSTROM: All right, thank you,
17 Vanessa.

18
19 MS. vonBIELA: Yeah, excellent
20 question.

21
22 (Teleconference interference -
23 participants not muted - static)
24

25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do you make any kind of
26 (indiscernible - static) just to see.....

27
28 MS. vonBIELA: Oh, I'm sorry, Mr.
29 Chair.....

30
31 MS. PATTON: Hi Ray, this is.....

32
33 MS. vonBIELA:that was a
34 little.....

35
36 MS. PATTON:Eva. Mr. Chair.

37
38 MS. vonBIELA:broken up I
39 couldn't hear that.

40
41 MS. PATTON: Yeah, just to interject
42 here, there was a lot of static in the background
43 there, Ray, so we weren't able to hear you. I'll just
44 take a moment now to remind folks on teleconference to
45 take a moment to star six your phones or make sure
46 they're muted. That'll help cut down on background
47 noise there.

48
49 Thank you.
50

0236

1 Sorry, Ray, maybe you could repeat that
2 question, it was hard for everyone to hear. Thank you.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, yeah. Okay,
5 thank you. And, again, have you taken any samples from
6 the chinook salmon before they reach the Yukon?

7
8 MS. vonBIELE: Oh, from the ocean then,
9 is that what you're asking about Ray?

10
11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, probably coming
12 in maybe from Hooper Bay. I know we usually get
13 indications that the fish are coming in mainly from
14 Yukon or I mean from Hooper Bay, or even further down
15 Scammon Bay, Black River area before they come into the
16 mainstem Yukon to see if you might have detected any of
17 the heat stress before they reach the Yukon.

18
19 MS. vonBIELE: Yeah, we haven't sampled
20 any fish on the saltwater side yet for this.
21 Generally, even though Bering Sea temperatures have
22 been quite warm, they're still quite a bit colder than
23 the thermal tolerances for -- or well within the
24 thermal tolerances I guess I would say for Pacific
25 salmon so you know our oceans have been warm in recent
26 years. We think the issue with that is maybe more of
27 an issue with their food resources and concern that
28 there's been changes in the food web that support them.
29 So I haven't been particularly worried about this sort
30 of direct effect of the temperatures being too high,
31 you know, above like 64 or 65 degrees fahrenheit,
32 that's right around 18 degrees celsius because the
33 Bering Sea just doesn't get that warm except for, you
34 know, maybe some parts of Norton Sound might get that
35 warm but you'd have to be in pretty protected ocean and
36 it would be a pretty short amount of time and probably
37 later in the summer, you know, after the time that
38 these salmon would have sort of moved through any of
39 those warming waters anyway.

40
41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.

42
43 MS. vonBIELE: But I do think there's
44 other stressors there and that interaction of those
45 things could be an important factor. So either, you
46 know, fish coming out of some poor ocean feeding
47 conditions, maybe not being in as good of shape to deal
48 with the heat stress in the river or that
49 ichthyophonous, the possible relationship between heat
50

0237

1 stress and ichthyophonous could also be occurring
2 since ichthyophonous is known to weaken the heart
3 muscles and so if that's affecting a fish's ability to
4 get oxygen around their body, that's another thing that
5 would be harder with heat stress.

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you.

8 Because last year during our fall meeting we had a
9 report from NOAA fisheries from Jim Murphy who gave us
10 a report on a survey he'd done with the chinook salmon
11 in the Bering Sea and from his report he mentioned that
12 the fish were migrating further north because of the
13 colder waters and, you know, with that kind of report
14 and with the -- I don't know, like I wanted to know
15 more about the spawning areas, I don't know because if
16 the Bering Sea is warming up and fish are moving
17 further north then that concerns me about the future of
18 the salmon, and also possibly the chum salmon coming
19 into the Yukon River. Is that something we need to be
20 aware of and hopefully this is just, you know, a short
21 warming of it, but in the long run I know global
22 warming has been a problem for everything it seems
23 like, from the wildlife and into the salmon.

24

25 Just to tell you a little story, while
26 I was growing up in the village every spring we'd look
27 forward to the break-up because break-up was an
28 excitement time for people to watch because of all the
29 rumblings and waters that were bringing down the broken
30 ice and it was an excitement to see and every now and
31 then you'd see fishwheels or a boat or something that
32 would come down the river among the broken ice and, you
33 know, over the last 20 years we haven't seen that type
34 of break-up and the break-up tends to melt in place
35 before the -- you know, our main ice on the river melts
36 before the main break-up reaches our area so that's
37 something that I've observed over the years so that is
38 concerning.

39

40 MS. vonBIELE: Yeah, it is concerning
41 to see those big changes. I also wonder if people are
42 seeing that there's just less snow packs sticking
43 around longer too, is there things like that too
44 happening?

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, we were fortunate
47 to have a lot more snow this year and we have at least
48 another month or so of winter so we're expecting to see
49 more snow so hopefully it'll be a good spring for us

50

0238

1 all. Because we look forward to high waters because it
2 only brings us more wood from further up the river.

3

4 MS. vonBIELA: Yeah, I have thought
5 that that's probably a piece for why we're -- we see
6 these high water temperatures in more recent years,
7 when that snow pack, either we don't get as much of it
8 or it melts much more quickly in the spring and so that
9 changes in our snow melt and the river ice break-up are
10 probably part of the story with those changing river
11 water conditions. But that's definitely outside of the
12 piece that I'm studying, but obviously it's kind of
13 what's underlying why we might have these levels of
14 heat stress in this recent study for 2016 and 2017.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, and another one I
17 had is have you checked any of the meat from the fish?
18 The reason why I ask is because of the Fukushima
19 disaster that happened quite some time ago and I guess
20 people are beginning to have, you know, stomach
21 problems and, you know, that's concerning for me too,
22 and that's the reason why I'm asking if there's any
23 studies or -- leading to testing of the meat of the
24 salmon for -- maybe even for radiation or other ways
25 that might be detected to see if there is, you know,
26 contamination in the meat.

27

28 MS. vonBIELA: Yeah, I'm aware that
29 there was some testing done, you know, in the couple of
30 years immediately following the Fukushima disaster and
31 I think that was one of the Alaska State Departments,
32 it might have been Environmental Conservation, and they
33 did have a website, at least at that time, I'm not sure
34 if it's still live where they were sharing the results
35 of those studies. And I've only seen that they
36 essentially didn't have any evidence of radiation
37 detectable in the fish and people were feeling like --
38 the fish that returned to Alaska, they mostly -- they
39 aren't really venturing into that kind of immediate
40 area near Fukushima where there was some known
41 radiation affecting the things that were feeding right
42 there close to Fukushima. So I think there were
43 scientists who were sort of able to detect it, some
44 very, very low levels of radiation in different things
45 in a wider area of the Pacific, but in terms of levels
46 of radiation that we would need to be concerned about
47 for eating and the health of the salmon and the health
48 of people who eat them, I've never seen that there were
49 any problems with any of the wild Pacific salmon

50

0239

1 populations when I've seen those things presented.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Do we
4 have any questions or comments for Vanessa at this time
5 regarding the Yukon River chinook salmon heat stress.

6

7 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

10

11 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. For
12 the record my name is Alissa Nadine Rogers. Thank you,
13 Vanessa for your presentation over the phone. I did
14 want to touch on three different topics really quick in
15 regards to the heat stress.

16

17 In your studies have you noticed as the
18 fish are starting to warm, the meat spoiling -- as
19 things get warm things tend to spoil, have you had any
20 indication in your research that the fish are spoiling
21 being in the river. We definitely had fish out here
22 during our heat stroke -- heat stroke -- our heated up
23 river out here where the fish were spoiling in the
24 river and by the time that we got them out of the river
25 they were already too far gone, the meat was bad, you
26 could smell it, the insides were mush.

27

28 The other one -- the second one is as
29 they're warming up, of course, they're decomposing as
30 they're coming up the river, but with the increase in
31 heat and the liability of the fish itself to get to the
32 spawning grounds, are -- the insides became quicker,
33 that they're not being able to make it all the way up
34 to the point to where it's destroying the inside of
35 their egg survival so by the time they actually get up
36 there. I know for a fact if you take eggs out of a --
37 take eggs out of a fish and then you put them in warm
38 water, the outside of the egg gets really, really soft
39 and flimsy and it's not very -- it doesn't keep -- it
40 doesn't retain its bouncy, it just starts to get soft
41 and flat and mushy and pretty much breaks open. So
42 that's what I was thinking about as you were giving the
43 discussion, I'm concerned about the eggs spoiling
44 inside of the salmon before they even get to the
45 spawning ground.

46

47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48

49 Thank you, Vanessa.

50

0240

1 MS. vonBIELA: Yeah, thank you. I
2 think that was Ms. Rogers, if I caught your name
3 correctly. Thank you for those questions. None of my
4 research has addressed these issues. People have also
5 mentioned to me that they have noticed that there is
6 less fat in the meat and wondered if that was connected
7 to the heat stress as well. And I do think there is
8 the potential for these things to be connected. You
9 know the warm temperatures are going to speed up a lot
10 of different biological processes and that includes
11 things like a bacteria that are going to be breaking
12 down, they could be breaking down these salmon as well
13 as other like parasites and pathogens. So there's
14 definitely a lot of like interactions at play here that
15 could affect other aspects about the meat and the
16 quality. So I definitely think there's more to be done
17 here.

18
19 And then in terms of the amount of fat
20 in the meat, if that is one of -- anyone's concern as
21 well, one thing that also happens with heat stress or
22 we think can happen, is that the metabolism of the fish
23 is sped up and you can think of metabolism as kind of
24 being like the miles per gallon you're getting on your
25 fuel so that the fish need to use up more fat to get
26 where they're going when that metabolism is sped up.
27 And so in some cases that it can be so extreme that
28 that's one of the reasons that they don't make it to
29 their destination, they just run out of that fat
30 resource they need. But in other cases you can imagine
31 situations where they just use that fat resource up
32 more quickly so if you're used to seeing a certain
33 amount of fat on a fish at one point in the river, you
34 might see that that is very more and that there could
35 be less -- less fat in the warmer years.

36
37 So these are all really important
38 observations for someone like me to be thinking about
39 and all of us to be sharing so that we can kind of
40 piece together what other parts of the puzzle might be
41 related to these warmer temperatures in the river.

42
43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Is
44 there any more questions or comments for Vanessa at
45 this time regarding the heat stress in the Kuskokwim
46 River InterTribal Fish Commission chinook salmon.

47
48 MR. ALSTROM: Yes, hello, Chair, this
49 is Thomas.

50

0241

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3 MR. ALSTROM: I have a quick question.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

6

7 MR. ALSTROM: Yes. I was reviewing the
8 flier here and it says that the heat levels were
9 collected in 2016 and 2017 at 65 yo 70 degrees in the
10 Pilot Station sonar and that Stan Zuray's wheel --
11 fishwheel, I think that (indiscernible - static) water
12 temperatures 65 yo 70 degrees fahrenheit, how deep are
13 they taking these temperatures. Are they taking them
14 at the surface or at what depth?

15

16 MS. vonBIELA: Thank you for your
17 question, Thomas. So water temperature stations are
18 usually a little bit below the surface so that you're
19 not getting like that little tiny kind of layer of the
20 warmest water at the top, but we're definitely not like
21 way down on the bottom either. From what I understand,
22 much of the mainstem Yukon is pretty well mixed top to
23 bottom, there's just so much turbulence in the river
24 that you don't get sort of that same really warm and
25 really cold layer that you might get in some other
26 places. There's also someone you might remember, oh,
27 many years ago now, back in 2004 there was a big
28 radiotagging project on the Yukon River which was done
29 by NOAA with Fish and Wildlife Service and maybe Fish
30 and Game, too, I'm not sure if they were involved. In
31 any event some of those chinook salmon that they put
32 radiotags in to figure out which spawning grounds they
33 were going to, some of those tags also had some water
34 temperature sensors in them, and I know those
35 biologists are coming back to that water temperature
36 data now that there's been so many questions about the
37 water temperatures and those are really valuable data
38 because they actually show you the water temperatures a
39 chinook salmon experienced along their migration and
40 not just what we're getting from a separate sensor in
41 the river.

42

43 Those tags were out in 2002, 3 and 4,
44 and those were progressively warmer years. 2004 was
45 actually a very warm year and a water temperature
46 record for the Yukon, so it would be very insightful
47 data and the little glimpses that I've been able to see
48 that have been shared with me for my input suggests
49 that those fish are really experiencing these warm

50

0242

1 temperatures that we measure in the mainstem, so we're
2 not too far off base with these water temperature
3 records you see.

4

5 MR. ALSTROM: All right, thanks,
6 Vanessa. Chair.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Do we
9 have any more questions or comments for Vanessa at this
10 time.

11

12 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair.

13

14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James.

15

16 MR. LANDLORD: James Landlord, Mountain
17 Village, yes. I don't remember when but a few years
18 ago right above Mountain Village there was -- people
19 notice big bubbles of water coming from the river, they
20 were wondering what were those and didn't know who to
21 call but there were big bubbles, just -- you know when
22 you're boiling water and it comes out, that type of
23 bubbles came out. Have other villages noticed that, I
24 don't know, up the river. And we didn't know what they
25 were, just come out of the water, that water was
26 boiling. But that is one of the notice that we saw --
27 people saw that they had never seen before.

28

29 That's it.

30

31 MS. vonBIELE: Thank you for that
32 observation. That's the first one I heard of the big
33 bubbles but I do think, you know, a lot of things are
34 changing so rapidly, you know, I'm not surprised that
35 there's things I haven't heard of. I definitely think
36 reaching out to Fish and Wildlife Service, Holly or the
37 Fish and Game manager, those are good things to do.
38 Maybe folks are also aware that there is this LEO
39 Network, which is a website, it stands for Local
40 Ecological Observers, and it's run by the Alaska Native
41 Tribal Health Consortium, and that's a place that
42 people are able to post any unusual observations and
43 it's sort of a more public forum, because anybody else
44 who is logged into the LEO Network website can see that
45 information and sometimes when somebody sees an
46 observation like that and it's something they've also
47 seen that'll encourage them to report it too, and then
48 we can start to see larger patterns. This is something
49 that was helpful to us in 2019 when a lot of different

50

0243

1 people across Alaska observed fish dying, Pacific
2 salmon dying in rivers in many parts of Southcentral
3 and Western Alaska and even, you know, in like Prince
4 William Sound and some of those reports got put on the
5 LEO Network and it really tipped some of us that there
6 was a much bigger story about 2019 than any one river
7 or any one species or one region. So I definitely
8 encourage people to report those abnormal observations
9 to either the fishery managers or share them more
10 publicly on the LEO Network. And that website address
11 is just LEO -- I believe it's LEONetwork.org.
12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Probably Eva can get
14 that address so we could make that available to all the
15 villages, both on the Yukon and the Kuskokwim. I'm
16 hoping that our Yukon River is not leaking.
17

18 (Laughter)
19

20 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. If there's.....
21

22 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23

24 CHAIRMAN ONEY:no other questions
25 or comments relating to heat stress in Yukon River
26 salmon, at this time I appreciate your report, Vanessa.
27 Very good report, thank you.
28

29 MS. vonBIELA: Yes, wonderful. Thanks
30 for having me. I hope to be in touch as I continue to
31 work on these issues and find more answers for everyone
32 on the river who depends on these resources.
33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. At
35 this time I'll go ahead and ask for a 10 minute break
36 and then come back and do the 2021 Kuskokwim River
37 salmon management pre-season discussion.
38

39 10 minute break.
40

41 Eva.
42

43 MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair,
44 sounds good, for a 10 minute break and we'll be back on
45 then with the Kuskokwim fisheries discussion. Thank
46 you, Mr. Chair. And, yes, indeed I will get the Leo
47 Network information back out to all the Council and
48 they have been on the list as well for a discussion
49 report with the Council so hopefully we could get them
50

0244

1 on at one of the future meetings come up here.

2

3 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. 10
6 minute break.

7

8 (Off record)

9

10 (On record)

11

12 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, we have our
13 quorum again for this afternoon. Thank you.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
16 To continue with our meeting, I think next on the
17 agenda is the 2021 Kuskokwim River salmon management
18 pre-season discussion, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and
19 Alaska Department of Fish and Game. If you're there
20 you have the floor.

21

22 MR. BLIHOVDE: Mr. Chair. This is Boyd
23 Blihovde. I'm the Refuge Manager at Yukon Delta
24 National Wildlife Refuge.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hi Boyd.

27

28 MR. BLIHOVDE: I'm not sure if Nick
29 Smith or others were going to speak on behalf of the
30 State.

31

32 (No comments)

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, Boyd, you're
35 recognized.

36

37 MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay, I appreciate that,
38 sir. I am fairly new to Yukon Delta National Wildlife
39 Refuge so we have some other Staff like Aaron Moses and
40 potentially Spencer Reardon might be listening in as
41 well who could jump in. But I believe that they
42 mentioned some of our intentions for 2021 when we were
43 giving our Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge update.
44 So I don't want to be redundant but, we are, at the
45 Refuge, talking with the Kuskokwim River InterTribal
46 Fish Commission, virtually, weekly. And we're really
47 coordinating a lot right now with them, and we are also
48 coordinating with the State of Alaska on what we
49 predict will be a poor season for chinook salmon

50

0245

1 returns up the Kuskokwim River. And for that reason,
2 the preliminary estimate is what we're really closely
3 watching and although it's not an exact number, it's a
4 range of the return -- preliminary returns for this
5 2021 season, we still, at the Refuge, are planning to
6 be very cautious with the season in 2021.

7

8 We have been discussing this with the
9 Staff at the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish
10 Commission and we all agree that there probably won't
11 be any surprises this year when it comes to management,
12 that we are going to need to implement restrictions on
13 the salmon, the chinook salmon season similar to those
14 restrictions that were placed on the season last year
15 in 2020.

16

17 So we would prepare an emergency
18 special action that would probably be out to the public
19 some time in May that would restrict salmon fishing
20 starting some time in early June and then run through
21 the month of June. And we would have the openers
22 similar to last year, we expect. This is all still
23 very much up in the air because the final numbers
24 haven't come out from the State, we're just looking at
25 the preliminary numbers with a lot of disappointment.
26 We, just like the rest of the folks living on the
27 Kuskokwim River, we certainly want there to be enough
28 salmon to go around and everybody to fish with no
29 restrictions but at least currently it doesn't look
30 that good. The preliminary numbers are between 94,000
31 returning chinook salmon, up to 155,000 chinook salmon.
32 And, again, that's preliminary numbers, but it's
33 certainly giving us a lot of concern for the continued
34 rebuilding of the chinook salmon numbers.

35

36 And I think that's about all I can
37 really provide right now at this point.

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Do
40 Spencer or someone want to comment.

41

42 (No comments)

43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Is there any questions
45 or comments for Boyd at this time regarding the
46 Kuskokwim pre-season outlook for 2021.

47

48 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I got a question.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, just one
4 question, maybe a simple one, for the Yukon and the
5 Kuskokwim, it seems like -- can you just give us an
6 answer like -- it seems like it won't be open for any
7 commercial fishing, what about the subsistence fishing,
8 like one opening or something like that.

9

10 Thank you.

11

12 MR. BLIHOVDE: Through the Chair, if I
13 could, this is Boyd again. Yes, that's a good
14 question. We're still going over the details of what
15 we feel would be safe and what opportunities could be
16 safe to allow and still protect the chinook salmon for
17 future generations. One thing that we're talking about
18 or trying to schedule, at least, two, maybe three
19 openers that we can put on the calendar and have them
20 set so that the subsistence users along the Kuskokwim
21 can be prepared and know when that fishing opportunity
22 will occur.

23

24 So I'm hopeful that when we start
25 having more planning discussions closer to the June
26 time period, that we'll know for sure, but I can say
27 there hasn't been much discussion about only one
28 opener, we've discussed maybe reducing to only two
29 openers in the early part of the season but we could
30 potentially go as far as even three or four openers,
31 and then use the data that we get from the harvest to
32 allow more openers. Because the pre-season estimates
33 on returns are just that, they're just estimates, so we
34 want to adapt to what actually happens during the early
35 part of the season.

36

37 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you.

38

39 MR. BLIHOVDE: Okay, yes, sir.

40

41 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, do we have any
42 more questions or comments for Boyd at this time
43 regarding the Kuskokwim pre-season outlook for 2021.

44

45 MR. BLIHOVDE: And through the Chair,
46 if I could, one last comment.

47

48 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

49

50

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1 MR. BLIHOVDE: One last comment is we
2 want to also gather as much information as we can from
3 the public and so with help from the Kuskokwim River
4 InterTribal Fish Commission we've discussed having a
5 stakeholder meeting, I guess is what you would call it,
6 that it's just basically a chance for people to come
7 in. It probably wouldn't be in person, it most likely
8 be a phone call or a meeting similar to this one, in
9 which we would just allow folks to tell us what they
10 think we ought to do to improve management of salmon on
11 the Kuskokwim. And that would likely happen in April,
12 maybe mid- to late April.

13
14 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. If
15 there's no other questions for Boyd at this time
16 regarding the Yukon -- I'm sorry, the Kuskokwim pre-
17 season outlook, I'm sure that things will fall into
18 place once April comes around as far as putting the
19 Fish Commission into action to start preplanning for
20 the upcoming salmon season. So I'm sure you guys will
21 have a head's up regarding that.

22
23 So appreciate your report, Boyd. If
24 there's no one else to followup, I thank you for your
25 report.

26
27 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yes, sir, thank you.

28
29 MR. MAXIE: Mr. Chairman, this is Carl,
30 Napaskiak. I have a question.

31
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

33
34 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, what's the outlook for
35 this summer subsistence fishing in month of June and
36 the other one is over the past four or five years, are
37 the fish coming in smaller or bigger, is there -- and
38 the other one is there any surveys being done at the
39 ocean, trawling -- trawlers. That's all I have,
40 thanks.

41
42 MR. BLIHOVDE: Yeah, through the Chair,
43 thank you for that question. And we do have an
44 obligation here with Fish and Wildlife Service at the
45 Refuge to provide for subsistence harvest of species,
46 not just the salmon, but other species as well and so
47 we really take that very seriously, and that obligation
48 seriously. In this case with chinook salmon, you know,
49 we're trying to balance it between protecting the
50

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1 species for the future. And so the openers that have
2 been happening, from what I've understood, over the
3 past two or three years, as you mentioned, they haven't
4 been adequate for many people to fill their freezer or
5 to dry enough fish and we recognize that. So what
6 we've been talking to the InterTribal Fish Commission
7 about is a strategy, a management strategy that we
8 could implement long-term that would rebuild the
9 chinook numbers.

10

11 But to get directly to your question, I
12 can't speak for the State, but I know that their plan
13 is also similar to last years, in which, there would be
14 a pre-season, or an early season closure in the first
15 couple weeks of June. I believe that they're planning
16 on setnet opportunities like they have done in the
17 past. Again, I don't want to misspeak for the State
18 because they should be the ones to talk about that, but
19 the other aspect of this is to allow for driftnet
20 opportunities sometime after that early season closure.
21 So in 2020 people seemed to appreciate having those
22 dates known early in the season so they could plan for
23 their driftnet opportunity, and that's what we hope to
24 do. I would say probably as early as -- early to mid-
25 May having those numbers published and out there to the
26 public so you could plan around the set times.

27

28 And then you had a second question, I
29 think, I might have missed that one.

30

31 MR. MAXIE: Yeah. Over the past four
32 or five years, have the chinook salmon, king salmon --
33 have they been coming in the same size, not getting any
34 bigger than -- yes.

35

36 MR. BLIHVDE: Yes, sir, I'm sorry.
37 That's right. I'm no expert by any means, but the
38 Staff that we have at the Refuge, they are experts and
39 they do confirm what seems to be a trend in smaller
40 sized chinook salmon. And so Aaron Moses, if he's
41 listening, Aaron, if you want to chime in on that and
42 confirm what I just said or not.

43

44 MR. MOSES: Yeah, through the Chair.
45 Yeah, correct, we've been hearing reports from all up
46 and down the river that the fish have been smaller than
47 in the past and that's been a trend for both the Yukon
48 and the Kuskokwim.

49

50

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1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Carl,
2 did that answer all your questions?

3
4 MR. MAXIE: Oh, yes, thank you.

5
6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Do we
7 have anyone from Fish and Game that could followup with
8 Boyd's presentation.

9
10 MR. SMITH: Mr. Chair, this is Nicholas
11 Smith with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

12
13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Nick.

14
15 MR. SMITH: Yeah, so my name is Nicholas
16 Smith and I'm the Kuskokwim River Fisheries Subsistence
17 and Commercial Fisheries manager. And I guess to
18 followup on what Boyd was talking about, so he's kind
19 of laying out his plan for the lower Kuskokwim River
20 with the assumption that he's going to have a Federal
21 special action in place for king salmon.

22
23 Moving up into the State waters, so
24 above Aniak, you know, we're going to be looking at it
25 from last year's perspective and with our pre-season
26 forecast, you know, hovering around a midpoint of about
27 120,000 fish, similar to what we've observed, you know,
28 almost over the last decade where, you know, we're
29 going to have to take fishery restrictions. And what
30 we're going to be looking at doing, as like Boyd said,
31 doing the front end closure by regulations, that's
32 early season. Having a couple setnet periods during
33 that front end closure like we've been doing in the
34 year's past. And then we're going to be watching our
35 in-season assessment data leading up into June 12th to
36 decide on what we're going to do above Aniak for
37 fishing opportunities.

38
39 So really we're just starting to get
40 all of our assessment information finalized and
41 starting to talk through kind of what our pre-season
42 plans will be. Ultimately our pre-season plan will be
43 finalized at the spring meeting of the Kuskokwim River
44 Salmon Management Working Group which is looking to
45 happen the first part of May.

46
47 So not really much I can add to this on
48 what exactly we're going to do because we still need to
49 talk to the working group.

50

0250

1 Mr. Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you, Nick.

4 Do we have any questions or comments for Nick at this
5 time.

6

7 MR. BLIHOVDE: Through the Chair, this
8 is Boyd again. Nick, I'm really glad you were around
9 because I didn't want to be the only one talking about
10 salmon because I'm so new here so I'm glad you were on
11 to say that. Thanks.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: You did a good job,
14 Boyd, thank you. If there is no other questions
15 relating to the 2021 Kuskokwim pre-season outlook then
16 we could go ahead and move on.

17

18 Thank you for your report.

19

20 MR. BLIHOVDE: Thank you, sir.

21

22 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
23 thanks Boyd and Aaron Moses and Nick for the reports
24 for the Kuskokwim. Next up on the agenda we have the
25 Bureau of Land Management and I believe we have area
26 manager Bonnie Million online. And Council members
27 you'll find that BLM report in your meeting books on
28 Page 27 as well.

29

30 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Bonnie, you
33 have the floor.

34

35 MS. MILLION: Good afternoon, Chairman
36 and Council members. My name is Bonnie Million for the
37 record. I'm the Field Manager for the Bureau of Land
38 Management Anchorage Field Office.

39

40 I'd like to thank the Council today for
41 the opportunity to present. I know we don't manage a
42 whole lot of lands within this particular area but we
43 do manage quite a bit up stream from you and so I
44 greatly appreciate the opportunity to come before you
45 today, telephonically, as it were, and give you an
46 update.

47

48 As Eva mentioned we do have a short
49 report that is in your meeting materials on Page 27

50

0251

1 that touches on some of the highlights of the projects.
2 There are three -- two of them actually aren't in that
3 report that I did want to touch on specifically because
4 I know it's of interest, especially to the down stream
5 communities on the Kuskokwim River, specifically.

6
7 First off, the Red Devil Mine
8 remediation project. That public comment period on the
9 proposed plan for the site remediation closed this past
10 December. That core team is currently in the process
11 of responding to comments that were received during
12 that public comment period and they are hoping to have
13 a final decision out sometime early summer. And I will
14 definitely be forwarding that information far and wide
15 as soon as it is available. I'm sure many of you are
16 aware of the Red Devil Mine area, but this is an old
17 mercury mining area and so there's quite a bit of
18 cleanup and tailings that needs to be completed for
19 that area. So that's the Red Devil Mine remediation.

20
21 The second brief update that I was
22 hoping to touch base on is the Bering Sea Western
23 Interior Resource Management Plan. I know I have given
24 presentations to this RAC before on several occasions.
25 I did want to give folks a head's up that that record
26 of decision for that resource management plan was
27 signed on January 16th and that resource management
28 plan is currently approved. I would say that as per
29 any Administration transition there are certain
30 decisions that are reviewed by the new incoming
31 Administration and I do believe that this RMP is one of
32 them. And I will definitely pass on any information if
33 there are any changes to that record of decision that
34 comes out of that review process.

35
36 And then the last item I wanted to
37 mention because I believe I heard yesterday during the
38 community updates, I believe it was a community update
39 from Bethel on sheefish runs being lower than were
40 typically expected, I did want to let the Council know
41 that the BLM does have a water monitoring station that
42 we installed several years ago on the Big River which
43 is one of the primary sheefish spawning rivers in the
44 up stream of the Kuskokwim. We are planning on trying,
45 fingers crossed, to get out there this winter to do
46 some under ice measurements of water quality for that
47 area but our Staff are planning on going out other
48 again this summer as well to continue to collect data
49 on that river system.
50

0252

1 So those are the broad brush strokes
2 overview of some of the big projects we've got going
3 on. Again, the report that's in your meeting materials
4 covers a couple of additional ones but that's all I
5 have at this time.

6
7 I'm more than happy to answer any
8 questions the Council may have.

9
10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Bonnie. Is
11 there any questions or comments for Bonnie at this time
12 regarding BLM.

13
14 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.

15
16 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl's got a question
17 if I can.

18
19 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

20
21 MR. SAMUELSON: Reference the Red Devil
22 mitigation, are we looking at more work in the area and
23 is that going to employ outside workers or local
24 workers to do the work?

25
26 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair, that's
27 a fantastic question. Yes, hopefully, the idea is that
28 whichever alternative is selected from the proposed
29 plan for the site remediation, once that decision is
30 made the next step is that the Bureau of Land
31 Management would pursue funding to implement that
32 project and once we procure funding we would then
33 contract out the project work and we always encourage
34 contractors to hire locally where they can, you know,
35 especially if it's a position that has -- sometimes
36 they can't if it's a position that has very specific
37 training requirements. This being a mercury site,
38 there could be some Hazmat -- specific Hazmat trainings
39 that are available, but the BLM does always encourage
40 local hire where possible.

41
42 MR. SAMUELSON: Yeah, just a followup
43 through the Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

46
47 MR. SAMUELSON: I'm really glad they're
48 doing something because it was about 10 years ago that
49 the Red Devil Mine was doing some work up there and I
50

0253

1 do believe, and you could correct me if I'm wrong, it
2 got low on the priority list afterwards and I'm glad
3 that's moving forward.

4
5 Thank you.

6
7 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, if I may. Just
8 for the record, could we please have you state your
9 name again. Thank you.

10
11 MR. SAMUELSON: My name is Earl
12 Samuelson, Community of Napaskiak, speaking as an
13 individual.

14
15 MS. PATTON: Yes, thank you, Earl.
16 Appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Do we have
19 any more questions or comments for Bonnie at this time
20 related to BLM.

21
22 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.

23
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John, go ahead.

25
26 MR. ANDREW: John Andrew from Kwethluk.
27 I have a couple of questions. Because I saw on your
28 report over here about mine reclamation, the ones on
29 (indiscernible) mine site, I've been there a number of
30 times when I used to go fish right in Goodnews Bay and
31 there were times when we take a ride up and went back
32 to the gold mine site and over to (Indiscernible) Bay
33 or we called it Jackman Bay (ph), that river used to be
34 -- it's all tainted and it looks like hell in there.

35
36 MS. MILLION: Humm.

37
38 MR. ANDREW: And I see a few humpies on
39 the river but that's just about it, near the mouth of
40 it, the one going out towards the mouth of -- towards
41 (Indiscernible) Bay, then my question is did they ever
42 do any reclamation work up in Nyak Mine, and it's
43 better than 20 miles of tailings up on the NorthFork, a
44 little below the Nyak and you could even see it from
45 the air, too. Because I used to go up to Tuluksak on
46 and off and those old folks used to say that used to be
47 a prime king salmon producers, their headwaters in the
48 early days. And now they got some fish coming back
49 into the rivers but not in the high numbers they used
50

0254

1 to see.

2

3

4 And the other question I got is on the
5 second page, you have on the first paragraph up there,
6 Alaska Native Veterans Allotments. Are they still
7 giving those away because not too long ago I heard that
8 Biden Administration had stopped giving out
9 applications to the Veterans, and the original ones
10 that were -- of those Veterans of the Vietnam area were
11 supposed to be given up to 168 acres of Federal land if
12 you applied for it.

12

13

Those are my two questions, thank you.

14

15

16 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair, this
17 is Bonnie Million again. Thank you so much, Mr.
18 Andrew, for those questions.

18

19

20 I believe the first one was talking
21 about -- asking about reclamation efforts in the Nyak
22 Mine area. Yes, we are -- the BLM is actively working
23 with -- there is a current, an active mine claim in
24 that area and the BLM Staff are actively working with
25 the claimant on reclamation of that area. I believe we
26 recently signed off on reclamation efforts in some of
27 the upland areas that met the vegetation, the Native
28 vegetation regrowth requirements and then the final
29 reclamation efforts are going to be focused on the
30 stream channels specifically. So, yes, reclamation is
31 ongoing in the Nyak area.

31

32

33 The second question about the Alaska
34 Native Veteran's Allotment Act, everything that I know
35 says that applications are still being accepted for the
36 Alaska Native Vietnam Veteran's allotment program and
37 they will be accepted through December 29th of 2025.
38 This is for a very specific group of folks and there is
39 a website that is listed in the BLM update. I would
40 highly recommend -- and the BLM is actively asking for
41 assistance. There are -- on that website, there are
42 quite a few folks that the BLM and BIA can't track
43 down, we can't find active addresses for the
44 individual. And so we are asking for assistance from
45 folks to reach out to anybody you might know who may
46 qualify under this Act to get in touch with the BLM and
47 see if we can't kind of make that connection. Let's
48 see, I believe -- yeah, there's information on that
49 website as far as available land, eligibility
50 requirements and some of the additional application

50

0255

1 information that is on there. So applications are
2 still being accepted and according to the Dingle Act,
3 right, which is what kicked this off, they will be
4 accepted until December 29th, 2025.

5

6 MR. ANDREW: Before that -- especially
7 the ones on Veteran's allotment. But I still don't
8 like the Nyak area, I got chased off of there during
9 our hunting trips twice in the past.

10

11 Thank you.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: I have one, Ray Oney
14 here. I don't know if you're familiar with the Willow
15 Creek Gold Mine up above Marshall, is there any
16 consideration for doing work on that?

17

18 MS. MILLION: So what was the name of
19 it, above Marshall?

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Willow Creek Mine.

22

23 MS. MILLION: That does not ring a bell
24 off the top of my head, but I've got notes going and I
25 will followup with my geologist and see what I can find
26 for you.

27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, appreciate it.
29 Didn't know there was a mine there going -- when I was
30 a young boy, I guess because of World War II they had
31 to shut down and I know from time to time I'd go up
32 there and visit the site, I know there's still some old
33 buildings that are there and they're still a lot of
34 pilings that are there, and I just wondered if there
35 was any consideration to reclaim that area.

36

37 MS. MILLION: Yeah, I will.....

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, go ahead. I'm
40 sure you will get back to me once you find any kind of
41 information. Thank you.

42

43 MS. MILLION: Yes, sir. Yep.

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: If there is no other
46 questions for Bonnie at this time regarding BLM, thank
47 you for your report, Bonnie.

48

49 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman.

50

0256

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

2

3 MR. SLATS: Yes, this is Richard.

4 Bonnie had mentioned BLM Bering Sea Western Interior
5 Resource Management Plan, the environmental impact
6 statement. A letter was sent to our Chair and I guess
7 to us through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife in December --
8 well, it was stamped December 1, 2020, and I guess this
9 is what I was telling the rest of the Council, that
10 these things are moving forward even at a time like
11 this, which gave -- I don't know if the rest of the
12 Council remembered getting an email about this letter,
13 but it -- that, you know, the final environmental
14 impact statement is now available and the 30 day
15 protest period was open then. I would imagine it's
16 closed now. So that protest period came and left and
17 we, you know, like we don't have time -- you know, like
18 we weren't -- in between our meetings we only get
19 correspondence like this and then we are not able to
20 make any comment or talk to or do anything with the
21 rest of our group until the meeting comes up or -- and
22 that we have correspondence protocols and things like
23 this. It's gone. Past. There was that 30 day period,
24 that came and left, and I think if this is the same one
25 that you're talking about, that the record of decision
26 will be coming out sometime soon, but I'm wondering if
27 a similar letter of this sort was ever sent out to the
28 tribes in this area for comment, you know, for the
29 comment period.

30

31 Thank you.

32

33 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair. Thank
34 you, Richard, so much for that question. Yes, letters
35 went out in early December for the announcement of the
36 release of the final impact statement, the final
37 environmental impact statement, and the proposed
38 resource management plan. That initiated a 30 day
39 public protest period, which ended in early January
40 2021.a Those protests were -- the protests that were
41 received were reviewed and resolved and then the record
42 of decision for the Bering Sea Western Interior was
43 signed on January 16th. When the Administration change
44 happened on January 20th, there were a list of projects
45 that the Administration identified as -- that they were
46 going to focus on reviewing, and the Bering Sea Western
47 Interior Resource Management Plan was one of them.

48

49 I'm not sure if that answered your

50

0257

1 question or not.

2

3

4 MR. SLATS: Yeah, 30 days seems like,
5 you know, short to me, you know, especially when it's,
6 you know, like for mines and things like that, that
7 might have affects on our waters and then especially on
8 our rivers where we clean -- you know, our rivers
9 depend on clean water for our subsistence resources.
10 But, you know, I'm thinking that 30 days -- is this
11 your 30 day comment period, is that your normal 30 day
12 -- is that how many days that you normally allow for
13 comment, especially when it affects the environment and
14 especially when it comes to the land and our waters.

14

15 Thank you.

16

17

18 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair.
19 Richard, again, thank you for that followup. For a
20 resource management plan, a public comment period which
21 occurs when the draft environmental impact statement is
22 released is, by regulation, a 90 day public comment
23 period. For the Bering Sea Western Interior Resource
24 Management Plan, that 90 day public comment period
25 occurred in early spring of 2019. For resource
26 management plans, when the final EIS is released that
27 initiates a 30 day public protest period, and that is
28 also per regulation.

28

29

30 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Mr. Chair.

31

32

33 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

34

35

36 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yeah, about the
37 Pebble Mine, is it still active, going on right now or
38 is it shut down, because I remember there was a lady
39 that's saying -- to clean out the mine with cyanide,
40 that's poison to humans and I was just wondering if
41 it's still active right now.

39

40

41 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair. The
42 Bureau of Land Management is not involved in the Pebble
43 Mine Project and so unfortunately I cannot speak to the
44 status of that project.

44

45

46 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay, thank you.

47

48

49 MS. MILLION: Uh-huh.

50

51

52 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, is there any more

53

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1 questions or comments for Bonnie with BLM at this time.

2

3 MR. MAXIE: Carl, Napaskiak. I got a
4 quick question here.

5

6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Carl.

7

8 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, good afternoon. Since
9 the BLM does monitor water quality, my question was do
10 we have contaminated -- did you find any contaminated
11 water through the drainage and the Red Devil -- and
12 where you guys are at -- because there used to be one
13 at Tuluksak River -- up river there someplace and what
14 about that up river mine too there, is that at risk for
15 -- with the Kuskokwim River, that's my question on the
16 water quality.

17

18 MS. MILLION: Through the Chair. Carl,
19 thank you so much for that question. Yes, so we
20 currently, the Bureau of Land Management in the
21 Kuskokwim watershed, we have water monitoring stations
22 up at Big River, and that's for in-stream flow,
23 specifically because of the sheefish spawning area up
24 there. And then we do have several, quite a few
25 actually, groundwater monitoring stations around the
26 Red Devil Mine area, as you would imagine, because of
27 concerns about contamination in that area from a result
28 of the mining tailings that are there. Those
29 groundwater monitoring stations will be in place
30 probably forever and that's one of the items that's in
31 that proposed plan for site remediation for that mine
32 site. And my understanding, based on the presentations
33 that I have seen and the reports that I have read from
34 that area is that the contamination that they see in
35 some of the surface water at the Red Devil sites
36 specifically dissipates pretty quickly once it enters
37 into the Kuskokwim water system, and primarily that's
38 because Red Devil Creek is a pretty small creek by
39 comparison. It's not a spawning creek for salmon or
40 anything like that, it's pretty small, sculpin and some
41 small sticklebacks maybe are all that's found in that
42 particular water stream. So we haven't seen impacts or
43 effects of a measurable level I would say within the
44 Kuskokwim as a whole as a result specifically from Red
45 Devil. And there have been several water sampling
46 efforts that have occurred downstream from Red Devil --
47 from the Red Devil Mine site I should say that -- that
48 kind of documents that water quality results, and that
49 information is available on the Red Devil Mine project

50

0259

1 website, and I can get -- I will get a link to that
2 website to Eva so she can share it with the Council.

3

4 (Teleconference interference -
5 participants not muted)

6

7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. Do we
8 have any more questions or comments for Bonnie at this
9 time.

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank
13 you, Bonnie, for your report. Appreciate it very much.

14

15 MS. MILLION: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Moving on to Alaska
18 Department of Fish and Game. Eva.

19

20 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
21 Council. I believe the Council received most of the
22 updates from Alaska Department of Fish and Game that
23 were shared during discussion of wildlife proposals and
24 wildlife updates, but we do just want to check online
25 and see if there's anything further from ADF&G.

26

27 (Teleconference interference -
28 participants not muted)

29

30 MR. JONES: Hi, Eva, this is Patrick
31 Jones. I don't have anything further. I think I gave
32 all my updates already.

33

34 MS. PATTON: Great, thank you, Patrick.
35 Appreciate that. Appreciate all your discussion with
36 the Council.

37

38 Okay, with that then we can move on to
39 our next report, and before we do that, just want to
40 friendly reminder to everybody on teleconference to
41 please mute your phones. We've got some sweet little
42 kids voices talking in the background, but if you could
43 please mute your phones so that the Council and
44 everyone can hear. Thank you. Just a reminder that
45 you can star six or hit your mute button on your cell
46 phone.

47

48 Thank you.

49

50

0260

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair. So up next we
2 will have North Pacific Fisheries Management Council,
3 and we have Diana Stram online to provide that report
4 for the Council. This was also a more recent update so
5 the report that Diana is going to share was emailed out
6 to everyone. And, again, John Andrew, that was also
7 emailed to the tribal council office in Kwethluk there,
8 and we'll have that report in the mail to everybody
9 too, but there wasn't time for it to arrive for this
10 meeting. So that was in your recent email for this
11 report. And, thanks, with that, I think we have Diana
12 Stram online.

13
14 MS. STRAM: Hi, can you hear me this is
15 Diana?

16
17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: You're nice and loud,
18 you have the floor.

19
20 MS. STRAM: Okay, thank you, very much.
21 Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, members of the Council. My
22 name's Diana Stram. I am a Senior Scientist with the
23 North Pacific Fishery Management Council. As Eva
24 indicated, I have a short presentation that was emailed
25 out to you. I'm going to walk through the slides, I'll
26 note which slide number I'm on as I'm talking through
27 them. I have a brief overview of our management
28 jurisdiction, and then some additional information on
29 salmon bycatch that are focused on the Bering Sea
30 region. And I'm happy to take questions at any time,
31 either during the presentation or when I finish,
32 whatever works best for you, Mr. Chairman.

33
34 So starting with what is the Council
35 and our jurisdiction. We are the Federal management
36 body, we manage the Federal fisheries off of Alaska
37 together with the National Marine Fisheries Service so
38 our jurisdiction is three to 200 nautical miles. We
39 coordinate -- sometimes we jointly manage with the
40 State of Alaska. And the Council itself are appointed
41 bodies, that I'll get into in a minute -- are appointed
42 people on the Council and they make recommendations to
43 the Secretary of Commerce which is administered through
44 the National Marine Fisheries Service. So we make the
45 policy recommendations on management in the Federal
46 fisheries and then those recommendations, once
47 approved, are implemented by the National Marine
48 Fisheries Service.

49
50

0261

1 In terms of Council membership we have
2 11 voting members, six of which are from the State of
3 Alaska, three of which are from the State of
4 Washington, one is from Oregon and we have the National
5 Marine Fisheries Service regional administrator is one
6 of the voting members, as is the designee for the State
7 of Alaska in terms of the Fish and Game Commissioner,
8 and that designee is currently Deputy Commissioner Ms.
9 Rachel Baker. So I have a slide that gives you what
10 the different voting members are on our Council and
11 there are alternates. We also have some non-voting
12 members that sit on our Council, obviously they do not
13 have a vote but they are advisory to the Council and
14 that includes U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the United States
15 Coast Guard, Pacific State Marine Fisheries Commission
16 and the State Department, and our Executive Director
17 who is currently Mr. David Witherell, also sits on the
18 Council as a non-voting member. And I would note that
19 our Chairman, Mr. Simon Kinneen is from Nome, Alaska.

20
21 So the fisheries that we manage. We
22 manage the Federal fisheries, again, in the Gulf of
23 Alaska and the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. Our
24 major fisheries are the flat fish fisheries, the cod
25 fisheries, pollock, mackerel, we also manage sablefish,
26 snow crab, king crab, and Alaska live scallops in
27 conjunction with the Alaska Department of Fish and
28 Game, and we also jointly manage crab with the Alaska
29 Department of Fish and Game.

30
31 And in terms of who manages what
32 fisheries, and I'm on Page 5 of the PowerPoint if you
33 have that document available to you, we have sole
34 management in conjunction with the National Marine
35 Fisheries Service of all groundfish so that's pollock,
36 cod, flat fish, so we do both the conservation, in
37 terms of the assessment that's recommended by the
38 National Marine Fisheries Service, so what number the
39 quotas are as the allocation of quotas and with respect
40 to crab fisheries in the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands,
41 that is jointly managed with the Alaska Department of
42 Fish and Game as are Alaska live scallops. With
43 respect to halibut, halibut, our jurisdiction is
44 limited to the allocation in terms of the directive
45 individual fishing quota allocation as well as the
46 bycatch of halibut, but the actual conservation of
47 halibut in terms of the quota setting and the
48 assessment of halibut is under the jurisdiction of the
49 International Pacific Halibut Commission.

50

0262

1 So our jurisdiction then, there's eight
2 regional fishery management Councils across the United
3 States and, again, our jurisdiction is three to 200
4 miles off shore and we coordinate with State and
5 Federal management across the State waters as well as
6 in management of other species.

7
8 So that's just a quick overview of kind
9 of who we are and what our jurisdiction is. And then
10 moving on to what is bycatch and kind of the
11 information that's of interest to you, as RAC members,
12 Council members, in terms of salmon bycatch.

13
14 So at this point right now if you're
15 following along I'm on Slide 8 in terms of what is
16 bycatch. So our overarching Congressional law is the
17 Magnuson-Stevens Act, and under the Magnuson-Stevens
18 Act bycatch is defined as fish which are not harvested
19 -- which are harvested in the fishery but which are not
20 further kept for personal use. These includes economic
21 discards and regulatory discards. So essentially for
22 our purposes bycatch is discarded fish. We have
23 different terms under our fisheries management plan,
24 and specifically as it relates to salmon, salmon are
25 considered to be prohibited species catch, so we
26 designate that as PSC, so prohibited species catch.
27 And those are fish that, by law, under our fisheries
28 management plan, must be returned to the sea with a
29 minimum of injury, that includes halibut, herring,
30 salmon, as well as crab species. For purposes of
31 salmon, the groundfish fisheries catch salmon, they
32 catch chum salmon and chinook salmon as bycatch and
33 those must be enumerated, they have to all be counted
34 and then returned to the sea but for all intents and
35 purposes the mortality rate is 100 percent on all
36 salmon that are brought on board as bycatch.

37
38 So moving on specifically and I'm on
39 Slide 9 now, with respect to bycatch controls for
40 prohibited species. So salmon and halibut, again, as
41 well as salmon and herring, they are bycatch species
42 that are defined as prohibited species, so they have to
43 be counted, but they cannot be retained or sold, and
44 that is explicitly to prohibit there being any
45 incentive to bring them on board. We have specific
46 measures that we have in place. So bycatch in
47 groundfish fisheries -- bycatch cap, which we also call
48 PSC limits and I will -- I will get into a little bit
49 more detail on that, and then previously we used to
50

0263

1 have time and area closures. So we had limits in the
2 pollock fishery where when that limit was reached an
3 area was closed. We no longer manage that way for
4 salmon because we found this is not as effective and
5 it's not very responsive to changing environmental
6 conditions. And then we also have some provisions for
7 gear modification. There's a thing called a salmon
8 excluder, we also have halibut excluders and it's a
9 specific mechanism in the trawl net that is designed to
10 allow chinook and chum salmon to escape the trawl net
11 before they're dropped back into the (indiscernible -
12 muffled) where -- when fishing for pollock.

13

14 So moving on then to measures that are
15 specific to salmon PSC, and I'm on Slide 10 at this
16 point. I have a slide here that gives you a contrast
17 between our bycatch management programs in the Gulf of
18 Alaska and in the Bering Sea. I'm going to focus on
19 the Bering Sea, I'm happy to answer any questions on
20 the Gulf of Alaska as well.

21

22 We have different programs in the
23 Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska and those programs
24 are specifically designed and different because of the
25 nature of the fisheries in each area. In the Bering
26 Sea the fishery that catches chum and chinook salmon is
27 the Bering Sea pollock fishery. That is a fully
28 rationalized fishery, so that means that it is under a
29 cooperative structure, it is by law under the American
30 Fisheries Act since 2000 and so they have -- their
31 quotas are defined by sector. There are four sectors
32 in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, and the way that
33 salmon bycatch is managed is by sector and by a hard
34 limit. So there is a hard limit, which means that when
35 a limit is reached by a sector, and those are divided
36 by seasons, that that sector, if it reaches that limit,
37 must stop fishing. And there are two different cap
38 levels, one is a performance standard and one is an
39 overall cap level. And we also have a cap that varies
40 in the Bering Sea depending on the status of chinook
41 salmon in Western Alaska and that is defined by what we
42 call a three river index. So we have different
43 provisions in place for the Bering Sea pollock fishery,
44 the management structure is extremely complex but it is
45 extremely limiting on that pollock fishery as well
46 provisions for 100 percent of the over coverage.

47

48 So moving on then, now on Slide 12.
49 The regulatory measures that we have under this

50

0264

1 management structure. So there's two different
2 amendments that develop this management program,
3 Amendment 91 and Amendment 110, and those two
4 amendments together, one put in place the current
5 management program, the other one refines the current
6 management program. And so the way that the current
7 management program works is there are two different
8 limits, an overall limit that's divided by sector and
9 by season, and then there is a performance standard
10 that's lower than that, again, divided by sector and by
11 season. And the intent of the performance standard,
12 the lowest cap level, is to provide a structure for the
13 individual sectors to put forward incentive plan
14 agreements which have provisions included in them that
15 are intended to ensure that the sector is avoiding
16 bycatch at all levels of encounter, so not just when
17 levels are low, as well as when levels are high. So
18 they have different performance incentives and
19 additional voluntary measures that are put forward in
20 the incentive plan agreement. So some of those
21 voluntary measures that are basically a requirement
22 under the incentive plan include what we call hot spot
23 closures. So those are three to seven day closures
24 that are put into place throughout the entire A season,
25 which is the winter season, and the B season, in order
26 to lead the fleet away from areas of high encounters of
27 chinook and chum salmon. There's also salmon
28 escapement panels, again we call that a salmon
29 excluder, but that is a panel that is designed in the
30 trawl net to allow salmon to escape before they're
31 drawn back into the (indiscernible - muffled). There
32 are also provisions in place for penalties as well as
33 for not avoiding salmon at different vessel levels and
34 in certain times of the year as well as a reward
35 (indiscernible - muffled) in place and the incentive
36 plans in order to provide for additional incentives to
37 avoid salmon.

38
39 The salmon that are brought on board,
40 to the extent possible, there is a large effort in
41 place with SeaState [sic] to -- for food quality,
42 salmon that's brought on board and processed by the --
43 voluntarily by the sectors to be donated to food banks
44 to an organization called SeaState, and with Sea State
45 we have worked hard in the last many years to establish
46 distribution centers in Western Alaska so that the
47 salmon that's donated as bycatch and food quality grade
48 through SeaState is brought to food banks in Western
49 Alaska.
50

0265

1 We also have through Amendment 110 a
2 lower cap that goes into place when the indications are
3 that it's a low chinook abundance year in Western
4 Alaska. So through Amendment 110 we have a three river
5 index and this is an annual process of determination
6 from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as to
7 whether or not the -- that some of the salmon abundance
8 from the three system index, which is based on the
9 Kuskokwim, the Unalakleet and the upper Yukon, the
10 post-season in-river salmon run size for those -- for
11 those three rivers, post-season, in-river chinook
12 salmon run size are -- and the aggregated number, if it
13 is below 250,000 which it is in this year right now,
14 then we drop to a lower cap level and the lower
15 performance standard, and that is the performance
16 standard that is in place for the pollock fishery in
17 years of low abundance. So this year is one of those
18 years (indiscernible - muffled) in which the pollock
19 fishery is under a lower cap level.

20
21 Moving on then, I'm on Slide 13 now.
22 Again, some of the provisions that are in place for the
23 pollock fisheries, it is full retention of all salmon,
24 it is extensive to salmon, but every single salmon that
25 is brought on board is counted. We have electronic
26 monitoring provisions on board all of pollock fishing
27 vessels in the Bering Sea. Those electronic monitoring
28 provisions are in place to ensure compliance. So the
29 cameras that are on board pollock fishing vessels are
30 not for catching the salmon, they are for ensuring that
31 every single watch point where salmon comes on board is
32 able to be filmed so that when the observer is able to
33 count those salmon, those salmon have not -- there has
34 been no opportunity for those salmon to go anywhere
35 other than in the hold or in the -- across the rack
36 where they're counted (indiscernible - muffled).

37
38 Annually we report to the North Pacific
39 Fishery Management Council, we receive reports from
40 each of the pollock fishing sectors and their
41 individual plans -- incentive plan agreements and that
42 comes up every year in April. So the Council meeting
43 that we have forthcoming in three weeks, we will be
44 getting reports from the pollock fishery on the
45 incentive measures they have had in place to avoid
46 salmon in the previous fishing year. We also receive
47 reports from the geneticist at the National Marine
48 Fisheries Service on both chinook and chum and that is
49 both in the Bering Sea as well as in the Gulf of
50

0266

1 Alaska.

2

3

4 In terms of trends and genetic
5 breakouts, this is Slide 14 in the presentation that's
6 available to you. This slide gives you the trends in
7 the number of chinook salmon in the left side, chum
8 salmon on the right side in the Bering Sea since 2003.
9 And what you can see from here is that under different
10 management measures that were in place prior to 2011
11 there was a spike in chinook salmon bycatch in 2006 and
12 2007, upwards of over 120,000 chinook were caught as
13 bycatch in 2007 and then the Council then devised this
14 new salmon bycatch management program which went into
15 place in 2011. We took action on it in 2009, it was
16 implemented in 2011. In 2016 then we revised it with
17 Amendment 110 to include the lower cap levels. Since
18 that time the levels have been much, much below, both
19 the performance standard and the PSC limit, and you
20 also see on this slide the stock composition estimates
21 that we now get on an annual basis from the geneticists
22 and we still see a smaller contribution Coastal West
23 Alaska. Right now, genetically speaking the majority
24 of the Coastal Western Alaska stocks are aggregated
25 because it can't be genetically -- they are not
26 genetically distinct enough to look at stock of origin
27 so you can't differentiate currently between say the
28 Nushagak and the Kuskokwim or the lower Yukon and the
29 Kuskokwim. The upper Yukon is a separate stock and
30 that can be delineated genetically. But the other
31 stocks in Western Alaska, at this point in time right
32 now are overlapping in terms of their genetic
33 composition and so we have to report back on stock
34 composition on an aggregate basis.

35 To the right on this -- and I'd just
36 note the chinook bycatch in 2020 then was 32,423 fish
37 -- on the right side gives the exact same information
38 for chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock
39 fishery, and here the contribution genetically to chum
40 salmon bycatch from Western Alaska is much, much
41 smaller. The vast majority for those temporarily and
42 spatially is consistently from Asian origin, and
43 largely hatchery produced chum salmon. So, again, as
44 with chinook salmon in the early period, in the 2000s
45 we hit a peak in terms of bycatch that prompted the
46 Council to examine more rigorous management measures.
47 And currently chum salmon is managed under the
48 incentive plan agreements of the pollock fishery and
49 primarily through short term time and area closures to
50

0267

1 avoid chum salmon bycatch while retaining the priority
2 that avoids chinook and particularly Western Alaska
3 chinook is the priority of the Bering Sea pollock
4 fishery.

5
6 (Teleconference interference -
7 participants not muted)

8
9 MS. STRAM: And, again, on this graph
10 then, which goes through 2019, the number of chum
11 caught as bycatch in aggregate in 2020 was around
12 320,000 fish.

13
14 The next graph then, on Slide 15, gives
15 you an idea of what the overall impact rate is. So
16 looking at if you -- when we do, what's called an adult
17 equivalency analysis, so we look at for the fish that
18 we know are coming back as combined Western Alaska
19 rivers, but again, understanding that that's all of the
20 Western Alaska rivers in aggregate, we look at the
21 genetic composition, the break out of those fish that
22 would be returning to those rivers and then we look at
23 the age composition of those fish to get an estimate of
24 which of those fish might have returned to aggregate
25 Western Alaska rivers in any year and what the impact
26 of bycatch is on the fish returning. So understanding
27 that even if you have a very, very high year, as we saw
28 in 2007, not all of those in 2007 were of an age that
29 they were going to be returning to a river system in
30 that year. In general, the (indiscernible - muffled)
31 trend as three and four year olds but we do get some
32 composition from five and six year olds, very
33 infrequently seven year olds. But -- so you basically
34 look at how -- what the number of fish that are
35 returning, the -- I'm sorry -- the number of fish as
36 bycatch, the proportion of that that would have gone to
37 Western Alaska, and then look at both the age
38 composition of the bycatch as well as the maturation
39 rate across those rivers to look at an estimate of how
40 many fish would've come back, and that's what we call
41 -- as the impact rates, that we look at the bycatch of
42 the adult equivalent divided by the aggregate run
43 strength. And so what you see then is that since 2011
44 then our impact rate has been about 2 percent of the
45 fish that are caught as bycatch would have returned to
46 the aggregate Western Alaska rivers.

47
48 And then my final slide here just shows
49 you some additional information. There's two different
50

0268

1 figures here from some genetics reports from the
2 National Marine Fisheries Service looking at A season
3 and B season on the left hand column, genetic stock
4 composition estimates.....

5

6 (Teleconference interference -
7 participants not muted)

8

9 MS. STRAM:in aggregate that were
10 from 2011 through 20.....

11

12 (Connection Drop - 3 min)

13

14 MS. STRAM:salmon bycatch in the
15 groundfish fishery from the National Marine Fisheries
16 Service. And then annually we also receive a report
17 from (indiscernible - lines not muted) which is the
18 nonprofit organization the (indiscernible - muted)
19 relief organization that coordinates the donations.....

20

21 (Teleconference interference -
22 participants not muted)

23

24 MS. STRAM:fish or the salmon
25 bycatches are flown to two food banks through SeaShare.
26 So all of that will be on our website is the details,
27 to log into our meetings on our website (indiscernible
28 - muted) spotlight on our website that gives you the
29 information to log into the meeting. You can provide
30 public comment written and verbal are available and
31 items that all of our committees, our science committee
32 and our (indiscernible - muted) and our Council and
33 Staff will all be meeting and discussing salmon bycatch
34 at the meeting in April.

35

36 MR. EPCHOOK: Mr. Chairman.

37

38 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

39

40 MR. EPCHOOK: Chariton Epchook. I have
41 a question for Diana. What can we do for -- can North
42 Pacific Fisheries do about opening up a seat for the
43 Kuskokwim River villages.

44

45 MS. STRAM: Thank you for the question.
46 I'm not sure I understood exactly what you were asking.
47 What the North Pacific Fishery Management Council can
48 do for opening a seat, (indiscernible - muted) question
49 about, what aspect of the Kuskokwim, because that's all

50

0269

1 I could hear.....

2

3 (Teleconference interference -
4 participants not muted)

5

6 MS. STRAM: I'm sorry, there's a little
7 feedback so I'm not sure I caught it. If it's
8 something that is within the actual Kuskokwim River,
9 that is not the jurisdiction of the North Pacific
10 Fishery Management Council, that is all solely the
11 jurisdiction of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
12 We only operate (indiscernible - muted) mile off shore.

13

14 MR. EPCHOOK: I'm asking that question
15 because every year we're like on the short end of that
16 stick where the other -- other organizations like
17 (indiscernible - muted/interference) one year made a
18 report to North Pacific Fisheries that there are no
19 concerns on the Kuskokwim River, but, in fact, that was
20 the year after we had these closures because of lack of
21 chinook salmon, the numbers coming up the Kuskokwim,
22 and for years and years they use it for villages of
23 Akiachak, Akiak, Tuluksak and Kwethluk, we've been
24 talking about possibly trying to get a seat in the
25 North Pacific Fishery Council so we can address our
26 concerns, actually, and participate in those meetings.

27

28 MS. STRAM: Sure. So we take public
29 comment at every meeting on every agenda item. In
30 terms of getting a seat on the Council itself, that is
31 something that is nominated through the Governor of the
32 individual states, so it would be the Governor of the
33 State of Alaska if you're looking at one of the Alaska
34 seats when those are up and the Governor nominates
35 three different people and sends that recommendation to
36 the Secretary of Commerce who then picks from among the
37 Governor's recommendations. So that's how people are
38 nominated to the Council. So that goes through the
39 Governor of the State of Alaska.

40

41 MR. EPCHOOK: Okay, thank you very
42 much.

43

44 MS. STRAM: Sure, you're welcome.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Do we have any other
47 questions, comments for Diana at this time.

48

49 MR. SAMUELSON: If it's okay, Earl

50

0270

1 would like to ask a question, through the Chair.

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

4

5 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl Samuelson,
6 Napaskiak, as an individual. Just to followup a little
7 bit more on the presentation. I know back in 2000 we
8 had the.....

9

10 (Connection Drop - 1.5 min)

11

12 MR. SAMUELSON:is that the limit
13 or is that the total bycatch?

14

15 MS. STRAM: Sorry that's the total
16 bycatch. So the limit -- the overall limit is.....

17

18 MR. SAMUELSON: Like a cap.

19

20 MS. STRAM: Yeah, the cap itself in
21 this year is 45,000 because it's under the lower level
22 and then there's a lower performance level and I should
23 have probably explained more that the reason for the
24 performance standard annual limit is that if a sector
25 exceeds their proportion of that limit more than twice
26 in three years -- in seven years, they are then held to
27 the lower limit in perpetuity. So the incentive plans
28 are structured around staying below a lower level than
29 the overall cap level because if they are to exceed
30 that lower level.....

31

32 (Teleconference interference -
33 participants not muted - many)

34

35 MS. STRAM:more than twice in a
36 rolling seven year period they would then be held to
37 that lower level whether it's the upper level or the
38 lower level based on chinook salmon abundance, they
39 would be held to the lower cap level in all years
40 following. So there's pretty stringent incentives to
41 stay below, not just what the hard cap level is, but
42 what the performance standard itself is which is lower
43 than that.

44

45 MR. SAMUELSON: So if I may make
46 comment about your hard cap, it is still way too high
47 for our region and we could see it out here, the
48 communities, that 30 to 32,000 salmon, that could be up
49 our tributaries, you know, even that number we feel it

50

0271

1 out here on the river, it totally impacts us where we
2 are limited to fishing and more regulations to do so.
3 I hope you could work on that, to get that even lower,
4 you know, even down to 20,000 and look at the numbers
5 in light of -- in the tributaries. Out here, and even
6 in the last 20 years, the Kuskokwim and the Yukon we've
7 been asking where are the salmon, you know, and we're
8 trying to do our part and go along with the
9 restrictions to preserve the fishery but out on the
10 Bering Sea we got to see more come out of that, more
11 restrictions, let's see if we can get this salmon
12 number up to the region -- so, okay.

13

14 MS. STRAM: Thank you. And I would
15 also encourage you at any point to testify to the North
16 Pacific Fishery Management Council on your concerns,
17 especially at our April meeting when they're taking
18 these kind of issues up.

19

20 MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you.

21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, for the record,
23 Ray Oney here. I know during the YRDFA teleconference,
24 I think you were there and there were a lot of
25 questions relating to the bycatch and it seem like
26 everything the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
27 does to try and come up with ideas to try and reduce
28 the bycatch of chinook salmon for tributaries that are
29 destined for Western Alaska, seem like we're still
30 seeing high numbers, and yet mainly on the Yukon and
31 also the Kuskokwim, we're being restricted because of
32 the high bycatch that are out there, we're seeing
33 closures happening more and longer and yet there seems
34 like there's no kind of penalties for people that are
35 out there, and, yet, we're still part of the cycle.
36 You know, every part of the cycle from the spawning
37 grounds out to the Bering Sea where they feed, we need
38 people to hear our concerns and to take measures to try
39 and reduce it. I know year after year we hear bycatch
40 and it's not getting any better for us here on the
41 Yukon, you know, and we've seen the dwindling of the
42 chinook salmon from year to year and are getting
43 smaller. So despite the measures that North Pacific
44 Fishery Management Council are coming up with it seems
45 like nothing is working. So we need stiffer -- we need
46 stiffer measures. Everybody needs to be restricted if
47 we're going to rebound the salmon that are destined for
48 Western Alaska. We need everybody to be penalized, not
49 only people in-river, and, you know, we rely on these

50

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1 salmon because we were born into it, we were born into
2 the fish because that's who we are and yet we see part
3 of our life being ripped out because of the bycatch
4 that are happening out -- and yet there's nothing, no
5 penalties being imposed on trawlers that are out there,
6 despite the penalties that you mentioned, and it's
7 probably just a dip in the bucket on the penalties that
8 you're seeing being put on these people out there and,
9 yet, like I mentioned, we are being hit the hardest
10 here on the Yukon and on the Kuskokwim living to what
11 we're born into.

12
13 I just wanted to comment on that, thank
14 you.

15
16 MS. STRAM: Thank you for that.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Is there any other
19 comment or questions for Diana at this time.

20
21 MR. MAXIE: Carl Maxie. I don't know if
22 it's a comment or suggestion.

23
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Carl.

25
26 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, for our conservation
27 there's a specific board and Kuskokwim/Yukon Board
28 here, I think both sides need to work together as one
29 for our conservation for our fish that are coming up to
30 spawn and more fish would go down -- they would fish
31 more -- because in their region they feed a lot of
32 people and in our region, too, we live off the fish too
33 and at the same time I think this would -- us working
34 together as one would have our conservation up a little
35 bit or so. I think working together as one for our
36 people and the community within the State of Alaska.

37
38 That's all I have, okay.

39
40 And meet once a year as a Board, or
41 both Board for upcoming season and so on.

42
43 Thanks.

44
45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. Are there any
46 other comments or questions for Diana at this time.

47
48 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl's got one more
49 question pertaining to the membership of the Board, if
50

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1 I may, through the Chair.

2

3

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Earl.

4

5

6 MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you. You
7 mentioned it was an 11 member Board and I don't -- I
8 think I missed it, and you said six were in Alaska, and
9 then just in general, where are the six members located
10 at, I guess, without getting any community-wise, would
11 be okay, what Mr. Epchook was asking, if we could get
12 some YK representation, YK Delta representation.

12

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MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you.

MS. PELTOLA: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

MS. PELTOLA: This is Mary Peltola. I
just have a really simple question. Would you say it's
fair to say that this North Pacific Fishery Management

0274

1 Council is most preoccupied with the ex vessel value or
2 the money made off of fishing and has almost no concern
3 or priority for non-commercial users?

4

5 Over.

6

7 MS. STRAM: Mr. Chair. No, I wouldn't
8 say that that's the case. I think that there's been a
9 lot of interest lately, particularly in the
10 incorporation of local and traditional and subsistence
11 knowledge in our process both through our community
12 engagement committee recently as well as we have two
13 task forces for the Bering Sea -- one is a focus on
14 climate change, the other is focused on the
15 incorporation of local, traditional and subsistence
16 knowledge in our process. So I think that there's been
17 a really renewed focus on all of that in terms of
18 folding that into our decisionmaking so that
19 decisionmaking is not only driven by.....

20

21 (Teleconference interference -
22 participants not muted - coughing)

23

24 MS. STRAM:sort of the directed
25 -- the affected entities, so our jurisdiction is the
26 affected entities when we take an action, and so that
27 -- for the most part tends to be the directed fishing
28 entities over which we have regulatory jurisdiction.
29 But I think there's been a really renewed focus
30 recently and if you listen in on our Council meetings
31 you'll hear quite a lot about this in terms of
32 broadening the scope of deliberations and
33 considerations to looking at non -- directly affected
34 entities (indiscernible).....

35

36 (Teleconference interference -
37 participants not muted - coughing)

38

39 MS. STRAM:knowledge sources
40 outside of what are tradition. Hopefully that
41 addresses your question.

42

43 MS. PELTOLA: All right. Mr. Chairman,
44 for me it's less of a question than an observation.
45 There are no sitting members that are not monied, you
46 know, commercial, big processing, big fish people and
47 the few Natives and, you know, subsistence type
48 oriented folks who have been on technical committees
49 haven't been reappointed, so hopefully, you know, the
50

0275

1 interest that you're talking about materializes into
2 actual seats on the Board that aren't just about
3 corporate interests.

4

5 MS. STRAM: Yeah, thanks for that.
6 That's definitely come up recently in terms of the
7 membership of our Advisory Panel, as well as there's
8 often been discussion of that at the Council level.
9 Again, at the Council level that is a Gubernatorial
10 appointment, so that is not something that is within
11 the jurisdiction of our Council to decide, that is a
12 Gubernatorial appointment so that's something that
13 folks have to take up with the Governor's office. With
14 respect to our Advisory Panels, that is something that
15 is under the jurisdiction of our Council and I know
16 that there's been a number of concerns raised recently
17 about that so I think that it's at least fair to say
18 there's been a lot of discussion along those lines very
19 recently.

20

21 Thanks.

22

23 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
24 DeWitt, can I ask a question, please.

25

26 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

27

28 MR. DEWITT: Diane, what days in April
29 is that and do you have a way you -- or can you give me
30 that address again for how to get the information for
31 it?

32

33 MS. STRAM: Sure, thank you. Okay, so
34 our website, and I'll make sure that Eva has this
35 information to distribute to you as well. It's
36 NPFMC.org. And hopefully I put it on my intro slide,
37 if not, please send me an email. And then if you go to
38 our website and you scroll down on the very front page,
39 you'll see a notification of our April meeting and that
40 meeting is, again, on line, as all our meetings are
41 right now, and that will begin with our Science Panel
42 on April 5th, and it will continue through the 17th of
43 April with our Council. So our Science Panel meets the
44 5th through the 9th. Our Advisory Panel meets the 6th
45 through the 10th. And then the following week our
46 Council will meet, April 12th through the 17th. And so
47 all the information for getting on to our meeting, it's
48 all broadcast online so you log in through Adobe
49 connect, you can sign up that way through public
50

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1 comment, you can provide public comment orally and in
2 writing through our agenda link, any of our Admin Staff
3 is happy to help you if you have any issues with trying
4 to get into the meeting or follow along with the
5 meeting. My email's on the first page of that -- of
6 the slides that I provided and if you have any trouble
7 at all, please just send me an email and I'll direct
8 you to who can help you to log into that meeting.

9
10 MR. DEWITT: Okay. I'm just a member
11 of the public and I didn't get a packet, that's why I
12 was questioning. I appreciate your time, thank you.

13
14 MS. STRAM: Oh, sure, thanks. And my
15 email is also on our website. My email is diana, D-I-
16 A-N-A-S-T-R-A-M at N-O-A-A.gov so I am always happy to
17 help direct you to whatever you need. But you can also
18 just get on our website NPFMC.org and you can navigate
19 to finding Staff contacts or just asking questions and
20 we're always happy to help.

21
22 MR. DEWITT: All right, thanks, Diana,
23 I appreciate it. And, thank you, Mr. Chair, for the
24 time.

25
26 MS. STRAM: Sure.

27
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Is
29 there any more questions or comments for Diana at this
30 time.

31
32 MR. LANDLORD: Mr. Chair, James
33 Landlord.

34
35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: James, go ahead.

36
37 MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, just a comment and
38 maybe one question. Is -- in North Pacific do they
39 have a higher Board member, or the Administration they
40 have responsibility to.

41
42 MS. STRAM: Thank you. I'm not sure I
43 understood the question. Our responsibility to -- to?

44
45 MR. LANDLORD: Yeah, do they have
46 another higher organization, like a Board member, like
47 from the Federal government that.....

48
49 MS. STRAM: Oh, I think I understand
50

0277

1 what you're asking.....

2

3 MR. LANDLORD: Yeah.

4

5 MS. STRAM: Are you asking does the
6 Council have a -- has a higher body to which they are
7 responsible to.

8

9 MR. LANDLORD: Yes.

10

11 MS. STRAM: Is that your question --
12 okay. Yeah, that's a great question actually. So the
13 way that our Council works, our Council, again, the
14 voting members are nominating from the respective
15 states of Alaska, Washington and Oregon. Their
16 recommendations, that's what they -- their decisions
17 are in the form of recommendations to the Secretary of
18 Commerce. So the Council doesn't -- while they make
19 the final recommendation, it is under the jurisdiction
20 of the Secretary of Commerce, through the National
21 Marine Fisheries Service to either accept, decline or
22 modify the Council's recommendation. So while they are
23 the -- there is no higher authority that would be
24 overseeing them, they absolutely are under the
25 jurisdiction of and make recommendations to the
26 Secretary of Commerce.

27

28 Hopefully that answers the question.

29

30 MR. LANDLORD: Yes. I don't remember
31 when, how many years ago, when our Council members
32 traveled, they go to meetings, or conferences, and when
33 he came back we heard about the bycatch so our Council
34 made a resolution to NCAI (ph) that there were too many
35 bycatch, chinook bycatches in the Gulf of Alaska under
36 this North Pacific Council, that they were under, so
37 our Council made a resolution, they're asking NCAI for
38 help because we don't know the process, and they took
39 our resolution and they said they would see what they
40 can do, at that time there was a lot of bycatch on the
41 -- by the trawlers and after that we discussed it
42 there, they said they -- they told us what -- see how
43 they can help us.

44

45 That's my comment.

46

47 MS. STRAM: Thank you. Yeah, it's been
48 super helpful to get input from all of you and your
49 groups to our Council in the form of public comment and

50

0278

1 resolutions. They definitely receive that information
2 and take it under consideration when they're
3 considering management action.

4
5 MR. LANDLORD: Okay, thanks.

6
7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, is there anyone
8 else that want to comment or have questions for Diana
9 at this time.

10
11 (No comments)

12
13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank
14 you, Diana, for your report. I'm sure we'll hear you
15 again sometime in the near future just to give us
16 updates on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council
17 bycatch and the other stuff that relates to.....

18
19 (Teleconference interference -
20 participants not muted)

21
22 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

23
24 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

25
26 MS. ROGERS: Sorry, Mr. Chair. This is
27 Alissa Rogers for the record. I had to step away for a
28 moment so I had missed some of the information that she
29 gave. But I wanted to ask really quick a question for
30 her if that's all right with you, Mr. Chair.

31
32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, that's fine, go
33 ahead.

34
35 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
36 Through the Chair. My name is Alissa Nadine Rogers,
37 for the record. I was going to ask if the North Pacific
38 Management Council had received the Yukon/Kuskokwim
39 Subsistence Delta Regional Advisory Council's
40 recommendation to continue to keep the cap at a low
41 number until our chinook salmon has returned to
42 adequate numbers for harvesting and being able to lift
43 restrictions on the mainstem rivers, of the Kuskokwim,
44 of the Yukon, and of the Arctic regional rivers. Has
45 that letter ever been received and was it taken up at
46 your previous meeting?

47
48 MS. STRAM: Thank you for that. I don't
49 see it posted as a public comment to our website for
50

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1 our upcoming meeting and I don't have any recollection
2 of that letter being received or posted to our Council.
3 So normally when we receive letters that are in
4 relation to an existing agenda item or they are posted
5 under our Staff tasking agenda item if there's not an
6 agenda item that's coming up at that meeting, so I
7 personally have not seen that that has been received.
8 If it's recent, it might be just kind of in the cue to
9 be posted to our upcoming item under salmon bycatch as
10 a public comment. If it is longer than that then I'm
11 not -- I don't have any knowledge of that type of a
12 letter being received by our Council.

13

14 MS. PATTON: Mr. Chair, this is Eva.

15

16 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva.

17

18 MS. PATTON: Yeah, thank you, Mr.
19 Chair, and thank you Alissa for bringing up that
20 letter. That was a letter coming from a Council all
21 the way back in March of 2019, so the spring meeting or
22 April of 2019 the Council's spring meeting of 2019.
23 And at that time there wasn't an open -- there wasn't
24 Bering Sea bycatch on the agenda for the North Pacific
25 Fishery Management Council so it was sent as a formal
26 comment letter from the Council but there wasn't a
27 meeting agenda topic item where it would fall under, so
28 it was sent as a comment letter at that time outside of
29 the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regulatory
30 cycle.

31

32 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33

34 MS. ROGERS: Mr. Chair.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Alissa.

37

38 MS. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
39 Through the Chair. Alissa Rogers for the record.
40 Would I be able to make a suggestion or a
41 recommendation to our current Council right now, that
42 we reamp that letter to be put forth in front of the
43 current North Pacific Fishery Management Council again
44 this year. I still feel that we jumped the gun too
45 soon to have those numbers increased, I believe that we
46 still should be in a lower bycatch number until our
47 chinook numbers return at a higher abundance, and our
48 restrictions on the mainstem rivers of both the
49 Kuskokwim, Yukon and the Arctic Rivers have been

50

0280

1 rescinded, lifted, and/or even removed from the
2 regulations.

3
4 Mr. Chair, thank you.

5
6 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Eva.

7
8 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
9 Council. Yes, that is definitely an option for the
10 Council to make a motion at this meeting, either to
11 resubmit that letter that was submitted back in spring
12 of 2019, or to make a motion on the record to draft a
13 new letter with recommendations at this time for
14 comment.

15
16 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

17
18 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you, Eva.

19
20 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl, through the Chair.

21
22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Earl.

23
24 MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you. Earl
25 Samuelson, Napaskiak. I'd like to speak in support of
26 that letter and resending it and glad that it's an
27 issue, it's always an issue out here, is the bycatch
28 numbers in Western Alaska and to the north, we watch
29 these very carefully because then we can predict what
30 the season's going to do, you know, so just speaking in
31 favor of resending that letter.

32
33 Thank you.

34
35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

36
37 MR. MAXIE: Carl Maxie, Napaskiak.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Carl.

40
41 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, I have a suggestion.
42 Instead of sending out a letter, somebody should be at
43 their meeting in person, represent fishing, if you have
44 a number of people send -- send representation to the
45 meeting, I think that would be more input.

46
47 Thank you.

48
49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Okay, we

50

0281

1 have options on the floor right now if anyone wants to
2 move a motion to write a -- rewrite that letter to
3 North Pacific Fishery Management Council what Alissa
4 had mentioned earlier, I guess a letter that was
5 written in April 2019 that we submitted. If there's no
6 other comments I'll go ahead and put that in a motion.

7

8 Do I hear a second.

9

10 MR. ALSTROM: Thomas Alstrom, second.

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Thomas.
13 Discussion. Alissa, can you relay your comments
14 relating the letter that we need to submit to North
15 Pacific.

16

17 MS. ROGERS: Yes, no problem. So when
18 we had our last RAC meeting in prior years and it's
19 been a topic on our agenda quite frequently, especially
20 when we had those folks that were seated out from the
21 Bering Sea villages, they talked a lot about how a
22 possibility would be to continue to keep that pressure
23 on keeping the chinook salmon bycatch numbers low. In
24 the previous years they had increased the bycatch
25 numbers for chinook salmon, which allowed them to
26 harvest more chinook salmon out in the Bering Sea and
27 so what we were hoping to see was that we continue to
28 remind them and keep that reminding pressure that we're
29 not in the clear yet to have all the chinook salmon, or
30 even increase the bycatch numbers to be able to not --
31 to be -- to continue to have increase or even more
32 restrictions on the mainstem, which would be the
33 villages of the Yukon and Kuskokwim people who rely on
34 the chinook salmon. Since it's such an important part
35 of our subsistence way of life, our daily food, and
36 food for the next generations, we'd like to see that
37 this continue to be a part of the North Pacific Fishery
38 Management Council's agenda awareness and also to keep
39 an eye on it. If there's going to be restrictions in
40 the mainstem, in the fresh waters, then there still
41 should be restrictions and limitations on the bycatch
42 in the Bering Sea.

43

44 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

45

46 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Alissa. Is
47 there any more comments relating or discussion relating
48 to the motion.

49

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0282

1 (No comments)

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10 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chair.

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12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard.

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: And we also could include all the comments that we heard today on the record to include that with the letter. I think a letter would be appropriate, to have a paper trail, and if possible we could have someone, if it can be done, you know, send someone to their Board meeting.

MR. SLATS: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard.

MR. SLATS: Yes, I think at this time, you know, because that letter was done in 2019, we should also take a look at it again and then update it before we send it in, and include some of the points that Alissa was making.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Richard. Any more.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.....

CHAIRMAN ONEY:discussion.....

MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, go ahead, Eva.

MS. PATTON: If I may, I just have a correction. I misspoke when I said 2019, that letter was drafted by the Council at your March 2020 meeting and submitted to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Again, there wasn't a Bering Sea bycatch on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council agenda for their meeting at that time. But my apologies, I misspoke, it wasn't 2019, it was 2020.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva. So it would be appropriate at this time to consider that letter to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council regarding the bycatch.

Any more discussion relating to the

0283

1 main motion.

2

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(No comments)

4

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6

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none can
someone call for the question.

7

8

MR. SLATS: Question. This is Richard.

9

10

11

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, question's been
called by Richard. All those in favor say aye.

12

13

IN UNISON: Aye.

14

15

CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed, same sign.

16

17

(No opposing votes)

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion
carries. So we will followup with a letter regarding
this. So, Diana, appreciate your report and look
forward to hearing from you again in the future, thank
you.

24

25

26

MS. STRAM: Thank you for your time.
Good afternoon.

27

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CHAIRMAN ONEY: Enjoy the rest of your
day. Eva, we'll move on.

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MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
Council. I did -- and thank you to Diana Stram for
joining us this afternoon and providing all those
updates, appreciate that. We did want to circle back
around, the Council, a little earlier today had some
questions regarding fisheries disaster and emergency
declarations. I've been trying to work back and forth
behind the scenes here to try to get some updates for
the Council. I believe we do have Holly Carroll back
online with us and she had done some looking and
provided some links for the Council which I just
forwarded a little bit ago, that provide some more
information both about the status of those declarations
and also a current open application period. I did get
some feedback, too, I know Serena Fitka from the Yukon
River Drainage Fisheries Association has been working
closely on this issue along with the Yukon River
InterTribal Fish Commission, and she had offered to try
to answer any questions for the Council as well on this

0284

1 topic.

2

3

4 So I think we do have Holly back
5 online and also maybe Serena has joined us again and we
6 might be able to get a little more information to go
7 there. And, hopefully, those emails got through to
8 you, those have some links and updates on current
9 information as well.

10

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you, Eva. Bill
14 Alstrom mentioned about information relating to the
15 fisheries assistance, are there any organizations out
16 there that are providing this and where can we go to
17 get that information. Just for your information,
18 yesterday I received in the mail from Pacific State
19 Marine Fisheries Commission and they're stationed out
20 of Portland, Oregon, and it says important Cares Act
21 fisheries assistance information, time sensitive
22 information, and it mentions about getting assistance
23 forms for people, commercially and for subsistence,
24 applicants are linked to agriculture, commercial
25 harvesting, seafood processing, sportfishing charter
26 sectors, additionally funds have been allocated for
27 subsistence users. So that's one avenue that we know
28 of that is available to assist fisheries. I don't know
29 if there's any other agencies that are providing this
30 funding for fisheries.

31

32 MS. CARROLL: Mr. Chair, this is Holly
33 Carroll.

34

35 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Holly.

36

37 MS. CARROLL: Yep. So I'm with Fish
38 and Wildlife Service, but the document that you're
39 talking about, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries
40 Commission, that is part of the Cares Act funding you
41 just described. And Fish and Game, the Governor -- the
42 Governor of the state of Alaska, through the Department
43 of Fish and Game, issued a letter all about that Cares
44 Act funding on February 18th, 2021, so it's on their
45 website. You've been emailed that link. I know YRDFA
46 also shared it. And it just tells you what that money
47 is and then how, as fishermen, to apply, and I just
48 glanced at it briefly, but the application period is
49 open now, and so if fishermen are looking to do this,
50 they need to do it in the next month or so because it's

51

0285

1 open now and it does close on April 30th. It looks
2 like a pretty simple application process, but that link
3 has been emailed to Eva and she's going to pass it
4 around.

5
6 I just want to clarify, that's
7 different than when the Governor declared a disaster,
8 that's a different process, he has to declare that, and
9 I know Serena gave an update just earlier in the
10 meeting that her and Fish Commission and YRDFA did ask
11 the Governor to declare that. But that's a very
12 different process. And the way the funding is handed
13 out later, if it's ever declared, can take years, and
14 they're usually given out through organizations. So it
15 is a real different process.

16
17 The Cares Act is for actual fishermen.
18 If you were hurt by Covid and the lack of fishing, you
19 can, you know, submit an application. And there's --
20 you know, as you just said, Mr. Chair, there's the
21 ability for subsistence users. So I would look at
22 those forms, see if you're eligible and you've got
23 until April 30th to submit that. And then the money
24 for that, the funds would be dispersed by June of 2021.
25 So that's your more immediate relief.

26
27 And that's all the info I have on that.
28 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service aren't part of it, I
29 just did a little research and found this information
30 and want to make sure that you guys get the info.

31
32 (Teleconference interference -
33 participants not muted)

34
35 MR. MULLIGAN: Mr. Chair, this is Ben
36 Mulligan from the Department of Fish and Game, can I
37 add a couple of things.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, go ahead, Ben.

40
41 MR. MULLIGAN: Hey, thank you. I talked
42 with our folks here at Fish and Game who coordinated
43 the plans that got submitted over to the Feds and so
44 the Pacific States will administer that money like
45 Holly said. I did check their website for the
46 application because I was thinking I would be able to
47 get it to Eva to get it to you guys, but right now
48 Pacific States is, I guess, looking for some more
49 information on the subsistence fishery on the Yukon,
50

0286

1 and right now the application or date, that section of
2 the funding isn't available right now, but they're
3 hoping to have that done soon. We asked if they don't
4 get it done soon, if -- if they will extend the
5 application period for those subsistence users who
6 would like to apply and they said yes. I've already,
7 behind the scenes, emailed Eva, and as soon as I find
8 out when that is available, I am more than happy to let
9 Eva know and she can send that out to all of you guys.

10

11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

12

13 MS. PELTOLA: Mr. Chairman.

14

15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

16

17 MS. PELTOLA: Yes, this is Mary Peltola
18 from the Kuskokwim River InterTribal Fish Commission
19 and I have a question for Ben Mulligan, if I might.

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Mary.

22

23 MS. PELTOLA: Thank you. Ben, does
24 that include the Kuskokwim as well as the Yukon?

25

26 MR. MULLIGAN: Mary, through the Chair.
27 This is just the Cares Act funding, this isn't
28 disaster, so it's rural subsistence users who were
29 impacted because of the pandemic so it isn't drainage
30 specific.

31

32 MS. PELTOLA: Okay, good. And then one
33 of the things I wanted to mention aside from the Cares
34 Act is that the Kusko Fish Commission, we did send a
35 letter to the Governor. I sent it to Ben Stevens first,
36 but didn't hear back, and then sent it to the
37 Commissioner of Fish and Game, Doug Vincent-Lang and
38 heard back immediately that they were going to analyze
39 the request, but we haven't heard anything back since.

40

41 MR. MULLIGAN: Okay. I can check on
42 that. I just -- I wasn't on the call, I had to step
43 away, but I had emailed our folks for the Yukon one and
44 I had an answer on that one, but you guys already know,
45 but I don't know where that is in the process yet.
46 Yeah, we analyze the disaster declarations and then
47 sent it up to the Gov's office, so, Mary, I can find
48 out for you, I'm just not sure off the top of my head
49 because I only asked for the Yukon.

50

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1 MS. PELTOLA: Okay. I'll email the
2 Kusko's to you as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3
4 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Thank you,
5 Holly, for that information. I'm sure Eva will get all
6 the necessary information so we can make it available
7 to all the people in the YK area, so appreciate you
8 coming back on.

9
10 MS. CARROLL: Sure thing.

11
12 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl's got a question,
13 through the Chair.

14
15 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Earl.

16
17 MR. SAMUELSON: Just mention that Cares
18 Act funding, is that concentrated through subsistence
19 rural fishermen or commercial, and distributed out to
20 all the tribes.

21
22 MR. MULLIGAN: Mr. Chairman, this is
23 Ben Mulligan. I can take a stab at it if you'd like.

24
25 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

26
27 MR. MULLIGAN: Sir, there's different
28 -- the link that you'll have in your email will give
29 you specifics, but certain portions of that funding go
30 to certain parts of, you know, folks impacted, as long
31 as -- as far as fishing sectors. So there was money as
32 a part of that for subsistence users, for the
33 commercial harvest sector, sportfishing sectors,
34 seafood, it's a statewide deal, and it includes all the
35 major sectors that were impacted, at least in that.
36 So, subsistence, like I said -- and even aquaculture.
37 So it runs the gamut of qualifications.

38
39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Does that answer your
40 question, Earl.

41
42 MR. SAMUELSON: Yes, thank you.

43
44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. If
45 there's no other questions or comments relating to
46 funding, in hopes of finding funding for the disaster
47 that we experienced, so hopefully there's enough
48 pressure on the Governor to declare a disaster for our
49 area. So, thank you, appreciate your comment.

50

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1 Eva, moving on.

2

3 MS. FITKA: Mr. Chairman.

4

5 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

6

7 MS. FITKA: This is Serena Fitka. I am
8 also online for any questions.

9

10 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Oh, sorry, I didn't
11 know you'd come on. Is there any questions or comments
12 for Serena at this time.

13

14 MS. FITKA: Mr. Chairman, just a brief
15 refresher of my report that I did. We did contact the
16 Governor's office last month, the letter to the
17 Governor requesting a disaster declaration was sent out
18 in October, we received about 23 resolutions from
19 tribes along the Yukon River and we have not heard
20 anything back. We reached out to Anne Robertson with
21 Murkowski's office last week and chatted with her. She
22 was going to reach out to the Governor's office to see
23 what the hold up was and she would get back with us
24 right away.

25

26 So at this point we are still waiting.

27

28 MR. MULLIGAN: Mr. Chairman, this is
29 Ben Mulligan at Fish and Game again. Can I add a
30 point?

31

32 MS. FITKA: yes.

33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

35

36 MR. MULLIGAN: I just checked in with my
37 counterpart, who helps coordinate our -- Fish and
38 Game's analysis, and that analysis went up to the
39 Governor's office and we're expecting an answer very
40 soon now, you know, very soon means different things to
41 different people, but I, again, committed to Eva, as
42 soon as I hear something I'm more than happy to
43 distribute that. I'll also see if I can get a better
44 timeframe for what very soon means. But our -- I
45 guess, know that our analysis went up to the Governor's
46 office. They've been reviewing that and we should
47 expect an answer soon.

48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, thank you. And

50

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1 I'm hoping we do get an answer for the YRDFA Board
2 before their annual meeting coming up in April. So,
3 thank you, appreciate your comments. Is there any more
4 questions for Serena at this time.

5

6 (No comments)

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Questions or comments.

9

10 (No comments)

11

12 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, thank
13 you. Appreciate you coming back on, too.

14

15 MS. FITKA: Thank you.

16

17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, moving on, Eva.

18

19 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
20 Council. And big thanks to Ben and Holly and Serena
21 for jumping on to try to help get this information back
22 out to the Council and communities, so thank you.

23

24 Well, we are coming to the end of the
25 agenda now, so last but not least we have the OSM
26 report, the Office of Subsistence Management report,
27 and we have Orville Lind online who is going to provide
28 that for the Council.

29

30 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

31

32 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Orville, you have the
33 floor.

34

35 MR. LIND: Quyana, thank you, and good
36 afternoon, Mr. Chair and Council members. I want to
37 thank you for this time for allowing me to give you an
38 updated report on a few items.

39

40 First of all we are holding all 10
41 winter 2021 Regional Advisory Council meetings via
42 teleconference. And the decision was made with the
43 utmost consideration and concern for the health and
44 welfare, and safety of Council members, their families,
45 and rural communities, also the public and Staff, who
46 are all part of the Council meetings. The CDC, or the
47 Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines
48 suggest that people avoid travel and refrain from
49 meeting in person to minimize risk and to help prevent
50

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1 the spread of Covid.

2

3 We recognize that holding face to face
4 meetings in rural communities across Alaska is
5 preferable for encouraging the public's most effect
6 involvement. The Federal Subsistence Management
7 Program is also fully committed to resuming in-person
8 Council meetings across Alaska as soon as it's possible
9 to do so safely.

10

11 Next, is OSM, Office of Subsistence
12 Management Staff changes. And since the last Council
13 meeting, the following Staffing changes have occurred.

14

15 Doctor Brent Vickers started as the
16 Office of Subsistence Management Anthropology Chief in
17 December.

18

19 Greg Risdahl moved over to U.S. Forest
20 Service in January, to become their Subsistence Program
21 Leader and will be on the Forest Service representative
22 on the InterAgency Staff Committee.

23

24 We are grateful to have experienced
25 people on the ISC that will remain with the Program as
26 advisors to their Board members.

27

28 Mr. George Pappas is currently the
29 acting Office of Subsistence Management Fishery
30 Division Chief, in addition to his normal job as State
31 liaison to Wildlife and Fisheries Programs.

32

33 Katya Wessels, the Council Coordinator,
34 is currently acting OSM, or Office of Subsistence
35 Management Policy Coordinator. Katya was just selected
36 as Council Coordination Division Chief and will be
37 starting in mid-March.

38

39 Mr. Steve Fadden, came to us from the
40 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuges to be the Acting Office
41 of Subsistence Management Wildlife Division Chief.

42

43 Our Admin support Sabrina Schmidt has
44 served as one of the clerks at our office and she just
45 took a promotional job with the military back in
46 January.

47

48 Going to go over the Council
49 appointments and applications topic.

50

1 The annual Council appointment process
2 is complex and it takes about 15 months to complete.
3 It begins in September of each year when the Federal
4 Subsistence Board announces the open application period
5 for Council membership. During this six month
6 application period the Program conducts an extensive
7 statewide recruitment effort. And the Program
8 distributes approximately about 2,000 applications
9 throughout Alaska via mail, email, individuals,
10 agencies and organizations. Additionally the Program
11 conducts wide-ranging outreach through a variety of
12 media outlets including, but not limited to newspapers,
13 radios, TV, internet, FaceBook and public conferences.
14 Last year, 2020, the effort resulted in 74 applications
15 to fill 62 vacated or expiring seats. After the
16 InterAgency Nominations Panel conducted the interviews,
17 the Federal Subsistence Board reviewed the applications
18 and forwarded their recommendations to the Secretary of
19 Interior and Agriculture on September 4th of 2020. On
20 January 15th, 2021, our Office of Subsistence
21 Management received copies of the Regional Advisory
22 Council appointment letters signed by the former
23 Secretary of the Interior. The original appointment
24 letters were sent out by regular post and applicants
25 whose appointments were approved should have received
26 their letters by now. We received full appointments
27 for four Councils, Kodiak/Aleutians, Bristol Bay,
28 Northwest Arctic, and Seward Peninsula, and partial
29 appointments for three Councils, the Eastern Interior,
30 North Slope and Southcentral. Three Councils, Western
31 Interior, Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and Southeast Alaska
32 Council did not receive appointments at all. This
33 resulted in 35 currently vacant seats on all Councils.
34 To remedy the situation we are working with our Fish
35 and Wildlife Service Headquarter's office as well as
36 with the Department of the Interior to see if we can
37 get the additional appointments considered out of
38 cycle. The application period for this year's 2021
39 Regional Advisory Council appointments is open until
40 March 12th. Again, the application period is open
41 until March 12th, which is not too far away, about 8
42 days. The application deadline was extended. By
43 December 2nd of this year we are going to have 62 open
44 seats for appointment or reappointment and as of today
45 we have very few applications to fill these seats. We
46 are encouraging Council members whose terms will expire
47 in December 2021 to reapply. Your Council Coordinator
48 should have contacted you already if your membership
49 expires this coming December. We also encourage other
50

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1 rural Alaskans to apply for Council membership.
2 Serving on the Regional Advisory Council is the best
3 way to proactively participate in the Federal
4 Subsistence Management regulatory process and help to
5 sustain traditional way of life. I always like to say
6 traditional subsistence way of life. Your
7 participation on the Regional Advisory Council allows
8 for better regulations to be developed and satisfy the
9 needs of the users in the region and at the same time
10 assure the continued viability of fish and wildlife
11 populations. Please let your Coordinator know if you
12 want to reapply or apply or would like to nominate
13 someone so they can get you on application form, and
14 please encourage knowledgeable users in the communities
15 to apply as well. You can also -- they're also on our
16 website.

17
18 RealID for traveling to Council
19 meetings. When we do get to the point where we need to
20 travel again, over the past two years we've been
21 reminding Council members about the change in
22 requirements for IDs at airports. This has been
23 postponed until October 1st of 2021. Note that all
24 Council members will need to make sure that they have a
25 required RealID for travel next fall. If you do have
26 the correct ID please make sure that you get it for the
27 fall of 2021 Council meeting cycle -- I'm sorry, if you
28 didn't have the correct ID, try to get it before the
29 next meeting cycle in the fall.

30
31 The last topic is the lawsuit from the
32 State of Alaska, some updated information.

33
34 On August 10th, 2020, the State of
35 Alaska filed a lawsuit against the Federal Subsistence
36 Board after it adopted emergency special action WSA19-
37 14. This allowed the village of Kake in Southeast
38 Alaska to engage in a community harvest of two antlered
39 moose and five male Sitka black-tailed deer. Also
40 included in the lawsuit was temporary special action
41 WSA20-03 which closed Federal public lands in units 13A
42 and 13B to non-Federally-qualified moose and caribou
43 hunters. As part of the lawsuit the State asked the
44 court to issue two preliminary injunctions. One to
45 prevent the Unit 13 closure from taking effect and
46 another vacating the Kake hunt and prohibit the Board
47 from allowing any additional emergency hunts related to
48 the impact of the Covid19. On September 18th the U.S.
49 District Court denied the State's request for a
50

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1 preliminary injunction on the Unit 13 closure. The
2 court found that, because the State has not
3 demonstrated either a likelihood of success or serious
4 questions on the merits of its claims, the court need
5 not consider the remaining elements of the preliminary
6 injunction analysis.

7

8 Two months later on November 18th, the
9 Court also denied the State's motion for a preliminary
10 injunction on the Kake hunt after Judge Gleason
11 concluded that the State had not demonstrated a
12 likelihood of success on the merits, raising serious
13 questions on the merits of its claim, or demonstrated
14 any likelihood of irreparable harm.

15

16 While these rulings on preliminary
17 injunction are encouraging, they do not resolve the
18 litigation. Settlement negotiations between the
19 Department of Justice, the DOI Solicitor's Office, and
20 USDA Office of General Counsel, and the State are
21 ongoing. The parties have agreed to delay the court
22 proceedings while these discussions are ongoing.
23 Barring a settlement, the Solicitor's Office now
24 estimates that the briefing should be complete in
25 summer 2021 and that the court will issue its decision
26 in summer 2021, before your next meeting, and that the
27 Court will issue its decision in late summer.

28

29 Based on legal guidance, Program Staff
30 does not comment on any active litigation directed
31 against the Federal Subsistence Board beyond what has
32 been set forth here.

33

34 With that said, Mr. Chair, if you have
35 any questions I will try to answer them.

36

37 Quayana.

38

39 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, quyana, for your
40 update. Do we have any questions or comments at this
41 time for Orville.

42

43 (No comments)

44

45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, I just want to
46 comment maybe on the meetings in the villages. I think
47 when I first got on in the early 2000s that was the
48 most that we used to schedule our winter meetings and
49 it was an idea to at least let villages see how the

50

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1 process of how the YKRAC functions and give them an
2 opportunity to comment on issues that are of concern to
3 them. And a lot of times, you know, our villages,
4 members, you know, very seldom leave their village and
5 I think that'd be a good opportunity to continue the
6 village meetings again, so I appreciate that, thank
7 you.

8
9 MR. LIND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes,
10 I agree. It's the Native way, Alaskan way, face to
11 face, I miss that, but hopefully this will all go away
12 soon and then we can get better to have these excellent
13 meetings we've had.

14
15 Quyana.

16
17 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you. Is
18 there any comments or questions for Orville at this
19 time.

20
21 (No comments)

22
23 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none,
24 appreciate your update, thank you.

25
26 MR. LIND: Thank you.

27
28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Moving on, Eva.

29
30 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
31 Council, and thank you Orville.

32
33 So last up, the next last before
34 adjourn is to take a look at the Council meeting
35 schedule, you'll find that beginning on Page 30 of your
36 meeting books in the back, and just want to review and
37 reconfirm the fall 2021 meeting date. Currently the YK
38 Delta has selected October 6 and 7 of 2021 for your
39 fall meeting dates. If the Council would like to
40 reconfirm those meeting dates or if there's any
41 interest in any changes for any reason.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you.
46 Anyone want to comment or should we remain status quo
47 for October 6th and 7th.

48
49 (No comments)

50

0295

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: No comment, so we'll
2 keep October 6 and 7 for our fall 2021 fall meeting.
3 Moving on.
4

5 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. And
6 then on the following page you'll find the winter 2022
7 meeting calendar and the one you have in your book is
8 blank because these materials went out long before any
9 Council began to meet so there's been a handful of
10 other Councils that have met already and selected their
11 dates. And because of the limitations of being able to
12 cover only two Council meetings per week, we have four
13 weeks that are available to the Council. So if you'll
14 look on your calendar, the week beginning February 22nd
15 is available. And the following week, February 28th
16 through March 4th is available. And then the last two
17 weeks of March are available for the Council to select
18 to meet.
19

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.
21

22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you, Eva.
23 Any suggestions.
24

25 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman, do we have
26 to make a motion on the 2022 winter meeting?
27

28 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, since we haven't
29 picked on.
30

31 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, I move that we have
32 our winter meeting on March 2 and 3 in Bethel in
33 person, I said in person.
34

35 Thank you.
36

37 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay. There's a motion
38 on the floor by John to have winter meeting in Bethel
39 on March 1 and 2. Is there a second.
40

41 MR. ALSTROM: Thomas Alstrom, I'll
42 second that.
43

44 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, seconded by
45 Thomas Alstrom. All those in favor say aye.
46

47 IN UNISON: Aye.
48

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Opposed, same sign.
50

0296

1 (No opposing votes)

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Hearing none, motion
4 carries for our winter 2022 meeting will be March 1 and
5 2.

6

7 Okay, thank you, moving on, Eva.

8

9 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
10 believe last up on the agenda would be closing
11 comments.

12

13 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, for closing
14 comments I want to include past members that would want
15 to comment, I'll give them an opportunity to do so,
16 too. But right now we're open for closing comments,
17 anyone.

18

19 (No comments)

20

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Anyone want to give
22 closing comments.

23

24 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl, here, if I may,
25 through the Chair.

26

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Earl.

28

29 MR. SAMUELSON: Thank you. Through the
30 Chair. Just wanted to thank all of you and thank all
31 the folks who had presentations. I didn't listen in on
32 yesterday's but I know it's a lot of time involved.
33 Thank you for the patience and have a safe journey, so
34 thank you very much.

35

36 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

37

38 MS. ROGERS: Hi, Mr. Chair.

39

40 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Alissa.

41

42 MS. ROGERS: Hi. Thank you, Mr. Chair.
43 Through the Chair. My name is Alissa Nadine Rogers for
44 the record. I want to thank all of you so much for your
45 time, your effort, all the sweat that gets put into
46 these meetings, all the dedication and everything that
47 we go through in order to make sure we have the most
48 updated information to take care of our families, our
49 wildlife, our fisheries, and I'm sure going to miss
50

0297

1 Bob. I miss him a lot at those meetings, and now that
2 he's officially going to be an honorary Board member,
3 that -- I'll miss him.
4

5 I really want to thank you all for
6 sticking through it and putting all this information
7 together, even for folks that we finally were able to
8 get to at least one of our meetings to get our
9 information brought through so thank you so much.
10

11 And thank you so much for stepping up,
12 Mr. Chair, for the ability to conduct these meetings,
13 and you're doing an amazing job and I'm very proud to
14 have you there and so congratulations to the rest of
15 you who are still there.
16

17 I wanted to apologize for not being
18 able to be participative in certain parts of the
19 meeting today. I had a few emergencies. We're
20 currently in a blizzard out here and I have some
21 offices out here in Western region which I had to
22 attend to to take care of and make sure all the
23 employees got home safe.
24

25 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for
26 everything. And God bless you all and we'll see you at
27 the next meeting.
28

29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: God bless you too.
30 Closing comments, anyone.
31

32 MR. ANDREW: Mr. Chairman.
33

34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: John.
35

36 MR. ANDREW: Yeah, Guyana. Yeah, first
37 of all I'd like to thank you, our interim President,
38 along with Richard and Thomas, you guys did a good job.
39 And our Coordinator, she always does a good job every
40 time we have a meeting. And the Staff, the Staff Fish
41 and Game, and Alissa, Carl Maxie, and James Landlord,
42 and all the people out there that testified.
43

44 Guyana.
45

46 I had trouble keeping my connections, I
47 think my phone is getting old like me.
48

49 Thank you.
50

0298

1 (Laughter)

2

3 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yep, thank you.

4 Closing comments, anyone.

5

6 MR. SLATS: Mr. Chairman.

7

8 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard.

9

10 MR. SLATS: I just want to thank
11 everybody that was, you know, all the Board members, I
12 just wanted to find out before the fall meeting that,
13 you know, when she mentioned -- I about didn't have a
14 chance to bring this up when we were just talking about
15 it, I'm still learning my phone so I was still on mute
16 when I thought I was on the air, but I agreed with
17 Alissa for our fall meeting in Bethel should be in
18 person, as long as we're able to find a site that can
19 accommodate for cubicles or set us up, you know, those
20 things that have -- you know, and for all of us
21 members, as long as we're fully vaccinated by September
22 or October, maybe we're able to make it through those
23 meetings without, you know, raising too much health
24 issues.

25

26 I want to thank Ray Oney for stepping
27 up and being -- leading -- taking the lead.

28

29 Thomas and John, for sitting through
30 this process, because -- also I want to thank Alissa,
31 Carl and James Landlord for being with us and, you
32 know, like a show of support means a lot. I want to
33 thank the Staff for the -- the Office of Subsistence
34 Management and all of those people, the people from the
35 tribe, the people on the Kuskokwim especially, and
36 those people on the Yukon, it's really good to sit
37 through some of this stuff and then we come up to date
38 with things that are going on in our area, and this is
39 especially when it comes to subsistence, which means a
40 lot to us.

41

42 I want to thank everybody for sitting
43 in with us and God bless all of you.

44

45 Good luck to all of you.

46

47 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you.

48

49 MR. MAXIE: Yeah, Carl, Napaskiak. I

50

0299

6
7 Qu yana .

9 I'd like to have -- see before the
10 upcoming meeting to send all the 56 villages, tribes
11 notices with their leading admin, to let them know that
12 we'll have the meeting at a certain place, at a certain
13 time and dates, to have their heads up for their
14 concerns, or anything, any topic pertaining to fish and
15 wildlife.

17 And, again, thank you all, have a Covid
18 shot so we can get over this and move on. Thank you
19 and God bless you all.

21 CHAIRMAN ONEY: God bless you, too,
22 Carl.

24 MR. DEWITT: Mr. Chair, this is Neil
25 DeWitt.

27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead, Neil.

29 MR. DEWITT: I'm not on your Committee.
30 I am just a bystander from the public but I want to
31 stress to you because while I was listening in, I was
32 also checking out the North Pacific Management Council
33 dot org website, and I want to stress to all your
34 members, if you're really concerned about your fish you
35 need to go on that because it's a real eye opener,
36 there's some really, really good numbers and stuff in
37 there. It also has some things that's going to make
38 you very upset, but I think I read the 2nd of April is
39 the cut off day for anything to come up on their
40 meetings. So if you want to put in a proposal or if
41 you want to sign up for public testimony it's all
42 there, you can do that.

44 And thank you for letting me interrupt
45 your meeting from time to time and ask my questions
46 also, and that's all I have to say. Ya'll take care,
47 bye, bye.

49 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Thank you. Closing

0300

1 comments. Thomas.

2

3 MR. ALSTROM: Oh, yes, Chair, this is
4 Thomas. I'd just like to thank everybody for calling
5 in and giving their reports. I do kindly ask out of
6 respect maybe if somebody could close up with a closing
7 prayer.

8

9 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yes, we will close with
10 a prayer as soon as we are done with our comments. If
11 there's no one else that's going to comment I'll go
12 ahead and close my comments.

13

14 First of all I want to thank you all
15 for your confidence in me to be the interim Chairman
16 for this meeting, thank you very much for allowing me
17 to do that. And I thank each one of you for your
18 participation in this meeting, and especially those
19 from the villages that called in to participate. You
20 know very seldom do we, you know, hear people from
21 outside of our Council that we hear from and I want to
22 encourage more people to participate. So encourage
23 your village members and your neighboring villages to
24 at least put in their two cents worth of concerns or
25 comment relating to issues that may affect them. So,
26 you know, the more we hear the more answers we could
27 have for concerns that we have so continue to encourage
28 people to participate. And like I said, I thank all
29 those that called in and participated.

30

31 And I thank all those that gave us
32 updates on reports from Fish and Game, Fish and
33 Wildlife, North Pacific, USGS, and all those agencies
34 that came forward to at least let us know what's going
35 on, you know, with the resources that we heavily depend
36 on because of our status as village members. So
37 continue to advocate, continue to push, and continue to
38 work for your people because that's the only way we
39 could -- by uniting all of us, the more we'll have in
40 addressing the concerns that we have, keep pushing
41 them, keep taking this through on that.

42

43 So, again, thank you.

44

45 Eva, thank you and all those that have
46 put this meeting together and invited different
47 agencies to update us on either wildlife or fisheries,
48 so thank you again.

49

50

0301

1 You guys have a good spring, good
2 summer, hopefully the fish will return for us to at
3 least put some away, and thank you again, and have a
4 good spring, good spring hunting, good summer, take
5 care, and be good.

6
7 Thank you.

8
9 MS. PATTON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
10 This is Eva. And I just want to thank all the Council
11 members as well. A big thanks to you, Ray, for
12 stepping in to Chair the meeting with your wonderful
13 way and heartfelt facilitation. Thanks to all the
14 Council members and all the communities that
15 participated in the meeting today, especially in these
16 challenging times. As difficult as it is to get
17 through on teleconference for everyone to -- you know
18 the persistence and good work and dedication to
19 advocate for subsistence in your communities. So it's
20 an honor to work with all of you, thank you so much.
21 And take good care everyone, and I'll be following up
22 in the next weeks here with your draft letters and
23 proposals so I'll be in touch again, soon.

24
25 Thank you everyone, take good care.

26
27 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Yeah, thank you Eva.
28 Before we close if someone can give us a closing prayer
29 then we could adjourn the meeting right after the
30 closing prayer.

31
32 (No comments)

33
34 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Richard, do you care to
35 give us a closing prayer.

36
37 MR. SLATS: Yeah.

38
39 (Prayer)

40
41 MR. SLATS: Amen.

42
43 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Quyana, amen. Thank
44 you, Richard. I guess the last item on the agenda is
45 to adjourn.

46
47 MR. ANDREW: Quyana, Richard, and
48 quyana to all of you.

49
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0302

1 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Is there a motion on
2 the floor to adjourn.

3
4 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl, a motion to
5 adjourn.

6
7 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Go ahead.

8
9 MR. SLATS: Second, Mr. Chair.

10
11 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, there's a motion
12 on the floor by -- I didn't get that, who motioned
13 first.

14
15 MR. SAMUELSON: Earl.

16
17 MR. ALSTROM: Thomas Alstrom.

18
19 MR. SAMUELSON: Oh, Thomas, go ahead,
20 Thomas.

21
22 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Okay, Thomas, Thomas
23 Alstrom moves to adjourn the meeting. The time now is
24 5:22 p.m., do I hear a second.

25
26 MR. SLATS: Second. Richard Slats
27 seconds.

28
29 CHAIRMAN ONEY: Second by John Andrew.
30 Meeting is adjourned, safe travels, happy spring,
31 meeting is adjourned. Thank you. Thank you all. Have
32 a good spring, be safe.

33
34 (Off record)

35
36 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)

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0303

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

4) ss.

5 STATE OF ALASKA)

6

7 I, Salena A. Hile, Notary Public in and for the
8 state of Alaska and reporter for Computer Matrix Court
9 Reporters, LLC, do hereby certify:

10

11 THAT the foregoing pages numbered ____ through
12 ____ contain a full, true and correct Transcript of the
13 YUKON KUSKOKWIM DELTA FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
14 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING, VOLUME II taken
15 electronically on the 4th day of March;

16

17 THAT the transcript is a true and
18 correct transcript requested to be transcribed and
19 thereafter transcribed by under my direction and
20 reduced to print to the best of our knowledge and
21 ability;

22

23 THAT I am not an employee, attorney, or
24 party interested in any way in this action.

25

26 DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 24th
27 day of March 2021.

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Salena A. Hile
Notary Public, State of Alaska
My Commission Expires: 09/16/22